

Musica e musicisti (1902-1905)

Directed and published by Giulio Ricordi (1840-1912),¹ *Musica e musicisti* [MEM] is a leading source for musical information in Italy at the beginning of the twentieth century. It began publication in Milan in January 1902 and continued until December 1905. At the beginning of its second publication year it merged with the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* [GMM],² also published by Ricordi, to become *Musica e musicisti. La Gazzetta musicale di Milano*. The merging of these two publications led MEM to adopt a rather complicated publication numbering system.

In its first year MEM's six bimonthly installments appeared from January to November 1902, numbered respectively year I, no. 1 through no. 6. At the beginning of its second publication year, MEM adopted the yearly numbering system of GMM. Its final volume was year 57 while the second year of MEM became year 58. To further complicate the numbering system, MEM abandoned the manner in which it identified its first year of publication, namely, year I, and replaced this with a volume numbered I as the "anno" number continued that of GMM. Consequently, Anno I identifies MEM during its first year, while year 58, volume 1, identifies its second. Bimonthly publication was abandoned at the end of its first year, and replaced with monthly installments from January 1903 until the journal's demise. Each year was given a publication number (58 through 60), a volume number (vols. 1 through 3); and an issue number (Nos. 1 through 12).

The pages of the principal articles and the musical supplements that follow contain an intermingling of miscellaneous information, short articles, lists and advertisements that are numbered consecutively beginning with the number one each year for 1902 and 1903. However in 1904 and 1905 the pages of each annual supplement are numbered independently from those of the articles, and combined with a Roman numeral assigned successively to each year.

In the RIPM calendar, the two sets of page-numbers are clarified by the bracketed heading "Supplemento a "Musica e musicisti" [Supplement to *Musica e musicisti*] positioned at the outset of materials using the second system of page numbering.

Although first printed in rather small format (16 x 12 cm.), *Musica e musicisti* is attractive for the clarity of its organization under various rubrics and the placement of its illustrations and music examples. MEM is also very interesting for its editorial policies: in the "Presentazione" in the introductory pages of the first issue, it is stated that the aim of the periodical is to explore musical novelties (from chamber music to sacred music, from dance music to popular songs), and to feature the most fashionable composers and interpreters (opera singers and instrumentalists), all appraised as cinema stars. In order to gratify the public's taste, ample space is assigned to mundane reports of musical events relating to operatic theaters and concert halls. Readers seem to appreciate the new periodical: in the opening essay of the second fascicle of the

¹Ricordi's name and position of authority are printed at the bottom left-hand side of the title page, and at the outset of the first article of each issue.

²Its forerunner, the *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* advertised the new journal in its January 1902 issue. When in 1866 *La Gazzetta musicale di Milano* reappeared, it continued publication until the end of 1902. In 1903 it merged with *Musica e musicisti*. See *Gazzetta musicale di Milano* 57, no. 5 (30 January 1902): 63.

March issue of March 1902 (Vol. I, No. 3), it is pointed out that the periodical circulates not only on a national, but on an international level as well.

Beginning in January 1903, MEM was printed in a larger format (the traditional octavo size, 25 x 18 cm.), characterized by new rubrics, by a more complex structure and was now published in monthly installments. In its subscription plan, the aesthetic of the new periodical is reaffirmed: the reporting of musical and dramatic topics in an attractive way, aimed at a public not only of professionals and amateurs but also of simple music lovers.³ The success of the journal is testified by the essay “Ai nostri abbonati e lettori” [To our subscribers and readers] in the July 1903 issue,⁴ a success partly due to Giulio Ricordi’s skillful marketing policies. Buyers of Ricordi’s music editions receive free subscriptions to *Musica e musicisti*; subscribers to the periodical can in turn choose from among Ricordi’s music editions. Musical compositions, as well, are made available to the public as music inserts or supplements to the periodical.⁵ The readers of *Musica e musicisti* can thus enjoy playing at the piano or singing the pieces of Casa Ricordi’s publications, including those of the most fashionable composers such as Francesco Paolo Tosti, and pianoforte transcriptions of operas by Alberto Franchetti (*Germania*) and Giacomo Puccini (*Madama Butterfly*). Jules Bergmeim (pseudonym of Giulio Ricordi) himself published some of his compositions in *Musica e musicisti*: “Il racconto della nonna” [The tale of the grandmother] in January 1902 and the “sérénade villageoise per mandolins et guitars” entitled *Noël* in December 1905. Such publications were a way of satisfying the readers, often music lovers, who had at their disposal music to play for fifty cents, the same price as that of the periodical.

