

# INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

# AD PARNASSUM STUDIES 5

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CENTRO STUDI OPERA OMNIA LUIGI BOCCHERINI-ONLUS  
LUCCA

# INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

*Edited by*

*Roberto Illiano & Luca Sala*

*Ad Parnassum Studies*

APS 5

ISBN 978-88-8109-468-4

UT ORPHEUS EDIZIONI

Palazzo de' Strazzaroli

Piazza di Porta Ravegnana, 1

I-40126 Bologna Italia

<http://www.utorpheus.com>

<http://www.adparnassum.org>

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Stampato in Italia - Printed in Italy 2010 - Global Print S.r.l. - Via degli Abeti 17/1 - Gorgonzola (Mi)

*Dedicated to the memory of  
Albert Dunning (1936-2005)*



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## PREFACE

ON JULY 1–3, 2006, the International Conference ‘Instrumental Music and the Industrial Revolution’ was held in Cremona, in collaboration with the *Ad Parnassum* Journal, the Stichting-Fondazione P. A. Locatelli<sup>1</sup>, the Ut Orpheus Edizioni in Bologna, and under the patronage of the Municipality and the Province of Cremona, as well as the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Ministry for Cultural Goods.

Over thirty scholars from all over the world convened to engage in an extensive debate about the complex issues presented at the conference. The project was intentionally ambitious, setting out as it did to investigate complementary, albeit diverse, topics: we aimed to bring together, in one volume, aesthetic, philosophical, organological, historical and sociological approaches to the subject, with the intention of contributing to a better understanding of one the most sensitive and interesting periods in musical history.

Given that *Ad Parnassum* is the delegated arena for investigating the history of instrumental music of the 18th and 19th centuries, it would be a good thing if some willing scholars should begin to assert here a particular ineludible problem: the relationship between the Industrial Revolution (also involving, for instance, the massive influx of pianos and harps and scores for the winder markets) and its peculiar ideological and political values and social needs, on the one hand, and the aesthetic-musical sphere, on the other. To give just one example, an awareness of its existence (or otherwise) and an analysis of this relationship in specific cases could greatly assist the stylistic and comparative scrutiny of composers like Haydn, Boccherini and Clementi, and perhaps might even generate some agreeable de-mystifying repercussions concerning the legitimacy of certain primacies of dubious acquisition<sup>2</sup>.

On the basis of this programmatic objective, appearing in the second issue of our journal *Ad Parnassum*, we wanted to investigate the intersection between the Industrial Revolution and the aesthetic-musical field. In particular,

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<sup>1</sup>. Now the *Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini*, Lucca.

<sup>2</sup>. DE CARO, Roberto. ‘Editorial’, in: *Ad Parnassum. A Journal of Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Instrumental Music*, II/1 (October 2003), p. 5.

we aimed to explore the European dimension of the cultural exchanges caused by the phenomenon of musical migration, together with the international relationships generated by the music printing industry, entrepreneurship and the market for musical instruments.

The later eighteenth and earlier nineteenth centuries were a time of fundamental change in European life, proceeding from the revolutionary implications of the ideologies of Enlightenment, and reverberating in market economies, methods of manufacturing and agriculture, modes of travel, and population distribution. Such a far-reaching process of change exerted a significant influence on European music-making: «accelerated change in design and manufacture of musical instruments, assisted by mechanization, interacted in complex ways with shifts in musical style»<sup>3</sup>.

The development of new technologies resulted in the enlargement and improvement of the music printing industry, and in the widespread diffusion of music in private and public spheres. The Industrial Revolution brought about the ‘modernization’ of productive processes and, as a consequence, engendered a kind of ‘globalization’ of the musical market — an extremely modern concept<sup>4</sup>.

