

The New Music Review and Church Music Review (1901 – 1935)

Published monthly¹ in New York City from November 1901 to September 1935, *The Church Music Review*²—from November 1904, *The New Music Review and Church Music Review* [NMR]—was one of the most important early twentieth-century American music journals and one that enjoyed “a high reputation for its able editorials and the excellence of its contributed articles.”³ In total NMR consists of thirty-four volumes containing 404 issues.

From its inception until its title change in 1904, the journal appeared on the first of the month, and thereafter on the fifteenth. Its pages are printed mostly in double columns; there are generally between thirty and forty-four pages per issue, with longer issues common from 1906 to 1912. Each volume contains twelve issues with the exception of volumes 31 and 34, which have eleven and ten issues respectively.⁴ The first four volumes begin in November and run through October of the following year, but the fifth volume and those thereafter begin in December and run through November.⁵ Most often the page numbers for each volume follow consecutively beginning with one at the instigation of the new volume. However, there are several exceptions.⁶

NMR was founded by H. W. Gray, the United States representative of the British publisher Novello, Ewer and Co. In 1906 Gray⁷ established his own firm, which published both sheet music and the journal, while continuing its representation of

¹ There were two exceptions: a double issue was published for the months of December 1904 and January 1905, and a triple issue for the months of July through September 1932.

² The title of the journal changed to the *New Music Review* with volume 4 in November 1904; in 1901 it began as the *Church Music Review* with the title page reading *The Church Music Review and Official Bulletin for the American Guild of Organists: A monthly periodical devoted to the interests of organists & choirmasters & oratorio societies*, and was stated as such through October 1904.

³ H. C. Colles, ed., *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 4th ed. (New York: Macmillan Company, 1942), s.v. “Periodicals, Musical.”

⁴ Volume 34 includes ten issues, through September 1935 when the journal was discontinued.

⁵ Volume 4 also has twelve issues despite the change, because issue no. 38 was a combined issue for the months of December 1904 and January 1905.

⁶ Volumes one, two and three are numbered consecutively from page one to 565; numbering begins with page one in volume 4 and continues through volume 5 to page 1361. Volumes 6 through 14 are numbered individually, but the page numbers of volume 15 are continuous to the conclusion of volume 16. The pagination begun in volume 17 continues through to the first issue of volume 18; page one begins in the second issue of volume 18 (January 1919) and continues to the end of the volume (November 1919). The pagination for volume 21 continues through the first issue of volume 22, and the pagination for volume 22 extends through the first issue of volume 23. However in these instances, the second issue (January of 1923 and 1924 respectively) does not begin with page one, but is numbered as if page one was the first of the volume (beginning in the previous December) and thus omits page numbers one through forty-four. Volume 29 continues the page numbers from volume 28, ending on page 960. Volumes 19, 20, 25-28, and 30-34 are numbered individually.

⁷ Gray encouraged American composers by publishing many of their works, especially organ and choral music. In addition to his professional duties, Gray was the secretary-treasurer of the Oratorio Society of New York for many years, and was a founder of the American Guild of Organists.

Novello. Gray owned and likely edited (see below) the NMR, and Geoffrey H. Gray served as its business manager from the 1920s until the journal's demise.⁸

The Church Music Review was established with the aim of advancing “the cause of good music in our churches”⁹ Articles pertaining to sacred music and its improvement are regular components throughout the run. Both the H. W. Gray Company and Novello, Ewer and Co. published a great deal of sacred music much of which is featured prominently in NMR's reviews, advertising and supplemental sheet music. In addition to its regular content, the journal also contained a monthly news report dealing with the activities of the American Guild of Organists (AGO)¹⁰; this affiliation explains the featuring of many articles about the organ, organ music and organ performance.

The NMR generally contains six sections: 1) At the outset of each issue is “Editorials” which contains remarks on current and historical matters as well as reviews of important books on musical topics. 2) This is followed by three to five feature articles on a broad range of topics. (3) Three regularly appearing columns, “Foreign Notes,” “Facts, Rumors and Remarks” and “Ecclesiastical Music” are interspersed among the feature articles. 4) The articles are followed by AGO news (concerning its organization and activities), a section consisting of reviews of organs and sacred music concerts, and suggestions for the selection of music appropriate for the liturgy of particular Sundays. 5) Reviews of new and reprinted music. 6) Extensive advertisements.

