

## British Music Criticism, 1890–1945

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Music criticism in Britain underwent a major transformation in the late nineteenth century, the effects of which were felt far into the twentieth century. The rise of a new school of music criticism facilitated largely by John F. Runciman (1866–1916) helped professionalise the music critic and improve his – and her – literary status. While the reporting of music news and events remained a mainstay of criticism, music critics, through mentoring or self-education, asserted themselves as intellectuals. As a consequence, their writings were no longer simply about music, but often cast in relation to literary, philosophical and historical questions and issues. European, North American and British music criticism had long featured both reporters and intellectuals, but it was in the late nineteenth century that such portfolio careers coalesced and the division that once separated the journalist from the intellectual – or man of letters – was no longer clear-cut. Moreover, there was a vast increase in the number of women writing in all domains of criticism, and although they were subjected to various degrees of misogyny and condescension, they were nonetheless provided with opportunities for training and career advancement. This chapter maps out the momentum of this period of changing music criticism and looks particularly closely at the careers of Ernest Newman (1868–1959) and Neville Cardus (1888–1975), both products of this era of intellectual transformation.

### Setting the Agenda for Reform

Runciman was a key figure in setting the agenda for the reform of music criticism. His articles in the 1890s were a stinging attack on contemporary habits, and they appear to have set in motion further literature on the subject. Although some members of the Musical Association had previously written manifestos in the 1880s, their distribution was limited to a narrow circle of

insiders. Runciman's articles in the literary press exposed the problems of music criticism to the world.<sup>1</sup>

An unsigned and negative article on the state of contemporary music criticism in the *Saturday Review* in August 1891, 'Musical Criticism and Musical Critics', is attributed to Runciman.<sup>2</sup> In it, he claimed there was a 'total absence of serious musical criticism nowadays' with part of the problem lying in the haste with which critics sent their reviews to print without adequate time for considered reflection and analysis.<sup>3</sup> He also asserted that a lot of music criticism was badly written, arguing that literary and dramatic criticism was of a much higher standard and supposing critics in these fields were 'perfect masters of their art as compared with musical ones'.<sup>4</sup> Runciman bemoaned that music critics used technical terms and foreign words without understanding them, or used adjectives that made little or no sense. By way of an example, he explained how a critic, whom he did not name, had claimed that the Polish tenor Jean de Reszke 'speeded through the adagio movement' and that the singer's vocalisation of Lohengrin was 'splendid'. Runciman failed to see how 'speeded' was a word and wondered where in the score in *Lohengrin* the direction for vocalisation – 'to sing exercises without naming the notes and on one vowel' – was called for.<sup>5</sup> For Runciman, such criticism was the work of the 'uneducated would-be specialist'.<sup>6</sup>

The rush of ill-written concert reviews also worried Charles Villiers Stanford, who took up the topic (and other issues) in an article for the *Fortnightly Review* in June 1894.<sup>7</sup> Stanford identified what he believed to be 'two baneful oppressions under which musical criticism in England is now groaning'.<sup>8</sup> The first was this haste to print. The second was the prevalence of anonymous criticism, which allowed the same critic to write variations of a review in many newspapers. In order to overcome rushed press notices, Stanford advocated the French practice of publishing a concert notice days – rather than hours – after the performance. He claimed that taking more time to publish a review would bring England in line with 'all other civilized European countries': the critic would have time to add literary polish to the text and, as a consequence, the public would get a better reading experience.<sup>9</sup> Stanford also warned that music reviews could not stand by literary merit

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, John Stainer, 'The Principles of Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, Seventh Session (1880–81), 35–52; and Charles Kensington Salaman, 'On Musical Criticism', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, Second Session (1875–6), 1–15.

<sup>2</sup> Unsigned [attrib. John F. Runciman], 'Musical Criticism and Musical Critics', *Saturday Review* (15 August 1891), 187–8.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 187. <sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 188.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford, 'Some Aspects of Musical Criticism in England', *Fortnightly Review* (June 1894), 826–31.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 826. <sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 828.

alone; that editors should employ music critics who knew the repertory. He ended the article by strongly encouraging all music criticism to be signed, just as it was in most major European cities he knew, so that it was clear to all ‘what ballast he carries’.<sup>10</sup>

Runciman was inspired to keep writing on the pitfalls and problems of contemporary music criticism and responded to Stanford’s article with two further essays: one in the *Fortnightly Review* in November 1894 (‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’) and a second in the January 1895 *New Review* (‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’).<sup>11</sup> These two articles stand as a turning point in the argument for the promulgation of new criticism by severely attacking the credentials of old-school critics and newspapers. In the first of these articles, Runciman was particularly scathing of J. W. Davison (1813–85), whose journalism he regarded as highly suspect:

His [Davison’s] criticism, and indeed most other of that day, is beneath contempt. A few hours spent over old musical newspapers will reveal a depth of ignorance, petty spite, stupid obstinacy, besides a lack of artistic susceptibility, that are almost inconceivable to the modern person. For thirty years this, the ‘old criticism’ hung like a millstone round the neck of English music.<sup>12</sup>

Through a brief critique of many of his contemporaries, or near contemporaries, such as Franz Hueffer (1845–89), J. A. Fuller Maitland (1856–1936), E. F. Jacques (1850–1906) and George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), Runciman attempted to define a new school of criticism. For Runciman, Hueffer was too literary and narrow-minded. Fuller Maitland and Jacques were considered new-school critics, if half-heartedly, but Runciman did not say why. He ranked George Bernard Shaw as a new-school critic (a point on which he would soon further elaborate) for his well-written work in the *Star*. Runciman later described Shaw’s writing in the *World* as ‘the best example of what may be done by the new method’.<sup>13</sup> Eventually, Runciman came round to defining the new critic and the qualities that make one:

The ‘new’ critic may be imagined as defining his position thus: Here am I, endowed with certain faculties cultured to a greater or less extent; the question for me to decide is not whether the artist I am criticizing produces a result the same as or different from that produced by certain dead-and-gone worthies, whom you call authorities, ‘standards of taste’, and what-not, and

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 831.

<sup>11</sup> John F. Runciman, ‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’, *Fortnightly Review* (August 1894), 170–83; ‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, *New Review* (January–June 1895), 612–24.

