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GENERAL HISTORY OF MUSIC

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From the Earliest Ages to the
Present Period
(1789)

Authore

authors

by
CHARLES BURNEY
Mus.D., F.R.S.

Authors

VOLUME THE FIRST
WITH CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL NOTES
by
FRANK MERCER

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INTRODUCTION

IN preparing this edition of Burney's "General History of Music," my aim has been to make the work more valuable to the general reader; that is, the class of reader for whom the "History" was intended. I have not attempted to bring it "up to date" in the sense of any tampering with the text, or softening or altering the opinions held by the author. Too many critics praise or censure Burney's work (and, indeed, all Histories) in accordance with the treatment, sympathetic or otherwise, meted out to their own particular period. Burney's History is not a period History—it is a General History, and it is an intensely personal one. I do not intend to embark upon a defence of Burney's opinions; they were his own, and they cannot be dismissed lightly; but I must draw attention to one thing that is frequently overlooked by many, and that is the necessity of appreciating the 18th century meaning of words such as barbarous and licentious, etc. The age of Burney was an age of frank speaking, and one must not ignore this fact when reading works of that period. Burney often uses words which have, since his day, received a more special meaning, and if this is kept in mind many of his so-called "savage and harsh strictures" will not appear unfair.

In the present edition, Burney's text and notes (with the original spelling) have been given in full and unaltered with the following exceptions:

- (1) The transcription of the musical tract by Tunsted in the second book has been punctuated correctly.
- (2) A more correct version of Cutell's tract in Book 2 has been substituted.
- (3) The titles of the early English Psalters have been given in more detail.

All the dates and corrections enclosed in square brackets [] are additions for which I am responsible.

The work has been re-indexed, and I trust that the new index will be found more useful than the original one.

The musical examples are also complete with the exception of a very dull example of a degree exercise, which will be found in Vol. III, p. 351, of the original edition. One or two examples of the difficulties to be found in Virginal music have been curtailed, but enough remains to show the nature of the difficulty. In his musical examples, Burney employs almost every variety of clef. I think that the only one I have not discovered is the old French

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violin clef. The unusual ones have been altered to modern usage, but I have retained the tenor and alto C clefs.

The question of the examples of Tudor music has given me considerable trouble. Burney not only alters that peculiar feature of the technique of the period, the so-called *false relation* or augmented octave, but in some cases his scansion of the words has made him change a semibreve into a dotted minim and a crotchet. All cases of wrong notes have been altered, but in the majority of cases I have allowed his arrangement of the words to stand.

For the sake of convenience Burney's volumes are called Books, so that Book 1 is Burney's Volume I, etc. When *volume* is mentioned it refers to the present edition.

My own notes are indicated by asterisks, and in selecting those inserted, from the large number I had prepared, I have been influenced by what might be most useful to the non-specialist.

acknowledgements

If I endeavoured to thank publicly all those who have given information and help in the preparation of this edition, my introduction would be extended to an inordinate length, but I must give my thanks to Dr. Percy Scholes for sending me a proof copy of his valuable book, "The Puritans and Music"; to Miss Burney, of Wandsworth, for permission to copy and include letters from her collection of Burney MSS; to Richard Border, Esq., for the letter from Burney to Lady Banks; to Raymond Conrad, Esq., for information about the Troubadours; to the officials at the British Museum and the Music Library of the University of London; to G. Ceci for permission to photograph his copy of "*A musical evening at Dr. Burney's*"; to the Education Department of the Columbia Graphophone Company, Ltd., for the loan of records; and, above all, to my wife, without whose constant help my work in connection with the publication could not have been accomplished.

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Abbreviations Used in the Editor's Notes

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The usual abbreviations in connection with dates. Please note the *c* letter before a date refers to one date only. Thus, for example, in *c. 1500-57* the *circa* refers to 1500, and not to 1557. If both dates should be uncertain, the following would be used: *c. 1500-c. 57*.

