

A Sketch of the History of Music-Printing, from the Fifteenth to the Nineteenth Century
Second Period (Continued)

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A SKETCH OF THE HISTORY OF MUSIC-PRINTING, FROM THE FIFTEENTH TO THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

BY FRIEDRICH CHRYSANDER.

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SECOND PERIOD (continued).

ITALY, Germany, and France had contributed their shares to the development of music type-printing, and these three countries also remained for a long time the first in the use they made of the new art.

Italy had the precedence. Though at the beginning of the sixteenth century not yet the leading nation in the number and rank of her musical composers, Italy occupied the first place as a centre for music, towards which all musical forces involuntarily gravitated. This privileged position emanated from the Church, but was permanently secured to that country by the great composers, who possessed the power of giving an artistic tone to the whole of life by means of a perfect musical language and an equally perfect feeling for music, inherited from the Romans. Hence Italy held the place of authority not only in highly elaborated church-music, but in secular song, as also at a later date in music for the stage and for instruments. She had brought all the various departments of music under her sway, and thus became the school whose teaching was eagerly sought, the ruling power whose laws were willingly obeyed, the musical focus which shed warmth abroad to all, without distinction of nation or creed. The highest position was thus secured for the music-trade of Italy, Venice, the cradle of musical typography, being the centre of the business. As the greatest commercial city not only of the country but of the age, it was the best fitted for this; and we can therefore understand how even the great composers who resided in Rome published their works at Venice, much as is the case at Leipzig in our day. The greatest printing and publishing firm was Gardano, which began about 1536 with Antonio, was continued by his sons Angelo and Alessandro as a music-printing establishment (*stampa del Gardano*), and existed till late in the seventeenth century. The time when this house attained to its greatest lustre was that of the brothers, who were contemporaries of Palestrina and publishers of his works. Probably in order to transact the business more advantageously, Alessandro established himself independently in Rome. With the name of his brother Angelo Gardano at Venice is connected all that is most important in the matter of the printing and sale of music in the sixteenth century. The oblong octavo form, which was used by Petrucci and other publishers until about 1550, was now abandoned, and the large folio size was only employed in exceptional cases. Gardano printed almost all his books in a quarto form, which has only within the last twenty-five years come again into general use under the name of royal octavo. All works appeared in separate parts, and impressions in which, as in earlier times, three or four voices are found united in the same books, and standing opposite one another, were now only exceptionally taken in the case of small occasional pieces. Gardano's types are very clear, and the workmanship is neat and careful and gives a certain appearance of superiority, yet without possessing that intentional elegance which was characteristic of the earliest prints, but is rather avoided than aimed at by real men of business. Specimens of magnificent printing by Gardano are therefore scarcely to be found anywhere. Another

reason for this is that the music was only printed in separate parts, and in this form gave no opportunity for show. While the printing was so far from perfection, the music-trade of Italy could certainly never hope to attain an importance and extension corresponding to her eminence in musical art. Another hindrance was the isolated position of Venice. Undoubtedly the great high road of nations at that time passed through Venice; but the importance of that wonderful city as a place of commerce depended entirely on its connection with the East, and not a sheet of music was ever sold to those parts. The foreign customers of the Italian publishers were only those who "lived beyond the mountain"—Ultramontanes. The roads that led to them from Venice were laboriously constructed passes for use in time of need; they were used when the field-produce and wearing apparel with which the northern countries were unable to furnish themselves could not be obtained by any better route. But whatever could be acquired by their own activity these northern nations did not permanently order in any quantity from Venice by that inconvenient route. This observation is especially true of music. The Gardanos, Scotos, Amadinos, Vincenti, Magni, and other Italian publishers could safely send a number of copies of every new work by the trade-caravans; the ware was known to be a *prima*, and was bought at once. But whatever among these new works proved particularly popular was not ordered again wholesale from Venice, but reprinted at various places. There were everywhere sharp men who found out at once what would go; such printers were to be found especially at the great emporiums, Nuremberg, Frankfort, and Antwerp. The produce of their own country alone gave them plenty of material, especially in Germany, where new choirs were being set up everywhere and old ones strengthened, and every petty choirmaster began to let his light shine in printed compositions. The seeds which were imported almost weekly from Italy shot up rapidly in such a soil; and plants and weeds grew up together without distinction. These circumstances explain very naturally the great number of collections or anthologies of considerable extent which were produced at that time. And the same circumstances were more favourable to the growth of musical culture in the various countries than to the interests of the Italian publishers. The latter could only have a permanent foreign sale for his wares by always having new articles to dispose of; and in this the Italian musical press accomplished more than almost any other has ever done. If their printed publications do not count many thousands, the separate collections are of such an extent that if put together in full score they would fill several hundred thousand pages.