Musica e musicisti contains articles covering a variety of topics: essays alternate with regularly appearing sections (headed by rubrics); puzzles and photographs abound on every page. Some of the colourful rubrics that are published throughout the periodical’s run are “Il giro del mondo in un mese” [Around the world in a month], “Proiezioni” [Projections (lantern slides)], “Armonie e stonature” [Harmonies and discords], “Fiori d’arancio” [Orange flowers], “In qua e in là” [Here and there], “Novità musicali” [Musical novelties], and “In platea” [In the orchestra pit].⁶ In “Il giro del mondo in un mese” there are day-by-day descriptions of the principal musical and dramatic events that took place in the preceding month in Italy and abroad.

Among the most noteworthy sections of the periodical is “Proiezioni” [Projections], which adds to its success, by presenting a sort of illustrated encyclopedia of musical and dramatic arts of the time. Numerous types of artists are mentioned: musicians, actors, dancers, café-chantant singers, including Dina Galli, Emma Gramatica, Salomea Krusceniska, Ernesto Consolo, Emma Calvé, Titta Ruffo, Virgilio Talli and Virginia Reiter. For each a biographical sketch and a photographic reproduction, characteristic of the period and focusing on their artistic specialty, is published. Of a lighter nature are the contents under the rubrics “Armonie e stonature” [Harmony and discord], and “In qua e in là” [Here and there] that contain curious notices from the various parts of the

³Significant in this respect is the title of the subscription plan: “Ai cultori di musica” [To the cultivators of music].

⁴MEM 58 1, no. 7 (July 1903)≠ 569.

⁵From January 1904 the music is inserted between the regularly numbered text pages and the pages of text with Roman numerals (denoting year) and with Arabic numbers (denoting successive pages).

⁶The arrangement of the rubrics beginning with the first issue of 1902 is constantly modified. The examples that are cited here are taken from MEM 1, no. 6 (November 1902).

musical world. The section “Fiori d’arancio” [Orange flowers] announces weddings and betrothals of members of the musical world.

Noteworthy also is the rubric “Novità musicali” [Musical novelties], which presents to the reader Casa Ricordi’s most recent publications of chamber and sacred music, as well as a considerable number of transcriptions of the most successful operatic works,⁷ for performing at home.⁸ Among the most reputed contributors to Ricordi’s publications are Ernesto Becucci, Victor Dolmetsch, Alessandro Longo, Beniamino Cesi, Renato Avena, Vincenzo Mattarese, Eva Lonsdale, Ellen Wright, Paul Fauchey, and still others representing international musical interests. Of interest is the rubric “In platea” [In the orchestra pit], which includes reviews of works performed in Italian and foreign theatres, with special attention given to operatic works.

Starting with the first issue of 1903 the structure of the periodical undergoes significant changes: the original rubrics are relocated within the issues, and a considerable number of new rubrics are added (surely more appealing to the public), such as “Corrispondenza intima” [Intimate correspondence], “Punti d’esclamazione” [Exclamation points], “Attraverso le arti sorelle” [Across the sister arts], “Alla rinfusa” [At random], “In memoria” [In memory], and “Omaggi alla nostra rivista” [Homages to our journal].⁹

Giulio Ricordi is probably the author of the unsigned material under the rubric “Corrispondenza intima,” devoted to a variety of arguments, characterized by a very compact, ironic and flirtatious prose with regard to arguments of *bon ton*, and technical writing concerning strictly musical matters, thus answering promptly and correctly those readers who asked advice of a worldly man, experienced in cabaret life and an amateur of the arts.¹⁰

The material of the “Punti d’esclamazione” [Points of exclamation] section is short, similar to the preexisting “Armonie e stonature” [Harmony and discord], dealing mostly with curious anecdotes. The periodical reserves ample space to notices of events concerning the various arts, such as the figurative and theatrical arts, as for example in the rubric titled “Attraverso le arti sorelle” [Across the sister arts]. The rubric “Alla rinfusa” [At random] contains various notices of some interest, constantly limited to musical events.

