

Gazzetta musicale di Milano 1842-1862

The first issue of the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* appeared on 2 January 1842. Published by Giovanni Ricordi's Stabilimento musicale in Milan, this weekly journal, which emphasized the interests of its publisher, quickly established itself as Italy's most important music periodical. While during periods of political or economic unrest Ricordi suspended publication of the journal, a definitive break occurred after the 28 December 1862 issue. When the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* reappeared in 1864, the format and editorial stance had changed and, despite the same title and publisher, it was a different journal. This RIPM publication treats the journal from its inception through 1862.

During its first twenty years, the publication varied slightly in size and format. Generally eight pages in length, its initial three-column format was replaced by two columns in 1846. Ricordi offered musical supplements as a regular feature for much of this run. In 1842 and 1843, subscribers received a piece of music every month forming the "Antologia classica musicale," a collection of pieces of music selected from Ricordi's list of current publications.¹ In 1844, subscribers either received the selections chosen by Ricordi, or they chose any other piece of music from Ricordi's catalog as long as it added up to the same number of pages, about 150.² Ricordi discontinued this option in 1845 and 1846.³ For two years thereafter, the "Antologia classica musicale," which was reserved for individuals who paid their full year's subscription, was expanded to include four pieces in *partitura*, and additional vocal or instrumental pieces. In all it contained 234 pages of music and *figurini* from at least one opera (Verdi's *Macbeth* in 1847).⁴

On 29 March 1848, following the Milanese insurrection against Austria, the journal expanded its title to *Gazzetta musicale di Milano ed Eco delle notizie politiche*, changed it on 19 April to *Gazzetta musicale di Milano e di Italiana armonia*, and reversed this order on 7 June to *L'Italiana armonia e Gazzetta musicale di Milano*. Following the Austrians' return to Milan, Ricordi continued the publication of the *Gazzetta* only until 26 July 1848. When the journal resumed publication on 14 January 1850 with only minor

¹Selections during these first two years include compositions by Rossini, Gluck, Beethoven, Cherubini, Paisiello, Clementi, Meyerbeer, Cimarosa, Boieldieu, Fioravanti, Mayr, Mozart, Schubert, Donizetti, Czerny, D. A. Scarlatti, Padre Martini, Hummel, Benedetto Marcello (with piano accompaniment by F. Mirecki), Pergolesi, Paer, Pollini, Weber, and J. S. Bach.

²It is assumed that those pieces bound into the copies of the journal treated in this publication were those offered by Ricordi. They include music by Placido Mandanici, Martini, Beethoven, Vincenzo Federici, Palestrina, Tartini, Carissimi, Spontini, Frescobaldi, Giovanni Battista Clari, Haydn, and Salieri.

³The anthology of these years includes compositions by Pergolesi, Mozart, Stradella, Paisiello, Francesco Durante, Dussek, Handel, Corelli, Antonio Lotti, Rossini, Arcadelt, Lichtenthal, Czerny (one piece "written expressly for the *Gazzetta*"), Mayr, Soliva, Lully, Weber, Cimarosa, Luca Marenzio, Paer, Benedetto Marcello, Monteverdi, and Clementi.

⁴The music for 1847 included pieces by Rossini, Rodolphe Willmers, Golinelli, Palestrina, Mozart, Pergolesi, and Beethoven. Only one piece from 1848, a patriotic hymn by Pietro Cornali, appeared in copies of the *Gazzetta* consulted.

changes of format, it avoided any political commentary. While the “Antologia classica musicale” was abandoned, from 1850 through 1853 annual subscribers received their choice of music worth up to twenty *franchi* and an occasional “gift” of sheet music. The occasional gifts continued into 1859.⁵

Following the outbreak of the second war of Italian independence, Ricordi suspended the periodical once again on 29 May 1859, resuming publication on 1 January 1860 after the state of emergency ended. During its final three years, no supplements were offered and, during 1861 and 1862, the journal became much thinner, with most issues consisting of only four pages.

Giovanni Ricordi (1785-1853) founder and patriarch of the firm bearing his name, was consistently identified on the final page of each issue as the owner and publisher of the *Gazzetta*. He began his career as an independent copyist in 1803, slowly building his business and reputation until the company became an influential publishing house of international proportions, a legacy that has survived intact to the present. As a primary publisher of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi, not to mention almost every other Italian composer who achieved even a modest amount of fame, Giovanni Ricordi’s career followed and helped to shape the institutions of Italian opera and its role in daily life. Early in 1853, shortly after the premiere of *La Traviata*, Giovanni died. While in a sense his death symbolized the end of the *primo ottocento*, the traditions he had helped to forge continued with his oldest son Tito (1811-1888) at the head of this powerful company.

