

Boccherini (1862-1882)

The periodical began publication in 1862, a few months after the Società del Quartetto was founded; beginning with year three (No. 1, 15 March 1864), its title was changed to *Giornale musicale per la Società del Quartetto*; and to *Giornale musicale mensile* starting with year eleven (No. 11, 30 November 1873).

The first number was published on 31 March 1862 and the last on 30 November 1880: in all there are 297 numbers and ten supplements. During its first two years of publication, *Boccherini* appeared monthly; from year three to five it appeared bimonthly; from year six to seven the number of issues was reduced to twenty numbers per year; in year nine the number of issues was further reduced to ten; and, finally, in year ten the original monthly rate of publication resumed. Beginning with year fourteen the numbering of the issues is changed when, on journal's heading, the indication XXIII (rather than XIV) appears, in order to emphasize the continuity of the periodicals published by the editor Guidi twenty-three years before—namely the *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze* (1853-55), and its continuation, *L'Armonia* (1856-59). In its final year—XX according to the actual numbering, XXIX according to the declared numbering—the publication comes to an end with No. 11 of 30 November 1882, just before the publisher's death.

The periodical was published in Florence, first on Via S. Egidio No. 6640, and, from year two onward, on Via S. Egidio No. 12 (Palazzo Batelli). It was first printed by the Stamperia del Monitore Toscano; beginning with year one, No. 10, 31 December 1862, by the Stamperia sulle Logge del Grano, directed by G. Polverini; from year four by the Tipografia G. Gaston, in Borgo S. Jacopo; from year eight by the Tipografia del Vocabolario, directed by G. Polverini. The publisher Giovan Gualberto Guidi, was the journal's owner.

Initially, a single number was sold for fifty cents (thirty cents for the members of the Società del Quartetto residing in Italy, twenty cents for foreign residents); in year two the cost was reduced to forty cents; in years three and four the periodical was not sold in single issues; from year five the price of a number returned to fifty cents. Beginning with year two an annual subscription rate was introduced: 3.60 Lire for the Kingdom of Italy and 4.80 Lire for foreign countries (the system of subscription was introduced beginning with No. 8, 31 October 1863); beginning with year four the subscription rate was 5 Lire for the Kingdom of Italy and 7 Lire for foreign countries. Beginning with year two, members of the Società del Quartetto were entitled, among other things, to a subscription to the periodical.

The periodical had widespread diffusion in Italy and abroad, where its distribution was the responsibility of local publishers: Schott and Sons, Böte and Bock in Germany, Flaxland in France, Schott and Co. in Great Britain.

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Boccherini's structure is typical of that of Italian journals dating from the mid-1830s to the 1880s. Each number is four pages long, extended to eight pages in double issues. The format is 27 x 38 cm. The first page is generally reserved for major articles: extensive music analyses; articles on music history, aesthetics, theory; anecdotes, memoirs, modern editions of writings of the past, and articles on current events. Articles that appear on the first page often continue on the inside pages and in many cases in successive issues. Concert reports generally appear on inside pages (particular attention is devoted to the activities of Italian quartet societies), as do book reviews and short articles on a variety of subjects. Brief Reports, the section dedicated to correspondence very short publisher-related commercial letters and advertisements are generally printed on pages 3 and 4.

Even though *Boccherini's* structure is nearly identical to that of many mid-century Italian music periodicals, its content at times displays a certain originality. For, following the path traced by its predecessors the *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze* and *L'Armonia* especially, the content of the new periodical anticipates that of musicological journals published in Italy in the last years of the century. Even though *Boccherini* devotes constant attention to current musical events in Italy and abroad (as the chronicles and brief reports testify), the periodical devotes increasing attention to topics that Italian musical journals had previously only barely touched upon or had only occasionally treated at the most; namely, musical analysis, history, theory, acoustics, and technical questions. And quite novel, even revolutionary if thought of in terms of the Italian historical context of the time, is the almost total lack of interest expressed in opera, except for essays on Meyerbeer or on authors not connected to the Italian operatic scene, and the passing mentions of Wagnerian "novità." In keeping with the activities and aims of the Società del Quartetto, which is directly linked to the periodical, the journal's central topic is instrumental music, and particularly chamber music.