The rubric “In memoria,” on the other hand, is devoted to obituaries of notable personalities from the world of music and the theatrical arts. Brief biographical sketches are provided for the most illustrious names, with, in some cases, the reproduction of their photographs. The section

⁷ The practice of transcriptions had wide diffusion in the 19th century: entire operas or separate pieces are published for various instrumental combinations, from chamber music for one or more instruments to band music. See M. Di Cesare, “La Musica nelle pagine del “Corriere dell’Umbria” (1870-1877),” (Perugia, Cattedra di Storia della Musica dell’Università di Perugia-Centro di Studi Musicali in Umbria, 2001): 25-29; in *Quaderni di Esercizi. Musica e Spettacolo*, 7); and “Verdi: mille occasioni d’ascolto,” in *Verdi a Perugia e in Umbria nell’Ottocento*, ed. Biancamaria Brumana, (Perugia, Morlacchi editore, 2001): 25–27 in *Quaderni di “Esercizi. Musica e Spettacolo”*: 8.

⁸ Among Ricordi’s publications are, for example, a Duo for harp and piano from Puccini’s *Bohème*, eight Fantasias for mandolin (or violin) and piano by G. Silvestri based on motives from Verdi’s operas, a Fantasia for piano on Franchetti’s *Germania*.

⁹ See for example MEM 60, 1, no. 3 (15 March 1903).

¹⁰ The December 1904 issue, for example, contains articles about the following topics: Wagner’s *I Maestri cantori di Norimberga*, Mozart as operatic composer, custom illustrated business cards, the meaning of female names, the “Coro dei Cherubini” from Boito’s *Mefistofele*, a poem on face powder.

headed by the rubric “Omaggi alla nostra rivista” [Homages to our journal] is placed at the close of each issue; it lists all the publications received by the editor: musical compositions and literary works, with citations of titles, authors, and brief descriptions of the contents.

Beginning with April 1903, *Musica e musicisti* introduces for the first time the rubric “Le regine dell’operetta” [Queens of the operetta], similar in structure to the aforementioned “Proiezioni.”¹¹ The new section presents the reader with malicious biographies of the most famous female artists of cabaret, together with their photographs.

In May 1903 two new titles of rubrics are introduced: “Repertorio internazionale” [International repertory], containing lists of operatic performances in major foreign cities, and “Albe e tramonti” [Dawns and sunsets], a sort of calendar of births and deaths of famous musicians that took place during the month in question. The aim here is to enrich the didactic nature of the periodical, as is the introduction in January 1904 of another rubric titled “Rimembranze storiche” [Historical remembrances], which recalls the most significant musical events of earlier times.

To the delight of the readers Giulio Ricordi introduces, beginning in April 1904, caricatures, at the time greatly enjoyed by the public; these treat illustrious personages belonging to the world of culture and, more rarely, of international politics.¹² From its beginning, a sense of *humor* is indeed one of the major characteristics of the periodical.¹³ At times much space is reserved in *Musica e musicisti* for articles about prominent composers. Ricordi assigns special emphasis to Giuseppe Verdi, a regular presence in *Musica e musicisti*. The composer’s portrait appears in the first issue of January 1902, together with biographical notices. Ricordi’s intention is seemingly to elect Verdi as a signpost of the periodical. Further on in the same issue, the popular edition of his operas is publicized, thus representing a sort of posthumous homage to the Maestro.