As a result of the emergence of new aesthetic and cultural trends [...] on one side publishers outline the leading standards [...] on the other they consent to the musicians’ innovative impulses and endorse the public’s preferences for stylistic modernity. The phenomenon of the globalization of musical tastes lies in the space between these extremes [...] When I speak of ‘globalization’ of musical tastes, I refer to the development of a common feeling, at an international level, about the standards concerning everyday musical performance, especially at an amateur level<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup>. Quoted from the abstract of the intervention held by Leon Plantinga, one of the conference’s two keynote speakers (the other being Simon McVeigh): the printed version of his talk is published in the present volume.

<sup>4</sup>. «The Industrial Revolution is to be seen as a ‘permanent revolution’ through its shape/market. In the age of globalization the difficult and precarious balance between production and use in artistic products has dramatically been brought into question because, in particular, musical products are the ones that more than others tend to express socially an interior/emotional sphere. Therefore, they can be manipulated on a commercial basis»; from the abstract of Giuseppe Tumminello’s speech at the round table which started the congress in Cremona.

<sup>5</sup>. AVERSANO, Luca. ‘Editoria musicale e globalizzazione del gusto all’inizio del XIX secolo’, in the present book [our translation].

The market for printed music and the evolution of musical instruments — one must take into account, for example, the growing distribution of the piano, albeit in different ways in each country — to the point of transforming both the role of the composer and the image of the interpreting musician. The composer, no longer bound by service to a court or a patron, was fully integrated into the musical market. New work categories created new types of professional, like the theatre manager and the artistic agent: the musician gradually developed into an element of the market, and all these changes deeply influenced the social dynamics, stimulating new categories of musical public and modes of music making.

Not until the second half of the nineteenth century, in tandem with numerous changes in the social, political and cultural milieu across Europe, did concert life begin to develop modern business structures, led by internationally connected impresarios and agents cooperating with the interests of piano-makers and publishers. Most obviously, the concept of a career as a concert musician, based on meticulously planned international tours, began to take shape. It is no coincidence that this was indeed the period of the ‘second Industrial Revolution’, the renewed technological surge between 1870 and 1914, when the ‘haphazard, provisional, and uncertain’ earlier stages were superseded by more effective business planning and professionalised managerial practices, as well as new modes of communication and transportation<sup>6</sup>.

The present volume collects twenty-six among the thirty-eight contributions presented during the international conference held in Cremona in 2006. Our ambition was to offer an organic notion of the debate that emerged from the conference’s topic. For this reason, we decided to organize the volume according to thematic areas, from aesthetics to the socio-musical context, from the evolution of the publishing business and of the market for musical instruments, to organological and museologic researches.

A stand-alone chapter consisting of three contributions has been dedicated to Muzio Clementi, the epitomise of the ‘modern’ composer, talented entrepreneur, teacher, musician, virtuoso and cosmopolitan artist.

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<sup>6</sup>. McVEIGH, Simon. ‘Industrial and Consumer Revolutions in Instrumental Music: Markets, Efficiency, Demand’, nel presente volume.

## PREFACE

We would thank both the scholars who presented papers and those who enabled the event to take place through their enthusiasm and dedication: in other words, our friends and colleagues on the editorial staff of *Ad Parnassum* and of the *Centro Studi Opera Omnia Luigi Boccherini* in Lucca, in particular Massimiliano Sala, Lorenzo Frassà and Fulvia Morabito for their invaluable help in the editorial preparation of the volume.

The three days of papers boasted the presence of two prestigious Keynote speakers, whom we would like to sincerely thank for having accepted our invitation: Simon McVeigh (Goldsmiths College, London) and Leon Plantinga (Yale University, New Haven, CT). One further sincere vote of thanks must go to a friend and colleague, Andrea Coen, who performed a concert for fortepiano at ‘S. Domenico’ hall in the ‘Ala Ponzzone’ Civic Museum, on the theme ‘The Fortepiano and the New Europe’, with music by J. S. Bach, W. A. Mozart, C. B. Balbastre, J. L. Dussek, J. Haydn, D. Cimarosa, M. Clementi and D. Steibelt.

