

The New York Musical World

A continuation of *The Message Bird* (1849-52), *The New York Musical World* first appeared on 4 September 1852 and, while changing its title several times (see below), continued weekly publication until 21 July 1860 when it united with the *New York Musical Review and Gazette* to form the *Musical Review and Musical World*.

Oliver Dyer and Richard Storrs Willis are acknowledged as joint editors of *The New York Musical World* only until 2 October 1852 at which time both are cited as publishers, with Willis remaining the sole editor. A dissolution of the partnership between Dyer and Willis was announced on 10 December 1853 after which only Willis is indicated as editor and proprietor. August Morand's name appears on the title page as early as 14 April 1855 (Vol. 11, no. 15) in connection with business aspects of the journal. On 26 July 1856 references to Willis as proprietor are dropped; Willis and Morand are then cited as joint editors. With the 6 September 1856 issue Dr. Edward Hodges is cited as a third editor. The three continue to share this position until 2 January 1858 when references to Morand disappear. At this point Willis alone is cited as the editor and Hodges is mentioned as an independent contributor. After 10 July 1858 references to Hodges are dropped. Beginning on 7 May 1858 (Vol. 22, no. 1) J. H. Wardwell is noted as publisher, and, from 6 January 1860 (Vol. 24, no. 1) until the final issue he is also identified as editor, as Willis withdrew his participation from the journal.

From the merger with Oliver Dyer to the last few months of publication Richard Storrs Willis (b. Boston, 10 February 1819; d. Detroit, 7 May 1900) appears to have guided the journal's editorial policies. His own writings dominate *The New York Musical World's* contents through 1854, and perhaps the journal's longest running series of articles is Willis' "Musical Studies for the Million." These weekly texts present rudiments of music theory and harmony and respond to questions submitted by readers. Willis' interest in composition is often evident in reviews of new music, such as his critique of Lowell Mason's *Carmina sacra*. Willis' somewhat pedantic tabulation of parallel octaves and supposed incorrectly resolved chord progressions in this work provoked a strong response from Mason in the 22 January 1853 issue. During 1853 and 1854 Willis also published an ongoing series devoted to church music in which he promoted strong views concerning the participation of the choir and organ in the liturgy, the proper location of organs in the layout of churches, and the nature of music in relation to divine worship. Willis was also one of the most frequent composers to have his music printed in the journal. In 1858 his collection of church music, *Willis's Service Music*, appeared in installments. Although usually not signed, many of the concert and opera reviews also appear to have been penned by Willis.

Aspects of Willis' personal life and musical training are occasionally revealed in his writings. A series of sketches entitled "Portfolio of a Musical Bachelor" that began

on 26 February 1853 recount his experiences as a music student in Europe. Prior to his European studies Willis graduated from Yale University in 1841. References to his student involvement with university music clubs appear sporadically throughout the journal. When the death of Jonas Chickering was announced in the 17 December 1853 issue (Vol. 7, no. 16) Willis acknowledged not only the influence that this important Boston pianoforte manufacturer had on his young adult life and his choice to pursue music as a career, but also that Chickering provided the financial assistance that enabled Willis to study composition with Schnyder von Wartensee in Frankfurt and Moritz Hauptmann in Leipzig.

Edward Hodges (b. Bristol, 20 July 1796; d. Bristol, 1 September 1867) was awarded a doctorate in music from Cambridge University in 1825 and eventually migrated to New York City. In January 1839 he became the organist at Trinity Church. Hodges contributed essays to *The New York Musical World* on several occasions prior to becoming an associate editor. His writings on church music appear to have been much appreciated.

August Morand and J. H. Wardwell have more obscure backgrounds and do not appear to have left any significant musical legacy. Morand is mentioned frequently prior to his role as a joint editor within the context of the journal's typesetting and routine business affairs. Wardwell's relationship to the journal likewise appears limited to a business venture. He is not known to have contributed significantly to the journal's musical content.

The journal profited from regular contributions of several well-known American musicians and critics. During its early years of publication Lowell Mason sent reports from England on a regular basis. Entitled "Letters," they usually focused on major musical events such as the Birmingham and Norwich music festivals and combined substantial detailed coverage including lists of works performed at each day's concerts. Mason's endorsement of the Pestalozzian teaching method prompted a lively discussion in London's *Musical World*, and thereafter in *The New York Musical World*.

William Henry Fry relayed the latest musical events from Paris in 1852. When he returned to New York he presented a series of lectures on the history of music which were reviewed by Richard Storrs Willis; several are published in their entirety in the journal. On 21 January 1854 Fry wrote a lengthy letter and analysis in defense of his symphony *Santa Claus* in reaction to Willis's less than enthusiastic review of 7 January. Fry's letter is followed by one of Willis' most extensive editorials which launched a major debate on the issues of American music and the role of the New York Philharmonic Society in promoting new works. The controversy evoked heated responses from several prominent musical figures including George F. Bristow,

conductor of the Philharmonic, members of the orchestra, and John Sullivan Dwight. The weekly exchanges continued for four months until April of the same year.