During the initial years almost all of NMR's articles and reviews are devoted to sacred music, choirs and choral societies and church organs. At the end of 1904 (when the journal's title was enlarged), the scope of the journal expands to include reports and articles about secular music. Until the beginning of World War I, reviews of musical performances in New York are extensive, but as performances decline during the war, reviews decrease in prominence. Secular subjects then become the focus of NMR's feature articles, with diminished importance being placed on church music; in total, fewer than twenty-five percent of feature articles deal with sacred music. The “Foreign Notes” and “Facts, Rumors and Remarks” sections highlight secular concert life, while other sections, such as the “Ecclesiastical Music” column and the AGO section emphasize developments in the area of sacred music.

The “Editorials”¹¹ section opening each issue features the editor's opinions and remarks on a variety of musical matters including musical gossip, reviews, and recent and forthcoming performances and books. Aside from the Statement of Ownership the editor is not identified, and contributors are identified only if they sign their articles. The

⁸ See NMR 17, no. 193 (December 1917): 31 for a statement of ownership. Various owners were G. Edward Stubbs, M. Randall and his wife, and S. A. Trench as well as, for a portion of the journal's run, Frederick S. Converse, H. Binney, F. B. Miles, Ada M. Surette and Walter Henry Hall. When the journal ceased publication, its ownership was transferred to the estate of S. A. Trench.

⁹*The Church Music Review*, 1, no. 1 (November 1901): 1.

¹⁰ In 1918 and 1919 only, the AGO published its own magazine during which time NMR did not serve as the official bulletin; however, a section devoted to the AGO and its news remained.

¹¹This section was entitled “Current Topics” in the early years of the journal.

“Editorials” give the impression of having been written by a single author, and as no other editor is listed, it is likely that H. W. Gray assumed this function.

A wide range of musical topics is treated in the numerous feature articles found in each NMR issue.¹² In addition to the many concert and opera reviews, the principal topics treated focus on American music and musical life. Within each topic, major themes emerge. Issues relating to the development of American music explored in the journal include the struggle to define the characteristics of American music, the use of Native American music in original compositions, and the importance of folk-song to national music. Contributors, often American composers such as Henry F. Gilbert and writers such as Henry F. Krehbiel, identify reasons for the neglect of early twentieth century American music, and offer proposals for its promotion and development. Changing foreign influences on American music students are illustrated in articles describing the popularity of study in Germany before World War I, and the shift to study in France during and after the war.

Great interest in the reform of sacred music is exhibited in the journal, especially regarding the use of appropriate service music and the need for greater congregational participation. Many articles examine sacred music’s history and development in an effort to identify suitable musical characteristics for service music, and to clarify changes that should be made in current practices. Articles treat, for example, the purpose of sacred music, the restoration of plainchant and the choral service, the growing use of both mixed choirs and boy choirs, and the challenges of eliminating secular music influences from the service. The journal also offers suggestions for organists and choirmasters as they strive to improve their choirs and their congregations’ musical expectations. Articles also explore developments in organ building, including progress toward the creation of a standard pedal board, the question of standardization, changes in the console and tonal design, and the debate over the Unit Organ built by Robert Hope-Jones. Controversy over the use of organ transcriptions is observed, and practical advice for organists about proper service playing, accompaniment, and recital programming is evident throughout the journal’s run.