The seamless transition from father to son had been in preparation for years. Giovanni prepared Tito to assume control of all aspects of the family business. Tito was taught to engrave music,⁶ to coordinate set and costume designs, and to maintain important correspondence. From the time of negotiations with Verdi for *La Battaglia di Legnano* (1848), a letter from the head of the company could easily be from either Giovanni or Tito.

In a manifesto dated 11 December 1841, Giovanni Ricordi named Giacinto Battaglia (1803-1861) as the “literary editor” of the journal. Ricordi cited Battaglia’s experience as editor for the theatrical journal *Rivista europea*, a result of the merger of *Indicatore lombardo*, which Battaglia had directed, with *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero*. He had also established himself as a figure in the reform of Italian theater with his 1838 publication of *Delle attuali condizioni del teatro drammatico italiano in Italia e dei mezzi per promuoverne il perfezionamento*. That Ricordi would employ a theatrical journalist and polemicist to edit his journal underscores the close unity between theater and music in Italian thinking. However, Battaglia’s departure from the journal in 1846 likely resulted from his growing involvement in spoken theater. In 1844 he assumed the

⁵The “gifts” appear to be primarily salon music. In addition to a setting of *Alma redemptoris mater* by Angelo Mariani, there are a few pieces for piano by Golinelli and Giulio Ricordi.

⁶Tito’s name first appears as an engraver in the Ricordi libroni on 24 February 1827 at number 2933.

direction of the Milanese Teatro Re where, in 1846, Gustavo Modena—an important reformer of Italian theatrical practice—established his troupe under the supervision of Battaglia.

The same manifesto promised contributions from Basily, Donizetti, Lichtenthal, Mayr, Mazzucato, Mercadante, Pacini, and Vaccaj. Of these, Alberto Mazzucato (1813-1874) contributed the most and became the journal's editor in 1846. Trained in mathematics, Mazzucato left that field and studied music at the Conservatory in Padua. Later at the Milan Conservatory, he taught voice, composition, history, aesthetics and orchestration, and served as Director from 1872 until his death in 1877. The relationship between publisher and editor was strained from time to time. On 29 April 1848, Mazzucato wrote to Tito.

I enclose a letter written by Papà, of which I do not understand the meaning, particularly of the last lines. You will explain them to me later in your own time. In any case that letter was written in a style which I am not accustomed to receiving from anyone: and that is why I return it. I also ask that you and Papà arrange to remove me completely from the editorial staff of the *Gazzetta*. When you have made arrangements with another person, you will let me know. I will continue until I receive your decision, which I desire promptly. Released from excessive commitments I will be able to devote more continuous effort to the Berlioz and the Fétis, for which you will no longer have to grumble.⁷

Mazzucato's threatened departure, however, did not occur. Ricordi later published Mazzucato's translations of Berlioz's treatise on orchestration (not to be confused with the translation by Cesare Mellini published in 1842 for a series in the *Gazzetta*), and Fétis's treatise on harmony. When Ricordi resumed publication in 1850, Mazzucato was especially prolific and wrote many articles, including a series "Voice classes in music conservatories, or On the relationship between professors of voice and those of solfeggio," and reviews of operas such as Antonio Cagnoni's *Amore e trappoli* and Verdi's *Luisa Miller*. From the beginning, the owner and publisher were identified in each issue, but the editor was not until 14 December 1856 when Alberto Mazzucato was officially recognized. This identification may have signaled a change in administrative function within the journal with Tito Ricordi relinquishing more responsibilities to him. In August 1858 Mazzucato resigned from his editorial responsibilities at the *Gazzetta*, and, in 1859, became the conductor (*maestro direttore e concertatore*) of the orchestra at La Scala. His departure from the *Gazzetta* was probably related to the beginning of the theatrical season in late December 1858.

On 8 August 1858, Mazzucato was replaced by Filippo Filippi (1830-1887), who edited the journal until it ceased publication in 1862. Filippi studied law in Padua completing

⁷Milan, Archivio Ricordi, Mazzucato #58.

his degree in 1853. In the same year he began writing about theater (including opera) for the Venetian journal *I fiori letterari*. In 1855, his review of *L'Ebreo* by Giuseppe Appolloni came to the attention of Giovanni Ricordi, who reprinted it in the *Gazzetta*.⁸ Before assuming the role of editor, Filippi contributed frequently to the journal. In 1856 and 1857 in a series for the *Gazzetta*, Ricordi published Filippi's book on the life and works of the pianist Adolfo Fumagalli. Thereafter, Filippi became a major figure in another journal *La Perseveranza* in 1859, and continued his association with it until his death in 1887. Owing to Filippi's additional responsibilities, Ricordi hired Giuseppe Oggioni to serve as *gerente* or managing editor when the *Gazzetta* resumed publication in 1860 following the 1859 interruption. Filippi and Oggioni ran the journal from 1860 until 1862.