<sup>12</sup> Runciman, ‘Musical Criticism and the Critics’, 171. <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 177.

for whom I care not one jot, but whether the result gives or does not give me pleasure! The new critic, therefore, frequently gives no opinion – he implies it merely, by indicating his delight of the opposite with the result produced by his subject or victim. His criticism is purely an expression of personal feeling, and as such has a value the old criticism never had – could not, and cannot possibly have . . . The old method makes no demand upon the critic's best faculties.<sup>14</sup>

In his definition of new criticism Runciman placed a high value on readability and the careful, rather than wilful, imparting of impressions or reflections from personal experience. The critics of the old school were known for their 'impersonal manner' and 'sheer dullness'. Moreover, the kind of criticism that was neither old-school nor new school was mere description of performances that Runciman likened to police reports. Runciman did not care for the recording of a critic's impression or biased view of a performance, but, should a critic 'expose himself to the fire of a thousand cross-influences in the big world', his bias and narrow-mindedness could be overcome.<sup>15</sup> For Runciman then, criticism based on wide knowledge, reading and musical experience was the key to quality and the prime marker of this new era.

In the second article, 'The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism', Runciman allowed himself a more detailed exposition on the qualities that made for the quintessential new critic. Shaw's criticism, which Runciman held in the highest regard, was deemed to demonstrate 'cleverness, feeling, wit, and knowledge'.<sup>16</sup> It did not simply impart 'untutored impressions' but was based on a deep knowledge of music, which he believed Shaw possessed par excellence.

To show the extent to which a critic's knowledge and judgement could be tested by so-called authorities or musicians of power and influence, Runciman ridiculed a letter signed by Alexander Mackenzie, George Grove, Otto Goldschmidt (former director of the Bach choir), Walter Parrett (Master of the Queen's Music) and C. Hubert H. Parry that defended a recent performance of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* conducted by Stanford, which had received particularly unfavourable reviews in the press. Runciman himself thought the performance was 'disgraceful' and was irritated that this coterie of eminent musicians, performers themselves, claimed that they knew better.<sup>17</sup> The most damning review, in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which also appeared to be the most extensive account of the performance, was, according to Runciman, written with 'restraint and courtesy' and did not deserve the aggression brought against it by 'academics' who used their status and

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.    <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 180.    <sup>16</sup> Runciman, 'The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism', 613.    <sup>17</sup> Ibid., 614.

influence to resist reasonable and new-school criticism. Runciman was, of course, using the label ‘academic’ pejoratively.<sup>18</sup>

In a further attack on old-school criticism Runciman continued the article with a chapter of sins of the old-school critics:

Unless you turn out the old, old *clichés*; unless you fill your columns with profound references to consecutive fifths, and the birth- and death-dates of composers and popular singers, the Old Critics and the Academics of this land (who should have read their Schumann, their Berlioz, and their Wagner, and so know better) at once assume that you are ignorant, inept, fatuous, and so forth, but chiefly ignorant – ignorant, that is, of the technique of music.<sup>19</sup>

The second part of the article dealt with expression and style, and Runciman reprinted many excerpts from reviews, past and present, which continued to ridicule his detractors. He complained about Joseph Bennett’s (1831–1911) ignorance of music theory and also lambasted an unnamed critic from the *Musical Times*, with whom Runciman had played duets but whose journalism he did not like, for the same limitation. A further unnamed critic, writing for the *Times*, while thought by Runciman to be a competent harpsichordist, ‘draws no distinction between a Bach fugue and a Parry fugue’.<sup>20</sup> At the end of the article, Runciman turned his attention to a fuller discussion of the use of cliché and exaggeration in critical language employed by old critics, noting long lists of tired adjectives and expressions used in their prose.

Runciman’s article was much discussed and held considerable interest for writers in the leading music journals of the late nineteenth century, namely the *Musical Standard* and the *Musical Times*. In June 1895, an unsigned article in the *Musical Standard* (‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, a response to Runciman’s article by the same title) took issue with most of Runciman’s views, sarcastically stating that the old school did not have a monopoly on ignorance and that many of the crimes against criticism that Runciman had described could be readily spotted from the pens of critics old and new. The article chastised Runciman for the abusive tone he adopted, especially in the *New Review* article, and it defended both the importance of critics who had a sound knowledge of technical terms and the continuing importance of commenting on technical facility. The *Musical Standard* simply did not accept Runciman’s view that old criticism was necessarily all that bad:

The ideal of the old school was that all personal feeling should be eliminated, and that the critic should sit in his stall and solemnly register technical mistakes, and give praise for technical excellence. That the musical critic

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 616.    <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 617.    <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 619.

should in any way attempt to bring to the minds of his readers something of what he has felt was, and is, considered by the old school to be undignified and the mark of the dilettante. The old idea of the school-master in criticism is reasonable enough, but unfortunately it leads to absurd mistakes directly it is applied to any new work or to any instrumentalist who has a decided individuality of his own.<sup>21</sup>

The writer for the *Musical Standard* went on to defend the standard of music journalism and suggested it is the sort of criticism that is ‘done fairly well’ by most critics, but admitted that inferior criticism occupied too much space in most newspapers. The writer agreed with Runciman that George Bernard Shaw ‘showed that there was another way of writing about music’ but was not convinced that Shaw was as intellectually and musically worthy as Runciman thought him to be. For the *Musical Standard* writer, Shaw believed himself to be ‘omniscient’, something that led him into ‘rather tight technical corners sometimes’, but concurred that his chief skill was his ability to write and that he had a ‘genius for listening attentively, which is not given to everyone’.<sup>22</sup>

The *Musical Standard* writer agreed also with Runciman that the cultivation of a polished writing style was important but hardly necessary. He conceded that ‘when a critic has no particular literary gift, there is no excuse for the stereotyped phrases born of indolence which so much disfigure newspaper criticism’. Some of the clichés the writer singles out for being particularly unimaginative include phrases such as ‘remarkably fine rendering’ and ‘splendidly played’. In defence of some critics’ limited vocabulary, however, the writer made the point that certain newspapers’ conservative house styles constrained the sorts of prose and language that critics can use.<sup>23</sup>

By the end of the article, the writer appeared to be in agreement with Runciman on the matter of what a critic should impart:

We come to this, then: musical criticism, in distinction to mere reporting, should convey some idea to the readers of how the music affected the writer, who must have an impressionable nature and cultivated musical taste and the literary power of putting his impressions into words . . . It will be better if he have some technical knowledge of the art, not so that he may scatter a few technical phrases about his ‘copy’, because it will give him greater surety in writing of his musical impressions. But the amount of his knowledge is no measure of his capability of criticizing – the right temperament and the power of writing are the real requisites, however: we do not want the remarks of literary men who know next to nothing of music, whose musical taste has not

<sup>21</sup> Unsigned, ‘The Gentle Art of Musical Criticism’, *Musical Standard* (8 June 1895), 447.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 448. <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

been sufficiently cultivated; for music is a profession to many and much harm may be done by ill-judged and stupidly ignorant depreciation.<sup>24</sup>

The 1890s were characterised by editors taking up the mantle of criticism and advancing the new school or new culture of authorship and authority. Just as newspaper readers and later music critics had joined the call for reform, some journal editors began to redirect editorial policy and give space to the new-school criticism.

