

**Beyond the Drawing Room: The Musical Lives of Victorian Women**

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<1>With the notable but hardly positive exception of Alcharisi in *Daniel Deronda*, professional women musicians are rare in what we have come to regard as the canonical Victorian novels. Rather, the image of the Victorian woman musician is most commonly one gazed upon from the privacy of the middle-class drawing room. A middle-class woman seated at the piano embodies refinement and accomplishment as she performs to friends, family, and potential husbands, who applaud and murmur their approval to one another. Even in this private setting, the stakes are high for the woman musician: if she plays well, her performance may earn her a husband, but a discordant note could raise questions about her breeding and respectability. In this image, the piano's significance is more than its utility as a musical instrument; as Mary Burgan writes, "Of all the luxuries available to the middle classes in nineteenth-century England, the piano was perhaps the most significant in the lives of women; it was not only an emblem of social status, it provided a gauge of a woman's training in the required accomplishments of genteel society." (Burgan 52) Consider *Middlemarch's* Rosamund and the power her playing has over Lydgate:

A hidden soul seemed to be flowing from Rosamund's fingers; and so indeed it was, since souls live on in perpetual echoes, and to all fine expression there goes somewhere an originating activity, if it be only that of an interpreter. Lydgate was taken possession of, and began to believe in her as something exceptional... He sat looking at her, and did not rise to pay her any compliments, leaving that to others, now that his admiration was deepened. (Eliot 103)

It is not Rosamund's beauty that catalyzes Lydgate's affection and makes her exceptional but the symbolic value of the performance of her musical accomplishment. George Eliot's fiction and poetry resonate with musical allusion and device in no small part because of her own keen interest and extensive musical talent, but even her fictional representations of musical women tend toward the accomplished drawing room pianist rather than the serious, professional career woman musician. (Solie 108)

<2>Of the difference between musical performance and other distinctly feminine accomplishments, Phyllis Weliver writes, "music stood out [from other accomplishments such as sewing and painting] as a performance art in which women were encouraged to take center stage

and demonstrate their genteel education, graceful movements, and self-expression.” (Weliver 1) Sewing and painting culminated in a skilled finished product that can be compared to a well-executed song, but sewers and painters did not embody their skill the same way musical women did theirs. The piano might be the most pervasive image in fictional representations of musical scenes focused around women, but voice and harp were also instruments through which a young woman could exhibit her musical accomplishment. (Temperley 10) The symbolic capital of musical performance was due in part to its multi-sensory nature. To underscore this particularly performative form of musical display, Jodi Lustig indicates that part of the enjoyment of those in the audience came from the visual pleasure offered by the player and piano as decorative objects and as the focus of a hyper-sexualized “musical” gaze. (85-86) Undeniably, at least one expected result of this performance evident in Victorian fiction was marriage. Alisa Clapp-Itnyre writes of a middle-class woman’s musical education that “it became a custom to educate daughters musically for the marriage market, displaying them at social gatherings in order to attract husbands for them.” (32) Because of this intended function of musical education, a woman’s drawing room performance was a form of commodity exchange in which her performance signaled availability, a man responded to her music insofar as it was social indicator of femininity and readiness for domestic life, and the two parties mutually recognized that the purpose of the performance was eventual marriage. This commodity exchange model explains the abundance of single female pianists and lack of married female pianists in much of Victorian fiction; once a woman married, the function of music as an accomplishment was no longer needed.(1) Rosamund’s performance is only one example of this familiar scene in which superficial musical training earns the performer a husband but falsely signifies her preparation to function within a marriage. However, the prevalence of this image in novels such as *Middlemarch* obscures the greater ideological and cultural significance of music in the lives of Victorian women. The periodical press demonstrates music held greater (and more complex) significance in women’s lives than the novel’s drawing-room image indicates. Besides being a private performance within the home, the musical profession was a space within the public sphere where women could participate professionally at a time when women’s participation in other performing arts such as dance and acting were surrounded by an air of scandal. Women’s professional musical performance was initially validated by its value in the marriage market, but as the century progressed, increased education and the press’s emphasis on music’s professional value in the lives of women worked to legitimize and authorize the figure of the professional musical woman.