The Florentine Società del Quartetto, the first concert society founded in Italy, was the result of a movement of ever-increasing opposition to the cultural and economic supremacy of opera. This opposition, which first developed in Italy in restricted social circles, gradually propagated the concept of "classical music"—with an increasing interest in instrumental music and in studies of music of the past—which finally led to the creation of a large number of musical and concert activities. At mid-century, Florence was to play an important role in this development, since it was the cradle of various projects undertaken by concert societies such as the "Society for the Advancement of Instrumental Music" and later the "Society for the Study of Classical Music." Furthermore, it was in fact the editor Guidi in the periodicals he published in Florence who upheld Meyerbeer as an antidote to national opera represented by Verdi. And, to this end Abramo Basevi organized the "Beethoven matinées" (with meetings starting in 1859 that were characterized by the specific intent to promote studies and research), and Jefe Sbolci who founded the "Orchestral Society." Therefore, it was quite natural that Florence "give birth" to the first Italian quartet society: a society devoted to the performance and diffusion of chamber music, evidently with particular attention to string quartets. The "Beethoven matinées" constituted the most direct forerunner of the "Società

del Quartetto,” and Abramo Basevi’s role¹ in the foundation of the Society was undoubtedly fundamental. Moreover, *Boccherini* was launched with contributions by the critic and musicologist from Livorno, Basevi, with his “Studi sopra Beethoven” [Studies on Beethoven] (1862) dedicated to the Opus 18 Quartets, the “Studi sull’armonia” [Study of harmony] (1863), the “Brevi notizie intorno alla storia della musica” [Short notices about the history of music] (1864-66),² as well as other essays. Just as it was in the case of *L’Armonia* a few years earlier, Basevi’s contribution to the journal came to an end at a certain point (1866), at least officially. But the cultural trend he helped establish was to be followed by others who developed and further explored specific arguments in ample articles that were published in the form of series.

A sample of the most significant articles arranged by topic follows. Esthetics: *Sunto di un corso di Estetica musicale* [Sketch of a course on musical aesthetics] (1863) by Alberto Mazzucato and *Considerazioni sul bello musicale* [Considerations on the beautiful in music] (1874) by Baldassarre Gamucci. Critical writings: *La melodia antica e moderna in Italia* [Ancient and modern melody in Italy] (1872) by an anonymous author, *La Critica e il Canto moderno in Italia* [The critic and modern song in Italy] (1875) by Domenico Bertini, the *Considerazioni sulla musica religiosa* [Considerations on religious music] (1864-65) by Girolamo Alessandro Biaggi, *Riflessioni sulla musica di Meyerbeer ed in particolare su quella del Roberto il diavolo* [Reflections on the music of Meyerbeer and in particular on that of *Robert le diable*] (1869) by Gamucci, *Il Matrimonio segreto di Domenico Cimarosa* (1870), *Monografia intorno alle opere di Saverio Mercadante* [Monograph on the operas of Saverio Mercadante] (1870) by B. Gamucci, *Amleto di Ambrogio Thomas* [*Hamlet* by Ambroise Thomas] (1872-73) by B. Gamucci, *Della Scuola musicale Italiana e della Tedesca* [On the Italian and German schools of music] (1866-67) by G. A. Biaggi, *Studi su Meyerbeer* [Studies on Meyerbeer] (1867) by G. A. Biaggi, *La Vestale di Gaspare Spontini* (1870) by R. Gandolfi. Theory, acoustics, technical studies: *Legge morale da cui dipende la formazione della scala* [Moral law on which the formation of the scale depends] (1876) by Primo Crotti, *I terzi suoni di Tartini e i suoni detti risultanti differenziali, del Signor Helmholtz* [Tartini’s differential tones

