

The Guitar in Victorian England

In 1893 Clara Lindow sang the ballad ‘Dreamtide’ to her own guitar accompaniment in the Cumbrian hamlet of Lowick. A writer for the local newspaper not only admired her ‘marked skill and ability’ but also considered the concert to be a sign of ‘the onward march of light and learning in our time’. Amateurs like Miss Lindow were at the heart of a Victorian revival of guitar playing, especially for accompanying the voice, which has never been fully acknowledged and has often been denied. This book is a groundbreaking history of the guitar and its players during the era when the Victorians were making modern Britain. The abundant newspaper record of the period, much of which is now searchable with digital tools, reveals an increasingly buoyant guitar scene from the 1860s onwards. No part of Victorian life, from palace to pavement, remained untouched by the revival.

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The Guitar in Victorian England

A Social and Musical History

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For Anne

Dans le fond des forêts votre image me suit

Jean Racine (Phèdre)

Contents

List of Figures [page viii]

List of Musical Examples [xi]

Acknowledgements [xiii]

List of Abbreviations [xiv]

Introduction [1]

1 A Victorian Conspectus [12]

2 Guitar-Players and Their Repertoires to the 1860s [46]

3 The Book of Acts [77]

4 New Opportunities from the 1860s Onwards: Penny Readings
and Amateur Concerts [105]

5 Madame Catharina Josepha Pratten and Others [139]

6 The Guitarists of the Streets [167]

Appendix A Using the Newspapers [192]

*Appendix B Reviews of performances given in England by Julián
Arcas (1832–82) and Antonio Giménez Manjón
(1866–1919)* [196]

*Appendix C Alphabetical Checklist of Street Guitar Players
and Documents Pertaining to Henry Sheppard* [199]

Bibliography [205]

Index [221]

Figures

- 0.1 *Sorrow and song* (1893) by Edmund Blair Leighton. © Bristol Museum, Galleries and Archives. Bridgeman Images. [page 9]
- 1.1 A guitar built by the London firm of Roudhloff, c. 1840. The sounding string length is 634 mm. From the Austin-Marie Collection. By permission of Jeffrey Wells. [14]
- 1.2 The first page of an arrangement of Edmond Harper's ballad 'Truth in absence' for voice and guitar by the British officer John Alexander Temple. Private collection. [37]
- 1.3 'My Children's Christmas Carol'. Engraving by E. J. Walker for the Christmas number of *The Illustrated London News*, 5 December 1885. [38]
- 1.4 A complete 'score' for strummed and arpeggiated chords on the guitar to 'Molly Malone' also known as 'Cockles and mussels'. From the archive of Mina Norton. Windsor Castle, St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library, M.1205/2/c(r). [45]
- 2.1 A substantial extract from the *Tempo di waltz* section of the *Grand Fantasia*, Op. 48, by Leonard Schulz, as it appears excerpted for study in Ferdinand Pelzer, *One hundred and fifty exercises for acquiring a facility of performance on the Spanish guitar composed and extracted from the works of the best writers for that instrument* (London, The Author, 1840), 27. [58]
- 2.2 The first page of Giulio Regondi, *1re Air varié*, Op. 21. Offenbach: Johann André, n.d. Published in London and Brighton by Augener and Co. The Royal Danish Library, Copenhagen, Rischel and Birket-Smith's Collection. [70]
- 2.3 The second page of *L'Espagnole impatiente* from the guitar book of Eleanor Snowden, 45–6. Signed and dated March 1838. Private collection. [75]
- 3.1 The Lord Nelson Tavern as shown in an issue of the magazine *Paul Pry*, 8 (1856). Look and Learn/Valerie Jackson Harris Collection/Bridgeman Images. [80]
- 3.2 Miss Davenport costumed as seven different characters for the one-act interlude *The manager's daughter*, written for her by Edward Lancaster.

- Hand-coloured etching by Pierce James Egan, c. 1840. National Portrait Gallery. [84]
- 3.3 The title page of ‘Tinkle tinkle tum’, words by Harry Adams, music by E. Jonghmans (London, Francis Bros and Day, 1884). The lithograph of Charles Godfrey is by Alfred Concanen. Private collection. [85]
- 3.4 Frederick Maccabe as himself and with nine of the impersonations from his show *Begone dull care*. *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 19 September 1874. Private collection. [87]
- 3.5 Poster for a performance by A[lbert L.] Stiegler, ‘The celebrated Hungarian minstrel’, at Buxton Theatre on 27 June 1835. Courtesy of James Westbrook. [92]
- 4.1 ‘A morning call at the rectory’, an etching of 1859. *Visit of a London exquisite to his maiden aunts in the country*, by ‘Theo’, dedicated to William Thackeray. Private collection. [113]
- 4.2 Melodies (*De Profundi[s]* and *Lancaster*) for hymns in two principal metres followed by harmonised settings of the inflections in each of the eight Gregorian psalm tones. Ferdinand Pelzer, *Instructions for the guitar tuned in E major* (London, The Author, 1854), 16. [124]
- 4.3 A female member of the Salvation Army with a guitar. Mary Evans Picture Library. [128]
- 4.4 Maud Berkeley and Lilian Barnes preparing to go on stage with their guitars at a Primrose League meeting on 10 April 1890 at Sandown (Isle of Wight). © Lorraine Wood. [132]
- 4.5 ‘Miss Jessie Hartcup. Captain Waveney Valley Ladies’ Golf Club’. *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 4 March 1905. Courtesy of James Hartcup. [137]
- 5.1 Excerpt from ‘Spanish romance’, by Madame Pratten. Reproduced by permission of the Royal College of Music, London. [145]
- 5.2 The first page of ‘Forgotten’ by Madame Sidney Pratten. Reproduced by permission of the Royal College of Music, London. [154]
- 5.3 The first page of Madame Pratten’s XVth divertimiento for the guitar tuned in E Major, from the guitar book of John Alexander Temple. Private collection. [156]
- 5.4 John Alexander Temple (1842–1928). Reproduced by permission of Charles Temple-Richards. [164]
- 6.1 A *carte de visite* by C. B. Walker from 1863, or soon thereafter, showing Lydia Foote in costume for the part of May Edwards in *The ticket-of-leave man*. Courtesy of Paul Frecker. The Library of Nineteenth-Century Photography. [168]