<3>The image of the professional musical woman is not entirely absent from contemporary nineteenth-century British literature. Mass-market and serial novels often presented a female opera singer or other stage performer as protagonist or secondary character, though they are often cautionary tales that hardly edify the character of the woman musician.(2) In his study of the *London Journal*, Andrew King finds even at mid-century (specifically the 1850s), before the professionalization of music as a career for women really began, the *London Journal* published portraits and biographies of opera singers. (King 145) However, the image of the professional musical woman in the press contrasts sharply with the prevalent image of the woman musician in the canonical Victorian novel. As active professional participants in Victorian musical culture, women supported themselves by teaching, composing, performing, and writing about music in various periodical formats. Previous scholarship has addressed the intersection of gender and music in the nineteenth century, but few of those studies reference writing about music

specifically for women. As a result, women's periodicals, an invaluable and immediate record of Victorian women's professional pursuits and struggles, have been largely neglected as legitimate sources in the study of Victorian musical culture. To bridge the gender gap between the study of nineteenth-century musical culture and women's experience, this study focuses entirely on writing about music in women's periodicals, specifically series on music in the *Lady's Newspaper* from 1850 to 1851, the *Girls' Own Paper* from 1883-1884, and the *Woman's Signal* from 1897-1898. From the music journalism in women's periodicals emerges a critical connection between music, education and professionalism that explains exactly how music offered Victorian women legitimized entry into a public sphere where they could function like men, undertaking serious education, earning a living and independence and, in some cases, gaining celebrity as musicians and composers. This case history approach to the significance of music in women's lives serves as a useful (and previously unused) lens for surveying the broader cultural significance of music in Victorian Britain from a woman's position of consumption and performance. The value and utility of this approach is that it does not privilege fictional representations of musical women over representations provided by the periodical press (or vice versa), but seeks to reveal a more holistic, total image of the woman musician as one way toward a better understanding of how music contributed to the construction of women's subjectivity throughout the century.

<4>Clara Angela Macirone is one woman who participated publicly in Victorian music culture throughout the period. A music teacher and composer of considerable fame, Macirone also contributed essays and reviews on music to the periodical press throughout her life. Born in 1821, she was educated at the Royal Academy in singing, pianoforte, and composition, and went on to become a professor of pianoforte there. (Champlin and Apthorp 502) Her songs gained popularity and recognition after being performed at the Crystal Palace and Exeter Hall, and her composition "Sir Knight" was the first music heard by Queen Victoria over the telephone in 1878. (Sadie and Samuel 299) A prodigious student of music, Macirone was recognized by the Royal Academy with a testimonial "such as had been presented to no other student," and was elected an associate of the Philharmonic Society. ("Miss Clara A. Macirone" 194) After enjoying great success as a composer and performer, she went on to become head music-mistress of Aske's School for Girls and the Church of England high school for girls in London, and because of her pedagogical success became "one of the best-known women composers and teachers" of the era. (Champlin and Apthorp 502) In these regards alone she must certainly be regarded as a musical professional by nineteenth-century usage of the word (see King in this issue). However, in addition to performing, composing, and teaching, Macirone also wrote extensively about music in an age when most serious music journalism was written by men. Her writing on music passionately advocates the importance of music in life and education, especially for young ladies. Between 1883 and 1885, Macirone contributed two separate series of articles on music to *The Girls' Own Paper*, a popular penny weekly for young girls with a circulation of about 250,000 published by the Religious Tract Society. (Beetham 138)

<5>Macirone's series of articles, "A Plea for Music" and "On Taste in the Choice of Songs," appeal to young ladies, asking them to consider the power and value of music in their own lives. The articles in each series are epistolary in format, addressed to "Mr. Editor" and referencing past letters. However, these "letters to the editor" stand alone in the publication as essays or articles, and their separation from the correspondence answered at the end of each issue signifies

a position of importance within the publication. Despite the initial “Dear Editor” salutation, Macirone is keenly aware of her audience of young girls and addresses them directly as “my dear young friends” (Macirone “Power of Music” 164) and “my young readers.” (Macirone “A Plea for Music, Fourth Letter” 411) Macirone writes to readers through the editor, which creates an indirect dual or double address; while the letter is directed to the editor, the essay contained therein is to the readers of the periodical.

