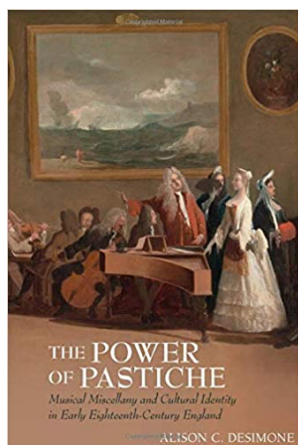




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Alison C. DeSimone. *The Power of Pastiche: Musical Miscellany and Cultural Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England*. • Pierre Dubois. *Dr Charles Burney and the Organ*. • Marcus Collins. *The Beatles and Sixties Britain*. • Kenneth Womack, ed. *The Beatles in Context* • John C. Dressler. *Granville Bantock (1868-1946): A Guide to Research*. • David C. H. Wright. *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History*. • Stephen Banfield. *Music in the West Country: Social and Cultural History Across and English Region*. Music in Britain, 1600–2000

Alison C. DeSimone. *The Power of Pastiche: Musical Miscellany and Cultural Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century England*. Clemson, SC: Clemson University Press, 2021. xv, 315 pp. ISBN: 9781942954774 (hardback).



Over the last decade the study of English-language literary miscellanies in the eighteenth century has begun to grow, as evidenced by a number of new books (Salamone 2017; Watson 2020), the appearance of the Digital Miscellanies Index (<http://digitalmiscellaniesindex.org/>) and even a themed issue of *Eighteenth-Century Life* 41/1 (January 2017). In this carefully contextualized new book, Alison DeSimone has made a convincing argument that the British preoccupation with the miscellaneous aesthetic is also related to the rise of pastiche Italian operas, miscellaneous songbooks, and variety concerts in the earliest decades of the eighteenth century, demonstrating effectively that it was a broader cultural paradigm that not only “exposed the English to different styles and types of music” but also “drove the nation to redefine its cultural identity as its landscape transformed under the influx of foreigners from the Continent” (226).

Through five substantial chapters and an introduction, DeSimone makes the point that for early eighteenth-century music versatility is key, and that this “variety” (a word more commonly used in musical cultures than “miscellany”) reflects the preferences of the diversified English audience of the time. According to DeSimone’s research, this predilection was a cultural phenomenon that extended to different types of musical engagement, and her book concentrates on how composers, performers, and audiences created and responded to it by focusing on several intertwined themes uncovered by her study: first, she considers problems of authorship and ownership of musical products, including the collaborative relationship between musician and consumer. Secondly, DeSimone uncovers and analyzes a body of new musical repertoire that has been obscured by the long-standing focus of scholars on studying single-author works. Thirdly, DeSimone—by building on the research of William Weber, who argued

that there was a “transformation of taste” in concert culture during the eighteenth century—argues that miscellany was “the primary means through which English audiences...experienced cosmopolitan musical culture” (9).

These three themes are expertly interwoven through all five chapters, which look at the broader concept of musical miscellany from the perspectives of performers, composers, and spectators such as critics. Chapter One covers the growth of variety concerts from 1700 to 1711. We learn that each night in London during this period audiences would have been able to hear concerts filled with a mix of instrumental solos “by the best Masters” on violins, oboes, and flutes, foreign opera arias and traditional ballads, concerti, dances, and acrobatics (rope-dancing). DeSimone uses the cases of Gasperini (Gasparo Visconti) and Scottish singer John Abell to demonstrate how specific performers used the variety concert to further their reputation. Significantly, she argues (convincingly) that we need to rethink our existing narrative of the inception and growth of Italian opera in London, because the contents of variety concerts show that English audiences generally already liked and accepted Italian music before it took hold.

Chapter Two, which covers the pasticcio opera tradition from *Thomyris* (1707) to *Wincelauls* (1717), is a particularly rich part of this book, because nearly all of these works have been ignored by previous scholars. For this chapter she did a great deal of archival work, digging into the sources for arias and identifying some of the (usually anonymous) arrangers of the music and other missing attributions. Her skillful efforts divulge how English composers chose, adapted, cut, and set words to the Italian arias. Through her work we see that Giovanni Bononcini emerges as significant composer, and – more importantly – that these pasticcios are integral to understanding the progress of Italian opera in Britain, as well as Handel’s output.

