

By the latter half of the nineteenth century the singing-class movement had created a great enthusiasm for music among the middle and lower classes. As we have seen, those who were active in fostering this were also anxious that music should exert a moral influence. From the reports quoted above it can be inferred that the school inspectors were just as anxious as the disciples of John Curwen to 'preserve many from the dangers of the theatre, the snares of the dancing saloons, and the dissipations of drinking shops' (*Tonic Sol-Fa Reporter*, May 1857). But the question of music's moral qualities was canvassed by a number of critics and philosophers who were not themselves associated directly with education. The problem is not, of course, a simple one, because so much depends on what is understood at any given time by the word 'moral'; and the issue is frequently confused by people who—like many of the Sol-faists—fail to make a distinction between music itself and the words to which it is set. The Rev. H. R. Haweis's book, *Music and Morals*, which had a certain vogue at one time, advances the theory (with reference to actual melodic shapes) that certain musical forms have the power of inducing in us a preference for wholesome rather than unworthy attitudes, and of encouraging balanced and reasonable judgements. The main objection to this notion is that a series of sounds may have a very different effect on us if we happen to hear it under unfavourable conditions (e.g. a delicate melody by Schubert arranged as a euphonium solo).

There is, however, one obvious sense in which music may be said to exert a good moral influence, and this was certainly appreciated in Haweis's time. Any sort of genuinely co-operative action is likely to have a beneficial effect on the men and women who take part in it; and even if (as was unquestionably the case) the innumerable choral groups which were formed as a result of the Hullah and Tonic Sol-Fa propaganda did not always turn their attention to music of the very highest quality, it can hardly be denied that the practice of vocal music induced habits of for-

bearance and 'give-and-take' which are in some degree 'moral'. Visitors to England from foreign countries were sometimes surprised to observe that in English choral concerts there were both male and female voices. 'It augurs well for our social system', wrote Joseph Proudman in the *Musical Standard* for 8 February 1868, 'that there is no hindrance to the union of the sexes in the pursuit of pleasant and healthful recreation, as found in our choral societies and classes.' In this respect, at any rate, we had a decided 'moral' advantage over our neighbours the French, for when a group of Orpheanist singers (the French counterpart of the Hullah school) arrived in England in 1860 it was revealed that they did not permit the sexes to intermingle on the concert platform.

The thirst for music which had been aroused by men like Hullah, Mainzer and Curwen was partly appeased by choral and competitive festivals—though the full development of competitive music-making took place in the choral sphere nearer the end of the century. In response to the prevailing belief that oratorio choruses should comprise hundreds (sometimes thousands) of voices, new halls had to be built, as at Leeds and Liverpool. To later writers the grand array of musicians over which Joah Bates presided at Westminster Abbey in 1784 seemed a comparatively unimpressive gathering. Nothing less ambitious than the throng of 3,625 performers packed into the Crystal Palace for the Sacred Harmonic Society's monster festival of 1862 seemed worthy of composers such as Handel and Mendelssohn. Among the rank-and-file performers who took part in the mammoth choral events which became such a common feature of English musical life after 1850, there arose a decided feeling that such occasions were the means best suited to the best and noblest music. There may have been a lack of discrimination about the way in which works like Costa's *Eli* (1855) and Spohr's *Fall of Babylon* (1842) were accepted as outstanding masterpieces, but at least those who took part in them under a conductor of national repute did so in an honest kind of good faith.

The brass-band contests, which called into play musical gifts of a rather different order, also had their own *rationale*, but in this instance the sporting element was slightly more prominent, the music being on the whole less solemn. The occasional 'horse-play' which, we are told, went on when some band objected to

the judgement against it, would have been quite out of place at a choral festival; and from their commencement the brass-band contests had a kind of masculine gaiety which was not diminished by the necessity for discipline in actual performances.

Bands made up entirely of wind instruments have been known for centuries, but until the nineteenth century such ensembles—except, of course, for the waits in certain towns and the church instrumentalists mentioned above—were more common in military than in civilian life. During the eighteenth century a number of regimental bands had been formed, although some of the more famous British military bands are considerably older than this. The Horse Grenadiers had a wind band in Charles II's time, but it was the more settled conditions of the later eighteenth century which encouraged the recruitment of musicians for service with the army. They frequently retained their civilian status, and were often trained by foreign bandmasters; German musicians, in particular, were very keen to secure such appointments, and it was as director of the Duke of Brunswick's regimental band that Sir William Herschel, the great astronomer, began his career in this country. When, in 1783, some musicians engaged to play for the Coldstream Guards objected to performing on the occasion of a water excursion to Greenwich, they were dismissed from their posts and replaced by a band of German instrumentalists.