### The Reform Agenda in Action: Education and Training

In the literature complaining about the standard of music criticism in England, the education and training of critics was almost invariably raised. We have seen already that a high value was placed on wide reading and detailed knowledge of musical works, coupled with a desire for detailed understanding of technical terms and a cultivated literary style. In the second half of the nineteenth century in particular, a plethora of self-help books were published for aspiring journalists, some of which gave advice to would-be music critics. For most music critics, even established and successful ones such as Newman, Herman Klein and Shaw, the route to becoming a music critic was informal and unstructured. As Klein remarked in his autobiography, *Musicians and Mummies* (1925):

My education as a musical critic was, I admit, rather of the practical, rough-and-ready order. Still, I have good reason for thinking it to have been neither better nor worse than that which was common to the period wherein I graduated as a musical journalist. Not until much later was a university training regarded as an essential preliminary for the young man who aspired to follow his branch of the profession. The musical critics of the sixties and seventies are nowadays dismissed with a smile as having been pleasantly naïve and comparatively incompetent.<sup>25</sup>

Ernest Newman meanwhile served his literary apprenticeship for about a decade from the late 1880s with the great Victorian polymath, rationalist and literary critic, John M. Robertson.<sup>26</sup> Through a combination of self-instruction, studies at University College, Liverpool and close mentoring by Robertson, Newman learned to read eight languages with varying proficiency, wrote on a huge range of topics ranging from banking reform to

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 448–9.

<sup>25</sup> Herman Klein, *Musicians and Mummies* (London: Cassell and Company, 1925), p. 83.

<sup>26</sup> For more on Robertson, see Odin Dekkers, *J. M. Robertson: Rationalist and Literary Critic* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).

Russian literature, and was provided with publishing opportunities through Robertson's many contacts and work as an editor. He was also a voracious reader with a substantial personal library of more than 10,000 volumes that contained books on philosophy, science, history and music, in addition to English, French, German and Russian literature.<sup>27</sup>

Shaw also benefited from contacts within the newspaper industry to secure his job as a music critic, as recounted with characteristic humour in his well-known essay, 'How to Become a Musical Critic':

My own plan [to become a musical critic] was a simple one. I joined the staff of a new daily paper as a leader writer. My exploits in this department spread such terror and confusion that my proposal to turn my attention to musical criticism was hailed with inexpressible relief, the subject being one in which lunacy is privileged. I was given a column to myself precisely as I might have been given a padded room in an asylum; and from that time up to the other day – a period of nearly seven years – I wrote every week, in that paper or another, an article under the general heading 'Music', the first condition of which was, as a matter of good journalism, that it should be as attractive to the general reader, musician or non-musician, as any other section of the paper in which it appeared.<sup>28</sup>

Like Shaw, Neville Cardus was mentored, but by C. P. Scott, editor of the *Manchester Guardian*. In 1916, Cardus was desperate to become a full-time writer. In his *Autobiography*, Cardus tells how he summoned up the courage to write to Scott to ask for a job. Much to his surprise, Scott agreed to meet Cardus in the December of 1916 and offered him a job as a secretary, which involved writing short summaries of books that Scott gave him by the following day. After some weeks, Cardus was relieved of the position (without payment), but by March Scott had offered him a role at the *Manchester Guardian* which saw him reporting on local council news and music hall. It was not until much later that he would replace Samuel Langford as the newspaper's music critic, having already established himself as a noted cricket writer.

Just as Robertson took Newman under his wing, Scott nurtured Cardus's career. In fact, Cardus attributed Scott's reading of his work as a significant point in his career because he refined Cardus's writing style. Cardus described Scott as a 'puritan on matters of language' who barred the use of the words

<sup>27</sup> For more on Newman's intellectual formation see Paul Watt, *Ernest Newman: A Critical Biography* (Martelsham: Boydell Press, 2017).

<sup>28</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *How to Become a Musical Critic*, ed. Dan H. Lawrence (New York: Da Capo Press, 1978). The article was first published in *Scottish Musical Monthly* in December 1894 and reprinted in *New Music Review*, October 1912.

such as ‘commence’, ‘basically’ and ‘sex’ and occasionally reprimanded Cardus over wayward expression or syntax.<sup>29</sup> Cardus held Scott in high regard but also identified his blind spots:

He [Scott] did not presume to be a judge of the writing of a critic, though he once told me he preferred [Ernest] Newman’s writing to [Samuel] Langford’s. Scott found Newman’s prose clearer, and more concrete; he couldn’t fully appreciate the poetic imagery of Langford.<sup>30</sup>

But Scott was not Cardus’s sole mentor. Cardus wrote of the ‘gifted’ people at the *Manchester Guardian*, who included Haslam Mills, Hedley Lockett and J. V. Ratcliffe, who among others led Cardus to describe this heady environment as ‘like an Academy in the Athenian sense’.<sup>31</sup> For Cardus:

There was a wonderful comradeship on the *Manchester Guardian*: it was the best university in the world. We used to go into the underground cellars in Manchester – they were for men only. No wine was served, just coffee. If you wanted a meal, you stayed upstairs. In those cellars I was given tutorials, as thorough and as wide-ranging as any that an undergraduate has had at Oxford or Cambridge.<sup>32</sup>

By contrast, most other journalists, critics and reporters had to fight their way into what was by the end of the nineteenth century a severely crowded marketplace, and self-help books had long been published to give aspiring writers a professional edge or, at the very least, some help. According to the *Reporter’s Guide* of 1869, at best one in twenty journalists working on the top journals had a university education, with very few having ‘a good classical education’.<sup>33</sup> Essential to the aspiring journalist, according to this book, was a working knowledge of Latin, French and the Greek alphabet, some legal knowledge, and shorthand; they should further capitalise on this knowledge by owning copies of Webster’s *Dictionary*, Haydn’s *Dictionary of Dates*, Bohn’s *Dictionary of Classical Quotations* and Cruden’s *Concordance*, among other reference works. Other manuals for self-instruction, such as Robert D. Blackburn’s handbook, *Composition and Style* (1885), focused on the cultivation of style: ‘The present volume sets forth and illustrates all the rules which should be observed by the young Author. These, if diligently practised, will enable any one of ordinary intelligence to acquire for himself a clear and forcible style.’<sup>34</sup>

<sup>29</sup> Neville Cardus, *Autobiography* (London: Collins, 1947), p. 161    <sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 98–9, 95.

