

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Music

The systematic academic study of music gave rise to works of description, analysis and criticism, by composers and performers, philosophers and anthropologists, historians and teachers, and by a new kind of scholar - the musicologist. This series makes available a range of significant works encompassing all aspects of the developing discipline.

A General History of Music

A friend and pupil of Mendelssohn, the composer and author William Smith Rockstro (1823–95) was regarded as an expert on early music. He contributed articles on the subject to Sir George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* as well as teaching counterpoint and plainsong at the Royal College of Music. His published output includes biographies of Handel (1883), Mendelssohn (1884) and the opera singer Jenny Lind (1891), all of which are reissued in this series. The present work was first published in 1886. In its narrative of musical history since the Greeks, it gives due weight to the development of music in England and includes, naturally, a chapter on Handel that reflects his enduring influence on national taste. The final section of the book discusses the contemporary musical scene and considers the importance of the recently deceased Wagner for the music of the future.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library and other partner libraries, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection brings back to life books of enduring scholarly value (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

A General History of Music

*From the Infancy of the Greek Drama
to the Present Period*

WILLIAM SMITH ROCKSTRO



Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town,
Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi, Mexico City

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108064798

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2013

This edition first published 1886

This digitally printed version 2013

ISBN 978-1-108-06479-8 Paperback

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

Cambridge University Press wishes to make clear that the book, unless originally published by Cambridge, is not being republished by, in association or collaboration with, or with the endorsement or approval of, the original publisher or its successors in title.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

A GENERAL
HISTORY OF MUSIC

FROM THE
*INFANCY OF THE GREEK DRAMA TO THE
PRESENT PERIOD*

BY
W. S. ROCKSTRO,
AUTHOR OF "THE LIFE OF GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL," "THE LIFE OF
MENDELSSOHN," "A HISTORY OF MUSIC FOR YOUNG STUDENTS," "THE
RULES OF COUNTERPOINT," "PRACTICAL HARMONY," ETC., ETC.

London:
SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
CROWN BUILDINGS, 188, FLEET STREET.
1886.

[*All rights reserved.*]

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

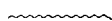
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

PREFACE.



A HUNDRED years ago, so limited were the recognised sources of information concerning the History of Music, that Dr. Burney, when accumulating the materials for his *opus magnum*, found it necessary to make an extended tour through the principal cities of Europe, for the purpose of obtaining the data needed for the completion of his scheme.

One of the earliest writers on the subject was Giovanni Battista Doni, who, in a treatise entitled *De præstantia musicæ veteris*, printed, at Florence, in 1647, endeavoured to prove that the Greeks had made far greater advancement in Music than was generally supposed. This work included a tract, on the same subject, by Pietro della Valle. Of a more practical character was Johann Gottfried Walther's *Musikalisches Lexikon*, published, at Leipzig, in 1732. In 1740, Johann Mattheson published his *Grundlage einer Ehrenpforte*, containing biographical notices of many eminent Musicians. Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's *Kritische Einleitung in die Geschichte*

der Tonkunst, published in 1751, was of more extended interest; though less valuable, by far, than P. Giambattista Martini's *Storia della Musica*, [3 vols. Bologna, 1757. 1770. 1781], and another work, in a certain sense continuous with it, entitled, *De cantu et musica sacra*, [2 vols. S. Blasien, 1774], by P. Martini's intimate friend, Martin Gerbert von Hornau, Prince-Abbot of S. Blasien, in the Black Forest: two books which are still regarded as marvels of musical scholarship.

It is at this point that our own two great musical historians appear upon the field, yielding the palm to none. Dr. Charles Burney, already mentioned, published the first volume of his *General History of Music from the earliest Ages to the present Period*, in 1776, and the fourth and last, in 1789. Sir John Hawkins published his *General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, in five volumes, in 1776. In 1819, Dr. Thomas Busby published a *General History of Music*, founded, almost entirely, on the works of his two illustrious predecessors; and it is scarcely possible to mention a later musical historian who has not been largely indebted to their famous volumes.

Nearly contemporary with these valuable works was the *Dictionnaire de Musique* of Jean Jacques Rousseau, [Geneva, 1767. Paris, 1768]. Nicolaus Forkel produced his *Allgemeine Geschichte der Musik*,

Preface.

v

in two volumes, dated 1788, and 1801. The first volume of Ernst Ludwig Gerber's *Historisch-biographische Lexikon der Tonkünstler*, based chiefly on Walther's older Lexikon, was published in 1790; and the second, printed in 1792, closes the list of Musical Histories produced in the 18th century.