DeSimone scrutinizes songbook miscellanies in Chapter Three, choosing to cover about a decade of published collections (1700-1710) in order to find out more about how the song selections might relate to English identity. Songs are grouped into themes in this section, from politics to pastoral love. With the help of some well-chosen musical examples, DeSimone makes the case that some truly delightful pieces are contained within these often-overlooked collections. Chapter Four continues the theme of deliberate cultivation of “variety” in order to attract different consumers, and here we read about how composers engaged with miscellany in their innovative compositions and crafted freelance careers in early eighteenth-century London. The focus here is on Charles Dieupart, John Ernest Galliard, Nicola Haym, and Thomas Clayton’s stylistic flexibility and entrepreneurial spirit (she also includes Handel in this group but spotlights the other four composers as they have been comparatively neglected). In this chapter, she describes composers as business agents, and includes documentary information on salaries, duties, instruments, marketing, their thoughts about adaptations and pasticcios, and therefore brings many of strands of research together. This chapter is relevant reading for anyone interested in instrumental music in the eighteenth century.

Chapter Five ends the book with an investigation of how the concept of variety was treated in contemporary criticism and aesthetics. To do this DeSimone examined the words of the era’s music historians, composers, and critics to give credence to her study’s argument that miscellany was seen as a highly regarded aesthetic choice, and one that was utilized to grapple with – and assert – an English cultural identity.

One of the strongest features of the book is the writing style, which is not only clear and organized but also very engrossing. This scholarship is also a model of how to use documentary evidence to explore and analyze audience tastes, concert programming, and early music



criticism. The book is generously illustrated with music examples. Further, I greatly appreciated her critical evaluation of the pasticcio repertory as well as the songbook miscellanies. With a topic as broad as “musical miscellany” it is inevitable that some parts of the picture might be excluded from this study. One omission is the corresponding development of the early English cantata, a musical hybrid that incorporated elements from Italian cantatas and was adapted to appeal to English constituents by many of the composers investigated in this book. The popularity of the genre was also due to its stylistic variety by alternating air, recitative, and arioso sections, and exploring different passions and keys. In addition, although I found the end notes to be useful, I would have also liked a bibliography. This defect deprives readers of an easy means of finding the primary sources (the treatises, compositions, word-books) uncovered and discussed by the author. These detractions, however, are minor, as the work is a refreshingly new perspective on English music in the first decades of the eighteenth century.

DeSimone’s book makes a significant contribution to musicology and to eighteenth-century studies as a whole. Traditional criticism has often held prejudices towards pastiche operas, and conventionally they were ignored (along with composers between Purcell and Handel) because they did not fall within the single-author narrative. Instead, as this study helps to make clear, the fashioning of early pasticcio operas created a practice that would serve as the foundation of English opera for a century or more. DeSimone not only provides valuable scholarship that gives us a fuller picture of musical life during the beginning of the eighteenth century, she also uncovers new information and repertoire. In my view, *The Power of Pastiche* is required reading for anyone working in the area of eighteenth-century English music.

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Pierre Dubois. *Dr Charles Burney and the Organ*. Elements: Music and Musicians 1750-1850 series. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021. 75 pp. 978-1108972864 (paperback).

Charles Burney was good dinner-party company. His enviable commitment to sympathy and good manners could stand as a vastly oversimplified, yet memorable, view of his aesthetic priorities. In his new booklet-size monograph, Pierre Dubois features Burney as an organist, then describes his moral and aesthetic philosophies in terms of his writings on the organ. Dubois’s ideas are of clear relevance to musicians and intellectuals of all curiosities; he refreshingly avoids niche overspecialization. In doing so, he invites nuance and conceptual grounding to correlation between aesthetics and ethics, especially the competing notions of moderation and the sublime.

The first two chapters chronicle Burney as an organ composer and performer, while chapters 3 and 4 situate Burney’s work and opinions in a short history of the organ in England. Here Dubois deftly lends nuance to the well-trodden narratives surrounding post-Commonwealth instruments, situating Burney’s work and opinions in a short history of the organ in England. Dubois argues that the technology and tonal frameworks of Restoration organs did not simply pick up where they left off during the interregnum; rather, they were formed by organ builders who sought refuge in foreign exile during the Protectorate. If Dubois’s intent in these chapters had been broader, he might not have buried the lede with this gem: “It is somewhat paradoxical that the English school of organ-building, which appears so insular, should have been influenced by continental practices” (29). The subtlety of his assertion against insularity both in England



and as a creative concept lends a welcome insight to a field of organology that can easily devolve into endless stop lists and turgid technical descriptions.