<sup>32</sup> Robin Daniels, *Conversations with Cardus* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1969), p. 163.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Allen Reed, *The Reporter’s Guide* (London: Pitman, 1869), p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> Robert D. Blackburn, *Composition and Style: A Handbook for Literary Students*, 5th ed. (London: C. W. Deacon and Co., 1885).

Blackburn goes on to instruct the reader on sentence and paragraph construction, cautioning against ‘puffing’ and hyperbole, and advocating that the prime rule of criticism was making prose readable.

Some manuals and self-help books encouraged aspiring journalists to steer well clear of vicious attacks on authors and works of art. In his *Practical Journalism* of 1885, for example, John Dawson cautioned his readers: ‘Let me impress upon young journalists the seriousness of criticism – i.e., don’t rush; take care to read fully . . . Praise the good, firmly, yet kindly condemn the bad; and altogether seek rather to encourage than discourage a young writer if signs of improvement can be discerned.’<sup>35</sup> He further advised aspiring dramatic critics to cultivate a knowledge of music, ‘as opera bouffe is now so popular on the stage, [it] would undoubtedly be a useful acquisition’.<sup>36</sup>

Few of these manuals and handbooks were written specifically for music critics. A. Arthur Reade’s *Literary Success* (1885) merely mentioned that critics of drama, art and music were generally specialised, and had nothing more to say on the subject.<sup>37</sup> But the issue of specific training for would-be music critics surfaced in the press in the 1890s, following the establishment of a training school for female journalists in Westminster around 1890. An unsigned article in the *Speaker* of 15 March 1890 entitled ‘Lady Journalists’ belittled this initiative, complaining that women ‘not content with penetrating into the pulpit, should also bring the rustle of petticoats within the sacred precincts of Fleet Street’.<sup>38</sup> If there had to be female journalists, this writer thought they ought to be confined to ‘writing articles on Shakespeare and the musical glasses, to fill up the columns of the evening papers’.<sup>39</sup> He predicted ‘danger’ about this newly established school for producing graduates ‘with only a scanty knowledge of literature, and without the slightest instinct for journalism’.<sup>40</sup>

Runciman provided a more sympathetic account of the female critic in the March 1895 edition of *Monthly Musical Record*. In this article, Runciman commented on the attributes of the music critic, regardless of their sex, though his comment about women making better critics than men, given their propensity for gossip, undermines his attempt to respect women as equals.<sup>41</sup> Still, Runciman was of the opinion that the essential qualifications for criticism – a knowledge of technique, music history, aesthetics and ‘sanity

<sup>35</sup> John Dawson, *Practical Journalism: How to Enter Thereon and Succeed: A Manual for Beginners and Amateurs* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1885), p. 48.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>37</sup> A. Arthur Reade, *Literary Success: A Guide to Practical Journalism* (London: Wyman & Sons, 1885).

<sup>38</sup> Unsigned, ‘Lady Journalists’, *Speaker* (15 March 1890), 283. <sup>39</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> John. F. Runciman, ‘Women as Musical Critics’, *Monthly Musical Record* (1 March 1895), 49–50.

of judgment', as well as the cultivation of a personal style – could be acquired and demonstrated by both women and men.<sup>42</sup>

Women were further encouraged to take up musical criticism in Frances H. Low's *Press Work for Women: A Textbook for the Young Woman Journalist* (1895).<sup>43</sup> Low was not going to let a male-dominated profession stand in her readers' way:

This branch of journalism [musical and dramatic criticism] is, for the most part, even in the sixpenny women's papers, for some extraordinary reason, almost wholly in the hands of men, and offers an interesting though limited field for a cultivated writer's taste, imagination and knowledge ... Seeing what a number of cultivated women musicians there are, this want of enterprise is striking; and I cannot help thinking that students who have a thorough knowledge of the theory of music might do worse than qualify themselves as critics.<sup>44</sup>

It was not until 1911 that an article-length discussion establishing a school for music critics was ventured, and it was written by Ernest Newman in the January *Musical Times*.<sup>45</sup> The article was inspired by recent articles in *Le Courrier Musical* in which it was reported that a paper entitled 'La critique musicale, ses devoirs, sa méthode' had recently been read by Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi at the École des hautes études sociales in Paris (where he had been teaching a course on music criticism). Newman thought the idea of a school for music critics was a worthy idea: 'the critic alone has not only to build his house but make his own bricks and find his own straw [but] he has, of course, the writings of great critics to go upon'.<sup>46</sup> The observation that emerging music critics did not appear to take the job seriously troubled Newman and he doubted they would be inclined to seek out an appropriately qualified mentor. Newman had in mind a mentoring programme spread over a handful of years in which an aspiring critic would be coached, presumably reflecting his own path to criticism under Robertson's mentorship. The critic would benefit from assuming his own principles were right and that 'until the critic can go to school as the composer and the performer can, and profit, like them, by what previous workers in the same field have learned, most criticism will remain the haphazard and dogmatic and contradictory thing it is at present'.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>43</sup> Frances H. Low, *Press Work for Women: A Textbook for the Young Woman Journalist* (London: L. Upcott Gill, 1904).

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>45</sup> Ernest Newman, 'A School for Musical Critics', *Musical Times* (1 March 1911), 16–17. <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Three months later, Calvocoressi himself answered Newman's article in the *Musical Times*, providing some background and context to his lecture.<sup>48</sup> In it he drew his readers' attention to an article by a Dr Bradford in the *Westminster Review* of November 1894 that suggested the introduction of an examination for music critics, but mentioned that the only structured course with which Braddon was familiar was at the Berlin Seminar für Musik by Dr W. Altmann.<sup>49</sup> Calvocoressi then went on to explain that music criticism had been taught at the Paris École des hautes études sociales as early as 1908 by Mr Hellouin, and from 1908 Calvocoressi had also presented lectures.