But brass bands as we know them were not a direct offshoot of these military bands, though sometimes a man with military experience might be called upon to train them. In the first instance, some of the most famous of nineteenth-century bands were very humble ensembles. We have already noticed that some early factory-owners encouraged music-making among their employees; as time went on, encouragement came from other quarters. And it might almost be said that the nation-wide brass-band movement, which was such an important feature of working-class life after about 1840, was made possible by two main developments: the rapid growth of railways (which brought down the cost of passenger travel and led to the granting of concessions for those going on 'excursions'), and a series of ingenious improvements in the manufacture of brass instruments. In particular the invention of the cornet-à-pistons made it possible for a moderately persistent player to master a melodic



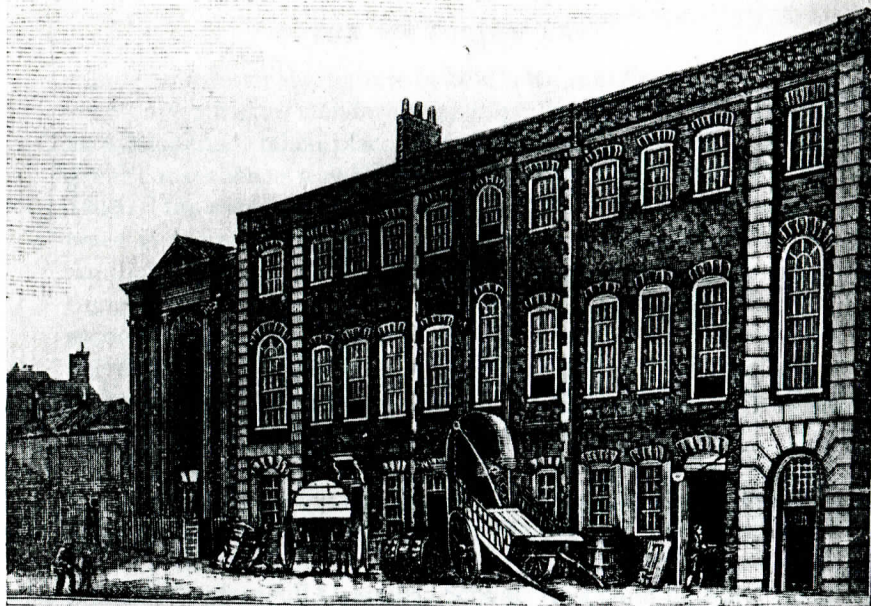
1. Medieval musicians: illumination from the Bromholm Psalter in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.



### THE SUNDAY BANDS.

*Little Jenny Jackson (taking a light) :—"Yes, I like this here place very well, but there's sich a lot o' snobs, don't tee know."*

2. Music in the parks: a mid nineteenth-century comment (from 'Fun', 1862) on Sunday performances in public places (see page 185).



3. *The Beggar's Opera*: site of the Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, where Gay's ballad opera was first produced (see page 99).

**BROADWOOD PIANOFORTES—British Manufacture.**

# THE GRAND TEST MATCH

The Sole Depot for these Celebrated Instruments for  
**SHEFFIELD, CHESTERFIELD, ROTHERHAM, BARNESLEY, and Districts:**

**Cole & Sons' Pianoforte Saloons,**  
 76, 78 & 80, SURREY STREET, SHEFFIELD.

*Henry Janniss*

4. Anglo-German trade competition: an advertisement from the souvenir programme of the Sheffield Musical Festival of 1902 (see page 221).

line without the years of application called for by the more delicate woodwind instruments. The stages by which the cornet-à-pistons came to be perfected need not concern us;<sup>1</sup> suffice it to say that many inventors in several countries were working simultaneously to produce simplified devices which would make possible a large range of notes on brass instruments generally. By the time a number of bands had been established in the north of England the instruments patented and sold by Adolph Sax (1814-94) had become famous and were in great demand. Their popularity is explained by Enderby Jackson, himself perhaps the most distinguished of all brass-band conductors: instruments made by the Sax family, he says, 'rapidly became favourites with the public for their tune and equality; and also with the players, not merely for their full and free power and good intonation but more especially for their ease in blowing and simple fingering. The latter quality was an inestimable boon, for . . . most of the members of this class of band were then . . . drawn from the weekly wage earning classes. . . . Their hands, horned and often malformed by their daily toil, were well served in these new instruments by the short easy manipulation, three fingers sufficing to work the mechanism of the three equi-distant pistons.'<sup>2</sup> The piston principle was, of course, applied to instruments other than the cornet; its great advantage, so far as the average player was concerned, lay in the fact that it took a great deal of strain from the lips and throat and placed it on the hands and fingers.