Dubois's illumination of foreign influence in English organ-building, incremental though they may be, invites a reimagination of the English organ's trajectory as less an accident of inattention or poor craft, and more a deliberate drive toward an aesthetic that is grounded in both situational needs and ethical aspirations. This view vindicates the tonal genius of British organ-builders that lent us the unremittingly beautiful, if idiomatic, sounds of Harris, Smith, or Gray pipework. More of a stretch however, DuBois's argument also justifies what some see as the backward tastes of figures like Samuel Sebastian Wesley, who continued to prefer British sounds, mechanics, and keyboard compasses even when presented with "superior" German and French alternatives. In Dubois' view, the use of low-pressure pipework, preference for long keyboards, and aversion for strong mutations characteristic of Georgian organs were not simply a precedent, preferred because of their familiarity. These characteristics, along with a deliberate aversion toward pedalboards, represented practical and moral choices based in what Burney thought were native English values. Practical, because an organ was not meant to fill an entire cathedral space, but only its local area, and because the sounding of singing should always have prevailed over the sound of a mechanical (non-human) instrument. Moral, because English organs befitted his concept of national character: dignified, and never overbearing emotionally or intellectually, even in pursuit of the sublime. This was Burney's hope for the "English way."

The final half of Dubois's book map Burney's views on the organ into broader ethical territory. His summary of Burney's writings on foreign organs and organists (chapters 5 and 6) describes the extent of Burney's nationalism, outlined in chapter 7. Burney's blanket unremitting critique of foreign organs limns the depth of his commitment to English building practices—silent, light touch; smooth, capacious expression (i.e., a swell box); and round, unimposing tone—that emphatically did not fill a space or reverberate excessively. Modern readers will chuckle at the especially harsh words Burney served up to the instrument at St. Bavo, Haarlem, and to Silbermann's organs as a failure of taste. Dubois's mountain of evidence supporting Burney's views are a welcome reminder of a life-lesson particularly relevant to playing the organ: that idiosyncrasy is as often deliberate to the bearer as it is nonsensical to the observer.

Throughout the delightful waterfall of information and analysis in this volume, one question niggles throughout the book: the slippery definition of *moderation*. In some passages Dubois counts it as an "ideologically-informed 'middle way,'" as if Burney were choosing something between the aesthetic corollaries to abstinence and excess. In other places, moderation is set in dialectic with the sublime. This comparison works if moderation is taken in a more exclusively eighteenth-century definition, where it connotes self-control and restraint, rather than a middle-ground blazed between extremes.

Both definitions of moderation have limitations. For example, Burney explicitly sought to establish a spectrum of musical quality based on English aesthetics, upon which he judged those of other nations. Burney's insistence upon this independent aesthetic standard rails against the idea of a "middle ground," which is of necessity a derivation of external ideas. This is especially true of Burney's opinions on organ-tone, which he defined as intrinsically English. Similarly, the second definition of moderation-as-restraint tracks with Burney's ideas of Georgian organ tone. However, moderation in this guise stands as an antonym to the sublime. Since Burney and others argued that reaching the sublime was the organ's primary purpose as a liturgical instrument, this definition cannot hold in Burney's writings. One wonders if these



conceptual problems around moderation contributed to Burney's avoidance of the term, and his search (though equally conceptually flawed) for an independent musical standard.

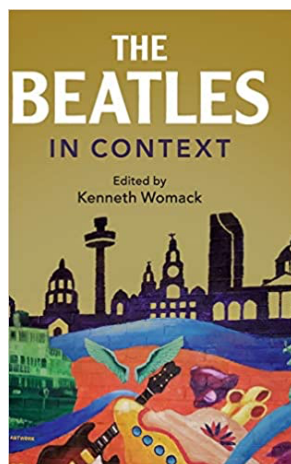
Perhaps my concern over this point reveals my own preoccupation with current political polemics. However, the moderation as a concept is of pervasive importance to British scholars precisely because of its longstanding and constant presence in English texts. What began benignly enough as a call for self-control, over time led to conflict as broad usage became a shield against differing ideologies in some quarters and a denial of overt social disenfranchisement in others. Just as crucially, the painting of any position of non-excess as a derivation of its extreme counterparts undercuts the autonomy of a host of viable philosophical, aesthetic, political, and moral positions, which then become subject to the artificialities of the spectrums upon which they are placed.