Calvocoressi appears unconvinced that music criticism can be taught, but suggests that

The pupil critic should now be taught how to cull facts, to discern and to weight their import. He should be helped to train his perceptive, emotional and intellectual faculties; to cultivate his receptiveness and his taste, on which his opinions are founded, and to discern the connection between these opinions and certain facts – thus discovering the true key to sound criticism.

Calvocoressi thought that teaching was most effective in groups of two or three students. The method of instruction in his classes in Paris involved the following:

All the principal accounts and criticisms issued after first performances are read and compared, care being taken to render the starting-points – involving many a ramble through the dangerous regions of pure aesthetics – and of the connections between the principles implicitly or explicitly professed and the actual judgments. This is the more practical part of each lesson, devoted to applied aesthetics and the acquirement, not of a particular method, but of method.<sup>50</sup>

Calvocoressi gave further instruction in music history and analysis, especially rhythmic analysis, and the study of a range of criticism evaluating how opinions are formed and 'all the directions for the writing of articles or books, including advice about scope, plan, tone, diction &c., with reference to the requirements of publication or public for which they are intended'.<sup>51</sup>

### Reform in Theory and Practice

By the 1920s the past, present and future of music criticism had been so much discussed and had garnered so much interest that two landmark books were

<sup>48</sup> Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, 'Can Musical Criticism Be Taught?', *Musical Times* (1 May 1911), 300–2.

<sup>49</sup> Jacob Bradford, 'Musical Criticism and Critics', *Westminster Review* (November 1984), 530–6.

<sup>50</sup> Calvocoressi, 'Can Musical Criticism Be Taught?', 302. <sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*

written on the practical as well as theoretical parameters of the craft: Newman's *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (1925) and Calvocoressi's *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (1923).<sup>52</sup>

*A Musical Critic's Holiday* was a reflective and sometimes pedestrian treatise on criticism, but it stopped short of articulating a theory or method of criticism, which was implied in the opening pages. Consequently, the book confounded many readers, as Newman readily admitted.<sup>53</sup> *A Musical Critic's Holiday* considered the need to separate objectivity from subjectivity in criticism and for a critic to be able to stand apart from 'the clichés of his day'.<sup>54</sup> Newman saw detachment and perspective as characteristics of a process he termed 'backthought' and argued strongly that 'Genuine criticism must always function in the past, not the present'.<sup>55</sup>

On publication, the book was misinterpreted by some of Newman's colleagues, including Edwin Evans, who reviewed it in the *Musical Times*.<sup>56</sup> Evans claimed that Newman's purpose was to 'envisage a work of art in complete detachment from all considerations arising from its, and from the critics' period, environment, and personal idiosyncrasies'.<sup>57</sup> But this was not so. Newman had long advocated that musical works should be judged free of a critic's bias and appraised outside its immediate historical environment. For example, Newman argued that a study of the historical circumstances and later reception surrounding Wagner's 'unsavoury reputation' was needed 'as regards general public recognition of his work'.<sup>58</sup> This is an instance of Newman's 'backthought' in operation, the use of history and historical method, a process Newman had long advocated, most self-consciously in *Gluck and the Opera* (1895).

Calvocoressi's book was an altogether different enterprise. It was based on his work in Paris, but he stressed that the book was not aimed at 'solving all his problems for him'.<sup>59</sup> In the preface, Calvocoressi outlined his view on the characteristics of a good critic:

<sup>52</sup> Ernest Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925); and Michel-Dimitri Calvocoressi, *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; London: Humphrey Milford, 1923).

<sup>53</sup> Following its publication, Newman wrote three articles on the purpose of his book, admitting people had been confused by it: 'A Postscript to "A Musical Critic's Holiday"', *Musical Times*, 66/992 (1 October 1925), 881–4; 66/993 (1 November 1925), 977–81; 66/994 (1 December 1925), 1076–9.

<sup>54</sup> Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, pp. vii–viii. <sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xi.

<sup>56</sup> Edwin Evans, 'Objectivity in Contemporary Criticism', *Musical Times*, 66/990 (1925), 692–5. Newman's 'A Postscript to "A Musical Critic's Holiday"' in the *Musical Times* was essentially a long-winded reply to Evans. Evans and Newman were locked in an ideological battle for years, and the battle is briefly discussed in Nigel Scaife, 'British Music Criticism in a New Era: Studies in Critical Thought, 1894–1945', unpublished DPhil thesis, University of Oxford (1994), 158–61.

<sup>57</sup> Evans, 'Objectivity in Contemporary Criticism', 692.

<sup>58</sup> Newman, *A Musical Critic's Holiday*, p. 124.

<sup>59</sup> Calvocoressi, *The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism*, p. 6.

A perusal of this book will show that, in its author's opinion, the musical critic's studies should include a good deal besides all that properly refers to music as an art: various branches of philosophy, viz. psychology, aesthetics, and logic; acoustics and other branches of musical science, if only in order to test the conclusion or assertions of writers who draw upon these for controversial purposes; and history (not of music only), more on account of the mistakes which ignorance will occasion than for the help history affords in criticism proper. Experience in other arts and other modes of thought will prove the sole remedy against the dangers of specialization, which tends to narrow, and warp the critic's outlook.<sup>60</sup>

*The Principles and Methods of Musical Criticism* differs significantly from the dozens of articles that complained about the lack of quality criticism and the self-help books that attempted to remedy the situation. This literature was largely empirical, self-referential and focused on practical matters such as drawing attention to old-school criticism as a means of illustrating how new criticism should work, providing working examples of poor writing styles in order to cultivate better ones. Calvocoressi's book was significantly more theoretical, philosophical and, importantly, European in outlook. He referred the student to many authorities, past and present, including Kant, C. A. Sainte-Beuve, Berlioz and local experts on criticism such as Clive Bell, Newman, John M. Robertson, George Saintsbury and Walter Pater. Major sections of the book quoted their writings on the role and function of the critic and criticism. It is clear that above all else, Calvocoressi practised what he preached in terms of the necessity of wide reading.

In some respects, Calvocoressi's publication did not cover especially new ground in his views that aspiring music critics should be widely read, command a wide vocabulary and write in a readable style. He advised critics to exercise discretion between documentary sources and circumstantial evidence, and to discern nuances of meaning in literature in psychology and the psycho-physiological sciences. He also stressed the importance of being familiar with historical writing and the comparative method.