Musical contests of one sort or another have been held from time immemorial. A writer in *Eliza Cook's Journal* for 23 March 1850 recalled that bell-ringing was one of the oldest amusements among the village musicians in the north of England, and added that 'Matches in bell-ringing are still often played for high stakes; the greatest number of changes correctly rung on the peal of bells within the shortest time, giving victory to the party that achieves it'. But so far as wind bands were concerned, France was ahead of England. This was pointed out in the *Musical World* for 24 March 1837, where it was stated that

<sup>1</sup> See R. Morley Pegge, 'The Horn, and the Later Brass' in Anthony Baines, ed., *Musical Instruments Through the Ages* (1961), pp. 309-11.

<sup>2</sup> Jackson, 'Origin and Promotion of Brass Band Contests' in *Musical Opinion*, 1 March 1896, p. 392.

competitive festivals ought to be held here, as in France, in order to encourage a higher standard of playing. Small-scale contests had, as it happened, taken place before this, but the first one of any great consequence was held at Burton Constable, near Hull, in 1845. This event is of interest for several reasons. In the first place it enjoyed the patronage of Lady Chichester, who was familiar with the band festivals in France and believed that something of the same kind might be attempted in Yorkshire; secondly, each band entering was to be restricted to twelve players; and thirdly, among those taking part was Enderby Jackson, who in later years was to have charge of the ambitious Crystal Palace band contests.

Enderby Jackson's career has been sadly neglected by musical historians, perhaps because it is of a kind that can be paralleled in most branches of English musical life during this period. The son of a tallow chandler in Hull, Jackson was born in 1827 and educated at the Hull Grammar School. As a child he was taught to play the chromatic trumpet, and at eight years of age was taken to hear Paganini perform at the Theatre Royal, Hull, which fired him with an enthusiasm to become a musician. But meeting with no encouragement from his father, he left home and worked as a theatre musician in York and elsewhere. Seeing that brass bands had a great future, Jackson devoted much of his time to rehearsing such ensembles, and in 1856 arranged a large-scale contest in the Zoological Gardens at Hull. Twelve thousand people paid for admission, the first prize being won by the Leeds Railway Band. Other contests followed, and a few years later Jackson was put in charge of the musical arrangements for the opening of Pearson Park, Hull. In 1860 he entered into negotiations with the managers of the Crystal Palace with a view to holding brass band contests there, and as a result of this the Crystal Palace became virtually the home of English brass-band festivals until it was destroyed by fire in the later 1930s.

These grand meetings at Sydenham commenced in 1860. But before this date a pattern of procedure had been set at Belle Vue, Manchester, where contests were started in 1853. Sheffield held a contest in 1858 at which twenty-six bands were present, though only six were permitted to play. In all these activities a very important part was assumed by Enderby Jackson, who, among other things, persuaded the railway companies to issue

## NATIONAL EDUCATION AND MUSICAL PROGRESS

cheap fares to bandsmen and their families—so that at one time it was possible to obtain a ticket from Leeds to London for as little as four shillings and sixpence. Describing some effects of this form of recreation on those who enjoyed it, Jackson writes: 'In a few years almost every village and group of mills in these districts (i.e. Lancashire and Yorkshire east and west of the Penine Hills) possessed its own band. It mattered not to them how the bands were constituted, or what classification of instruments was in use; each man made his own choice, and the teacher found music suitably arranged for their proficiency. If these things were cleverly managed, music was the result; and music was the love and pride of these people and their ever abiding pastime.'<sup>1</sup> The village of Queensbury, near Bradford, is a case in point. Records of a band there go back to 1816; another reed band was established in 1833; but it was in the 1850s that the Foster family established the ensemble which has ever since been known as the Black Dyke Mills Band. In the later part of the nineteenth century the formation of works bands was a means of improving the relationships between capital and labour.