Alexandre Etienne Choron, assisted by François Joseph Marie Fayolle, published a *Dictionnaire historique des Musiciens*, in 1810—1811; but, the more valuable *Biographie universelle des Musiciens*, first published by Fétis, in 1835—1844, and brought down to a later date by Pougin's *Supplement*, has completely supplanted the earlier work. Fétis's *Histoire générale de la Musique*, begun in 1869, was completed by his son, Mons. Edouard Fétis, in 1876.

A high place is taken among modern works by the *Geschichte der europäisch-abendländische Musik* of Raphael Georg Kiesewetter, Edler von Wiesenbrunn, [1834], and the *Histoire de l'Harmonie au moyen age* of Charles Edouard Henri de Coussemaker, [1852]; but the most important works of the present half-century are, the *Geschichte der Musik*, of August Wilhelm Ambros [4 vols. 1862. 1864. 1868. and 1878, the last vol. posthumous], and the *Musikalisches Conversations-Lexikon*, begun, in 1870, by Hermann Mendel, and now completed, in eight volumes, by Dr. Reissmann.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Very few of these works are to be had in the form of English translations; and the cumbrous and expensive quartos of Burney and Hawkins, leave even the last quarter of the 18th century unnoticed. Ambros's work, interrupted by his death, reaches only to the beginning of the 17th century. There is, indeed, no volume, of moderate size, embodying the entire History of Music, available, at the present moment, to the English reader; and it is with the view of providing him with such a volume, that the following pages have been written. It remains, therefore, only to add a few words in explanation of the plan on which they are designed.

All History, properly so called, is of necessity written in narrative form. In recognition of this law, the greater part of the following pages is occupied with brief sketches of the lives and achievements of the great representative Musicians of all ages. But, an Art-Chronicle consisting *entirely* of biographical notices would be grievously incomplete.

Side by side with the political history of a Nation, as recorded in the lives of its Kings, runs a collateral narrative, dealing with its advancement in Science, Literature, Commerce, and the thousand units that make up the sum of its general Civilisation.

Side by side with the exoteric history of Art, as set forth in the achievements of the Men of

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface.

vii

Genius who have devoted themselves to its culture, runs the esoteric record of its technical development.

Our great national Historian, David Hume, met the first condition, in his *History of England*, by means of occasional Chapters, placed, in the form of Appendices, at the end of certain important Reigns. We have endeavoured to meet the second, by a single Appendix, containing a general sketch of the Technical History of Music, from the age of the Greek Tragedians, to the present time. And, for the purpose of facilitating reference, we have devoted a separate Section of this Synopsis to each well-marked epoch of progressive development; indicating, in connection with every Section, the Book or Chapters of the General History which the technical remarks in question are intended to illustrate. By this means, we have been enabled to avoid much inconvenient digression, and consequent interruption of the narrative portions of the text.

In the hope of rendering the volume still more useful as a book of reference, we have combined a copious Chronological Table with the General Index. With the same purpose of facilitating reference, we have endeavoured to catch the student's eye, by printing the names of all works quoted as examples in Italics, and by beginning all technical terms—such as Stave, Chord, Trumpet, Notation, &c.—

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

viii

Preface.

with a capital letter, both in the index and in the text itself. We have also been careful to supply all information, not absolutely essential to the sequence of the historical narrative, in the form of foot-notes.

In a work designed expressly for the use of English readers, we have naturally dwelt, at considerable length, upon the history and vicissitudes of our national School—a circumstance which will, we hope, sufficiently account for what might otherwise appear to indicate a want of due proportion between the dimensions of some of our Chapters. For instance, if the Chapter on Handel occupies more space than that devoted to Beethoven, it is simply because his influence upon our national taste was so powerful and enduring, that its effect, at the present moment, is scarcely less remarkable than it was while he was still working, in the flesh, at the head of the English School. That influence, as a plain matter of history, is naturally described in the narrative portion of our work; whereas, the characteristics of Beethoven's individual style are more fittingly discussed in the Appendix, which forms the complement of this, as well as of many other biographical notices. The same remark will apply to the Chapters on the Early English Schools, the School of the Restoration, and others of scarcely less importance. We trust, however, that our

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period
William Smith Rockstro
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

Preface.

ix

endeavour to do justice to our own countrymen has not tempted us to pass over, with insufficient recognition, the merits of the Schools which have flourished, and are still flourishing, in other countries.

ELM COURT, BABBICOMBE, TORQUAY, 1886.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
 Drama to the Present Period
 William Smith Rockstro
 Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CONTENTS.

BOOK THE FIRST.

MUSIC IN THE EARLY AGES.

	PAGE
CHAPTER I. The Music of the Greeks	3
„ II. The Music of the Early Christians	14

BOOK THE SECOND.

