

Archivio Musicale

Archivio musicale was published in Naples from 15 January 1882 to June 1884 and consists of thirty-eight issues. The journal's promoter and director was Beniamino Cesi;¹ its printing was entrusted to the Stabilimento tipografico of Vincenzo Morano, with offices at the Istituto Casanova, which eventually became a publisher in its own right. The text of the frontispiece in the first number defines the character of the journal as a

periodical publication of aesthetics, acoustics, history, pedagogy and music criticism, counterpoint, harmony, song, orchestration, biography, bibliography, contemporary art, and controversy.

The editorial plan provided for twenty-four annual numbers published at the rate of two per month. The annual subscription for Italy was 24 Lire, and 30 Lire abroad. In the customary article found in the first number regarding the journal's prospectus we read:

[...] music has traversed a long road toward perfection [...] its very existence has been denied, and the search for its own little path—which has not been trodden repeatedly by those who preceded us in this art—has been regarded as vain [...] natural talent is worth little, rather, we do not hesitate to affirm, is worth nothing. It is necessary to study, to know what others have done if a step forward is wanted or if standing in line with those who are deservedly called by the name artist is desired [...].²

From these few lines one may conclude that *Archivio musicale* represents a completely new component in the rich, at least quantitatively, Neapolitan publishing life of the time. Some of the authoritative authors who contribute to the journal include François Auguste Gevaert, Michele Ruta, Vittorio Lebrecht, Oscar Berggruen, Giulio Roberti, Federico Polidoro, Antonio Tari, Ludwig Nohl, Friedrich Niecks, Julius Aisleben, and Wilhelm Langhans. The many foreign correspondents are equally interesting: Arthur Pougin (Paris), Emil Naumann (Dresden), Seewald (Leipzig), Joseph Green (London), Enrico d'Albero (Barcelona), Wenceslao Gonzales (Buenos Aires), H. Schneider (Leipzig), G. Portig (Hamburg), and Xavier van Elewijck (Leuven); as are the Italian correspondents: Dario Peruzi (Rome), Giulio Roberti (Turin), Domenico Bertini (Florence), Fr. G. Zingerle (Trieste), Giovanni Salvioli (Venice), Carlo Delsignore (Genoa), and, toward the end of the run, Ippolito Valetta (pseudonym of Ippolito Franchi Verney) from Turin. These individuals were probably drawn to Beniamino Cesi's intellectual position, because few journals of the time could boast so vast and prestigious an array of contributors. Besides

¹Beniamino Cesi (Naples, 1845-1907) is mostly remembered as a pianist and a pedagogue. Upon completing his studies in his home town, both at the conservatory and privately with Sigismund Thalberg, he began his concert and teaching career at the Naples Conservatory. As a teacher he was active from 1885 to 1891 at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory and then again in Italy at the conservatories of Palermo and Naples.

²La Direzione, "Ai lettori dell'Archivio Musicale," *Archivio musicale* I, No. 1, 15 January 1882: V.

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being one of the greatest pianists of his day, Cesi was an important protagonist in the artistic and intellectual life of the time. A diligent editor, a famous pedagogue and founder of the Neapolitan school of piano playing, he was one of the most interesting and intellectually lively personalities of his day. Cesi was a principal player in the movement for renewal of Neapolitan musical culture and a pioneer in the introduction of the German classics to Naples, much earlier than his pupil Giuseppe Martucci.

Each issue of the journal contains three sections. The characteristic, central and fundamental element of the publication is its dedication to essays, which anticipates the development of the modern musicological journal. *Archivio musicale* is unlike the majority of contemporary musical periodicals, which are concerned primarily with chronicling facts, with the general day-to-day events of musical life, and which show little inclination toward reflection and comment, and even less toward analysis of the artistic events that created the intensity of Neapolitan musical life. On the contrary, *Archivio musicale*, from the beginning, contains articles displaying a cosmopolitan vocation; and, Cesi truly achieves an admirable feat in his effort to surpass the provincial circle to which many Neapolitan intellectuals remained tied, and from which they asserted a dominating strength. In fact, from the end of the 1880s, after the departure of Cesi for Saint Petersburg in 1885 and Giuseppe Martucci for Bologna in 1886, the tendency toward renewal that so convincingly characterized Neapolitan musical life from the 1870s and beyond, began to ease in intensity.

The focus of the journal is characterized by the extensive chronicling of Wagnerian events, the first performance of *Parsifal* in Bayreuth in particular,³ and the attention given the first performance in Naples of Beethoven's op. 106, performed by Beniamino Cesi himself and greeted as a true and major artistic event by other local journals.⁴ On the whole, *Archivio musicale* maintains an independent and balanced editorial position toward the public musical life.⁵

The second part of the journal is entirely devoted to chronicles. But even here it is possible to see, especially in the pages entitled to "Nostre Corrispondenze," the essay-like character that Cesi tried to give the journal, even when contributors were called upon simply to supply accounts of artistic events. Finally, the third part is dedicated wholly to brief notices of current events, and in this section the international scope of the journal is also apparent.

³*Archivio musicale*, I, No. 1 (15 January 1882): 7-13; and No. 2 ([January] 1882): 37-41.