<6>The first series, “A Plea for Music,” was published in seven letters between December 1883 and July 1884. The first installment of the series was published under the title “The Power of Music,” but the content and a reference to the first letter in the third(3) prove it to be the first of the series. In the seven letters, Macirone extols the virtue of music by citing its power throughout history and its benefit in education. The first letter focuses on the powerful effect of music in history, quoting lines on music by Shakespeare and Julius Caesar and recounting the Spartan’s victory against the Athenians, which Macirone credits at least partly to their minstrel, Tertius, and his “spirit-stirring songs.” (Macirone “Power of Music” 164) The second letter quotes lines about the value of music from well-known periodicals such as *The Quarterly Review*, *Good Words*, and the American *Atlantic Monthly* and focuses on the therapeutic, healing, and restorative benefits of music, medicalizing its effect and linking it to health of the physical body as well as the social body:

Like a good physician, like a tender friend, music comes to the aid of all classes, a gentle minister of consolation...making grief bearable and loss tolerable. Music soothes the fever-heat of the sick man, and ministers strangely to the disordered mind when other means fail... It draws the bonds of social family life more closely together. (Macirone “A Plea for Music, Second Letter” 270)

In her third letter, Macirone laments the absence of music in girls’ education, while boys are encouraged to study music. She writes, “I have nowhere seen the fact brought to the front, that whereas in great boys’ schools music is encouraged, time, attention, and honour given to it, and special distinction bestowed in its culture—in large girls’ schools it is neglected and discouraged.” (Macirone “A Plea for Music, Third Letter” 331) The remainder of Macirone’s letters in the “A Plea for Music” series focuses on the necessity of “a systematic and thorough system of musical instruction for our young English girls,” even to the university level. (Macirone “A Plea for Music, Fifth Letter” 458) Macirone’s focus on education exposes “A Plea for Music” series as a plea for the reform of girls’ education to include musical study rather than just a plea for music, and her advocacy for music in girls’ education reflects the contemporary debate around what exactly a girl’s education should accomplish. In 1837, Thomas Wyse, an advocate of educational reform in the House of Commons, wrote of the neglect of music education in the England’s schools:

Music, even the most elementary, not only does not form an essential of education in this country, but the idea of introducing it is not even dreamt of. It is urged, that it would be fruitless to attempt it, because the people are essentially unmusical; but may not they be anti-musical because it has not been attempted? The people roar and scream, because they have heard nothing but roaring and screaming - no music- from their childhood. Is harmony not to

be taught? ... No effort is made in any of our schools; and then we complain that there is no music amongst our scholars. It would be as reasonable to exclude grammar and then complain that we had no grammarians. (qtd in Rainbow 25)

Bernarr Rainbow notes that especially when it came to girls' education in music, even educational reformers such as Dorothea Beale and Frances Buss tended to maintain traditional methods of musical education for girls in their new, progressive schools by providing students with modest musical proficiency. (43) Macirone's plea for musical education for girls does not explicitly call for education because it will lead to increased professional opportunities for girls who want to become professional musicians. Rather, her plea is for equality in girls' and boys' education and the equal opportunities that result from it.

<7>If "A Plea for Music" calls for girls' education in music, Macirone's second series, "On Taste and the Choice of Songs," encourages the refinement of taste in music through education. The first letter asks the question, "How am I to choose [songs to sing]?" and identifies the difficulty in choosing: "you need to be able to know how to choose aright." (Macirone "On Taste" 391) Rather than theorizing about aesthetic taste in music, Macirone asks a series of practical questions to show her reader just how to "choose aright" (what can you sing? what object have you in singing? what accompaniment will you have?), encouraging readers to choose songs suited to their voice, abilities, and circumstances. (391-392) The second letter addresses the variation of singing styles between women of England and women abroad, and encourages an English style of singing for English girls. The English style of singing, according to Macirone, is decidedly not Italian, and she derides "quiet English girls" who will hear a fine operatic song and "attack it calmly," not being of the correct breeding to undertake music that requires the "forcible expression of feeling" and effective delivery a foreign (i.e. Italian) upbringing cultivates. (Macirone "On Taste, Second Letter" 550) The third letter asks readers to carefully consider the words of the songs they choose, and the fourth and final letter of the series asks readers to embrace the joy of singing, and to leave off of sermonizing, moralizing, and philosophizing songs and to "sing of radiant and beautiful things." (Macirone "On Taste, Fourth Letter" 697) In this letter Macirone returns to her previous idea that music and singing benefit the social body as well as the mind and body of the singer, bringing "fresh energy into the older hearts so often wearied out and troubled in the hard work of life." (Macirone "On Taste, Fourth Letter" 697)