MUSIC IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

CHAPTER III. The condition of Music in the Early Middle Ages. Notation. Discant. The Invention of the Time-Table	23
„ IV. Concerning the Troubadours, the Minstrels, and the Minnesingers	37
„ V. The Invention of Counterpoint	43
„ VI. Concerning the Polyphonic Schools	50
„ VII. Concerning the productions of the Polyphonic Schools; their distinguishing characteristics; their progress; and the reform effected by Palestrina	62
„ VIII. On the development of Polyphonic Music in England	75
„ IX. Mediæval Hymnody	84

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xii

Contents.

BOOK THE THIRD.

MUSIC IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.

	PAGE
CHAPTER X. On the Schools of the Decadence, and the Invention of the Monodic Style	97
„ XI. On the invention and early history of the Opera	103
„ XII. On the invention and early history of the Oratorio	119
„ XIII. Instrumental Music in the Seventeenth Century	130
„ XIV. The later Composers of the Seventeenth Century	152
„ XV. The English School of the Restoration	162

BOOK THE FOURTH.

MUSIC IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CHAPTER XVI. On the condition of Music, in Italy, during the earlier years of the Eighteenth Century	191
„ XVII. The condition of Music, in France, England, and Germany, during the earlier years of the Eighteenth Century	203
„ XVIII. On the origin and progress of the Modern System of Part-writing	208
„ XIX. The Seven Lamps	213
„ XX. George Frederick Handel	221
„ XXI. Johann Sebastian Bach	238
„ XXII. Christoph Willibald Gluck	247
„ XXIII. Franz Joseph Haydn	260
„ XXIV. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	270
„ XXV. Ludwig van Beethoven	279
„ XXVI. The development of the Piano-forte	284

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

<i>Contents.</i>	xiii
	PAGE
CHAPTER XXVII. On the condition of Dramatic Music, in Italy, during the closing years of the Eighteenth Century	292
„ XXVIII. On the condition of Dramatic Music, in France, during the later decades of the Eighteenth Century	295
„ XXIX. Concerning the Schools of Leipzig and Vienna	303
„ XXX. The general condition of Music, in England, during the closing years of the Eighteenth Century	311
BOOK THE FIFTH.	
MUSIC IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.	
CHAPTER XXXI. The Seven lesser Lights. Schubert. Weber. Spohr. Mendelssohn. Schumann. Cimarosa. Cherubini	325
„ XXXII. On the general condition of Music, in Italy, during the earlier half of the Nineteenth Century	384
„ XXXIII. The German Schools of the Nineteenth Century	396
„ XXXIV. The French Schools of the Nineteenth Century	414
„ XXXV. The English Schools of the Nineteenth Century	431
BOOK THE SIXTH.	
THE PRESENT CONDITION OF MUSIC, AND ITS PROBABLE INFLUENCE UPON THE FUTURE.	
CHAPTER XXXVI. The New World	449
„ XXXVII. Wilhelm Richard Wagner	455
„ XXXVIII. L'Envoi	471

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-06479-8 - A General History of Music: From the Infancy of the Greek
Drama to the Present Period

William Smith Rockstro

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

xiv

Contents.

APPENDIX.

EPITOME OF THE TECHNICAL HISTORY OF MUSIC,
FROM THE EARLIEST AGES TO THE PRESENT.

	PAGE
SECTION I. The Epoch of the Greek Drama	477
„ II. The Epoch of Plain Chaunt	479
„ III. The Epoch of the Polyphonic Schools	480
„ IV. The Epoch of Monodia	483
„ V. The Epoch of the Polyodic Schools	483
„ VI. The Epoch of the development of Instrumental Music	486
„ VII. The Epoch of the Classical Schools	491
„ VIII. The Epoch of the Imaginative and Romantic Schools	494
„ IX. The latest form of Technical Development	497

INDEX AND CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE	501
---	-----

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

	PAGE
†Two Views of a Stradivari Violin of the best period. [Dated 1708]	137
†Handel's Harpsichord in the South Kensington Museum. [Dated 1651]	141
†Spinet, by Thomas Hitchcock. [Circa 1645]	142
†Spinet, by Charles Haward. [Circa 1668]	143
†A German Clavichord. [17th century]	145
The Haarlem Organ. [Completed 1738]	149
†Henry Purcell. (From a painting by John Closterman)	185
George Frederick Handel	236
Johann Sebastian Bach	243
Christoph Willibald, Ritter von Gluck	258
Franz Joseph Haydn	266
Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	277
Ludwig van Beethoven	281
†The Abbé Franz Liszt	291
†Étienne Henri Méhul	300
†Franz Peter Schubert	332
Carl Maria von Weber	341
Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy	366
Robert Schumann	370
†Madame Malibran	395

The Illustrations marked thus (†) are taken, by the kind permission of Messrs. Macmillan and Co., from Sir George Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.