Germany had from the very outset acquired a firm position by the independent way in which she laboured at the improvement of music-printing. Her music-printers were therefore early in the field, and exceedingly eager both to publish the produce of the land and to reprint Italian and even French pieces. Among the numerous printers in various towns the most conspicuous in the middle of the sixteenth century were the learned Georg Rhaw, Luther's friend, at Wittenberg, and the ingenious engraver and type-founder Hieronymus Andreæ, or Resch, at Nuremberg, whose beautiful types were used by other printers also. The latter was so proud of this part of his art that he gave up his family-name, and always called himself only Hieronymus Formschneider (Jerome Type-cutter); and he ultimately changed his

name again, and could be satisfied with nothing short of the Greek version of "type-cutting," Graphæus. The greatest German music-printer of this century was Adam Berg of Munich, a contemporary and powerful rival of Angelo Gardano. The causes of their success were similar. Gardano owned his prosperity to Palestrina, Berg to the great Orlando Lasso. But their modes of printing and of carrying on business were very different. Whilst Gardano aimed only at bringing into the market cheap handy singing-books, Berg appears to have adopted the design of renewing the great manuscript choir-books by means of typography. He published almost exclusively standard editions, and employed for his most important publications the largest folio sheets and every imaginable luxury, even printing on vellum. Was he led to this from an impulse of his own as a merchant, whose only consideration is one of profit and loss? Certainly not. He and the great composer whose works he sent into the world by the printing-press in so pompous a style were backed by a liberal Mæcenas, the musical Duke of Bavaria; and it was done by his will and at his expense. Gardano was a free music-merchant, but Berg was rather a Court music-printer. To what extent and in what manner the duke paid the costs is not known; at all events he furnished the paper and whatever other materials were required. The title of the chief work published by Berg, which was commenced in 1573—"Patrocinium Musices"—is distinct enough on this point. How strong a predilection there was at Munich for folio editions of Lasso's works may be gathered from the collection of his Motetts, which was printed there about 1600 by Nicolaus Henricus, after Berg's death, as "Magnum Opus Musicum." It is the greatest collective edition of the kind published in the sixteenth century; and Munich has the credit of having produced the largest musical publications in the earlier period printed with movable types. The other German printers, for obvious reasons, followed the example of Munich but rarely, and (unlike the Italians) remained for a long time faithful to the oblong quarto size. Very similar to the lot of Berg at Munich was that of Gimel Bergen at Dresden fifty years later. He was the most extensive German music-printer of the seventeenth century, and the exclusive publisher of the works of the greatest German composer of the time, Heinrich Schütz, which were likewise brought out with the assistance of his liberal prince. Scarcely a trace was to be seen, however, of the splendour of the Munich typography, although Bergen's print is evidently the best that could be accomplished in his day. The times were sadly changed for the worse.

In France also, as in Germany, a great number of productions of national composers were waiting to be printed, and were circulated in many editions. The species of music in all countries were at that time essentially the same, and were divided between the two domains, sacred and secular. The differences between various countries were more prominent in the secular than in the sacred. The Germans had their numerous hearty *Liedlein*, and the French an equal wealth of *chansons*, and both printed them indefatigably again and again. As regards the French music-printing, we have to do with Paris almost exclusively, where the engraver and printer Pierre Hutin made the first music-punches as early as 1525. These differed from those of Petrucci in that the note and the line were united in the same punch, which made a single impression possible. The same was the case with the German punches; and the French and German prints have much general

similarity, as also in the predilection for the oblong quarto form. Hutin himself produced very neat impressions; but his chief merit lies in his having provided the most noted printers in Paris and Lyons, and even the Antwerp publisher Tylman Susato, with types. From 1527 onwards Pierre Attaignant, the chief music-printer at Paris, printed with these types.