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Add. MSS.	Additional manuscript.
Bib. Nat.	Bibliothèque National Paris.
Ba & H.	Breitkopf & Härtel.
B.M.	British Museum.
Davey	History of English Music (1921).
D.T.O.	Denkmäler der Tonkunst in Österreich.
D.D.T.	Denkmäler der Deutscher Tonkunst.
E.M.S.	English Madrigal School.
Grove's	Grove's Dictionary of Music & Musicians (3rd edition unless otherwise stated).
Hari	Harlean Manuscripts.
L.M.M.F.	Les Maîtres Musiciens de la Renaissance (H. Expert) Française.
O.E.E.	Old English Edition (Arkwright).
Ox.H.M.	Oxford History of Music (latest edition unless otherwise stated).
Proske. M.D.	Musica Divina.
Quell.	Editor. Quellen-Lexikon.
Toschi. A.M.I.	L'Arte Musicale in Italia.
V.V.N.M.	Vereeniging voor Nederlandsche Muziekgeschiedenis.

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TO THE QUEEN

[CHARLOTTE]

MADAM,

THE condescension with which your Majesty has been pleased to permit your name to stand before the following History, may justly reconcile the author to his favourite study, and convince him, that whatever may be said by the professors of severer wisdom, the hours which he has bestowed upon Music have been neither dishonourably, nor unprofitably spent.

THE science of musical sounds, though it may have been depreciated, as appealing only to the ear, and affording nothing more than a momentary and fugitive delight, may be with justice considered as the art that unites corporal with intellectual pleasure, by a species of enjoyment which gratifies sense, without weakening reason; and which, therefore, the Great may cultivate without debasement, and the Good enjoy without depravation.

THOSE who have most diligently contemplated the state of man, have found it beset with vexations, which can neither be repelled by splendour, nor eluded by obscurity; to the necessity of combating these intrusions of discontent, the ministers of pleasure were indebted for that kind reception, which they have perhaps too indiscriminately obtained. Pleasure and innocence ought never to be separated; yet we seldom find them otherwise than at variance, except when Music brings them together.

To those who know that Music is among your Majesty's recreations, it is not necessary to display its purity, or assert its dignity. May it long amuse your leisure, not as a relief from evil, but as an augmentation of good; not as a diversion from care, but

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as a variation of felicity. Such, Madam, is my sincerest wish, in which I can, however, boast no peculiarity of reverence or zeal; for the virtues of your Majesty are universally confessed; and however the inhabitants of the British empire may differ in their opinions upon other questions, they all behold your excellences with the same eye, and, celebrate them with the same voice; and to that name which one nation is echoing to another, nothing can be added by the respectful admiration, and humble gratitude of,

MADAM,

your Majesty's,

most obedient

and most devoted Servant,

CHARLES BURNEY.

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PREFACE

THE feeble beginnings of whatever afterwards becomes great or eminent, are interesting to mankind. To artists, therefore, and to real lovers of art, nothing relative to the object of their employment or pleasure is indifferent.

Sir Francis Bacon recommends histories of art upon the principle of utility, as well as amusement ; and collecting into one view the progress of an art seems likely to enlarge the knowledge, and stimulate the emulation of artists, who may, by this means, be taken out of the beaten track of habit and common practice, to which their ideas are usually confined.

The love of lengthened tones and modulated sounds, different from those of speech, and regulated by a stated measure, seems a passion implanted in human nature throughout the globe ; for we hear of no people, however wild and savage in other particulars, who have not music of some kind or other, with which we may suppose them to be greatly delighted, by their constant use of it upon occasions the most opposite : in the temple, and the theatre ; at funerals, and at weddings ; to give dignity and solemnity to festivals, and to excite mirth, cheerfulness, and activity, in the frolicsome dance. Music, indeed, like vegetation, flourishes differently in different climates ; and in proportion to the culture and encouragement it receives ; yet, to love such music as our ears are accustomed to, is an instinct so generally subsisting in our nature, that it appears less wonderful it should have been in the highest estimation at all times, and in every place, than that it should hitherto never have had its progressive improvements and revolutions deduced through a regular history, by any English writer.

Indeed, though time has spared us a few ancient histories of empires, republics, and individuals, yet no models of a *History*, either of *Music*, or of any other *art* or *science*, are come down to us, out of the many that antiquity produced. Plutarch's Dialogue on Music approaches the nearest to history ; but, though it abounds with particulars relative to the subject, it is so short and defective, that it rather excites than gratifies curiosity.

Some of the writings of Aristotle and Aristoxenus that are lost, though they were not express histories of music, would, nevertheless, had they been preserved, have satisfied our doubts concerning several parts of ancient music, which are now left to conjecture.