<8>In both series of letters, Macirone quotes heavily from other authors on music, while seeming to undermine her own authority on music and musical education for girls by saying "I know many opinions so much more deserving of a hearing than my own...from the writings of men of the present day, whose testimony is valuable both from their knowledge of the power of music and the present need of its influence." (Macirone "Plea for Music, Second Letter" 269) This apparent preference for other "authorities" (especially since they are specified to be men) at first seems to be apologetic, but understood in the light of her intent to educate girls about music, her quoting of other sources works rhetorically to highlight her own knowledge and transfer it to readers rather than to undermine her authority on the subject. Within the pages of *The Girls' Own Magazine*, she creates a virtual classroom replete with resources on music history, music outside of England, music in literature, and the physiological, emotional, and social effects of music. If her aim is to encourage musical education for girls who may not have access to it, she

goes one step further than that and actually begins the educational process herself by using *The Girls' Own Paper* as a vehicle for her expansive knowledge which, through their reading of the magazine, is replicated in the very girls for whom she advocates musical education.

<9>The function of music in the lives of women like Macirone diverges significantly from the drawing room image of the musical woman; far from that one-dimensional figure, her multi-faceted musical professionalism extended beyond her career as a composer into musical education and musical journalism. This overlapping and multiple professionalism is not exclusive to Macirone, although she is a somewhat unusual case because she was a successful composer. As Antonia Losano discusses in her study of the woman painter, until the aesthetic shift occurring at the *fin de siècle*, women in the arts were more closely associated with consumption and performance than production. (Losano 245) It is quite possible Macirone's multiple professionalism is illustrative of women's late-century efforts to legitimize women's involvement in the professional workforce and represents how women increasingly took advantage of the diverse professional avenues open to them in order to maximize their chances in each. However, women's participation in music even earlier in the century suggests that women's participation within the musical profession was characteristically multi-faceted and multi-professional, and often included education and journalism. Like Macirone, Mrs. Frances Rosser Hullah is representative of the multiply professional musical woman. Frances Hullah was a professional sculptor and the wife of the well-known musician and musical educator John Pyke Hullah, who in 1836 collaborated with Charles Dickens in composing an operetta titled "The Village Coquettes." ("Obituary" 159) Though educated and trained as an artist, Frances Rosser's marriage to John Hullah in fact interwove her artistic career with music. Her sculpture, "Italia," was placed in the sculpture room of the Royal Academy of Music and, as a contributor of articles on music to women's periodicals, she often linked the ideas of music and art while encouraging women to develop rigorous musical knowledge. (Tyson 128) Even during the more professionally conservative mid-Victorian years when the domestic ideal had not yet been supplanted by the idea of the professional "New Woman," Mrs. Hullah encouraged more than just superficial knowledge of music for women.<sup>(4)</sup> Her contributions to popular women's newspapers spiritedly propose that serious musical education is not only for girls, boys, and young women on the marriage market, but rather a serious and intellectual endeavor for all women.

<10>The *Lady's Newspaper* published a series authored by Mrs. Hullah titled "A Few Words About Music" from 18 May 1850 through 7 December 1850, in nine parts. The *Lady's Newspaper* was an eclectic paper published weekly on Saturdays, launched in 1847 and merged with the *Queen* in 1863 after encountering financial difficulty. (Beetham 91) The frequency and longevity of the "A Few Words About Music" series assured that its readers were exposed to its educative musical content about once (and sometimes twice) a month for nine months. Each installment of the series opens with a poem excerpt that references music in some way. Three of the excerpted poems are credited to the *Christian Year*, two to Wordsworth, one to Tennyson, two to Longfellow, and one to Clare. The series is signed only with the initials "MH," but the 1868 *Handbook for Fictitious Names* identifies the author of the series as Mrs. Frances Rosser Hullah. (Hamst 89) Even without the positive identification of Mrs. Hullah as the series author, the articles' many references to art coupled with her husband's fame make her the obvious author. Prefacing a series about music with poetic excerpts links music with the art of poetry, and Hullah

reinforces that link throughout the series through discussion of music in relation to the “sister arts” of painting and poetry. The first installment of the series focuses on countering the assertions of a reviewer of Charlotte Brontë’s *Shirley* published in a recent number the *Edinburgh*, who writes:

It should further be remembered that it is precisely in that art which demands least employment of physical force, viz., Music, that the apparent inferiority of music is most marked and unaccountable. Indeed, music is by far the most embarrassing topic to which those who maintain the mental equality of the sexes can address themselves. (“A Few Words About Music” 78)

The basis for this assertion is the perceived absence of any successful female composers of the era rather than women who find success as performers, which emphasizes that the Victorian female musical subject was seen as one who performs, not one who creates. Additionally, the unnamed reviewer rather harshly states, “it is true that, of all kinds of genius, a genius for Music is least akin to, and the least associated with any other. But, on the other hand, it is an art that is cultivated by women who have the least aptitude for it.” (“A Few Words About Music” 78) Mrs. Hullah responds to these assertions about women and music, drawing on the historically interconnected figures of music and poetry to prove the reviewer’s flawed logic. About the “genius of music” being unrelated to any other, Mrs. Hullah wryly responds, “if this were true, what an extraordinary blunder the ancients made when they place the lyre in the hands of Apollo!” Expounding on this history of music and poetry, she continues, stating:

We cannot feel but that the old Greek ideas of the Muses being sisters was not a mere fancy, but a downright matter of fact. All ages and nations bear witness to it, if we except a certain class in England which has sprung up within the last two centuries,—Orpheus and Arion, Miriam, Sappho, King David, Timotheus, St. Ambrose, the bards of the Celtic and Gothic nations, the Minnesingers, Troubadours, the Minstrels, the Improvisatori,—behold what a legion of spirits memory can call up as witness to the fact that Music and Poetry are ‘akin’ and *closely* ‘associated’ with each other! (“A Few Words About Music” 78)

This list not only counters the reviewer’s assertion that music stands alone in relation to other arts but also reveals Mrs. Hullah’s working knowledge of historical musical and poetic figures that is evidence of the relational link between the musical and poetical arts that was part of a woman’s consciousness.

<11>The article next responds to the reviewer’s assertion that “[Music] is an art that is cultivated by women who have the least aptitude for it” with the admission “True, every young lady learns to play and sing, by a certain mechanical process, similar to that by which she acquires dexterity in Berlin-wool work or crochet-knitting.” (“A Few Words About Music” 78) However, Mrs. Hullah contrasts this mechanical style of musical education with the true study of the “heaven-descended art of Music,” a type of study that has vastly different aims and outcomes from the type of study that creates superficial accomplishment and the types of young ladies who can “rattle through a host of polkas and waltzes with a brilliant finger [but] would be completely posed when they attempted Beethoven or Mendelssohn.” (“A Few Words About Music” 78)

These sentiments resemble the educational aim of Clara Macirone's series in *The Girls' Own Paper* in that music should not be equated with other feminine accomplishments or skills (like wool work or crochet knitting), but should be undertaken as serious artistic study that holds significance beyond the private realms of the drawing room, family circle, and lover's gaze.

<12>The second article in the series is promised in the first to contain practical advice for women's undertaking in the study of music, but Mrs. Hullah digresses instead on a woman's motives for studying music. She asks, "Will I startle you, dear reader, when I say that I consider cultivation of music taste to be a *religious duty*?" (Hullah "A Few Words About Music II" 333) The reason for this consideration, she writes, is that "the human soul is capable of feeling that music has some strange connection with the unseen world," reminding readers that the soul is "that portion of our nature that was created in the image of God." Emphasizing the link of music not only to art and poetry but also to religion challenges the notion that music should be considered a mere accomplishment for women rather than a serious and reverential undertaking. Mrs. Hullah is not calling on women to necessarily become clerics as well as able musicians, but she does posit a sense of religious duty as a reason why women would (and, in fact, should) undertake serious musical study. The idea of music as an especially spiritual art was a commonly held thought throughout the nineteenth century, but Mrs. Hullah specifically revises this idea to elevate the social perception and status of professional women musicians. With this heavy charge of religious duty, Mrs. Hullah calls for a reformation of the idea of music, for "all of those who have the cause of music at heart to do what they can to induce their fair countrywomen to study art in the right way," the "right way" being which that promoted soulful fellowship with God as opposed to superficial accomplishment or the production of "trashy, flimsy art" for mass consumption.