More perfect types than Hutin's, and of two kinds, a large one for choir-books and a smaller for ordinary music printed in a different style, were produced about 1550 by the engraver Guillaume le Bec, and employed in the music-printing office established by Robert Ballard in conjunction with his son-in-law Adrian le Roy. The name Ballard introduces us to the greatest family of music-printers not only in France but in the world. The business was established in Paris soon after 1540, and carried on till the second half of the eighteenth century—more than 200 years. The foundation of this house was laid by the Royal Privilege of February 16, 1552, by which Ballard was installed and curiously described as "seul imprimeur de la musique de la chambre, chapelle et menus plaisirs du Roi." The privilege was renewed to his son Pierre, who purchased Le Bec's punches and matrices for 50,000 livres, an enormous sum from which both the wealth of the printing-office and the extent of the means then available at Paris for music-printing may be estimated. Louis XIII. prolonged the patent in 1633. Then in 1639 it was confirmed to Pierre's son, Robert Ballard, an eminent and accomplished man, who successively filled the offices of Judge, Consul, Administrateur des Hôpitaux, and Syndic de la Chambre des Libraires. Through him the family was raised to a higher social rank. To gain for the publishing firm equal repute in foreign parts one great difficulty had to be overcome. They had hitherto had no great musician whose works were attractive enough to create a rapid demand in all countries. Robert's son, Christophe Ballard, was fortunate in witnessing the rise of such a one, and in thereby obtaining for his firm a world-wide reputation. The master through whom this result was attained was the great Lully, with his numerous French operas. The family privilege was renewed by Louis XIV. to Christophe Ballard, May 11, 1673, and October 5, 1695, and also repeatedly later to his successors.* Christophe Ballard is also especially noteworthy in the history of music from the fact that he began to publish almost regularly the complete full scores of the new French operas—a thing which was at that time never done, either in Italy or anywhere else. In one of his latest publications, the second edition of Lully's opera "Bellerophon" in 1714, he advertised that of Lully's operas there were to be had *en partition générale*, five printed with types, nine engraved on copper, and five in manuscript. However, not only these five works but almost all the operas were printed by him with movable types, with the exception of those which remained in manuscript. The above surprising advertisement is to be explained from the fact that Christophe Ballard at first printed everything exclusively with types, and later took a fancy to the copperplate engraving which had become fashionable. Then, as new

* Fétis, "Biographie universelle des Musiciens," tom. i. p. 231, erroneously states that the patent of 1695 was granted to Christophe's son, Jean-Baptiste Christophe. The name of the father as publisher appears till 1714, and he must have died at the end of 1714 or beginning of 1715; the privilege was renewed to his son in the year 1715. The accounts of this family by Fétis are very meagre, yet they are the only ones hitherto available. It is curious that no one has interested himself in a subject which is certainly not devoid of importance.

editions of the works became necessary, he did not set them up in type again but engraved them on copper. His son, however, seems not to have shared the father's propensity, for in the second edition of "Phaeton," in 1721, the same nineteen operas are enumerated as being printed, ten with types and nine from copperplates. Thus the two methods contended, as it were, for the precedence in Ballard's office. We shall recur to the subject farther on, in speaking of copperplate engraving. For two generations after Jean-Baptiste Christophe the business was carried on, and the privilege remained in the family until the great French Revolution abolished all privileges. There was, however, little left here to be destroyed, for the business had been declining for many years. The Ballards, like the few type-printers who still existed in Italy, obstinately stuck to the square notes, at a time when the round ones had long been adopted by printers and engravers. So their privilege was violently attacked by competitors in and after 1730, and was represented as a great obstacle in the way of progress. But in reality the long and secured existence of Ballard's house was a great blessing for French music, which thereby gained the peculiar advantage of having all compositions of any merit, and especially the long series of French opera-scores, brought to the press.

England's share in the art of music-printing was in the earliest age very insignificant. If the bass part of a collection of twenty English songs published in 1530 (with the title "In this boke ar cōteynyd XX sōges. IX of IIII ptes and XI of thre ptes") were not extant in the British Museum, it might be doubted whether types for florid music had reached England at all in that age. We see from this book that Petrucci's types for a double impression had been procured from Venice, and consequently that the German and French types for the single impression were not yet known. But in the quieter times in the second half of the sixteenth century the art advanced very rapidly. John Day, about 1560, employed the improved modes of printing which were then in general use. The glorious reign of Queen Elizabeth shed its lustre on music-printing, and England, which fifty years earlier had been nowhere, now became suddenly the first in this field, and, about 1600, produced impressions, by Thomas Este and a few others, of an elegance and solidity which were not surpassed and scarcely equalled in all Europe. It seemed as if Angelo Gardano had risen again on the banks of the Thames. England showed a general predilection for Italy in composition, types, letters, paper, form and everything. After this another dreary time came over England, during which an isolated impression occasionally saw the light to bear witness to the general decline. When at length music was again printed diligently in Charles the Second's reign by John Playford and others, all the methods which had come into use in the meantime were tried. Here, as in Germany, the square notes were being gradually supplanted by the round ones about 1700; yet, all experiments notwithstanding, they were not successful in giving to the latter any elegant appearance or pleasing regularity; on the contrary, this type-printing with round notes, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, produced the ugliest music to be found anywhere.