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" Aristotle, the disciple of Plato," says Plutarch, " regarded melody as something noble, great, and divine." Now, as this passage is not to be found in the remaining works of Aristotle, it is imagined that Plutarch took it either from his *Treatise on Music* (*a*), or the second book of his *Poetics*, where he treated of the Flute and Cithara, both which works are lost. And yet Kircher, [1602-80] in his *Musurgia* (*b*),* speaking of the ancient writers on Music, whose works he had consulted among the manuscripts in the Jesuit's College Library at Rome, names Aristotle;** but I sought in vain for the Treatise which he had written expressly on Music, nor could I find there any work by that philosopher relative to the subject, except his *Acoustics* (*c*). Headline

Almost all the ancient philosophers, especially the Pythagoreans, Platonists, and Peripatetics, wrote treatises on Music, which are now lost. Meursius, in his notes on Aristoxenus, enumerates, among others, the following ancient writers on music, of whom we have nothing left but the name: Agenor, of Mytilene, mentioned by Aristoxenus (*d*), from whom sprung a sect of musicians called *Agenorians*; as from Eratocles, the *Eratocleans*; from Epigonus, the *Epigonians*, and from Damon, who taught Socrates music, the *Damonians* (*e*).

But of all the ancient musical writers, the name of no one is come down to us, of whose works I was in greater want than those of the younger Dionysius Halicarnassensis, who flourished, according to Suidas, under the emperor Adrian, and who wrote twenty-six books of the *History of Musicians*, in which he celebrated not only the great performers on the Flute and Cithara, but those who had risen to eminence by every species of poetry. He was, likewise, author of five books, written in defence of Music, and chiefly in refutation of what is alledged against it in Plato's Republic. Aristides Quintilianus (*f*) has, also, endeavoured to soften the severity of some animadversions against Music in the writings of Cicero (*g*); but though time has spared the defence of this author, yet it does not indemnify us for the loss of that which Dionysius junior left behind him; as testimonies are still remaining of his having been a much more able writer than Arist. Quintilianus (*h*).

But though all the musical histories of the ancients are lost, yet almost every country in Europe that has cultivated the polite arts, has, since the revival of learning, produced a history of Music, except our own. Italy can boast of two works under that title;

other

<small>(a) Ὑπερ Μουσικῆς.</small>	<small>(b) Tom. i. p. 545.</small>	<small>(c) Ηερι ακονων.</small>
<small>(e) The list of Greek writers on the subject of Music, whose works are lost, amounts, in Fabricius to near thirty.</small>		<small>(d) Lib. ii. p. 36.</small>
<small>small</small>	<small>(f) P. 69, et seq.</small>	<small>(g) In Politic.</small>
<small>small</small>	<small>(h) Vide Fabricium, Bibl. Grac. lib. iii. p. 10.</small>	

references

* The most famous of the many works of this versatile writer is the *Musurgia Universalis Sive Ars Magna Consoni Et Dissoni* (2 vols., Rome, 1650), which contains much valuable information. The second volume deals with Greek music but is untrustworthy in many respects.

** Made many references to music in his writings. These have been collected and published by Von Jans (*Musicis Scriptores Graeci*, 1895). Aristotle was born 384 B.C. and died 322 B.C. It is held by some authorities that the *Problematum Sect. 19*, which is often mentioned in this volume dates from the first or second century A.D. and was probably written at Alexandria.

one written in the latter end of the last century by Bontempi (*i*), and that of Padre Martini, in this (*k*). France has likewise two, one by Bonet (*l*), and one by M. de Blainville (*m*); and Germany has not only produced two histories of Music in its own language, by Gaspar Printz (*n*), and M. Marpurg (*o*); but one in Latin, lately published in two volumes, 4to. by the prince abbot of St. Blasius (*p*). Unluckily, those of P. Martini,* and M. Marpurg, are not yet finished; and that of the learned abbot only concerns church music; so that though much has been done, much is still left for diligence to do (*q*); and however I may respect the learning, and admire the industry and abilities of some of these writers, yet I saw the wants of English musical readers through such a different medium, that I have seldom imitated their arrangements, and never servilely copied their opinions. Printed materials lie open to us all; and as I spared no expense or pains either in acquiring or consulting them, the merely citing the same passages from them, cannot convict me of plagiarism. With respect likewise to manuscript information, and inedited materials from foreign countries, few modern writers have perhaps expended more money and time, undergone greater fatigue, or more impaired their health in the search of them, than myself.

And yet, though all will readily allow, *in general*, that perfection is not to be expected in the works of man; it is evident that, in *particular cases*, little tenderness is shewn to imperfection in the most difficult and laborious undertakings.