Particular attention is given to various notices concerning the Casa di Riposo per Musicisti [Retirement home for musicians], founded by Verdi in Milan: its opening in October 1902, the inauguration of Verdi’s burial crypt there in March 1903,¹⁴ and a description of the institution published in several successive installments in 1905. At the close of the last installment, June 1905, a photograph features the composer together with Arrigo Boito and his brother Camillo looking at the panorama of Milan from the terrace of the Casa di Riposo, providing a moment of everyday life of historical significance.¹⁵

Such moments in the life of Giacomo Puccini are also presented, beginning in February 1903, his biographical sketch is published in successive installments, accompanied by numerous photographs of Puccini. In March 1903 many photographs are published concerning the composer’s car accident which occurred near Lucca.¹⁶ A substantial photographic representation concerning Puccini’s trip to Buenos Aires is given in the periodical in 1905, with the composer

¹¹ Unlike “Proiezioni,” which is an editorial rubric, “Le regine dell’operetta” is signed by G. Clemente Tomei.

¹² The caricatures are presented in the form of a rubric titled “Istantanee” [Snapshots].

¹³ Irony is the guiding spirit of *Musica e musicisti*: from spicy mottoes sporadically present in the first issue of 1902 to the caricatures that appear without interruption from April 1904 to December 1905.

¹⁴ For the occasion the periodical publishes a detailed program of the concert conducted by Arturo Toscanini.

¹⁵ MEM 60, no. 6 (June 1905): 322.

¹⁶ At the conclusion of the article on Puccini’s accident, a telegram sent to the composer by Tito Ricordi is reproduced, apparently to provide comfort concerning Puccini’s health condition.

appearing in various situations: from boarding the ship “Savoia,” to his residency in the rooms of the Palace of the newspaper *La Prensa*, all representing a remarkable *battage* of advertising promoted by Giulio Ricordi.

Noteworthy publicity is also given in the journal to the inaugurations or to the re-openings of various Italian theaters, such as the Teatro Verdi in Naples,¹⁷ the Teatro Del Corso in Bologna,¹⁸ the Teatro Sociale of Como,¹⁹ the Teatro Sociale in Rovigo,²⁰ the Teatro Regio in Turin,²¹ the Teatro Nuovo in Novara,²² the Teatro Massimo in Palermo,²³ and the Teatro Dal Verme in Milan.²⁴ These theaters are presented to the readers with a rich selection of photographs and with an outline of each theater’s particular history and its architectural characteristics, undoubtedly with the intent of giving prestige to Italian culture.²⁵

A similar informative treatment is given to certain Italian musical institutes. A case in point is the two installments about Milan’s Regio Conservatorio Musicale “Giuseppe Verdi.”²⁶ Along with the more than twenty illustrations dedicated to this institute,²⁷ considerable information is given on its architectural features and the structure of the building, on the library and on the museum of musical instruments; there is also a detailed account of the teachers, including high praise of director Galignani, who had endorsed the dedication of the conservatory to Verdi. This extensive article certainly denotes the special connection that existed between Giulio Ricordi and the city of Milan.

Ricordi’s fondness for literature is apparent in the publication in installments from February 1903 of a series of novels by foreign authors. The first to be printed is Max Pemberton’s *L’incubo* [The Incubus], with drawings by M. Greiffenhagen (1903), followed by Samuel Rutherford Crockett’s *Il teschio d’argento* [The Silver Skull], with drawings by G. Grenville Marton (1904), Friedrich Gerstäcker’s *Oro!* [Gold!] (1904), and Mrs. Humphry Ward’s *La figlia di Lady Rose* [The Daughter of Lady Rose] (1904). The only Italian author given some space in *Musica e musicisti* is Antonio Quattrini, with his philosophical spiritualist novel *La pietra filosofale* [The philosophical stone], which appeared at the conclusion of each issue from January to August 1904.

Some illustrious collaborators contribute articles that enhance the prestige of *Musica e musicisti*. These articles are often written in form of *reportage* or a monograph on a musical subject, and

¹⁷ S. Di Giacomo, “Il Teatro Verdi a Napoli,” MEM 58, 1, no. 6 (15 June 1903): 480-82.

¹⁸ Ugo Pesci, “Il Teatro Del Corso rinnovato,” MEM 59, 1, no. 11 (November 1903): 973-81.

¹⁹ Mario Cubasca, “Il Teatro Sociale di Como,” MEM 59, 2, no. 8 (15 August 1904): 483-89.

²⁰ Alvisè Manfroni, “Il Teatro Sociale di Rovigo,” MEM 59, 2, no. 10 (15 October 1904): 619-29.