We have arrived at the end of the first quarter of the eighteenth century—the period of the deepest degradation of printing with movable types. During the 225 years that this method of printing music was almost exclusively used we must say that there was

no advance, but rather a constant going back, for Petrucci's types are fundamentally the most perfect of all; they were only modified by later printers to make them easier to work. The print itself, the ink, paper, &c., got worse and worse in the seventeenth century, even to the point of illegibility. In 1720 the state of things had become so inconvenient that a remedy was universally desired. In such an *entourage* Ballard's impressions appeared *éditions de luxe*, creating a double sensation by their symmetry in an age destitute of all style. Out of France the square notes were still retained, for in Italy Padre Martini's "Saggio fondamentale pratico di Contrapunto" was printed with them (Bologna, 1744-45). And it seemed as if the city where Petrucci invented the types was destined to celebrate the end of them by one great achievement visible to all the world, for the renowned "Fifty Psalms" of Benedetto Marcello were printed by Domenico Lovisa at Venice in the years 1724-27 in eight folio volumes with all the typographical luxury attainable at the time.

In Germany music-printing became at length the worst, and at Leipzig the very worst; but from this latter place the innovation went forth which established the modern style of musical type-printing. The well-known musicseller Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf about 1750 brought type-printing with round notes to a degree of perfection which incited all other countries to attempt improvements. After various smaller experiments, he tried his method on an extensive work, the Italian Opera, "Talestri, Regina delle Amazoni," composed by the Crown-Princess of Saxony, which he published in the year 1756, calling himself "Inventore di questa nuova maniera di stampar la musica con caratteri separabili e mutabili." These words must be referred only to his "new manner," not to the invention of printing with movable types in general, which has been often done; as to the latter, there was nothing more to invent about the year 1750. Breitkopf himself obtained more honour than advantage from his invention. How little calculated it was to accomplish exactly what the times demanded, and what he also strove after in his great experiment, is best shown by his own conduct as musicseller, for he kept in his employ a great number of copyists, and sold for many years more written than printed full scores.

This new type-printing was most used, and also most practically developed, in England. We have the best examples of it in vocal scores of Handel's oratorios—Clarke's edition in folio, about 1800, and Novello's in royal octavo, about 1840. In the latter series the "Messiah" is remarkable as having had the largest sale of any book printed with movable types, hundreds of thousands of copies having been distributed throughout the world.

Of late years type-printing has been given up again, even for publications which have a large sale. It is now already almost entirely confined to a domain from which it will probably never be expelled by any better method—that of theoretical, historical, and instruction books on music, which contain musical examples mixed with letter-press. In these the printing of letters and musical notes is done on the same typographical system, and the perfect harmony between them will never be dissolved. Is not this very like a return to the original practice? For the necessity of having music between the lines of text in the church-books was the first incentive to the employment of music-types; and the same on an enlarged scale is now again becoming the end of them. The progress during four centuries has consisted essentially only in the avoidance of the

original double impression and the possibility of uniting several notes in the same five lines to form chords. This result is certainly a great advance, but yet not exactly what the "inventors" anticipated.

(To be continued.)

THE DECADENCE OF MUSICAL JOURNALISM.