In either case, by broaching the topic, Dubois has contributed substantively to a study of moderation as power based in self-control, politeness, and sympathy. This topic deserves continued attention, in historical and contemporary frameworks. It has the potential to provide new models for the complex task of deciphering historic decisions and decisionmakers, especially in the context of identifying cultural power-structures in which they worked. It also opens a fertile field of philosophical purposes: to determine on what grounds moderation can exist as in independent ideology.

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Marcus Collins. *The Beatles and Sixties Britain*. Cambridge University Press, UK, 2020. xviii, 365 pp. ISBN: 978-1-108-47724-6 (hardback).

Kenneth Womack (ed). *The Beatles in Context*. Cambridge University Press, UK, 2020. xx, 351 pp. ISBN: 978-1-108-41911-6 (hardback).



In the half-century since the group disbanded, well over 1000 books have been produced about the Beatles. They include popular biographies, musicological analyses, personal/anecdotal memoirs, diary-like chronologies, lyrical interpretations, photographic collections, and case-studies of particular events or periods. Moreover, when the number of scholarly articles in peer-reviewed journals and the persistent contributions of the news and entertainment media are counted, it becomes likely that more words have been written about the Beatles than any other musical figures. Consequently, the

appearance of any new title inevitably prompts the question "Do we need another book about the Beatles?" The answer, of course, cannot be phrased as a simple "Yes" or "No," but can only be determined by the book's ability to provide fresh insights and information.



Two new books, both published by Cambridge University Press, illustrate this circumstance nicely. Marcus Collins's *The Beatles and Sixties Britain* is not about the Beatles *per se*: readers expecting to increase their knowledge of the group's personal history or musical output will be disappointed. Rather, it sets out to "reassess the Beatles, the sixties and the relationship between the two" (2) by documenting the myriad ways in which they were received, described, evaluated, used (and misused), regarded, and represented by others in that decade. In doing so, it conforms to rigid strictures of time and place, as the author makes clear from the outset: "This book concerns British attitudes to a British band who travelled widely but lived and recorded music almost entirely in Britain during the 1960s" (8).

Thus defined, his unwaveringly objective investigation of the group's presence is located around three broad categories, which he labels "Society," "Culture," and "Politics." Within each category, he presents a meticulously researched array of contemporary comments and reactions, assembled from individuals and institutions such as the police, teachers, feminists, cartoonists, journalists, sociologists, the clergy, broadcasters, politicians, writers, artists, musicians, and fans. From these, four recurring themes create a framework for the book's trajectory. First, the group's iconic position, built around its fame, global popularity, and unprecedented accomplishments; secondly, the Beatles' divisive public impact, signaled by the opposing outbursts of admiration and resentment (and occasional bewilderment) their actions triggered; thirdly, an atypicality, embedded in their distinctive appearance, their speech, their demeanor, and their "Northern-ness"; fourthly, the group's prefigurative status, as shown by its members' espousment of behavior and support for causes widely considered radical at the time, but which would later become routinely accepted.

The level of detail, the range of sources, and their organization within the book are impressive. In the chapter on "Politics" for example, references to the Beatles made by MPs during parliamentary debates in the House of Commons from 1962 to 1970 are dissected by party, by theme, and by generation. In addition to the mainstream parties, the views of the Communist Party, the International Marxist Group, the International Socialists, the Young Communist League, the Socialist Labour League, and the Socialist Party of Great Britain are recorded. Elsewhere, organizations including the Association for Moral & Social Hygiene, the Arts Council, the Mothers Union, and the Writers Guild are quoted, as are publications including *Black Dwarf*, *Spare Rib*, *New Left Review*, *Peace News*, *Anarchy*, *International Times*, *Oz*, and *Private Eye*. Together, they provide a vibrant compendium of opinion and observations about the Beatles, drawn from diverse sectors of a nation in the process of reinventing itself after the turmoil of the 1940s and the austerity of the 1950s.

Given today's near-universal acknowledgement of the Beatles' musical legacy, and their public veneration – as indicated by the knighthoods given to Paul McCartney in 1996 and Ringo Starr in 2018, the renaming of Speke Airport as Liverpool John Lennon Airport in 2001, and the acquisition by the National Trust of McCartney's and Lennon's childhood homes in 1996 and 2002, respectively – the intensity of the hostility they faced throughout the 1960s may come as a shock to some. Furthermore, approval, when it came, was never straightforward: the polarity of contributions to public debates about the Beatles serves to remind us that while their success "challenged critics to rethink the very definition of art and its function in society [. . .] the rethinking process was contested and protracted" (148).