The identity of one of the journal's most popular contributors, who published under the pen name of Fanny Fern, remains unknown. The 25 September 1852 issue announced that this anonymous writer had been engaged exclusively by *The New York Musical World*. Fern's first essay appeared on 9 October. In the following year the "Fanny Fern column" played an increasingly prominent role in the evolving character of the journal. Her writings rarely dealt with music and can be characterized as sentimental and moralistic; they frequently treat themes such as the plight of orphans, the role of parents, and the social responsibilities of the wealthy. Fern's immense popularity helped boost the journal's circulation. Advertising for a published collection of writings entitled *Fern Leaves from Fanny's Portfolio* claimed sales of more than 46,000 in four months. A subsequent publication for children entitled *Little Ferns* claimed sales of 25,000 in three weeks. Shortly after the announcements for these lucrative publications Fanny Fern's contributions to the journal ceased.

Carlo Bassini produced two extended series of articles related to voice production. The first series entitled "The Art of Singing" was later compiled and edited for publication by Richard Storrs Willis. Another long running series of articles entitled "On the Method of Music Teaching" was written by Gustav Schilling. Henry Mason, Sabilla Novello and Anne T. Wilbur are credited for numerous translations of French and German texts. In the later years of the journal Clara M. Brinkerhoff published a regular column entitled "Works of Art, and Where to Find Them," an ongoing review of New York art exhibits.

Numerous correspondents from cities across the United States submitted reports and reviews of local musical activities signing contributions with either pseudonyms or initials. Some of the most frequently appearing pseudonyms include Armp (Philadelphia), Æolian (San Francisco), Clio (Boston), Demi Semi Quaver (Concord, N.H.), Felix (Milwaukee), Philomel (Norwalk, Conn.), Philomusae (Philadelphia), Presto (Albany), and Rasselas (Milwaukee). Of those identified contributors signing with their initials are A.M. (Augustus Morand), C.M.B. (Clara M. Brinkerhoff), E.H. or H. (Edward Hodges), G.H.C. (George Henry Curtis), G.W.P. (George W. Pratt), J.S.B. (J. S. Black), L.M. (Lowell Mason), O.D. (Oliver Dyer), R.S.W. (Richard Storrs Willis), and, W.H.F (William Henry Fry).

Throughout the entire run of *The New York Musical World* the editors regularly reproduced articles and news from other publications; the most frequently quoted sources include the *Musical World* (London), *Musical Times* (London), *Athenaeum* (London), *Illustrated London News*, *Cock's Musical Miscellany*, *Punch*, *Dickens' Household Words*, *Hall's Journal of Health*, and the *Home Journal*.

Music received for review is initially listed by category and ranked by perceived quality in the journal. Eventually however new music is simply listed by publisher. The names of new subscribers appear weekly in the early years of the journal, but only occasionally after 1854. Musical news from around the world, letters from correspondents, answers to correspondents, and information concerning subscriptions and advertising persist in various formats throughout the journal's life.

Music appears in most issues. Salon pieces for voice and piano or guitar, simple piano pieces, secular and sacred choral works are prominent, as are arrangements of popular opera arias by composers such as Donizetti, Rossini and Verdi. Some of the more prolific American composers of original works that appear in the journal are Richard Storrs Willis, Charles C. Converse, Robert Stöpel, Hermann A. Wollenhaupt, F. Kucken, Albert W. Berg, William B. Bradbury, William J. Wetmore, Charles Grobe, Stephen C. Foster, J. Zundel, George F. Root, Charles W. Glover, William Dressler, J. P. Clarke, Theodore Eisfeld, Henry Dielman, and William Vincent Wallace.

Advertising in *The New York Musical World* is extensive, especially in the later issues. Details concerning advertisers and announcements are noted in this RIPM publication. The most common advertisements promote pianoforte and melodeon manufacturers and retailers. Many such ads are illustrated with drawings of instruments, factories where instruments were built, and warerooms where they were sold. The most frequent notices concern Jacob Chickering, Chickering & Sons, Steinway & Sons, William Knabe, Boardman & Gray, George A. Prince & Co., Berry & Gordon, Lighte, Newton & Bradbury, Hallet, Davis & Co., William P. Emerson, Grovesteen & Truslow, Horace Waters, S.D. & H.W. Smith, Albert Weber, Hallet & Cumston, T. Gilbert & Co. and A. H. Driggs. Other regular ads for music instrument makers deal with Alexandre organs, Atwill & Co. stringed instruments, Badger's flutes, and William B. Tilton's guitars and violins.