<13>The question of taste foregrounds the third article, which begins thus:

At the risk of appearing *extreme* I do not hesitate to say that a large portion of the musical publications and performances of the present day are injurious not only to public taste, but also public morality. In the first place, they are opposed to truth and justice; they gild copper and offer it to an ignorant, confiding public as pure gold. Secondly, they appeal to the baser passions of the multitude—vulgar wonder, and still more vulgar merriment, such as is excited by the tricks of a conjurer or the jokes and grimaces of a clown at Astley's. Let those who enjoy that sort of thing go to the proper place for it—the theatre. (Hullah "A Few Words About Music" III 68)

Mrs. Hullah explains that by vulgarity she does not mean humorous music, which has its own value and place, but she is very clear that its place is not next to "fine" music, since it would "jar the mind when it had just been lifted heavenwards on the harmonies of some mighty master." ("A Few Words About Music" III 68) To illustrate her point, she asks her readers to consider music in terms of poetry and painting:

Say you had just read "The Siege of Corinth" and a person seeing you close the book offered to read you "The Natural History of the Gent"?<sup>(5)</sup> Or, again, if you are in a picture gallery, and you have been gazing entranced upon a Raffaele or a Domenichino, till every earthly

thought had passed from your mind, would you like the subject of the next picture that met your eyes to be drunken Dutch boors, by one of the coarsest of the Flemish painters? (68)

Although one should not “always be in the clouds,” Hullah writes that it is not agreeable to return to earth too suddenly from the jarring effect of moving from high art to low. By identifying the boundaries between low and high art, she works to police them and ensure they are as clear to her readers as they are to her.

<14>It is not until the fourth article in the series that Mrs. Hullah delivers on her promise of practical information about the study of music. Her advice includes choosing classical pieces over showy polkas and quadrilles, the rousing sounds of which encourage the vanity that can result when musical performance is undertaken without sufficient talent or training. (“A Few Words About Music IV” 76) Article five shifts the focus of the series from the general topic of music to the piano, while article six asserts the powerful influence of music on general education. Mrs. Hullah’s position on music’s educational value is that “studied properly, [it] is a powerful aid in general education, but as it is learnt in many homes, it is a hindrance rather than an aid. It may be made the means of opening the mind, strengthening the memory, refining the taste, and guiding rightly the imagination and feelings.” (“A Few Words About Music VI” 147) Such rhetoric pervades even her practical instruction to pianists on correct finger positions and practice schedules. The remaining articles comprise lessons in piano playing, music reading, and practice methods that emphasize depth of skill and mastery of a few serious pieces over a wide and superficial ability to play music meant to entertain an undiscerning audience. Like Macirone, Mrs. Hullah does not explicitly call for women to take up music as a profession; at the time she was writing for the *Lady’s Newspaper* (1850), such a proposition would have been radical and out of line with the periodical’s ethos. Her aim in this educational series, though, is radical nonetheless, for she pointedly critiques contemporary musical culture and implores women to aspire to musical proficiency that transcends superficial accomplishment.

<15>Advocacy for music in girls’ and women’s education and self-improvement and using periodicals as vehicles for musical education was common throughout the nineteenth-century, but near the *fin de siècle* music took on a new significance in women’s lives by becoming a more accessible and accepted opportunity for vocational occupation rather than just a staple of education and means to marriage. The *Woman’s Signal*, a weekly paper distributed on Thursdays and edited by Lady Henry and Annie E. Holdsworth (for a short time) commenced publication on 4 January 1894. Between 22 April 1897 and 1 September 1898 it printed a series of articles entitled “What Can Our Daughters Do for a Living?” (Vann and VanArsdel 275) Each article of the series answers that question with a different vocation suitable for women. The *Woman’s Signal* was only one of many different periodicals near the end of the nineteenth century publishing articles concerned with women’s employment, the titles of which illustrate the anxiety caused by the pervasive “New Woman” question. A small sampling includes “Higher Thoughts on Girls’ Occupations,” (*Girls’ Own Paper*, 1883) “Music as a Profession for Girls,” (*Monthly Packet*, 1891) “What to do with our Daughters” (*Hearth and Home* 1892) and “Employment for Gentlewomen,” (*Myra’s Journal*, 1898) all of which identify suitable careers for the new generation of professional women. Emma Liggins explains this late-century proliferation of women’s employment topics in the periodical press as a necessity, because:

as it gradually became more acceptable for young women to refuse or at least postpone marriage, the late-Victorian periodical press had to cater to a growing number of female readers who were perhaps more interested in work and education than household management and family life. This partly explains the unprecedented launch of a number of new women's magazines, some with female editors, throughout the 1890s. Such publications helped to shift periodical debates around the figure of the working woman away from virulent attacks on the asexuality and mannishness of the "unnatural" female towards a muted admiration for the modern woman's greater freedom of movement in public and the choices available to her. (Liggins 217)