²¹ Francesco Montalento, “La riforma del Teatro Regio in Torino,” MEM 60, 1, no. 4 (April 1905): 210-14.

²² “Nuovo teatro a Novara,” MEM 60, 1, no. 5 (15 May 1905): 296-97.

²³ Giuseppe Capità, “Il Teatro Massimo ‘Vittorio Emanuele’ in Palermo,” MEM 60, 2, no. 9 (15 September 1905): 548-56.

²⁴ “Il Teatro Dal Verme in Milano,” MEM 60, 2, no. 9 (15 September 1905): 561-63.

²⁵ The various signatures of the authors of articles about theatres are probably those of local collaborators to the periodical. The most illustrious name among them is that of Salvatore Di Giacomo for the article on the Teatro Verdi in Naples.

²⁶ “R. Conservatorio musicale Giuseppe Verdi in Milano,” MEM 58, 1, no. 12 (15 December 1903): 1009-17, and 59, 1, no. 1 (15 January 1904): 3-12.

²⁷ The illustrations were produced by the prestigious photographic studio of Varischi, Artico e C. (previously I. Ricci) in Milan.

are published in installments in successive numbers of the periodical. The July 1905 issue, for example, starts with the original title of “Nella terra dei ‘Félibres’ (impressioni di un viaggio in Provenza)” [In the land of the Felidae (Impressions of a journey in Provence)]. Its author Claudio Clausetti describes his stay at Marseilles on the occasion of the annual congress of the Parisian Association littéraire et artistique internationale, and in the successive issues, relates his visits to other cities of Provence, such as Arles, Aix-en-Provence and Avignon. Clausetti is fascinated by the monuments, the festivities and the local specialties, inspired by the quasi magical atmosphere of the poet Mistral.

The articles by Felice La Torre, professor of clinical gynecology at the Regia Università di Roma, that appear in June 1905 deal with an altogether different subject. Very competent in his profession, La Torre, in the bombastic title “La musica al tribunale d’Igea” [The music to the tribunal of Igea], inquires about the origin of musical experiences, their physical nature and influences on the human mind.

With the review by Arturo Marescotti (1866-1928) of the VI Internazionale d’Arte di Venezia [Sixth Show of the Venice Internationale], the periodical begins to pay attention to the visual arts, thus anticipating the editorial aims of the subsequent Ricordi journal *Ars et Labor* (1906-1912), a continuation of *Musica e Musicisti*. Marescotti’s articles explore the works exhibited in the halls of the Exhibition using a technical and refined prose—somewhat difficult for the uninitiated—to illustrate the various national schools, with special attention given to the national participants. At the close of his contribution Marescotti denounces the methodological incoherence and professional hypocrisy of many artists whose works were exhibited, but were solely interested in obtaining the recognition of the public.²⁸

Another outstanding collaborator is the poet-musicologist Salvatore Di Giacomo (1860-1934). In his articles he expertly explores the Neapolitan musical culture. In the October 1905 issue, for example, he recounts the circumstances of the debut of the bass singer Luigi Lablache (1794-1858) at the Teatro Carlino in Naples at Easter 1814.²⁹ In an article of December 1905, he faithfully reports on an unpublished document by Agostino Gervasio found in the Biblioteca de’ Gerolamini in Naples, titled “Osservazioni musicali intorno a’ Compositori napoletani, ricavate dalla Conversazione col signor Paisiello” [Musical observations about Neapolitan composers, profiting from conversations with signor Paisiello].³⁰ In this writing Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816) expresses interesting opinions on significant eighteenth-century composers Christoph Willibald footnote 2 Gluck (1714-1787), Nicolò Jommelli (1714-1774) and Giambattista Pergolesi (1710-1736).

A valuable collaborator of *Musica e musicisti* is Pompeo Molmenti (1852-1928), author of interesting monographs on Venice’s cultural life. In April 1903 he signs a rubric published in successive installments titled “Arte, storia, costume. Giuochi, feste e carnevale veneziano” [Art, history, costumes. Games, festivals and carnivals of Venice], in which he describes the typical

²⁸ E. A. Merescotti, “Visitando la VI Internazionale d’arte di Venezia.” MEM 60, I, no. 6 (15 June 1905): 353-61. The article continues with four additional parts.