Advertising for music publishers is also extensive. The ads of publishers, notably Oliver Ditson, Alfred J. Novello and William Hall & Son, often contain general catalogs of published music or catalogs dealing with specific genres. Advertisements are also placed by numerous music stores including Firth, Pond & Co., Lee & Walker (Philadelphia), C. Bruno, F. Zogbaum & Fairchild, J. Schuberth, Colburn & Nash, J. A. Novello, and Nathan Richardson's Musical Exchange.

The beginning years of *The New York Musical World* are marked by a high level of music-related content. During the years 1852-1854 Richard Storrs Willis was intently occupied with the musical life of New York City, and his reviews of local concerts, especially opera, are frequent and significant. These years also present a rich portrayal of musical life across the United States through a wealth of correspondence.

Coverage of musical activities in Europe is also substantial. Beginning in 1855 a gradual trend away from music as the journal's primary focus is evident in its declining original content, an increase in borrowings from other magazines such as *Punch*, *The Home Journal* and *Hall's Journal of Health*, and increasing attraction to the trite, fantastic and sentimental. The prospectus for the 1859 volume, in fact, justifies this conscious editorial policy.

The programme for the new year will be essentially the same with that which seems to have given such satisfaction in years past. Our paper is not purely musical; it is musical only to the extent that it can be made interestingly so. For the rest, we aim at a readable, entertaining paper for all classes—music being our specialty only.

In the larger context of 19th-century musical journalism, however, *The Message Bird* and *The New York Musical World* remain essential sources for the study of American musical culture.

Note concerning title changes

The journal's first number was labelled volume 4, number 75, (continuing the numbering system employed in *The Message Bird*) and titled *The Musical World and New York Musical Times* reflecting the recent merger of Oliver Dyer's *The Musical World* and Richard Storrs Willis' *New York Musical Times*. While the running head *The New York Musical World* appears throughout these RIPM volumes, it is important to note that the journal's title and subtitle changed on numerous occasions throughout its publication run. Title variants appear on the journal's wrapper, title page, and running head. Following is a chart indicating the subsequent changes.

Abbreviations

MW	Musical World
MW. AJF“HMEF”	Musical World. A Journal for “Heavenly Music’s Earthly Friends”
MW. ALAF-AP	Musical World. A Literary and Fine-Art Paper
MW. AJF“HMEF”	Musical World. A weekly Journal for “Heavenly Music’s Earthly Friends”
MW. ALAF-AP	New York Musical World. A Literary and Fine-Art Paper
MW.AWJF“HMEF”	A weekly Journal for “Heavenly Music’s Earthly Friends”
NYMW.ALAF-AP	New York Musical World. A Literary and Fine-Art Paper
TMW	The Musical World
TMW&T	The Musical World and Times
TMW and NYMT	The Music World and New York Musical Times
TMW and T	The Music World and Times
TN.Y.MW. N-M-L	The N.Y. Musical World. News-Music-Literature
TN.YMW.N,M,L	The N.Y. Musical World. News, Music, Literature
TNYMW.N,M,L	The New York Music World. New, Music, Literature

Date, Vol & issue no. *	WRAPPER	Title Page	Running Head
4/9/52 (IV, 1)	TMW and NYMT	TMW&T	TMW and NYMT
9/10/52 (IV, 6)	not present	TMW and NYMT	TMW and NYMT
25/12/52 (IV, 17)	not present	TMW and NYMT	TMW and T
3/9/53 (VII, 1)	TMW and NYMT	TMW&T	TMW and T
7/1/54 (VIII,1)	not present	TMW&T	TMW and T
6/5/54 (IX,1)	not present	TMW and NYMT	MW
9/9/54 (X, 180)	not present	MW	MW
6/1/55 (XI,1)	not present	MW.AWJF“HMEF”	MW
13/1/55 (XI,2)	not present	MW.AJF“HMEF”	MW
5/5/55 (XII,1)	not present	MW.ALAF-AP	TMW
5/1/56 (XIV, 249)	not present	NYMW.ALAF-AP	NYMW
21/6/56 (XV, 273)	TN.Y.MW. N-M-L	NYMW.ALAF-AP	NYMW
19/7/56 (XV, 277)	TN.Y.MW. N,M,L	NYMW.ALAF-AP	NYMW
26/7/56 (XV, 278)	TNYMW. N,M,l	NYMW.ALAF-AP	NYMW
2/1/58 (XIX, 1)	not present	TMW	NYMW
6/2/58 (XIX, 6)	not present	TMW	MW

* The seeming disparity in the journal’s issue numbers (e.g., 1, 180) results from the simultaneous use of two different numbering systems: one, applied consistently and dating back to *The Message Bird*, which is based upon the consecutive numbering of issues throughout the journal’s entire run; and, the other, applied with less regularity, which begins each volume with an issue numbered one.

A microfilm copy of the journal published by Opus Publications, Inc. was in large part used to prepare these RIPM volumes. The missing sections in this microfilm were supplied by examining copies of the journal at the Library of Congress, the American Antiquarian Society (Worcester, Massachusetts), and at the Performing Arts Division of the New York Public Library.