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978-1-108-06525-2 - Concert Room and Orchestra Anecdotes of Music and Musicians,  
Ancient and Modern: Volume 1

Thomas Busby

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The writer, composer and organist Thomas Busby (1754–1838) was originally articled to the composer Jonathan Battishill before setting out to make his living from both musical and literary labours. His compositions (many now lost) include songs, theatre music and oratorios. His written output comprised journal articles and monographs, among them *A Grammar of Music* and *A General History of Music* (both reissued in this series). The present work, his most endearing, was first published in 1825. Gossipy, informative and highly entertaining, it yields all manner of insights into musical life through history. Approximately a thousand anecdotes are assembled across the three volumes as a delightful potpourri, interspersed with pen portraits of eminent musicians. Volume 1 includes discussion of Sir John Hawkins, the Panharmonicon, Rodolphe Kreutzer, Beethoven's eccentricity, and music as a treatment for the bite of a spider.

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VOLUME 1

THOMAS BUSBY



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CONCERT ROOM  
AND  
ORCHESTRA ANECDOTES.  
*OF*  
MUSIC AND MUSICIANS.  
  
*Ancient and Modern*  
BY  
THO<sup>S</sup> BUSBY. MUS. D.  
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## P R E F A C E.

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IN a publication similar to the present, the labours of the writer will necessarily consist more of the exercise of his taste and judgment, than of any superior talents or acquirements.

He who undertakes the task of a literary collector has often been compared to the bee, that, roving from flower to flower, extracts every sweet that offers itself to his choice, and depends, for the future store of his hive, more on the inviting treasures blooming around him, than on any wealth of his own. But this simile, perfectly ap-

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posite in most cases of compilation, is here only partially applicable. The articles now presented to the public, have, in many instances, been collected from sources that lay far out of common reach, and which demanded, for their attainment, an extended acquaintance not only with musical history, ancient and modern, but with circumstances connected with the habits and characters of many composers and performers, which could only be expected to come within the knowledge of a professional musician.

To the bee, every garden is open, and every garden alike; not so, to him who seeks for musical curiosities, are the recesses he has to explore. The intelligence to be acquired, and so indispensable to the completion of his intended work, is limited to a distinguished few; and, in a great measure, not acquirable, except by him who, favoured by a kind of professional privilege, finds the door of information open to his approaches. But while, on that very account, such information will, to the ge-

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PREFACE.

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nerality of readers, be the more acceptable, because the more rare, yet, as being subject to the whims and caprices of tardy or reluctant informants, it is often the more difficult of attainment.

The labours of the Editor have not, however, been wholly confined to the humble task of compilation; many of the narratives and anecdotes in these volumes are the results of a reminiscence founded on the professional practice and personal connection of three score years, and have never before met the public eye. Most of these are curious and interesting, and none of them, it is trusted, unworthy the attention of musical readers.

Among the other articles, will be found biographical notices of some of the most meritorious composers and performers, vocal and instrumental, of this and the past century. Concerning these, the narrated facts are faithful, and the criticisms meant to be liberal and candid. The whole is intended to form a mass of useful and amusing matter—matter too nearly connected with the

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taste and feelings of musicians and amateurs, not to gratify the readers to whose attention the work is particularly addressed; and, if the Editor shall prove to have been so successful as to have effected this object, he will have no reason to be dissatisfied with the labour he has bestowed.

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