The range of occupations available to women and publicized in the periodical press came to include music and, finally, women were explicitly encouraged to apply their musical education to the pursuance of music as a profession. Of the 22 installments of the *Woman's Signal's* "What Can Our Daughters Do for a Living?" series, seven describe employment in music.<sup>(6)</sup> The emphasis on music as a potential occupation seems to be a natural extension of the educative rhetoric of music in mid-century women's and girls' periodicals such as the *Girls' Own Paper* and the *Lady's Newspaper*, but also signifies a shift in women's subjectivity as it was constructed by musical discourse, social convention, and the expectation of marriage. From the 1880s on, women were not only seen to be private performers of music, but also public professionals whose stage was no longer just the drawing room of the home, but the musical stage. The first installment of the "What Can Our Daughters Do for a Living?" series, authored by the Reverend W. Wynn Robinson and subtitled "A New Opening for Girls in Music" notes this change, commenting "I have attended the [Handel Festival] for some years, and it is a pleasure to me to see how, since Mr. Manns became conductor, ladies have, in increasing numbers, taken their places among the instrumentalists." (Robinson 27) Robinson's choice of phrasing in this sentence is important; his use of the pronoun *their* in his sentence "ladies took *their* place among the instrumentalists" implies ownership, agency, and that there was a place to be taken. His meaning would be different if he had chosen the article *a*, and his syntactical choice, subtle as it may be, characterizes the shift in thought surrounding music and the ways women could participate in it. The entirety of his article encourages women to consider music as a profession, pointing out the shortage of female musicians in England and the excellent resources available to students of music. Robinson especially encourages women to consider the woodwind instruments such as the clarinet, oboe, and bassoon, countering potential claims that they are unladylike and unfeminine with the response, "Will a lady be less lady-like when evoking a ravishing melody from a flute, an oboe, a clarinet, or bassoon, than when pounding a piano or rummaging about for the pedal stops and keys of an organ?" (Robinson 27) Robinson's argument about the woodwind instruments and femininity shows the socially constructed bind between femininity and music that restricted women's access to certain types of musical participation until the late nineteenth-century and also represents a point when that bind began to loosen.

<16>Lucie Heaton Armstrong, a novelist and author of late-century etiquette and conduct books, contributed the second article, subtitled "Pianoforte Students" to the *Woman's Signal* series. Though she returns to the ubiquitous piano, her advice to those considering the life of a professional musician is pragmatic and sincere, and, like Mrs. Hullah, she explicitly differentiates between the amateur and the professional and the serious effort a woman pianist

must exert to become a professional musician. Lest an amateur pianist/reader think her cursory practicing—“a few pieces languidly played, the scales run up and down carelessly a few times, without any attention to the production of tone, the new piece repeated once or twice with the same mistake occurring at the same bar with unvarying punctuality”— will allow her entry into the professional music world, Armstrong assures her it will not: “the successful pianists are at it all day long; they sit at the piano for long hours at the time, only resting or taking exercise in order that they may come back fresher to their work.” (Armstrong “Pianoforte Students” 58-59) Armstrong does not seek to discourage women from undertaking a professional career in music, but rather attempts to introduce women to the new paradigm of the professional female musician and its dissonance with the historical figure of the “accomplished” amateur female musician.