The journal documents the establishment and goals of the American Guild of Organists and focuses on the progress made by the organization in raising the standards of church music. Articles and notices explain the process of and need for AGO examinations that test the proficiency levels of organists and choirmasters, and certify that members have adequate skills to hold church positions. Several examination papers for Associateship and Fellowship diplomas are reprinted. Pleas are addressed to church congregations to promote cooperation between clergy and musicians and to provide proper working conditions for organists. The AGO continually strives for improvement in service music, and its success is noted in accounts of members’ work and in outreach to new members and clergy. Many articles reveal the dissemination of music through the varied activities of American choral societies, and the importance of American festivals to regional

¹²The titles of feature articles are often listed in a contents section at the beginning of each issue, which frequently omits the authors. There are indexes for some volumes of the journal in which the year’s articles listed in alphabetical order by title.

musical life. Descriptions in feature articles demonstrate that the choral societies gave first American performances of new works, often commissioned by patrons of the festivals. Model choral societies are described in feature articles, as are the difficulties the societies face.

Many authors show concern for the growth of musical education both in schools and on the community level, and underscore the need for a standard curriculum and requirements at the grammar school, high school and collegiate levels. Articles elucidate new methods for teaching music in public schools, emphasizing the need for students to learn musical fundamentals in elementary school and to have a wider selection of music courses in high school. Writers stress the fallacy of learning to sing by rote, and endorse learning to read music and sight singing. Contributors to the NMR are also early advocates of musical appreciation, recognizing its importance and espousing its ideals. In fact, the NMR's series of articles on musical appreciation by Thomas Whitney Surette and Daniel Gregory Mason became one of the first widely circulated music appreciation textbooks.¹³

Many feature articles are biographical sketches; in all, more than 140 articles examine the lives and works of American and European composers and performers. Among these are American composers, including Frederick Stock, Charles Martin Loeffler, Edward MacDowell, David Stanley Smith, Henry Hadley and William Wallace Gilchrist. Twenty-one treat prominent American organists important to the development of sacred music in the United States, including Channing Lefebvre, Norman Coke-Jephcott, Clarence Dickinson, and T. Tertius Noble. Biographical sketches of European composers such as d'Indy, Ravel, Debussy and Satie reflect growing interest in French music, while those on Elgar, Davies, Bantock, Delius, Coleridge-Taylor and Holbrooke exhibit interest in England's active musical life. The NMR's articles on German and Italian musicians, in contrast, report on the lives of long-dead composers and singers, with some exceptions including contemporary composers Reger, Schönberg, and Hugo Wolf.

Many other themes are also considered in the feature articles. Topics relating to musical history concern, for example, the development of notation and musical form, the evolution of instruments, and early music in America. Articles about contemporary issues scrutinize the roles of conductors and prima donnas in concert and opera, and report on technological developments including "talking movies," music on the radio, and electronically generated music. In the field of opera, prominent subjects are Wagner reception and the controversy between bel canto and Wagnerian singing. The importance of American opera and opera in the English language are also considered. Among the articles related to aesthetics are those treating the value and goals of music, progress in music, and changing public tastes. Other topics consider the need for criticism, the role

¹³The series ran from July 1906 through December 1908. The textbook *Music Appreciation* was published in 1907 by the H. W. Gray Company; the collection of the Library of Congress contains few books on appreciation published before this one (based on a search of texts under the subject heading "music appreciation" by date). Keene describes the book as the most influential for teaching music appreciation, and notes that its fifteen editions were published from 1907 to 1924 (Keene, *A History of Music Education*, 240). From December 1908 through June 1909, Mason wrote another series of appreciation articles entitled, "Orchestral Instruments and What They Do."

of the critic, interpretation and subjectivity in music, emotional expression in music, and the association of music and poetry.

Important European composers of the twentieth century were featured in reviews and discussion throughout the journal's run. Claude Debussy's musical characteristics and innovations, his influence and imitators; Richard Strauss's use of dissonance and the progressive orchestration of his tone poems and operas; Igor Stravinsky's controversial *Le Sacre du printemps* and his retreat to neo-classicism; and Jan Sibelius's compositional method as found in his symphonies are prominent topics of interest. Three took part in concerts in the United States in the early years of the century: Gustav Mahler with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Edward Elgar as choral conductor at the Cincinnati May Music Festival, and Alexander Scriabin as piano soloist with the New York Russian Symphony Orchestra. Their contributions as performers and their compositions are prominent features of NMR's review sections as are the compositions of other contemporary European composers including Ferruccio Busoni, Granville Bantock and Arthur Honegger.