In the 1841 manifesto Giovanni Ricordi delineated the role of the periodical as a vehicle for the "examination and rigorous application of aesthetic and critical doctrines regarding music," and he offered it as a forum open

for the independent discussion of the best theories of the art; for the examination of the nature and character of various musical schools; for the astute treatment of the reasons that cause the varied and more or less rapid progress of some schools while others threaten decline; for biographical history and criticism of the most celebrated composers and performers both past and present; for diligent analysis of the most notable musical productions of all types both in our Italy and amongst foreigners.⁹

Ricordi's journal reflects this position. Each issue begins with one or two major articles that fit within this general program. Local news follows, then correspondence, miscellaneous news from Italy and abroad, and finally advertising fills out a typical issue.

From the beginning, major articles are very frequently presented in series sometimes spanning several months. In 1842, for example, series are devoted to Fétis's notions about Italian music, Berlioz's treatise on orchestration, and Wagner's views on music in Germany. Contributions by foreigners were frequent and included translations of articles published in other journals. In 1851 Liszt's biography of Chopin was reprinted from *La France musicale*, and in 1857 the journal presented a series on the history of the *cantus firmus* by Adrien de La Fage. Even so, some of the longest and most important series appeared first in the *Gazzetta*. These include a biography of Giovanni Simone Mayr by Girolamo Calvi published in 1847 and 1848, and several series by Angelo Catelani on important Italian composers such as Orazio Vecchi (1858) and Claudio Merulo (1860). Not all major series were signed. One on liturgical chant published in 1856 serves as an example.

⁸*Gazzetta musicale di Milano*, 13, no. 3 (25 February 1855): 57-59.

⁹Giovanni Ricordi, *Manifesto d'associazione* (Milan, 11 December 1841).

Reviews of new operas occupy an important place at the beginning of many issues. For works first performed at La Scala or in other Milanese venues, one can almost always find a major review, including a serious examination of the libretto and the music, as the lead article in the *Gazzetta*. This also extended to major operas first performed in other cities, as is demonstrated by Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata's article on *Macbeth* in Florence in 1847. Clearly, reviews and news of Verdi's works occupy a special place within the journal's pages. The well-known incident of Verdi's reaction to an innocuous notice in the *Gazzetta* about *Giovanna d'Arco*, a circumstance that contributed to Verdi's ill humor toward Ricordi and his temporary move to Ricordi's rival, Francesco Lucca, can be overstated. Nevertheless, treatment of Verdi's works in the journal thereafter was positive and diligent.

Occasionally the *Gazzetta* opens with a review of new music. Ricordi's own publications are always featured prominently, but not exclusively. The majority of pieces reviewed are salon music with a sizeable number of transcriptions, souvenirs, paraphrases, etc. of popular operas.

Beginning in 1854, *appendici* [*feuilletons*] become a regular feature sharing the first few pages with the lead article. Topics range from short stories (usually with some musical content or allusions), anecdotes, historical essays, and reports on fine art exhibitions. Antonio Piazza wrote most of these and appears to have been responsible for this feature.

A section devoted to current musical events in Milan frequently follows the opening articles. Various names "Rivista musicale," "Rivista musicale di Milano," "Rivista settimanale," etc., this section generally contains not only short notices of artists' activities and commentary on current repertory, but also, at times, substantial reviews of musical events in Milan. Other occasional rubrics may follow the initial articles. They include "Critica musicale" which contains more extended reviews of music, "Critica melodrammatica" which provides extended treatments of new operas performed primarily at La Scala, and "Bibliografia" which consists of brief descriptions of music mostly published by Ricordi. On rare occasion these rubrics appear in place of a lead article.

Correspondence occupies an important place in the middle of many issues. Letters from Carlo Andrea Gambini in Genoa, Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata in Florence, and Angelo Catelani in Modena are the most prominent contributors from other Italian cities. Each of these writers also wrote major articles and reviews both within their correspondence and in separate lead articles. Paris, however, towers over all others in this section. For many years, the Paris correspondent was Achille Montignani who provided many insightful observations regarding Italian music and musicians in the French capital. When Montignani moved to London, he became the correspondent for the *Gazzetta* from that capital, and an anonymous writer submitted items from Paris. While most major musical events in each location are discussed, performances of Italian works and those by Italian artists receive particular attention.