- 6.2 Traders of ‘Kerbstone London’, including a street guitar-player (not apparently standing by a kerb). From G. R. Sims, ed., *Living London*, 3 vols. (London, Cassell and Co., 1901–3), i, 384. Private collection. [172]
- 6.3 ‘A wand’ring minstrel’, drawn on Hampstead Heath for *The Licensed Victualler’s Mirror*, 23 April 1889. [174]
- 6.4 Henry Sheppard’s dossier in Cambridgeshire Archives, K1350/1/2598. [190]

Musical Examples

- 2.1 Excerpt from an arrangement (by John Ella?) of the second movement ('Tema con variazioni', *Andante con moto*) from Beethoven's Violin Sonata, Op. 12/1). From the Saltoun collection of guitar music (Library of Congress, ML31.S25, Box 1, Folder 8). [page 49]
- 2.2 A passage from George Pigott's arrangement of Mozart's C Minor Sonata for the pianoforte K457 (first movement only, *Allegro molto*), compared with the corresponding passage in the first edition of 1795. Cambridge University Library, Additional MS 9471 [pp. 4–5]. [53]
- 2.3 Extract from a section of 'Ma la solo ohimè son io', from Bellini's opera *Beatrice di Tenda*. From Schulz–Clinton *Le delizie dell' Italia*, No. 3 (London, Wessel and Co., 1842). [55]
- 2.4 Extract from the first variation ('Manieroso') from Joseph Anelli's variations upon 'Deh! con te' from Bellini's *Norma*. Hudleston collection. Royal Irish Academy of Music. [62]
- 2.5 Excerpt from *L'Espagnole impatiente* as it appears in the guitar book of Eleanor Snowden, signed and dated March 1838. Private collection. [74]
- 3.1 The beginning of 'The anchor's weighed', by John Braham, as arranged for the guitar by J. G. Weber (Philadelphia, A. Fiot, 1840–55). [96]
- 3.2 Excerpt from 'The Spanish retreat' as arranged by Flamini Duvernay, for a guitar tuned Cccgc'e'. [100]
- 4.1 'To the gay tournament the troubadour is gone', with words by Thomas Haynes Bayly and music by Thomas Cooke, arranged by C. M. Sola (London, Cramer, Addison and Beale, 1830). [120]
- 4.2 Excerpt from Henry Lea's arrangement of the Christy Minstrel ballad 'Someone to love in this wide world of sorrow'. *Lea's Edition of popular guitar songs: popular songs with Italian and English words*, 29. [121]
- 4.3 Excerpt from Florian Pascal's 'Aurora' in the arrangement by Alfred R. Watson, *Album of songs for voice and guitar* (London, Joseph Williams, 1894), 12. [122]
- 4.4 The first verse of Psalm 6, 'Oh Lord, rebuke me not in thine indignation', assigned tone 3 for Ash Wednesday in *The psalter with the Gregorian tones adapted to the several psalms* (1845), using the harmonisation for

- a guitar tuned in E major from Ferdinand Pelzer, *Instructions for the guitar tuned in E major* (1854), 16. [126]
- 4.5 The first verse of ‘At the cross her station keeping’, a paraphrase of *Stabat mater dolorosa* by Jacopone da Todi (d. 1306), from *Hymns ancient and modern for use in the services of the church with accompanying tunes compiled and arranged under the musical editorship of William Henry Monk* (London, William Clowes and Sons, 1861), hymn 98 (second tune). [129]
- 4.6 An excerpt from Gerard F. Cobb’s setting of Rudyard Kipling’s ‘Mandalay’ with a guitar part editorially reduced from the pianoforte version in *Musical settings of Rudyard Kipling’s barrack room ballads* (London, Charles Sheard and Co., etc., 1892). [136]
- 5.1 The beginning of ‘The summer bloom hath passed away’ (words by George Linley; music by Caroline E. Hay). Staves 1, 3 and 4 carry an arrangement for voice and pianoforte (Cleveland, S. Brainard and Sons, between 1866 and 1873) while stave 2 shows the corresponding section of accompaniment in *Madame R. Sidney Pratten’s guitar school* (London, Boosey and Sons, 1859), 30–1. [160]
- 5.2 Extract from Henry Lea’s arrangement of ‘Bright as the moon’ (i.e. ‘M’appari, tutt’amor’ from Friedrich von Flotow’s opera *Martha*), as it appears in *Lea’s edition of popular guitar songs*, No. 22 (top two staves in each brace of four) and the corresponding passage in Madame Pratten’s arrangement as it appears in *Madame R. Sidney Pratten’s repertoire for the guitar*, No. 58 (lower two staves in each brace of four). [161]

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My wife Anne, whose puzzlement that I am so interested in guitars is a constant stimulus, was an abiding presence throughout this book, which is dedicated to her.

Abbreviations

DGA	Digital Guitar Archive
EM	<i>Early Music</i>
GSJ	<i>Galpin Society Journal</i>
IF	<i>Il Fronimo</i>
JAMS	<i>Journal of the American Musicological Society</i>
M&L	<i>Music and Letters</i>
MQ	<i>Musical Quarterly</i>
SB	<i>Soundboard</i>
SbS	<i>Soundboard Scholar</i>
TNA	The National Archives