Many colleagues and friends have also contributed decisively either with encouragement or their own participation: amongst them, we would like to thank Elena Ferrari Barassi, Elio Matassi, Michela Niccolai, Rohan H. Stewart-MacDonald, Giuseppe Tumminello, and Pietro Zappalà, as well as the advisory board of *Ad Parnassum*.

Finally, we would like to thank sincerely all the staff of the Ut Orphues Edizioni in Bologna, a publishing house that over the years has proved to be an indispensable partner in the realisation of projects of great value, namely the *Ad Parnassum* Journal and the Italian National Edition of the Complete Works of Muzio Clementi and Luigi Boccherini.

*Roberto Illiano & Luca Sala*  
Lucca-Paris, December 2009

# INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION



# INDUSTRIAL AND CONSUMER REVOLUTIONS IN INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC: MARKETS, EFFICIENCY, DEMAND

Simon McVeigh  
(LONDON)

## INTRODUCTION: THE 'INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION'

IF WE ARE TO ADDRESS INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC'S relationship with the Industrial Revolution as anything more than the merest chronological coincidence, we must first clarify some principles. For a start, we might well debate the value of the term Industrial Revolution within this context<sup>1</sup>. Some historians have shunned the term altogether, questioning both its claim

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<sup>1</sup>. This introduction draws on the work of a range of social and economic historians, including ASHTON, Thomas Southcliffe. *The Industrial Revolution, 1760-1830*, with a new preface and bibliography by Pat Hudson, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1996; DEANE, Phylliss. *The First Industrial Revolution*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, <sup>2</sup>1979; *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume 1: Industrialisation, 1700-1860*, edited by Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 2004; *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England*, edited by Ronald Max Hartwell, London, Methuen, 1967 (Debates in economic history); HORN, Jeff. *The Industrial Revolution*, Westport [CT], Greenwood Press, 2007 (Milestones in business history); HUDSON, Pat. *The Industrial Revolution*, London, Edward Arnold, 1992 (Reading history); KING, Steven – TIMMINS, Geoffrey. *Making Sense of the Industrial Revolution*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2001 (Manchester studies in modern history); LANDES, David S. *The Unbound Prometheus: Technological Change and Industrial Development in Western Europe from 1750 to the Present*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, <sup>2</sup>2003; MATHIAS, Peter. *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700-1914*, London, Methuen, <sup>2</sup>1983; *The First Industrial Revolutions*, edited by Peter Mathias and John A. Davis, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989 (The nature of industrialization); *The Economics of the Industrial Revolution*, edited by Joel Mokyr, Totowa [NJ], Rowman & Allanheld, 1985; *The British Industrial Revolution: An Economic Perspective*, edited by Joel Mokyr, Boulder [CO], Westview Press, <sup>2</sup>1999; NEF, John U. *Cultural Foundations of Industrial Civilization*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 1958 (The Wiles lecture, 1956); *The Industrial Revolution and British Society*, edited by Patrick O'Brien and Roland Quinault,

for sudden upheaval and its implicit emphasis on technological efficiency as the primary agent of economic growth. Traditional accounts did indeed concentrate on the gradual mechanisation of the old hand-wrought manufacturing methods, led by a few heroic inventors and risk-taking entrepreneurs of the later eighteenth century. More modern analysts, deriding the scenario of ‘a wave of gadgets’ sweeping across Britain, emphasise that the celebrated early technological advances in both textiles and iron production, enhanced by the development of steam power, remained for many years limited in scope and concentrated in a few particular regions of the country<sup>2</sup>. Large-scale industrial production and mechanised factories were assuredly not widespread until the mid-nineteenth century.