Literally thousands of concert and opera reviews appeared in NMR of performances in New York City and in eastern and mid-western locations, including Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago. From 1905 through 1914, reviews of most major concerts in New York—by the Philharmonic Society of New York, the New York Symphony Orchestra, the Russian Symphony Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra—are featured. Chamber music concerts by the Kneisel String Quartet, the Boston Symphony String Quartet, the Flonzaley String Quartet, and the Olive Mead String Quartet are regularly reviewed, as are choral concerts by the Oratorio Society of New York, the Musical Art Society, and the Mendelssohn Choir of Toronto. A number of concert reviews of recitals by well-known singers and instrumentalists are also offered each month in the journal's editorial and review sections. Among them are the pianists Ignace Jan Paderewski, Ossip Gabrilowitsch, Fannie Bloomfield-Zeisler, Josef Hofmann and Raphael Joseffy; the violinists Misha Elman and Fritz Kreisler; and the singers Emmy Destinn, Mary Garden, Geraldine Farrar, Luisa Tetrazzini, Enrico Caruso, Johanna Gadski, Ernestine Schumann-Heink, and David Bispham and Fedor Chaliapin. The struggles between Oscar Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House and the Metropolitan Opera House for the supremacy of opera production in New York are duly noted.

Following the concert reviews, the "At the Opera" section focuses primarily on performances of the Metropolitan Opera Company, the Manhattan Opera Company, and the Chicago Opera Company. There is also the column "Brief News" giving reviews of events in Chicago—dealing with musical groups such as the Apollo Club, the Evanston Musical Club and the Chicago Orchestra—and in Boston, of performances by the Cecilia Society, the Handel and Haydn Society, and Boston Symphony Orchestra.¹⁴

The "Foreign Notes" section is organized by cities, and usually made up of numerous short notices containing news and reviews of musical activities primarily in Europe.

¹⁴The "Boston News" and "Chicago News" sections appeared only through 1906.

Gossip about well-known artists, news of forthcoming events, and obituaries are found in the “Facts, Rumors, and Remarks” section; when present, the “Notes” section contains notices of musical events and miscellaneous information. There are also sections listing choral society programs and concert programs from many communities in the United States. The section entitled “News of the American Guild of Organists” reports on the organization’s growth, activities, chapter events, and convention highlights. Separate sections follow providing specifications for new organs and many programs of organ recitals throughout the country.

An average issue contains twenty to thirty short reviews of musical works and books in the “Reviews of New Music” section. Amounting to thousands of reviews over the life of the journal, in this section alone, the NMR introduces its readers to a large body of newly published music. The reviews focus on sacred music, organ music and choral music. The majority of the works reviewed are published by the H. W. Gray Company¹⁵ or Novello, Ewer and Co. However, music from other important American music publishers such as Arthur P. Schmidt, Oliver Ditson Company, Carl Fischer, Theodore Presser, and J. Fischer and Brother, is also reviewed. Lists of music published during the preceding month are regularly printed.

Beginning in 1906, G. Edward Stubbs (1857-1937) became the journal’s most regular identified contributor. Stubbs contributes a monthly “Ecclesiastical Music” column concentrating on church music reform, and topics related to service music, the choral service, boy choirs, congregational singing, English traditions, musical festivals, and other issues of interest to organist-choirmasters. Stubbs served a long tenure as choirmaster/organist of St. Agnes’ Chapel, Trinity Parish, taught at the General Theological Seminary, and was, like Gray, a founder of the AGO. Stubbs also wrote a respected book on training boy choirs.