By the 1920s there was a vast literature on historical method that had been appropriated across the spectrum of emerging specialist disciplines in the last century. Calvocoressi was particularly interested in one pocket of this literature: Robertson's rationalist approach to criticism, which had gained considerable currency in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ostensibly through two books, *Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1889) and *New Essays Towards a Critical Method* (1897), and an article, 'Criticism and

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Science' (1919).<sup>61</sup> These writings did not prescribe a strictly positivist framework for reading history and philosophy, but rather sought to draw attention to the way reason and logic – also referred to in some literature as induction – should form the basis of all criticism in an effort to be rid of what Robertson termed 'the personal equation', or bias. The result of this process was to achieve a consistent view on art and, through comparison of works of art and others' judgements of them, to arrive at a considered, consistent and rational judgement of one's own.<sup>62</sup>

The strength of Calvocoressi's book is his careful use of examples. It teaches the student how to 'read' in between the lines, how to be alert for evidence of bias and how to know the historiography of books and the philosophical and aesthetic context in which they were written. It is a much more intellectual account of how one might learn to be a critic, and it subtly, but powerfully, allows students to discover their own blind spots and the ways in which the ideal of objectivity, or 'ethical critics' as Calvocoressi also termed it, may be attained.

### The 1930s and 1940s: Newman and Cardus

Newman and Cardus dominated music criticism in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s and became household names. In 1920, when Newman was appointed chief music editor at the *Sunday Times*, he had already developed a reputation as a formidable and controversial voice. By contrast, Cardus was much less fierce but equally well known. He worked on the *Manchester Guardian* from 1927 to 1940 but also travelled to Australia in the 1930s and 1940s to report on cricket at first and then music. Despite Runciman's and others' efforts to reform music criticism, it is important to bear in mind that this call to arms was not about homogenising the style and tenor of criticism. And despite their common backgrounds and interests – a provincial, working-class upbringing, agnosticism and interest in rationalism, and a love of romantic music – their styles of criticism could not be more different, even though Cardus recorded Newman's significant influence on his career.

Newman was twenty-one years older than Cardus and was well entrenched in his own career when Cardus was just starting out. Cardus wrote that as a youth he fell under the 'spell' of Newman's work on the *Birmingham Daily Post* (in the early 1900s), going so far as to admit he 'borrowed' from Newman,

<sup>61</sup> John M. Robertson, *Essays Toward a Critical Method* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1889); *New Essays Toward a Critical Method* (London and New York: Bodley Head/John Lane, 1897); 'Criticism and Science', *North American Review*, 209 (1919), 690–6.

<sup>62</sup> Calvocoressi, *Principles and Methods*, p. 32.

meaning that he tried to emulate his mentor's writing style: 'I practised my pen with Newman my model in music criticism, with Shaw and Montague and Agate my models in theatre criticism.'<sup>63</sup> Cardus also wrote of imitating or 'aping' Newman's style.<sup>64</sup> When Cardus reflected on the first article he published, which was on Bantock in the 1916–17 volume of *Musical Opinion*, he described it as 'written in the scholarly manner of the rationalist school presided over by J. M. Robertson and Newman. It contained footnotes and was copious in allusions. I could almost have indexed it, beginning with Alembert and ending it with Zukunftsmusik.'<sup>65</sup> On the one hand, Cardus was writing sarcastically, for this style of criticism was pedantic and a bit overcooked but, on the other hand, he admired it for its breadth and thoroughness. Cardus credits his love of Hugo Wolf's lieder to Newman (whose book on the subject was published in 1907).<sup>66</sup> Cardus also wrote of his engrossment with Newman's writings on music, especially from his book on the piano-player.<sup>67</sup> In fact, Cardus attributed Newman with inspiring him to be a music critic: 'At around this time [1905], he [Newman] brought out a book called *Musical Studies*. That book made me wish to become a music critic.'<sup>68</sup>

Despite a shared interest in and influence by Robertson, and Cardus's deep respect for Newman's work, their approaches to music criticism were vastly different. Cardus described these polarities:

I was blessed in my two teachers – Langford the Platonist, Ernest Newman the Aristotelean: Spirit of Affirmation and Spirit of Denial. Langford taught me to feel and translate, while Newman taught me to observe and analyse. Faust and Mephistopheles! – without these two working in harness, so to say, no man can hope really to know art or life. Langford was like the priest administering the sacrament, the body and blood of Beethoven; Newman was the sceptic who while he aesthetically savoured the ritual was alert of palate enough to know always if the wine were good – *qua* wine. Newman never allowed me to take my eye from the object ... Newman remained outside the creative process, and Langford was absorbed into it.<sup>69</sup>

Cardus's criticisms were often imbued with the parlance of religion, especially with a Roman Catholic hue, though he was not a practising Christian of any

<sup>63</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, pp. 41, 47.      <sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50; Cardus, 'Bantock and Style in Art', *Musical Opinion*, 40 (1916–17), 158–9.

<sup>66</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 55; Ernest Newman, *Hugo Wolf* (London: Methuen, 1907). Newman's other work on Wolf include 'Hugo Wolf', *Contemporary Review* (1 January 1904), 707–20; and *Fifty Songs by Hugo Wolf* (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1909).

<sup>67</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 50; Ernest Newman, *The Piano-Player and Its Music* (London: Grant Richards, 1920).

<sup>68</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 40; Newman, *Musical Studies* (London and New York: Bodley Head/John Lane, 1905).