On the other hand, there can be no doubt that the decades around 1800 witnessed an economic and social transformation so far-reaching as to impact on the lives of all by the middle of the nineteenth century. Broader typologies have been suggested to capture the multiplicity of this transformation. Already in 1948, T. S. Ashton identified five characteristics differentiating an ‘industrial revolution’ from less significant forms of economic growth: increased population, the application of science to industry, a more intensive and extensive use of capital, the conversion of rural to urban communities, and the rise of new social classes<sup>3</sup>. Many (more recent) historians subscribe to a series of inter-related sub-revolutions — thus, in a well-known study, Phyllis Deane highlights in four separate chapters ‘The demographic revolution’, ‘The agricultural revolution’, ‘The commercial revolution’ and ‘The transport revolution’<sup>4</sup>. Innovation and invention certainly extended beyond new gadgets and more efficient organisation of labour to profound structural changes in commerce and capital formation, in marketing and distribution, and in entrepreneurial approaches towards world markets. It was, in the words of Harold Perkin, a «more than industrial revolution»<sup>5</sup>.

As one expands the range of enquiry in this manner, not only does the topic start to lose a readily graspable thread but another debate enters, as if by a side door. Were these profound changes in the relationship between society and the goods it consumed essentially driven by producers or by consumers?

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Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 1993; PERKIN, Harold James. *The Origins of Modern English Society*, London-New York, Routledge, 2002.

<sup>2</sup>. An argument dating back to CLAPHAM, John Harold. *An Economic History of Modern Britain*, 3 vols., Cambridge (UK), The University Press, 1926–1938.

<sup>3</sup>. ASHTON, Thomas Southcliffe. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), as summarised in HORN, Jeff. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup>. DEANE, Phyllis. *Op. cit.* (see note 1).

<sup>5</sup>. PERKIN, Harold James. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), title of Section I.

Technological changes, capital accumulation and the rise of the factory were after all features of the supply side: but what about the demand?

The economic historian Neil McKendrick has argued most boldly in favour of a parallel 'consumer revolution' as an analogue to the Industrial Revolution, «the necessary convulsion on the demand side of the equation to match the convulsion on the supply side»<sup>6</sup>. The origins, extent and timing of such a consumer revolution, and the validity of the concept, have occasioned much debate in recent years. The dispute is complex and the arguments convoluted, not least because any answers are so strongly dependent upon where the lines are drawn. For Joel Mokyr the notion that technological change somehow occurs in response to demand is «clearly fallacious»<sup>7</sup>. Yet just at the point when economic historians had largely dismissed the concept, it was vigorously resurrected by social historians such as Maxine Berg, who observes that the appeal of the consumer revolution has been remarkably «difficult to dislodge» — and that a deep understanding of consumer culture is as essential for the understanding of economic growth as the history of technology<sup>8</sup>. Certainly no-one can be in any doubt that the spending power of the increasingly affluent (if elusively multi-layered) ranks of the middle classes led to a new hunger for belongings and services, an insatiable appetite for style and fashion, that radically changed patterns of consumption in the period<sup>9</sup>.

Neil McKendrick's 'consumer revolution' may be best illustrated through his research on Josiah Wedgwood and the pottery industry, the *locus classicus* of this debate<sup>10</sup>. Wedgwood's vision was to expand his market not simply by

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<sup>6</sup>. MCKENDRICK, Neil – BREWER, John – PLUMB, John Harold. *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England*, Bloomington (IN), Indiana University Press, 1982, p. 9. The seminal article is GILBOY, Elizabeth Waterman. 'Demand as a Factor in the Industrial Revolution' (1932), reproduced in: *The Causes of the Industrial Revolution in England*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), pp. 121–138.

<sup>7</sup>. *The British Industrial Revolution [...]*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 61.

<sup>8</sup>. BERG, Maxine. 'Consumption in Eighteenth- and Early Nineteenth-Century Britain', in: *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume 1*, *op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 357; BERG, Maxine. 'Product Innovation in Core Consumer Industries in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in: *Technological Revolutions in Europe: Historical Perspectives*, edited by Maxine Berg and Kristine Bruland, Cheltenham (UK), Edward Elgar Publishing, 1998, Chapter 8.