<17>Two of Armstrong’s five articles suggest institutions where a woman might undertake serious study of music, the first and foremost being The Royal Academy of Music, the oldest of England’s musical academies. In addition to the thorough and rigorous musical education a woman receives by attending the Royal Academy, Armstrong notes that the list of teachers includes a few women’s names, and (unlike at the London Academy) they are not separated from the “Masters” by the qualifier of “Lady Teacher,” but rather “the men and the women’s names are all put down together in the Academy list under the headings of “Professional Staff” and “Sub-Professors.” (Armstrong “Where to Study?” 107) Although the Academy separates “Professional Staff” from “Sub Professors,” they both serve the same professional function of teaching music to students who themselves hope to become professionals. The Royal College of Music (opened in 1883) employed only two female professors, but, unlike the Royal Academy, provided female students with lodging at Alexandra house, which had room for 50 women studying music, art and science. Armstrong’s opinion of the Royal College’s Alexandra house is that “it is one of the best things which have ever been done for the benefit of women...the girl-students live the happiest of lives there, free from the cares and worries of home-life, which are very trying when a person is engaged in any serious work.” (Armstrong “Where to Study? II” 122) Armstrong does not overstate the significance and importance of Alexandra house. In addition to the Royal College’s many scholarships, it afforded women whose homes were distant from the college the opportunity to live amongst other musical women who, without financial assistance, could not have undertaken any serious musical study. The London Academy of Music and the Guildhall School of Music also offered scholarships, and Armstrong notes that their tuition rates were very low compared to the Royal Academy and Royal College. Scholarships and the low cost of attendance meant that musical education was both democratized and professionalized near the end of the nineteenth century and removed from the privileged sphere of the domestic middle class.

<18>These examples of writing about music in women’s periodical publications clearly show that music held more significance in Victorian women’s lives than fictional representations of “accomplished ladies” such as Rosamund indicate. Music performed a critical function for women throughout the nineteenth-century by allowing a point of entry for them into the paid professional realm and determining the extent of their participation in musical culture throughout the century. Serious musical education and professionalization for girls and women combined with the late-century cultural shift in attitudes about women’s employment legitimized the figure of the professional woman musician and allowed her to take her place on the stage. Whereas women’s education in music had been less than effective in producing competent women

musicians at the beginning of the Victorian era, Bernarr Rainbow notes that musical education from the 1870s and after made remarkable advances. New institutions such as the founding of Girton College, Cambridge in 1869, of Anne Clough's residential house for women students there (similar to the Royal College of Music's Alexandra House) in 1871, and of the first high school for girls in 1880 marked a decade of unprecedented progress in musical education that no longer concentrated on the empty display of skill, but rather true mastery. (Rainbow 44) Though music in early and mid-Victorian culture was "a charged site of struggle insofar as it was pronounced both a transcendent corrective to social ills and subversive cause for those ills," as the century advanced it seems, especially for women, that musical discourse actually took on a more even tone that encouraged serious education and increased public and professional participation. (Çelikkol 239) Increased education in musical matters through the periodical press served a critical function for Victorian women both in emphasizing the importance of professionalization and education and legitimizing music as a profession for an increasingly educated crowd of musical women.

#### Endnotes

(1)I extend my most sincere thanks to Kristi Wilson, Marie Bingham, Sarette Albin, Sarah Coppola Jewell, Meghan Roe, April Patrick, and especially Linda Hughes for valuable feedback offered in earlier stages of this project. There are, of course, exceptions to this observation in which married women teach piano lessons to young girls, but these exceptions are most often implicated by class.(^)

(2)For an in-depth study of musical women in Victorian fiction, see Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff's *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*.(^)

(3)"In my first letter I gave a few instances of the vast and beneficent power exerted by music from the earliest ages, and of the estimation in which it was held by the greatest minds, whether of statesmen or philosophers in those early times" (Macirone "A Plea for Music, Third Letter" 331).(^)

(4)Kali Israel discusses Frances Rosser Hullah's involvement in women's suffrage and advocacy for women's education, especially for young women.(^)

(5)Reviewed in the *Literary Gazette*, April 1847, as a "clever and piquant *jeu d'esprit*, satirizing the habits of a very numerous class of vulgar annoyances, whose ill-breeding, impudence, and thoughtlessness or selfish disregard for the feelings of others, well deserves the lash laid upon their shoulders by the writer. We wish we could hope that it would produce any good effect upon such anti-social nuisances, or yet the lower orders (in the lowest depths a lower still) who imitate them." A. Smith's *Natural History of the Gent* (1847) is available from Google Books.(^)

(6)Other occupations discussed in the series include employment as Civil Servants, Government Clerks, Post Office Sorters, Lady Telegraphists, Post Office Savings Bank workers, Postal Order Branch workers, and in Printing, Elementary School teaching, China Painting, Library work, Shorthand, Artistic Bookbinding, and as Laundry Managers.(^)

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