<sup>69</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, pp. 213–14.

sort. He once described himself as ‘an atheist who prays’ and also wrote of this distinction about Christ: ‘He [Jesus Christ] offered the world a complete code for civilized living, but the majority of people reject Him. The fact that He went to the Cross as an ordinary man – divesting himself of all power – moves me much more deeply than the description and theology of the Resurrection.’<sup>70</sup> Under the influence of his employer at Shrewsbury School, Cyril Alington, Cardus wrote that it was he who ‘compelled me to overhaul my disbelief, much to my annoyance; a young man’s scepticism towards all revealed religion could be mightily dogmatic a quarter of a century ago’.<sup>71</sup> It is therefore difficult to pin down Cardus’s religious outlook; suffice it to say that he appeared to believe in some kind of divine spirituality. This manifested itself in various ways in his writing, including the belief that a gramophone recording was a poor substitute for experiencing the musicality of a performer in the flesh. In reference to Kathleen Ferrier he wrote that on the gramophone the listener ‘experienced only 50 per cent of her. The presence of Kathleen on the platform . . . you felt a *spiritual* communication’.<sup>72</sup> Cardus also spoke of the value of communication in relation to writers: ‘The communication you receive from the hands of a great genius such as Dickens and Shakespeare is much more penetrating than a fleeting television show, which is only an image on the retina – and I don’t think it goes very much farther than that!’<sup>73</sup> Despite these difficult nuances of religious thought, Cardus ultimately believed music was on a higher plane than life and other arts.<sup>74</sup>

Cardus’s metaphysical appraisal of music is perhaps best demonstrated in his writings on the Austrian pianist Artur Schnabel (1882–1951), widely revered for his technique and interpretive depth. Cardus’s opinion was no exception, and he was especially captivated by his performances of Beethoven: ‘You wouldn’t be told that Schnabel was a man of distinction. His conversation within ten minutes would have made you think to yourself, “Who is he? What does he do? He’s either a philosopher, a writer, a painter, or a – musician.”’<sup>75</sup> Cardus described how ‘in an almost clairvoyant way’ he could recall Schnabel playing Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 32 Op. 111; the pianist was like a ‘spiritual medium’ and that ‘it is as though Beethoven was speaking through him’.<sup>76</sup> For Cardus, composers and conductors ‘work through the medium of the senses’,<sup>77</sup> this was what defined the ‘romantic temperament’.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64; Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 266. <sup>71</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 81.

<sup>72</sup> Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 230. <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 268

<sup>74</sup> See Christopher Brookes, *His Own Man: The Life of Neville Cardus* (London: Methuen, 1985), p. 60.

<sup>75</sup> Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 116. Other pianists Cardus greatly admired were Arthur Rubinstein, Muriel Cohen and Ignaz Friedman.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 140. <sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* <sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

In taking the spiritual dimension a step further, Cardus recounted how Schnabel saw himself as a medium:

Before going on to the platform for a public performance I would call to mind what Schnabel used to say to his students when they were nervous about playing in front of the audience: 'You will only be nervous, when you go to the piano, if you are thinking about yourself. Think of Beethoven and then *he* will play'. Schnabel wanted the pianist to be a medium – so far as a human being can be. Whenever I heard Schnabel play I felt he *was* a medium through whom music was speaking. There are very few pianists today whom I would put in that category.<sup>79</sup>

Believing music to be on a higher plane than the other arts and in the ability of a musician to channel music are quintessential romantic values. Indeed Cardus was very aware of this and once described himself as the last of the romantics.<sup>80</sup> It was even suggested to him by Daniels that he was 'the arch-romantic among English music critics'.<sup>81</sup> And it was a belief that was far away from Newman's atheism.

Newman's criticism rarely drew on metaphysical or religious hyperbole, and he virtually never wrote of his rapture either with a performer or a performance. He was reticent about claiming any degree of emotional response to music. His style as a critic was typically rationalist: he strove to be scientific, removed and impartial. His criticism may have betrayed a disinterest in Mozart and a once over-inflated view of Joseph Holbrooke, but by and large Newman's criticisms were unbiased, in Cardus's view.<sup>82</sup>

A particularly good example of Newman's scientific approach to criticism is found in a series of three articles in the *Sunday Times* in the early 1920s. In 'A Physiology of Criticism', published in January and February 1929, Newman acknowledged that personal biases got in the way of objective criticism and that any appeal for a scientific method of criticism would be ridiculed.<sup>83</sup> Undeterred, Newman proposed a 'system of musical physiology'. In this initial article, he reacted to Paul Bekker's 1911 biography of Beethoven, in which he felt its author had 'read things into Beethoven's music that are not to be found in the music'.<sup>84</sup> Newman insisted that his own physiological

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p. 260. <sup>80</sup> Ibid., p. 262. <sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 95.

<sup>82</sup> For Newman's blind spots in Mozart. see Daniels, *Conversations*, p. 41. For an extended account of Newman's spectacular over-estimation of Holbrooke see Paul Watt, "'A Nationalist in Art': Holbrooke's *Contemporary British Composers* (1925)", in Paul Watt and Anne-Marie Forbes (eds.), *Joseph Holbrooke: Composer, Critic, and Musical Patriot* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), especially pp. 160–2.

<sup>83</sup> Ernest Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism', *Sunday Times* (20 January 1929), 7; (10 February 1929), 7; and (17 February 1929), 7. These three essays are reprinted in Felix Aprahamian (ed.), *Essays from the World of Music* (London: John Calder, 1956), pp. 13–27.

<sup>84</sup> Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7; Paul Bekker, *Beethoven* (Berlin: Schuster and Loeffler, 1911); English trans. by M. M. Bozman (London: J. M. Dent, 1925). For background on Bekker's career see Christopher Hailey, 'The Paul Bekker Collection in the Yale University Library', *Notes*, 51 (1994), 13–21.

approach could arrive at a more tangible interpretation of a composer's psychology, but many of his readers were not entirely convinced.

Newman turned to his book *The Unconscious Beethoven*, published two years before, in 1927, as an example of how a physiological study of a composer might be realised.<sup>85</sup> Newman argued that Beethoven had employed three ascending notes (arranged and rearranged in about six different configurations) as the basis for all his compositions, and that Beethoven was

the only composer in whom you will find such a sequence of three notes used with such frequency, always at the same equivalent point in the melody, and always as the obvious expression of a certain state of mind. The three-note sequence, I contend, is a veritable Beethoven fingerprint, because it is not found in any other composer.<sup>86</sup>

Although *The Unconscious Beethoven* was not widely reviewed, some critics disagreed with Newman's fingerprint thesis on the grounds that it was too speculative. On the other hand, one reviewer believed Newman's formal-analytical treatment did not go far enough.<sup>87</sup> Newman admitted in his first article on physiology that the Beethoven book had met with 'small success', but he remained convinced of its argument. Newman asserted that his type of musical analysis, which was concerned, in part, with discerning compositional processes, could go one step further: to 'see a certain mood' when particular formulas were used, as in the case of Beethoven.<sup>88</sup>

If undertaking a study of Schubert, for example, Newman argued that it would not be difficult to find a set of devices that would be 'always unconsciously employed when Schubert wished to express a certain mood', just as his study of Beethoven had concluded. This establishment of a mood, argued Newman, was the benefit that a physiological study would bring and should be approached in a particularly scholarly way:

I would argue that on the practical aesthetic side [of this physiological method] alone a good deal would be achieved if for a few years writers upon music would abandon their too easy psychological methods – which mean, in the last resort, only saying the first thing that comes into your head – and

<sup>85</sup> Ernest Newman, *The Unconscious Beethoven: An Essay in Musical Psychology* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927).