The feature articles, often signed, are written by prominent figures in the musical world. In total, there are contributions from over two hundred and forty authors; the journal provided a venue for American writers, but there are also articles by English authors. Daniel Gregory Mason (1873-1953), the “scion of a famous family of American musicians; grandson of Lowell Mason and nephew of William Mason”¹⁶ was the most prolific contributor to NMR. Over 100 articles by Mason are found in the journal between 1902 and 1931; they deal with a diverse number of topics including music criticism and aesthetics, harmonic theory, Beethoven’s Mass in D, Mozart’s compositional style and orchestration. Henry F. Gilbert (1868-1928), an American composer, wrote about developments in American music, Native American music, Edward MacDowell and issues concerning contemporary composers. The composer Arthur Farwell (1872-1952) wrote about the use of folk-song and the influence of nationalism on composers. Oscar Sonneck (1873-1928)—a prolific writer on American music and Director of the Music Division of the Library of Congress from 1902 to 1917—discusses, in many articles, early concerts and opera in the United States, music and the first presidents, the Library of Congress, and Anton Beer-Walbrunn.

¹⁵Also by Novello, Ewer & Co., represented by the H. W. Gray firm.

¹⁶*Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Music*, 5th ed., s.v. :Mason, Daniel Gregory.”

A number of American critics well-known for their work in other publications also contributed to the NMR. Richard Aldrich (1863-1937), a critic for the *New York Tribune* and the *New York Times*, wrote about productions in New York, the Worcester Festival, Grieg, MacDowell and Mendelssohn. Olin Downes (1886-1955), a critic for the *Boston Post* and the *New York Times*, reviewed Converse's operas and discussed the music of Sibelius. Philip Hale (1854-1934), critic for the *Boston Herald* and author of program notes for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, provided news about musical events in Boston, as well as articles on modern French composers. William James Henderson (1855-1937), critic for the *New York Times*, the *New York Sun*, and the *Herald*, discussed singing, opera, and works by the composers Loeffler, Wagner, Broekhoven, and Wullner. Henry Edward Krehbiel (1854-1923), a critic for the *New York Tribune* and author of books about music appreciation and opera, wrote about the history of church music in New York, Beethoven, the Worcester Festival and the Cincinnati Festival.

The writings of several British music writers and critics are also found in NMR. Herbert Antcliffe (1875-1964), musicologist and writer for the *London Times* and the *New York Herald Tribune*, contributed many biographical sketches of English composers and discussed contemporary music. Ernest Newman (1868-1959), critic for the *Manchester Guardian* and the *London Sunday Times*, wrote about contemporary composers and vocal music. John F. Runciman (1866-1916), critic for the *Saturday Review*, discussed modern composers, Franck, Bach, and municipal English orchestras. George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) discussed being a music critic and offered reminiscences about the musical life of the late nineteenth century Britain. The critic and author Michel-Dmitri Calvocoressi (1877-1961) contributed articles about Russian music and other contemporary composers.

A number of important organists and organ builders also made significant contributions to NMR. The English builder Robert Hope-Jones (1859-1914) explains his innovations in wind supply for the organ, and his Unit Organ Orchestra, as well as discussing standardization of the instrument. Ernest M. Skinner (1866-1961), an American builder of many large and important organs, discusses transcriptions, standardization, the pedal board and American contributions to organ building. Edwin H. Lemare (1866-1934), an English concert artist who held posts in the United States, discusses the development of the organ and its console. Walter Henry Hall (1862-1935) and Wallace Goodrich (1871-1952), both American conductors and important university educators, discuss issues relevant to sacred music, such as training organists and boy choirs.

Sheet music Supplements consisting of anthems and solo songs by the leading composers of sacred music in the United States and England at the time—G. W. Chadwick, R. Huntington Woodman, John E. West, David Stanley Smith, T. Tertius Noble, Thomas Whitney Surette, Samuel A. Baldwin, J. Varley Roberts and P. C. Lutkin—were distributed with each issue from NMR's inception until March 1907. The April, May and December of 1907 issues have no sheet music. By 1908 sheet music was no longer a regular feature.

This RIPM publication is based a microfilm copy of the journal available from the New York Public Library.

LIST OF INITIALS AND AUTHORS

A. J. J. August Johannes Jaeger

C. H. D. Charles Henry Doersam

D. G. M. Daniel Gregory Mason

D. S. Estelle D. Swift

G. E. S. G. Edward Stubbs

J. W. B. James W. Bleecker

L. C. Lilian Carpenter

P. A. S. Percy A. Scholes

S. B. Samuel Baldwin