¹Abramo Basevi (Livorno 1818–Florence 1885) was a medical doctor, amateur writer on philosophical and literary questions, critic, composer, and organizer of musical events. He advanced the rebirth of instrumental music in Italy and promoted concert activities such as the “Beethoven matinées” (that led to the birth in Florence of the Società del Quartetto) and the Popular Concerts; he instituted as well a competition for the composition of string quartets. His collaboration with the publisher Guidi gave birth to the periodicals *L’Armonia* and *Boccherini*, and led to the publication of pocket scores. Basevi also contributed to the transformation of the old School of Music in Florence into the Musical Institute, presently the Conservatorio “Luigi Cherubini.” He composed the operas *Romilda ed Ezzelino* (Florence 1840) and *Enrico Howard* (Florence 1847). He wrote, among others, the first critical monograph on Verdi (*Studio sulle opere di Giuseppe Verdi* [Study of the operas of Giuseppe Verdi], published in *L’Armonia* and then printed in 1859 in an enlarged edition), historical, theoretical and analytical essays, some of which were first published in *Boccherini* and later printed as single volumes).

²Subsequently published by G. G. Guidi in single volumes: *Beethoven op. 18 con analisi dei sei quartetti* (1874), *Studi sull’armonia* (1865), *Compendio di storia della musica* [Compendium of the history of music] (1865-66).

and the sounds called summation tones, by Mr. Helmholtz] (1880) by P. Crotti, *Perché i Greci antichi non progredirono nell'armonia* [Why the ancient Greeks did not make any advancement in harmony] (1880-81) by B. Gamucci, articles by P. Crotti and A. Camiolo on the *Essai sur le lois psychologiques de l'intonation et de l'harmonie* [Essay on the psychological laws of intonation and harmony] by Arcangelo Camiolo; various articles on theoretical and technical arguments by Cesare Ponsicchi; various articles (1877-78) by B. Gamucci devoted to Basevi's *Il nuovo sistema d'armonia*; *Sulla scienza dei sentimenti musicali* [The new system of harmony; On the science of musical sentiments] (1874) by A. Camiolo; articles on measurements of the diapason and on tuning (1873-74) by A. Camiolo and C. Ponsicchi. Particular emphasis is given in articles to research on Bartolomeo Cristofori and the birth of the pianoforte: *Il pianoforte: i suoi cultori e la sua missione* [The pianoforte: its culture and its mission] (1872) by Alessandro Kraus; various articles (1874-80) by D. Bertini and C. Ponsicchi. Pedagogical and institutional studies: *Della musica come mezzo di educazione e della utilità dell'insegnamento del canto corale nelle scuole elementari* [On music as a constituent part of education and on the utility of teaching choral singing in elementary schools] (1870) by Leto Puliti; *Se le Leggi costitutive la proprietà delle opere dell'ingegno possano giovare al vero progresso della Letteratura e delle Arti* [Whether copyright laws can contribute to the real progress of literature and the arts] (1873) by Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata. Also noteworthy is the publication (1864-65) of Giovanni Pacini's *Le mie memorie artistiche* [My artistic memories], preceding the one-volume edition of 1865.

The journal's principal collaborators, most of them active in Florence, were Abramo Basevi, Domenico Bertini, Girolamo Alessandro Biaggi, Luigi Ferdinando Casamorata, Primo Crotti, Baldassarre Gamucci, Vincenzo Meini, Giovanni Pacini, and Cesare Ponsicchi.