⁴*Archivio musicale*, I, No. 16 ([September] 1882): 492-509; No. 17 ([October] 1882): 547-54.

⁵If a model for this journal were sought, one could be found in the *Giornale Napoletano di Filosofia*—directed by Bertrando Spaventa from 1872 and then by Francesco Fiorentino from 1875—and not infrequently concerned with musical events up to 1880. It stands in the forefront for those times as an interpreter of the cultural tensions of a renewed Naples after the unification of Italy.

Introduction

Business interests play no role in *Archivio musicale*. Lacking a real publisher, the journal's administration is entrusted to L. Nicodemo, its "gerente responsabile." The journal was clearly addressed to a select, small circle of music lovers, professional musicians—or rather *dilettanti*—who were frequently able instrumentalists and cultivators of the *musica di quartetto* who characterized the musical life of Naples during those years. An example of the direction maintained by the journal is the aforementioned intense debate about Wagner, a fact made clear by two important events: the first performance of *Parsifal* in Bayreuth on 26 July 1882, and the death of the composer on 13 February 1883.⁶ *Archivio musicale* attentively follows these two events with reports and comments by Oscar Berggruen and Wilhelm Langhans; and, with contributions countered by the fanciful prose of Antonio Tari—a proclaimed *antiwagnerista*, and a champion of bel canto and of the attributes of national music. The Neapolitan philosopher rises up as a defender of the superiority of melody, with reasoning that is not always clear. But if Tari's arguments appear somewhat pale today when compared to other contemporary studies, the articles of Ippolito Valetta, to the contrary, auger that future studies will be based not on prejudice and commonly-held notions, but on a rigorous examination of documentation. Also in this, the journal positioned itself as an inheritor of those forces for renewal already invoked with singular intuition by Nicola Marselli in 1859,⁷ and reposed with greater awareness by Federico Polidoro in his writings for *Archivio musicale*. For, the latter show a complete understanding of the true musical situation in Italy and demonstrate a determination to separate themselves from the narrow provincialism perceived in the columns of other contemporary journals. This is achieved not only in the journal's clear appreciation of an expansion of the repertory, but also by its opening as wide as possible a serious critical debate:

[...] In Italy, musical literature is limited and almost nothing in comparison with that of Germany, of Belgium, of France, of England, where criticism and the history of the arts have arrived at a high level of achievement [...] it would be well worth the effort to examine the reason for this indifference for criticism and the history of the arts in general which is observed in our country [...].⁸

Beniamino Cesi, in particular, realizes the absence of a real encounter with the problems that afflict the evolution of Italian music which lacks an authentic cultural framework and is rigidly confined, with a few exceptions, to the constricted boundaries of the pure and simple exercise of the profession. Thus *Archivio musicale* offers its pages to whomever wishes to participate with appropriate themes. And the voices, although isolated, some-

⁶*Archivio musicale*, II, No. 2 ([March] 1883): 35-58.

⁷Nicola Marselli, *Le ragioni della musica moderna* (Naples: Detken, 1859).

⁸N. Malfatti, "Giuseppe Sarti musicista del secolo XVII, per G. Pasolini Zanelli - Tipografia P. Conti, Faenza, 1888," *Archivio musicale*, II, No. 10 ([September] 1883): 337-38.

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times do not lack authority. Lauro Rossi expresses himself—more or less in line with Cesi—in an open letter to the journal, which is directed above all, to young composers:

[...] Now, therefore, why must this so-called music of the future disturb the sleep of its adversaries [...] But be that as it may, the fact remains that since a period of time in the not too distant past, we Italians bear a weight on our conscience which we should freely admit, our unfortunate neglect of the study of counterpoint in particular; studies that foreigners have never ceased to embrace [...].⁹

In the end, the feeling lingers that *Archivio musicale* was an isolated experience in Neapolitan musical culture, a central force in the tension already in play at the beginning of the seventies and which prolonged itself until the end of the eighties. The only outcome destined to survive from this fortuitous moment in the musical history of Naples is that school of piano, with all of its technical peculiarities which planted a fertile seed for the following century and which remains alive today.

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This publication is based on a copy of the journal conserved at the Civico Museo Bibliografico Musicale in Bologna, except for no. 11 of year II, [November] 1883, which belongs to the collection of the Conservatorio S. Pietro a Majella in Naples. With the exception of numbers 1 of year I, 15 January 1882, and 1 of year II, 8 February 1883, no issue cover revealing the date of publication is preserved. Therefore, the bibliographical reference for each issue is noted within brackets; the month of publication being deduced by reference to the date of recorded events.

Notice

The terms *opera nuova* and *prima rappresentazione* may indicate either a world premiere or a local premiere. The term “opera” is frequently used not only to indicate a well-defined genre, but also to indicate a “work,” or theatrical or musical “composition.” In the Keyword-Author Index the same subject may figure appear under different keyword headers. This is particularly evident with respect to names of theaters (e.g., Opéra-Comique, Teatro dell’Opéra-Comique; Théâtre de la Monnaie, Teatro della Monnaie, etc.).

⁹L. Rossi, “Alcune franche idee sulla composizione ideale,” *Archivio musicale*, I, No. 22, ([January] 1883): 726-29.

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