<sup>9</sup>. Further on consumerism and consumption, see *Consumers and Luxury: Consumer Culture in Europe, 1650–1850*, edited by Maxine Berg and Helen Clifford, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1999; BERG, Maxine. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005; *The Consumption of Culture, 1600–1800: Image, Object, Text*, edited by Ann Bermingham and John Brewer, London–New York, Routledge, 1995 (Consumption and culture in the 17th and 18th centuries); *Consumption and the World of Goods*, edited by John Brewer and Roy Porter, London–New York, Routledge, 1993.

<sup>10</sup>. MCKENDRICK, Neil – BREWER, John – PLUMB, John Harold. *Op. cit.* (see note 6), Chapter 3.

churning out cheap cups and plates for a mass market, but by replicating a luxury product for a wider clientele. He invented a classical design subliminally identified with aristocratic culture, only to develop the revolutionary technical processes and working methods needed to reproduce it in quantity for a bourgeois market, opening up new fronts all around Europe and North America. In this way, innovation and efficiency were combined with energetic and focussed marketing. Yet Wedgwood still made sure to woo royalty and aristocratic patrons, retaining an image of luxury as he sold in large numbers. His success was nicely dependent upon retaining the prestige value of his products: if the brand became too widely diluted it would lose its exclusive cachet, disdained by the aristocracy and thus no longer desirable to the emergent bourgeoisie either. Wedgwood was therefore careful not to lower prices so far as to match those of his competitors, preferring instead to project his pottery as ‘designer-ware’, to use Berg’s pregnant phrase<sup>11</sup>. Clearly this tightrope-walk of luxury and imitation was to some degree independent of the consumer, since it required subtle manipulation by a highly commercially aware entrepreneur. Rather than disputing the primacy of the supply and demand sides, therefore, we might well accept that they could develop roughly in parallel. Certainly the most far-sighted entrepreneurs allied the practical working out of technical solutions and increasingly efficient methods of production with response to existing needs, or to what they perceived as likely demand.

But there is a further twist to this debate: the emulation question. Was the extraordinary increase in consumer spending by the increasingly affluent middle classes really motivated by emulation of the luxury tastes and conspicuous consumption of the wealthy elite? It might seem self-evident that the aspirational and status-conscious middling ranks would be anxious to impress their peers with their fine taste and modern style, yet hard evidence for this process is patchy at best<sup>12</sup>. Indeed many modern commentators, while accepting the broad notion of the ‘consumer revolution’, have categorically rejected this argument. For Colin Campbell, seeking to explain the addictive consumption of the late eighteenth century, a stronger factor than intentional emulation of aristocratic ostentation was a modern hedonism, an individual

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<sup>11</sup>. BERG, Maxine. *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, *op. cit.* (see note 9), p. 148.

<sup>12</sup>. See for example, admittedly for an earlier period, the analysis of inventory data between 1675 and 1725 in WEATHERILL, Lorna. *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660-1760*, London, Routledge, <sup>2</sup>1996; and EAD. ‘Consumer Behaviour and Social Status in England 1650-1750’, in: *Continuity and Change*, 1 (1986), pp. 191-216.

pleasure in luxury material goods in a newly legitimised commercial society<sup>13</sup>. Sometimes, too, there was undoubted resistance to the imposition of what were perceived as the alien (often foreign) values of the aristocracy. In her extensive research into the consumption of decorative household items, Maxine Berg has stressed the message of «modernity, politeness, respectability, and independence» conveyed by the well-designed yet affordable tableware and furnishings of the late eighteenth century: a new species of middle-class semi-luxury goods, neither individually crafted pieces for high society nor mass-produced ware targeted at a wider populace<sup>14</sup>.