If I might presume to hope, however, for any unusual indulgence from the public with respect to this work, it must be from the peculiarity of my circumstances during the time it was in hand; for it may with the utmost truth be said, that it was composed in moments stolen from sleep, from reflection, and from an occupation which required all my attention, during more than twelve hours a day, for a great part of the year.

footnote

(i) *Historia Musica.* In Perugia, fol. 1695.

(k) *Storia della Musica*, 4to. In Bologna, 1757, and 1770, and [1781].

(l) *Histoire de la Musique, et de ses Effets.* 2 Tom. 12mo. Par. 1715, and Amst. 1726.

(m) *Histoire generale, critique et philologique de la Musique.* à Paris. 1767.

(n) *Historische Beschreibung der Edlen Sing- und Klingkunst*, in 4to, gedruckt, zu Dresden 1690.

(o) *Kritische einleitung in die Geschichte und Lehrsätze der alten und neuen Musik*. 4to. Berlin. 1739.

(p) *De Canto et Musica Sacra a prima Ecclesia aetate usque ad presens tempus.* Typis San. Blasianis. 1774.

(q) The history of Music by M. Bonet is written upon a very narrow plan; for the second volume contains nothing more than exclusive eulogiums of Lulli, and illiberal censures of every species of Italian music. And though the work of M. de Blainville is nominally a *General History of Music*, yet, notwithstanding the splendid promises in the title, the whole historical, critical, and philological parts of this work, are comprised in less than half a thin quarto; the rest of the volume being filled with a treatise on composition. The Musical Dictionary of M. Rousseau, without promising any thing more than an explanation of terms peculiar to the theory and practice of Music, affords not only more amusement, but more historical information relative to the art, than perhaps any book of the size that is extant.

* An important figure in the musical life of the eighteenth century. He was born at Bologna in 1706 and died in 1784. Apart from his compositions he was a prolific writer on musical matters. The third volume of his history was published in 1781 and this proved to be the last, as he died before he could complete the fourth. Martini had an enormous library which Burney estimated to contain about 17,000 volumes.

If it be asked, why I entered on so arduous a task, knowing the disadvantages I must labour under, my answer is, that it was neither with a view to rival others, nor to expose the defects of former attempts, but merely to fill up, as well as I was able, a chasm in English literature. I knew that a history of Music was wanted by my countrymen, and was utterly ignorant that any one else had undertaken to supply it; yet, to confess the truth, I did, at first imagine, though I have been long convinced of my mistake, that, with many years practice and experience in musical matters, some reading, and the possession of a great number of books on the subject, I should have been able to compile such a history as was wanted, at my leisure hours, without great labour or expence.

But, after I had embarked, the further I sailed, the greater seemed my distance from the port: doubts of my own abilities, and respect for the public, abated my confidence; my ideas of what would be required at my hands were enlarged beyond my powers of fulfilling them, especially in the narrow limits of two volumes, and in the little time I had allowed myself, which was made still less by sickness.

A work like this, in which it is necessary to give authorities for every fact that is asserted, advances infinitely slower, with all the diligence that can be bestowed upon it, than one of mere imagination, or one consisting of recent circumstances, within the knowledge and memory of the writer. The difference in point of time and labour is as great as in building a house with scarce materials produced in remote regions of the world, or with bricks made upon the spot, and timber from a neighbouring wood; and I have frequently spent more time in ascertaining a date, or seeking a short, and, in itself, a trivial passage, than would have been requisite to fill many pages with conjecture and declamation.

However, after reading, or at least consulting, an almost innumerable quantity of old and scarce books on the subject, of which the dulness and pedantry were almost petrific, and among which, where I hoped to find the most information, I found but little, and where I expected but little, I was seldom disappointed; at length, wearied and disgusted at the small success of my researches, I shut my books, and began to examine myself as to my musical principles; hoping that the good I had met with in the course of my reading was by this time digested, and incorporated in my own ideas; and that the many years I had spent in practice, theory, and meditation, might entitle me to some freedom of thought, unshackled by the trammels of authority.

Concerning the music of the Greeks and Romans, about which the learned talk so much, it is impossible to speak with certainty; however, the chief part of what I have to say with respect to its theory and practice, is thrown into a *Preliminary Dissertation*, in order that the narrative might not be interrupted by discussions concerning dark and disputable points, which will be generally uninteresting even to musical readers; and in which it is very

doubtful, whether I shall be able either to amuse or satisfy the learned.