<sup>86</sup> Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7.

<sup>87</sup> A particularly trenchant and hostile review of *The Unconscious Beethoven* was written by Carl Engel in 'Views and Reviews', *Musical Quarterly*, 13/4 (October 1927), 646–62. Engel lambasted Newman for throwing 'mud' (646) at Beethoven's reputation and did not find the formal analysis section of the book convincing. On the other hand, writing in 1929, Paul Miles was disappointed that 'Newman's book received too little attention, I think, and its suggestiveness was not fully realized', in 'Beethoven Sketches', *Gramophone* (29 October 1929), 12.

<sup>88</sup> Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 1', 7.

devote themselves to establishing a preliminary physiology of each of the great composer's styles.<sup>89</sup>

Newman's readers were puzzled. He spent the next two instalments (27 January and 3 February) answering readers' letters in a convoluted fashion, going over old ground about the difficulties of impartial criticism and the perils of the so-called 'personal equation'. Newman was at pains to point out that by a physiology of criticism he did not mean 'a study of the composer in the light of his nerves and arteries, or even of his liver'.<sup>90</sup> Readers were still confused, and the letters continued to pour in. In the last instalment, on 17 February, Newman called a truce:

The sooner I end this series of articles the better, for it is evident from the letters I receive on the subject that no one has the slightest idea what it is I am driving at. I must wait and see if I have better luck in a treatment of the subject on a larger scale elsewhere. The term 'physiology' is plainly a stumbling-block for most people; they read into it a meaning I never intended, and then write me long letters that are most interesting in themselves, but hopelessly irrelevant to the theme.<sup>91</sup>

Cardus's emphasis on spirituality and Newman's preoccupation with physical or scientific matters represented the extremes of musical criticism in the first half of the nineteenth century. Newman distrusted any sort of criticism of a spiritual hue, while Cardus was extremely ambivalent about any kind of psychological outpouring. Indeed, the latter wrote in his autobiography: 'It is perhaps necessary here to point out that young men of thirty years ago did not read books and listen to music and attend theatres and art galleries to "integrate their personalities", or to seek out some "higher synthesis."'"<sup>92</sup>

Despite their different approaches and styles of criticism Newman and Cardus shared a disdain for much of the musical criticism written by their peers. Cardus 'hated the bulk of English musical criticism for its dryness of nature and its parsimonious good-mannered use of the language'.<sup>93</sup> He also despised the party-politics of Lambert and the Sitwells: 'It was Lombard Street to a china orange that this new intelligentsia would praise Berlioz at the expense of Wagner'; he also admonished H. C. Colles and Francis Toye for being predictable.<sup>94</sup> Echoing Runciman and Stanford, Cardus frequently opined that modern criticism lacked wit and depth of knowledge about music through research, and he commented on the ridiculous rush to get concert reviews into print the next day, preferring instead for English

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. <sup>90</sup> Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 3', 7.

<sup>91</sup> Newman, 'A Physiology of Criticism 4', 7. <sup>92</sup> Cardus, *Autobiography*, p. 257. <sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p. 267.

newspapers to adopt the French and German practice of printing longer notices days after the performance. Cardus complained that criticism had become too much of a business.<sup>95</sup>

## Conclusion

The drive for quality music criticism in Britain that began in the second half of the nineteenth century was in order to replace the dogmatic, opinionated and hack reporting deemed old-school criticism, while a more carefully written and nuanced approach to writing raised the quality of reviewing to criticism, even science. This was the new era of criticism for which Runciman, Newman and others had long agitated. It is not surprising, given the prevalence of positivist thought in the nineteenth century, that a system of principles should be developed for criticism of all types, but it was ultimately an unworkable scheme that could never regulate individuality of style. The best that could be hoped for was that music critics could be trained appropriately for their profession. Books by Newman and Calvocoressi represent both theoretical and practical applications of musical criticism, but neither book attempts to shoehorn musical criticism into formulaic approaches. Furthermore, the careers of Newman and Cardus clearly demonstrate the new tenor of criticism: reference to Shakespeare, Dickens, physiology and aesthetics in the extracts above from Newman and Cardus illustrate the broad depth of learning and a wider frame of reference of the new-school critics. Moreover their style was not cast in an ‘impersonal manner’, nor was it ‘sheer dullness’, terms in which Runciman had earlier described criticism of old. A new criticism of much broader horizons, intellectual clout and polished writing style had emerged and come of age.

<sup>95</sup> Daniels, *Conversations*, pp. 173–5.

The rapid expansion of the British Empire in the second half of the XIXth century was accompanied by a rise in the diffusion and the legitimacy of racist ideas in Britain. Intellectuals wrote of the "scientific" differences between the races, and racial hierarchies were generally accepted by educated people. What of the uneducated? Our article will aim at analysing the racist content of popular music in this period – both that of the extremely popular "minstrel shows", where white performers disguised themselves as stereotypical black slaves for the purposes of entertainment, and the "coon songs" which were common in the music halls. This is despite the fact that we know of severe criticism of minstrelsy in the US context from many decades earlier. The Oxford Companion to Music defines music criticism as "the intellectual activity of formulating judgments on the value and degree of excellence of individual works of music, or whole groups or genres". In this sense, it is a branch of musical aesthetics. With the concurrent expansion of interest in music and information media over the past century, the term has come to acquire the conventional meaning of journalistic reporting on musical performances. MUSIC CRITICISM Music criticism has played a fundamental and influential role throughout music history, with numerous composers such as Berlioz, Schumann and Wagner, as well as many contemporary musicians, also maintaining careers as writers and critics. The Cambridge History of Music Criticism goes beyond these better-known accounts, reaching back to medieval times, expanding the geographical reach both within and beyond Europe and including key issues such as women and criticism, recordings and the story of criticism in jazz, popular music and world music. 18 . Critical Battlegrounds in the French Third Republic 344 DELPHINE MORDEY. 19 . British Music Criticism, 1890–1945 371 PAUL WATT. 20 . Music Criticism in Norway 392 PER DAHL.