Another area hotly debated among historians has been the actual time-frame of the Industrial Revolution. The very term ‘revolution’ implies abrupt and conspicuous change, a radical disruption encapsulated in the catchy and provocative phrase ‘lift off’ that W. W. Rostow attributed to the (even shorter) period 1783–1802<sup>15</sup>. Yet this narrow identification of sudden dramatic economic growth has been largely discredited by the ‘new economic history’ as many historians prefer to emphasise a continuous process of evolution, stretching back two centuries or more: certainly Britain had developed a wealthy and sophisticated market economy before 1750<sup>16</sup>. And if the beginning of the period is fuzzy, what of its end? It is now customary to speak of a ‘first Industrial Revolution’ lasting until around 1850, followed by a second extending into the twentieth century (when the potential of capitalised industry and of mechanised industrial processes and distribution was fully realised). Perhaps we should best view the period between 1760 and 1830 as one of incubation, when the foundations of the new industrial era were laid. In many areas, technological advance and the new entrepreneurialism lagged behind; yet in the broader picture this period still remains an unmistakeable turning point, when sustainable economic growth was unleashed in an irreversible upward trajectory. The transformation was led by Britain, where a whole range of

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<sup>13</sup>. CAMPBELL, Colin. *The Romantic Ethic and the Spirit of Modern Consumerism*, Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1987.

<sup>14</sup>. BERG, Maxine. *Luxury and Pleasure* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 9), p. 15; EAD. ‘New Commodities, Luxuries and their Consumers in Eighteenth-Century England’, in: *Consumers and Luxury* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 9), pp. 63–85. Compare also the theoretical models of class differentiation developed in BOURDIEU, Pierre. *La Distinction*, translated by Richard Nice as *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Cambridge [MA], Harvard University Press, 1984.

<sup>15</sup>. ROSTOW, Walt Whitman. *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, Cambridge (UK), Cambridge University Press, 1990. For a historiographical overview of the debate up to 1992 see HUDSON, Pat. *Op. cit.* (see note 1), Chapter 1.

<sup>16</sup>. *The British Industrial Revolution* [...], *op. cit.* (see note 1), p. 15.

propitious economic and social factors provided a fertile environment for creativity in invention and commercial exploitation, at a time when much of Europe was diverting its resources instead into costly wars.

In the context of the present conference, we are most concerned with the first Industrial Revolution — although it will soon become apparent that many of the processes that we might reasonably seek during the earlier period only came to fruition much later. And it is on Britain that I shall concentrate, since it is commonly acknowledged as the birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, if such an entity exists. At the very least, we might reasonably expect to be able to identify the earliest signs of change in British musical life — and even perhaps the most exuberant initial outcomes. This may seem in some respects a perverse starting-point, since traditional accounts of music history tend to give short shrift to British music between 1750 and 1850. But everything depends on perspective. The purpose here is to investigate not the output of composers born in Britain but rather some broad social and economic trends, and in this respect Britain provides an ideal test case within a European context. And, if Britain (to some degree) ‘led’ the Industrial Revolution, might this not be most evidently reflected in the salient characteristics of British musical life?

#### INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC AND THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

First we need to ask what measures should guide our analysis of how the Industrial Revolution might be interpreted within the context of instrumental music. What elements of musical production proved directly susceptible to ‘industrialisation’ — in any sense of the term? Can we attribute other economic transformations associated with the Industrial Revolution to instrumental musical life? A narrow view would concentrate on the efficiencies gained by new methods of production, and the widespread availability of high-quality goods at moderate prices. Certainly instrumental music has its gadgets too — technological advances in instrument-making and new methods of music printing — but the impact of many of these was not strongly felt until well into the nineteenth century. Looking more broadly, on the other hand, music was quite evidently impacted by all five elements in Ashton’s list of defining characteristics and musical life was certainly affected by the many associated ‘revolutions’ identified above. Improved transport, marketing and dissemination, not to mention consequent patterns of organisation, education and self-advancement, undoubtedly transformed the economic structure of the musical world around 1800. Music was assuredly a conspicuous exam-