It is, indeed, with great and almost hopeless diffidence, that I enter upon this part of my work; as I can hardly animate myself with the expectation of succeeding in enquiries which have foiled the most learned men of the two or three last centuries. But it has been remarked by Tartini, in speaking of ancient music, that doubt, difficulty, and obscurity, should not be imputed to the author, but to the subject, since they are in its very essence: for what, besides conjecture, is now left us, concerning things so transient as sound, and so evanescent as taste?

The land of conjecture, however, is so extensive and unappropriated, that every new cultivator has a right to break up fresh ground, or to seize upon any spot that has long lain fallow, without the sanction of a grant from anyone who may arrogate to himself the sovereignty of the whole, or of any neglected part of it. But though no one has an exclusive right to these imaginary regions, yet the public has a just power of censuring the methods of improvement adopted by any new inhabitant, and of condemning such productions as may be deemed unfit for use.

The opinions of mankind seldom agree, concerning the most common and obvious things; and consequently will be still less likely to coincide about others, that are reducible to no standard of truth or excellence, but are subject to the lawless controul of every individual who shall think fit to condemn them, either with, or without understanding them.

Dr. Johnson has well said, that "those who think they have done much, see but little to do;" and with respect to ancient music, I believe those who have taken the greatest pains to investigate the subject, are least satisfied with the success of their labours.

What the ancient music really was, it is not easy to determine; the whole is now become a matter of faith; but of this we are certain, that it was something with which mankind was extremely delighted: for not only the poets, but the historians and philosophers of the best ages of Greece and Rome, are as diffuse in its praises, as of those arts concerning which sufficient remains are come down to us, to evince the truth of their panegyrics. And so great was the sensibility of the ancient Greeks, and so accentuated and refined their language, that they seem to have been, in both respects, to the rest of the world, what the modern Italians are at present; for of these last, the language itself is music, and their ears are so polished and accustomed to sweet sounds, that they are rendered fastidious judges of melody, both by habit and education.

But as to the superior or inferior degree of excellence in the ancient music, compared with the modern, it is now as impossible to determine, as it is to *hear both sides*.

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~~Content~~ Indeed it is so entirely lost, that the study of it is become as unprofitable as learning a dead language, in which there are no books ; and yet this study has given rise to so much pedantry, and to such an ambition in modern musical authors, to be thought well versed in the writings of the ancients upon music, that their treatises are rendered both disgusting and unintelligible by it. *Words* only are come down to us without *things*. We have so few remains of ancient Music by which to illustrate its rules, that we cannot, as in Painting, Poetry, Sculpture, or Architecture, judge of it, or profit by examples ; and to several of these terms which are crammed into our books, we are utterly unable to affix any precise or useful meaning. To write, therefore, in favour of ancient music now, is like the emperor Julian's defending paganism, when mankind had given it up as indefensible, and had attached themselves to another religion.

However, it is, perhaps, a fortunate circumstance for modern music that the ancient is lost, as it might not have suited the genius of our language, and might have tied us down to precedent ; as the writers of modern Latin never dare hazard a single thought or expression without classical authority.

The subject itself of ancient music is so dark, and writers concerning it are so discordant in their opinions, that every intelligent reader who finds *how little there is to be known*, has reason to lament that there still remains so much to be said. Indeed, I should have been glad to have waived all discussion about it : for, to say the truth, the study of ancient music is now become the business of an Antiquary more than of a Musician. But in every history of music extant, in other languages, the practice had been so constant for the author to make a display of what he knew, and what he did *not* know concerning ancient music, that it seemed absolutely necessary for me to say something about it, if it were only to prove, that if I have not been more successful in my enquiries than my predecessors, I have not been less diligent. And it appeared likewise necessary, before I attempted a history of ancient Greek music, to endeavour to investigate its properties, or at least to tell the little I knew of it, and ingenuously to confess my ignorance and doubts about the rest.

Indeed it was once my intention to begin my history with the invention of the *present musical scale* and counterpoint ; for

“ What can we reason, but from what we know ? ”

But it was impossible to read a great number of books upon the subject, without meeting with conjectures, and it was not easy to peruse these, without forming others of my own. If those which I have hazarded should throw any light upon the subject, it will enable my readers to travel through the dark maze of enquiry with more facility, and consequently less disgust ; and if I fail in my researches, and leave both the subject and them where I found them, as the expectation which I encourage is but small, so it is hoped will be their disappointment. For with respect to all I

have to say, I must confess that the Spanish motto, adopted by Francis le Vayer, is wholly applicable.