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The guiding spirit of the periodical was its editor Giovan Gualberto Guidi, the *proprietario responsabile* as printed in every number. No one else assumed direct responsibility for the periodical, as there is no indication mentioning a managing editor or a director. Guidi was a particularly representative figure of Florentine musical life in the second half of the nineteenth century. A double-bass player, editor and bookseller, he was born in Florence in 1817 and died there in 1882. Between 1839 and 1853 he played in Florentine orchestras and took part in the music performances in the Chapel of the Grand Duke; from 1849 he was principal double-bass player at the Teatro della Pergola. After ceasing his activity as instrumentalist in 1856, he became a full-time publisher, an activity he had undertaken in 1844, when he founded the music engraving firm that took his name and that was located initially in Borgo dei Greci before moving to its definitive address in Via S. Egidio. Guidi printed music periodicals as well as a number of other publications, and played a fundamental role in the diffusion of musical culture, and in particular instrumental music, in Italy. Noteworthy for its originality was the publication beginning in 1858, of the first pocket-scores (*vade-mecum*) in Italy. His editorial activity

concentrated especially on chamber and orchestral music, sacred music, and transcriptions of ancient music, without neglecting opera. Advance subscriptions was the favored form of financing his publishing enterprises.³ He was also engaged in the antiquarian business (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) of music manuscripts and prints; of books of various kinds—theoretical, historical and biographical—and of librettos and autographs. He traded Italian and foreign publications by other publishers (music and music literature), prints, and musical instruments. He also handled the rental of scores and parts to which he held the property rights, either directly or acting as an agent. However, the publication of music periodicals did not constitute an activity of secondary importance, as is evidenced by the above cited *Gazzetta musicale di Firenze*, *L'Armonia* and then *Boccherini*. It was indeed in these periodicals that the progressive and innovative character of Guidi's editorial production found a most effective tool for the diffusion of music.

Guidi was also very active in the promotion of musical activities: a concert society that he patronized was founded in 1855; the following year he organized a concert of "classical music" for subscribers to *L'Armonia*, with works by Händel, Gluck and Pergolesi. In 1860 the music school annexed to the Accademia di Belle Arti was transformed into a Musical Institute (presently the Conservatorio "Luigi Cherubini"), and at the same time an Accademia Cherubini was founded within the Institute with the purpose of promoting studies, conferences, competitions, and concert activities. A member of the Accademia, Guidi published in *Boccherini* the texts of various conferences presented there, and published the prize-winning compositions of the competitions held by the Accademia. Lastly, Guidi played a leading role also in the foundation of the Società del Quartetto, established in 1861, with Basevi as its prime moving spirit. The inaugural concert held on 14 October 1861, presented, significantly, a program of works by Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven. The Society's concert activities—which consisted of from six to ten concerts per year—ended after its eighth year, 1868-69. In 1863, 1867 and 1869, the Society also promoted popular priced symphonic concerts. An ample number of the compositions performed were then published by Guidi in full score, in a series entitled "Chamber classical music in full score, published for the Florentine Quartet Society. Privileged special edition in pocket scores." Within twelve years, from six to ten works were published per year (almost entirely chamber compositions) by such composers as Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Boccherini, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Hummel, Schumann, Spohr, and Weber. In addition, Guidi published the compositions that received prizes in the competitions organized by the Society. When its founding father died on 17 January 1883, the activity of the publishing house was continued by his daughters for a few years; but in 1887 the firm was taken over by the publisher Ricordi.

³See the article "Guidi, Giovanni Gualberto" edited by Claudio Toscani, in *Dizionario degli editori musicali italiani 1750-1930*, under the sponsorship of the Società Italiana di Musicologia, ed. Bianca Maria Antolini, Edizioni ETS, Pisa, 2000, pp. 188-194.

Notes on cataloguing

This RIPM publication is based upon copies of the journal in the Biblioteca Comunale dell'Archiginnasio in Bologna and in the Biblioteca Palatina (Sezione Musicale) in Parma.

The following numbers were not available: year VIII, Nos. 19-20, October 1870; year XII, No. 4, April 1874; year XIII, No. 7, July 1875; year XIII, No. 8, August 1875; year XIII, No. 11, November 1875; year XXIII [XIV], No. 11, November 1876; year XXVII [XXVIII], No. 5, May 1880; year XXVIII [XIX], No. 6, June 1881; year XXVIII [XIX], No. 10, October 1881; year XXIX [XX], No. 8, August 1882.⁴

Translated by Elvidio Surian

⁴Should the missing numbers of the periodical be located, they will be added to RIPM's internet site.