²⁹ Salvatore Di Giacomo, “Lablache al San Carlino,” MEM 60, 2, no. 10 (15 October 1905): 639-43.

³⁰ Salvatore Di Giacomo, “Paisiello e I Footnote 30Footnote 35footnote 39suoi contemporanei,” MEM 60, 2, no. 12 (15 December, 1905): 762-68.

entertainments of the lagoonal city, such as the gondola races practiced since the 14th century.³¹ In July 1905 Molmenti writes another article on festivities and musical entertainments taking place in Venice in the sixteenth century.³² In the last number of the journal, in December 1905, Molmenti publishes another contribution dealing with an altogether different subject, bearing the explicit title “Il fallimento artistico dei concorsi e i cartelli dell’esposizione di Milano” [The failure of the competitions and posters of the Exposition of Milan].³³ In this article he criticizes the publicity posters proposed by the committee for the Milanese exposition of 1906, expressing a net preference for posters by Leopoldo Merlicovitz (1868-1944) promoted by Ricordi’s editions.³⁴

The articles by Amilcare Sebetius, pseudonym of Amilcare Lauria, are characterized by a notable irony. Under the title “Musica allegra,” Lauria narrates amusing and curious stories, which have unusual protagonists, such as marquis Palmizi, a staunch admirer of Wagner;³⁵ Don Gabriele Siesto, a member of the baritone section of the chorus of the San Carlo Theater in Naples;³⁶ the Neapolitan Marquis Don Alfonso Rodriguez and the teacher of singing Rita Gabussi-De Bassini.³⁷ In one of the articles we also find Giuseppe Verdi, the great “Beppino,” whose bad-tempered and biting character is very vividly sketched by Lauria.³⁸ The memory of Busseto’s Great Old Man is certainly still present in the minds of the readers of the periodical.

Musica e musicisti undoubtedly takes to heart the thought and the tastes of the public during its four years of publication. This illustrated journal made available to lovers of musical culture, to those capable of performing piano pieces at home, and to those readers in search of a bizarre notice relating to Italian and foreign musical events, stories and puzzles and series of portraits of stars of opera or the theatre. A kaleidoscope of thoughtful topics and reports conceived by Giulio Ricordi’s intelligence, his love for art, not only musical.³⁹

The number of December 1905 announces the new title of the periodical, *Ars et Labor*, derived from Casa Ricordi’s famous motto.

The present catalog was prepared on the basis of the complete collection of the periodical deposited in the Sezione Musicale of the Biblioteca Palatina at the Conservatorio di Musica “Arrigo Boito” in Parma. Considerable difficulty was encountered in the preparation of the catalogue, owing to the particular structural variety of subjects—at times interlinked in the rubrics—published in the periodical. In order to avoid overburdening the index, all names of non-musical publishing houses and photographic studios have been omitted.

Translated by Elvidio Surian

³¹ MEM, 58, 1, no. 4 (15 April 1903): 297-307.

³² Pompeo Molmenti, “Giuochi, musiche e balli del buon tempo antico” [Games, music and balls of the good old times], MEM 60, 2, no. 7 (15 July 1905): 401-10.

³³ Leopoldo Merlicovitz, MEM 60, 2, no. 12 (15 December 1905): 780-83.

³⁴ Leopoldo Merlicovitz is among the most assiduous of collaborators of *Musica e musicisti*: in fact, he is the creator of numerous illustrated title pages of the journal.

³⁵ Amilcare Sibetius, “Musica allegra,” MEM 58, 1, no. 1 (January 1903): 53-57.

³⁶ Sibetius, “Musica allegra,” MEM 58, 1, no. 10 (15 October 1903): 905-10.

³⁷ Sibetius, “Musica allegra,” MEM 59, 1, no. 5 (15 May 1904): 301-04.

³⁸ Sibetius, “Musica allegra,” MEM 58, 1, no. 12 (15 December 1903): 1030-33.

³⁹ Giuseppe Adami, *Giulio Ricordi, l’amico dei musicisti italiani* (Milan: Editoriale Domus, 1945): 247.