*De las cosas mas seguras
La mas seguras es dudar (r).*

In wading through innumerable volumes, with promising titles, and submitting to the drudgery of all such reading as was never read, I frequently found that those who were most diffuse upon the subject, knew least of the matter ; and that technical jargon, and unintelligible pedantry so loaded each page, that not an eligible thought could be found, in exploring thousands of them. Indeed my researches were sometimes so unsuccessful, that I seemed to resemble a wretch in the street, raking the kennels for an old rusty nail. However, the ardour of enquiry was now and then revived by congenial ideas, and by gleams of light emitted from penetration and intelligence ; and these will be gratefully acknowledged, whenever they afford assistance.

There are already more profound books on the subject of ancient, as well as modern Music, than have ever been read ; it was time to try to treat it in such a manner as was likely to engage the attention of those that are unable, or unwilling, to read treatises written, for the most part, by persons who were more ambitious of appearing learned themselves, than of making others so. Indeed, I have long since found it necessary to read with caution the splendid assertions of writers concerning music, till I was convinced of their knowledge of the subject ; for I have frequently detected ancients as well as moderns, whose fame sets them almost above censure, of utter ignorance in this particular, while they have thought it necessary to *talk about it*. Apuleius, Pausanias, and Athenæus, among the ancients, were certainly musicians ; but it is not so evident that Cicero, Horace, and others, who have interspersed many passages concerning Music in their works, understood the subject any more than our Addison, Pope, and Swift. Among these, the two first have written odes on St. Cecilia's day, in which they manifest the entire separation of Music and Poetry, and shew the possibility of writing well on what is neither felt nor understood. For Pope, who received not the least pleasure from Music himself, by the help of his friends, was enabled to describe its power with all the rapture and sublimity of a great genius, *music-mad*. This appears not only in his Ode of St. Cecilia, but in speaking of Handel, in the Dunciad.

Music and its admirers were ever contemned by him and Swift ; but, having neither taste nor judgment in this art, they were surely unqualified to censure it. Few conquerors ever aimed at *universal monarchy*, compared with the number of authors who have wished to be thought possessed of *universal knowledge* ; and yet these great writers, who discover, in what is within their competence, a vigour of mind, and elevation of genius, which inclines mankind to regard them as beings of a superior order, whenever they hope by the power

footnote

(r) The most secure of all secure things, is to doubt.

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of thinking to supply the place of knowledge, discover an imbecillity, which degrades them into common characters.

I will not, however, over-rate musical sensations so far as to say, with the poet, that the man who cannot enjoy them "*is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils*"; there being, perhaps, among mankind, as many persons of bad hearts that are possessed of a love and genius for music, as there are of good, that have neither talents nor feeling for it: but I will venture to say, that it has been admired and cultivated by great and eminent persons at all times and in every country, where arts have been cherished; and though there may be no particular connection between correctness of ear, and rectitude of mind, yet, without the least hyperbole it may be said, that, *cæteris paribus*, the man who is capable of being affected by sweet sounds, is a being *more perfectly organized*, than he who is insensible to, or offended by them.

But, as the Constable in Much ado about Nothing says, "these are gifts which God gives," and lovers of music should be content with their own superior happiness, and not take offence at others for enjoying less pleasure than themselves. However, it is no uncommon thing for the rich to treat the poor with as much insolence, as if it were a crime not to be born to a great estate; yet, on the other hand, to be proud of beggary and want, is too ridiculous for censure.

With respect to the present work, there may, perhaps, be many readers who wish and expect to find in it a deep and well digested treatise on the theory and practice of music: whilst others, less eager after such information, will be seeking for mere amusement in the narrative. I wish it had been in my plan and power fully to satisfy either party; but a history is neither a body of laws, nor a novel. I have blended together theory and practice, facts and explanations, incidents, causes, consequences, conjectures, and confessions of ignorance, just as the subject produced them. Many new materials concerning the art of Music in the remote times of which this volume treats, can hardly be expected. The collecting into one point the most interesting circumstances relative to its practice and professors; its connection with religion; with war; with the stage; with public festivals, and private amusements, have principally employed me: and as the historian of a great and powerful empire marks its limits and resources; its acquisitions and losses; its enemies and allies; I have endeavoured to point out the boundaries of music, and its influence on our passions; its early subservience to poetry, its setting up a separate interest, and afterwards aiming at independence; the heroes who have fought its battles, and the victories they have obtained.