Brief news items generally follow the correspondence sections. In 1842 these began as a single feature titled "Notizie," which by the end of the year was divided into "Notizie italiane" and "Notizie estere" (or "straniere" or some other variation). Italian news covers both major centers such as Florence, Venice, Naples, and Rome, and smaller places including Genoa, Modena, and Parma. While Paris dominates the foreign news, activities in other capitals such as London, Berlin, Vienna, and St. Petersburg are regularly treated. A great deal of this information is culled from other publications. Sometimes a piece of correspondence or even an extended review finds its way into this miscellaneous rubric. The most frequently cited journal is the *Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris*, and not just for news from France. Information from around the world was frequently borrowed (with attribution) from its pages. Other prominent journals cited in this way by the *Gazzetta* include the Leipzig-based *Signale* (spelled *Segnale* in the *Gazzetta*), and journals in several other German-speaking cities including Vienna and Berlin. These periodicals, however, cannot always be identified with precision as their titles are frequently given as "*Gazzetta musicale di*" followed by a city name.

Most issues close with a full page of advertising by Ricordi. Sometimes there is no advertising or the ad is reduced to half a page. On these occasions announcements of rights to scores purchased by Ricordi and notices of job openings may appear.

From the beginning many writers contributed to the *Gazzetta*. However, they are not always easy to identify. Beginning in 1845 Ricordi includes a list of contributors in the masthead of each issue, a practice that ends with the outbreak of hostilities in 1848 when the name of the journal briefly changes. Over these two-and-a-quarter years, a few names are added and others are dropped, thirty-four in all. Some names, such as Mayr appear on this list most likely for the prestige they bring to the publication, while others are not directly associated with specific contributions. For example, Peter Lichtenthal, who resided in Milan, may have supplied information about Mozart's heirs because of his connection with the family, without however having been cited by name. Still others such as a certain Bellini cannot be identified with certainty. This is likely the signature of Fermo Bellini whose compositions include fantasies for wind instruments based on Verdi's *I Lombardi* and *Giovanna d'Arco*, on Donizetti's *Adelia* and *Don Sebastiano*, and on Nicolai's *Il Templario*, and who wrote *Teoriche musicali su gli stromenti e sull'instrumentazione ad uso de' giovani maestri compositori* (1844) and a method for trombone. Or perhaps it is Pio Bellini who composed the music for several ballets including *Il Diavolo a quattro*, *Isnelda di Normandia*, and *Manon Lesaut*, all performed at La Scala during these years. The practice of supplying a list of contributors in the masthead disappears completely when the journal resumes publication in 1850. In addition to those already mentioned, the most prolific contributors during the twenty years treated in this RIPM publication include Melchiorre Balbi, a composer and theorist based in Padua; Raimondo Boucheron, composer, theorist, and maestro di cappella at the Duomo in Milan; Isidoro Cambiasi (husband of the noted pianist, Cirilla Branca) who directed musical activities in the salon of Casa Branca, and was an indefatigable *compilatore* who published lists in the *Gazzetta* of works by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti,

Mercadante, Pacini and Meyerbeer, and, of new Italian operas produced in selected years, while also assembling the earliest authoritative chronology of works produced at La Scala; Nicoló Eustachio Cattaneo, an author based in Borgomanero (Novara, Piedmont) who wrote several theoretical treatises and whose contributions to the *Gazzetta* reflect the humorous spirit of his 1836 publication, *Frusta musicale, ossia Lettera sugli abusi introdotti nella musica*; Piero Torrigiani, who is most likely Pietro, the composer who, during the 1840s, wrote at least two operas premièred in Naples and one in Bologna; and Geremia Vitali, a critic whose reviews for the *Gazzetta* form the backbone of critical discourse in Milan during the same period.

The following author's initials have been identified. (In order to distinguish between authors signing with identical initials, surnames are supplied in brackets in the catalogue).

Giacinto Battaglia	B., G. B.
Vicenzo Bigliani	Prof. B-i
Isidoro Cambiasi	Is. C.
Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata	L. F. C., M. ° Av. C.
François-Joseph Fétis	F.
Carlo Andrea Gambini	C. A. G., C. A. G...i
Veridico Giusti	V. G.
Peter Lichtenthal	L.
Angelo Mariani	A. M. [Mariani]
Alberto Mazzucato	A. M.
Achille Montignani	A. M. [Montignani], M. [Montignani]
Torelli	T., T-li., T-lli.

This RIPM publication is based in large part on a copy of the journal preserved in Piacenza at the Biblioteca Comunale "Passerini-Landi," and filmed at the Centro internazionale per la ricerca sui periodici musicali (CIRPeM) in Parma; various lacunae were filled by consulting a microfilm copy in the private collection of H. Robert Cohen. The catalogued music supplements are those that appear in the microfilms.