

## *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze*

The first number of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze* appeared on 16 June 1853; the last on 11 December 1855. It was issued by the “Stamperia sulle Logge del Grano” (“it is published Thursday at noon”) in weekly installments of four pages.<sup>1</sup> In all, 130 issues were published. The diffusion of the journal outside of Florence and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany was concentrated in northern Italy; the two locations of sale in central-southern Italy, Rome and Naples, ceased functioning in the middle of 1855, leaving this geographical area completely unserved, at least from the point of view of an “official” address; at the same time two international points of sale were established, one in Paris and the other in London.

The emergence of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze* coincides with the critical political period of the last years of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany and of the government of Leopoldo II of Lorena, before the union of the old State to the Kingdom of Piedmont and later to the Kingdom of Italy. After the experience of the bimonthly *Rivista Musicale di Firenze* (1840-1841)—founded by Ferdinando Giorgetti and Luigi Picchianti and directed by Andrea Luigi Mazzini—the first Florentine periodical dedicated entirely to the discipline of music, the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze*, appeared in the 1850s. Together with two Milanese journals, the *Gazzetta Musicale di Milano* and *L'Italia Musicale* (not by chance supported by the music publishers Ricordi and Lucca respectively), it belongs to a small number of periodical publications that foreshadow the nascent discipline of Italian musicology.

The publisher Giovan Gualberto Guidi was the journal's owner and director. An instrumentalist at the Teatro della Pergola, Guidi's publishing career extended from 1844 to 1882; among other things, he originated the idea of a series of pocket scores and was publisher of the periodicals *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze* (1853-55), *L'Armonia* (1856-59), and *Boccherini* (1862-82); he also promoted concert activities. In 1887 the publishing house he founded was absorbed by Casa Ricordi.

The principle editors, collaborators or correspondents of the *Gazzetta Musicale di Firenze* included Ermanno Picchi, director of the school of music connected with the Accademia delle Belle Arti in Florence; Abramo Basevi, a medical doctor, champion of philosophical and literary studies, critic, and composer; Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata; Carlo Andrea Gambini; Olimpo Mariotti; and Luigi Picchianti. An administration independent from Guidi, the “proprietario e responsabile,” was never properly declared; however, the role of initial supervision and critical guid-

<sup>1</sup> The journal was sold by subscription in Florence for the price of 4 Lire for three months (8 for six months and 16 for a year); for the price of 5, 10, and 20 Lire respectively in Tuscany “posted to its destination” and abroad “posted to the border.” With no. 22 of 13 November 1855 the periodical was “published Wednesday at 2 P.M.”

ance of the journal clearly belonged to Ermanno Picchi. He gradually left room to the growing influence of Abramo Basevi who during 1855 seems to have taken in hand the leadership of the journal, already prefiguring the future developments tied to the birth of *L'Armonia*.

The structure of the periodical remained almost unaltered during its two and a half years of publication. Within its four pages, the first was reserved for brief editorial statements or communications, for leading articles on variable topics (historical or theoretical essays, current events, polemics), for reviews of particularly noteworthy musical events, and for literary or biographical *appendici* which occupy the bottom third of the page. The internal pages were reserved for reviews of musical events and publications, brief historical or theoretical essays, reprints of articles on various topics taken from other periodicals, and for rubrics on *varietà*, anecdotes, and humor. The same type of articles printed in the internal pages were also assigned to the fourth page, which, however, was distinguished by a rubric for miscellaneous news and by advertisements. The *notiziario* in particular, written by the journal's editors, contained news items of variable length about performances and events; when unsigned, these notices were extrapolated or derived from other periodicals or from correspondence.

The character of the journal may be defined by its constant focus on local interests, by its assiduous attention to Italian and European activities, and by an interest in theoretical, historical, and aesthetic reflections. Florentine musical life in particular clearly emerges from the very frequent accounts of theatrical productions, liturgical functions, concerts, private musical meetings; from news about the *Società musicale di mutuo soccorso* and activities in the schools of music, and from the numerous opposing polemics, above all, with other local periodicals. The circle of the Grand Duke emerges from correspondence and brief references, albeit a bit muted; the series *Biografia contemporanea dei musicisti in Toscana*, published in 1855, constitutes an exception.

Italian and European musical life (the Americas are also present) is described in the *notiziario* and in correspondence. Among the Italian cities, Milan and Genoa are discussed prominently. In the European orbit, correspondence of particular note is reserved almost entirely for Paris, frequently reprinted from other periodicals.

In the issue of 11 December 1855 Guidi, the editor, stated in an announcement to the subscribers:

This *Gazzetta* will appear hereafter, possibly with another name, without however changing its principles. By changing name it can expand its coverage to subjects belonging to all literature, art, and science. In any case, this *Gazzetta* will come out with improved paper, and in a slightly larger format.

From now on it will be presented to the public as the *Organ of musical reform in Italy*.

The new periodical was *L'Armonia*.

#### Notes on Cataloguing

Numerous articles are signed with pseudonyms or initials. The pseudonyms that have been attributed to Olimpo Mariotti are *Il Moro Pio Attim*, *Io il Primo Matto*, *Un Monte e Otto Mari*, *Mario Pimottoli* (usually anagrams of the editor's first and last names); the attribution of other articles signed *Tam-Tam*, *Reu-Meu-Deu-Seu-Beu*, etc. is doubtful although a brief stylistic analysis has demonstrated an irrefutable affinity with the writings of Mariotti.

The initials *C. M.* affixed to the biography of Gioacchino Rossini published in installments in 1853 has been attributed to Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata on the basis of a bibliographic indication furnished by Giuseppe Radiciotti (*Gioacchino Rossini. Vita documentata, opere e influenze*, vol. III, Tivoli 1927-29, p. 307). Other articles signed with these initials have also been attributed to Casamorata after a brief analysis of the style and of the topics treated, but some doubt remains.

Other initials have been identified: *E. P.* (Ermanno Picchi), *L. P.* (Luigi Picchianti), *O. M.* (Olimpo Mariotti), *A. B.* (Abramo Basevi), *G.* and *C. A. G.* (Carlo Andrea Gambini).