If the titles of my chapters should appear too general and miscellaneous, and the divisions and sections of my work too few; if method and minute exactness in the distribution of its several subjects and parts should seem wanting; the whole is, perhaps, the more likely to be read for these deficiencies; for a history, of

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which the contents are symmetrically digested, separated by chapters, and sub-divided into sections, may be easily consulted, but is no more likely to be read throughout, than a dictionary.

My subject has been so often deformed by unskilful writers, that many readers, even among those who love and understand music, are afraid of it. My wish, therefore, is not to be approached with awe and reverence for my depth and erudition, but to bring on a familiar acquaintance with them, by talking in common language of what has hitherto worn the face of gloom and mystery, and been too much "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;" and though the mixing biographical anecdotes, in order to engage attention, may by some be condemned, as below the dignity of science, yet I would rather be pronounced trivial than tiresome; for Music being, at best, but an amusement, its history merits not, in reading, the labour of intense application, which should be reserved for more grave and important concerns.

I have never, from a vain display of erudition, loaded my page with Greek; on the contrary, unless some disputable point seemed to render it necessary, or the passage was both remarkable and short, I have industriously avoided it, by referring my learned readers to the original text. The modesty of citation may, however, be carried to excess; for quotations of remarkable passages are very amusing and satisfactory to learned readers, and often prevent suspicions of misrepresentation. There is no pedantry in a margin; and the ancients are perhaps never so entertaining as in the fragment way of quotation. As I pretend not to such a profound and critical knowledge in the Greek language as to depend entirely upon myself, in obscure and contested passages, I have, when such occurred, generally had recourse to the labours of the best translators and commentators, or the counsel of a learned friend. And here, in order to satisfy the sentiments of friendship, as well as those of gratitude, I must publicly acknowledge my obligations to the zeal, intelligence, taste, and erudition of the reverend Mr. Twining; a gentleman whose least merit is being perfectly acquainted with every branch of theoretical and practical music.

As ancient Greek Music had its *technical terms*, as well as the modern Italian, with which many excellent scholars and translators from that language, for want of an acquaintance with Music, and Greek musical writers, have been utter strangers, I may venture to observe that I have tried, and I hope not always without success, to trace these terms in ancient authors, in order to discover their original acceptation.

It would be a false, and perhaps offensive modesty, if I were here to trouble the reader with apologies for the length and frequency of quotations from the Iliad and Odyssey, and other ancient poets besides Homer; as it will be shewn, that history has no other materials to work upon in times of high antiquity, than those poems, which have always been regarded as historical; prose

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compositions having been utterly unknown in Greece for 300 years after most of them were written (s).

I have never had recourse to conjecture, when facts were to be found. In the historical and biographical parts, I have asserted nothing without vouchers; and I have made the ancients tell their own story as often as was possible, without disputing with them the knowledge of their own history, as many moderns have done; for I cannot help supposing them to have been full as well acquainted with their own affairs 2,000 years ago, as we are at present. An ancient Greek might, with almost equal propriety, have pretended to foretell what we *should be*, at the distance of 2,000 years, as we determine now what they then *were*.

Indeed it was my intention, when I first entered upon this work, to trace the genealogy of Music in a *right line*, without either meddling with the collateral branches of the family, or violating the reverence of antiquity. I wished and determined to proportion my labour to my powers, and I was unawares seduced into a course of reading and conjecture, upon matters beyond the reach of human ken, by the chief subject of my enquiries being so extensively diffused through all the regions of literature, and all the ages of the world. I found ancient Music so intimately connected with Poetry, Mythology, Government, Manners, and Science in general, that wholly to separate it from them, seemed to me like taking a single figure out of a group, in an historical picture; or a single character out of a drama, of which the propriety depends upon the dialogue and the incidents. If, therefore, a number of figures appear in the back-ground, I hope they will give *relief*, and somewhat keep off the dryness and fatigue which a single subject in a long work, or a single figure, if often repeated, though in different points of view, is apt to produce.

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(s) Cadmus Milesius, whom antiquity allowed to have been the inventor of history *in prose*, flourished, according to Sir Isaac Newton, 550 years B.C. and Herodotus, the oldest Greek historian whose writings are preserved, died 484 years before the same era.

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