NOT musical journalism only, but journalism as a whole seems to be passing through a very unsatisfactory phase just now. It is the one of our institutions which stands most in danger of becoming "Americanised," and to this position it has come by a rapid process. A few years ago, when a young lady from the States threw down the *Times* in our presence with a gesture of contempt and exclaimed, "Guess your Old Country papers are not worth reading; they tell us nothing personal," we were able to point out that the freedom of English journalism from needless personalities was one of its proudest boasts. Since then unhappily such a change has taken place that many of our newspapers might challenge comparison with the most "spicy" among those issued by New York. We owe this chiefly to what are called the "Journals of Society," whose success, having been made by gossip, is dependent upon gossip for continued existence, and whose fate it is to be driven further and further in the direction of scandal, that the growing appetite they have created may be appeased. But while the unpleasant phenomenon thus presented is perhaps the natural result of a state of society, social and political, which has no high principle to assert, no campaign to carry on against wrong, and no noble end to absorb its energies and engross its thoughts, the extension of the mischief into the region of music affords cause for surprise. Nevertheless that extension is a fact of which lately we have had ample evidence. In some cases columns which should be devoted to real criticism, to the advance of true art-principles, the encouragement of those who conscientiously labour, and the putting down of those who would mislead or are unworthy—such columns, we say, are given up to the most petty and paltry details affecting individuals. Gossip like this, however eagerly it may be read, is not worth the paper upon which it is written in point of artistic value; while, in so far as it goes out of the legitimate range of journalism into that of personal, domestic, or social life, it is an offence and a cause of mischief. But while the collection and dissemination of gossip affecting artists and others is, to say the least, an unworthy business, much worse is that form of present-day musical journalism which violates its own rules, and strikes, for the mere love of scandal, at the principles by which the "fourth estate" has attained its rank and honours. One "journal of society" is now gaining an unenviable notoriety in this respect, *à propos* to a singer recently brought before the London public. It appears that the critic of a morning paper was not greatly struck by the merits of the new comer, and intimated as much in his observations upon the performance. It appears also that the "Society" writer entertained a different opinion. He was greatly struck, and, being so, had a fair right to challenge the opinion of his fellow-critic, to prove its unsoundness, if he could, and demonstrate the correctness of his own. Conflict like this, when carried on in harmony with the rules not only of professional but social life, can do no wrong at all;

rather must it work for good, and we trust the day will never come when critics will shrink from crossing blades in fair and honourable fight against a worthy cause. But the journalist of whose conduct we complain "went behind," to use a now familiar Americanism, the article that drew forth his wrath. Ignoring the elementary rule of the craft which regards a journalistic expression of opinion as made by the paper wherein it appears and not by the actual writer, he assumed the offending article to be the work of a certain man, and then, naming him, treated that man as an enemy. It would have been bad enough had he done this while limiting his retort to observations fairly arising from the merits of the case, because we cannot too strongly insist upon the need for treating the anonymity of the Press as a fact, even in quarters where it must necessarily be a fiction. Above all should journalists themselves recognise and act upon this necessity, if only as an acknowledgment of the rules that, for good or evil, regulate their profession. It appears, however, that neither the laws governing the journalist nor the gentleman have any authority over the writer to whom we refer. For what did he do? Acquiring a knowledge of the morning critic's private relationships, or at all events making use of information previously gained, he charged him with subordinating public duty to the interests of a friend, and backed up the charge with particulars that followed the victim home to his very hearthstone. If any of our readers hope to be told here the names of the people concerned and the nature of the details affecting them they will be disappointed. We cannot ourselves commit the offence we charge upon others, and it must suffice if we have made the nature of the transaction clear enough to secure its condemnation. An act more criminal in its way cannot be imagined, its criminality, let us add, lying wholly outside the truth or falsehood of the allegations made. We ourselves do not believe a word of those allegations; but, admitting their perfect correctness, the position of the offender is not changed one bit from the point of view at which we are concerned to regard him.

Had the affair ended here it might have been regarded as an escapade by a single man, having no significance beyond the actual doer. Unhappily its sequel showed that others as well as he are not only ready to condescend to personalities but to do so with a seemingly perfect unconsciousness of wrong, which appears to us the worst feature in the case. A second critic, acting in a gratuitous manner, and without stopping to inquire whether the first would not prefer to treat with contempt the charges brought against him, rushed forward to defend his colleague. If he had protested, as we now protest, no harm would have been done; but, with almost amusing want of tact, he abandoned his vantage-ground and committed the very offence he sought to punish. For example, attempting to show that the assailed critic was not alone in his disputed opinion, he asserted that the critic of a journal which had expressed an opposite view was present only by deputy, his representative being a gentleman recognised as an authority on sporting matters! Naturally the "Society" writer, finding the legitimacy of his weapons recognised, smote this new foe hip and thigh. He told the world the nature of his everyday business as an "agent" for something or other; revealed such of his family relationships as had a compromising aspect; flatly called him a "liar," and challenged an action for libel. And to this pass has one important branch of English journalism arrived.