And, as Collins notes, the eventual adoption of the Beatles as "national treasures and symbols of the sixties" (5) has done little to create a consensus about the precise nature of their historical significance. Were they daring and far-sighted pioneers of social and cultural change, mere



participants among many in a wider evolutionary process, or detached individuals pursuing their own idiosyncratic goals and remaining largely unconnected from the wider society? Now, as then, the Beatles' role, if not their reputation, remains disputed.

It has to be said that *The Beatles and Sixties Britain* assumes some prior knowledge of the group's history. The Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Apple, and Yoko Ono are among the important characters and institutions who appear in the text with little or no explanation of their origins. Where they are mentioned, the Beatles' songs and albums are rarely discussed in any detail. It should also be pointed out that of the book's 365 pages, 161 are devoted to notes, bibliography, and the index.

Throughout the complex patterns of change and continuity that characterized the 1960s, the Beatles did much to elevate the status of popular music and to legitimize its claim to be an area of authentic cultural practice. But, as Collins continually demonstrates, their disruptive presence went far beyond the musical. The group was itself a historical event, and if there is a more general conclusion to be drawn from the book's comprehensive assembly of contemporary voices—positive, negative, neutral, mixed—it is that the Beatles “served as a common reference point around which people could argue about the present state and future direction of society” (200).

While Collins's book constitutes a unique and valuable guide to the times in which the Beatles were active, the same cannot be said of Kenneth Womack's edited volume *The Beatles in Context*. The book declares its intention to provide “a wide-ranging analysis of the cultural contexts that led to the group's emergence and enduring global influence...[through]...an array of insightful scholarly essays” (xi). Sadly, it does not. The decision to present the thirty chapters in six separate sections—“Beatle People and Beatle Places,” “The Beatles in Performance,” “The Beatles on TV, Film, and The Internet,” “The Beatles' Sound,” “The Beatles as Sociocultural and Political Touchstones,” and “The Beatles' Critical Reception and Cultural Legacy”—seems sensible, but too many of the essays merely provide simplistic introductions to familiar topics. Discussions of the group's visits to Hamburg, the two feature movies (*A Hard Day's Night*, and *Help!*), the US TV cartoon series, the role of producer George Martin, the visual imagery of the group, Beatlemania, the life of Brian Epstein, Abbey Road studios, influences from India, the problems of Apple, and the (final) rooftop concert are among the subjects that have been revisited by Beatles scholars for decades, and these short chapters offer little that is new, or that has not been written about in greater depth elsewhere.

There are errors: the assertion that in 1962, ITV's *Thank Your Lucky Stars* was the only national TV pop music program (109) overlooks the perennial presence of BBC's *Juke Box Jury* (1959-1967); Ringo Starr did not launch his solo career (234) with “You're Sixteen” (it was his fifth single) and “Act Naturally” (a Beatles' album track in 1965); Eddie Izzard is not a “high profile hitmaker” (236) but a stand-up comedian; AFN is an acronym not for the Armed Forces Network (24), but the American Forces Network. Some chapters are, in effect, annotated lists of people, programs, records, and events. In others, objectivity is replaced by exaggeration: “John, Paul, George, and Ringo, along with manager Epstein, perhaps singlehandedly laid the blueprint for all who would follow in music, popular culture, fashion, and revolutionary thinking” (65); or by misleading stereotypes: “Britain. . . lay in scalded ruin. Children skittered about, slapdash, on heaps of rubble, and the once pastoral countryside was littered with abandoned military bases and equipment, quietly disappearing in a riot of weeds” (3).



This is not to say that *The Beatles in Context* is of no interest. It is. The essays are—for the most part—well-researched, and present a range of information from a variety of perspectives. The problem is that many other books have done the same thing. Previous publications by several of the authors have made significant contributions to our understanding of the Beatles, and it is to those that I would advise potential readers to turn, rather than these brief summaries.

Although the preface speaks confidently of its appeal to “students, general readers, and advanced scholars” (xi), it is difficult to identify the likely readership for Womack’s book. Students (of Musicology, Social History, Sociology, Media & Cultural Studies) already have access to a large number of introductory academic texts that examine the music and career of the Beatles; for their part, general readers may prefer the kind of “coffee-table” book that typically includes photographs and other visual material in its presentation of the group’s history; and the advanced scholar will find very little in its pages she does not already know.

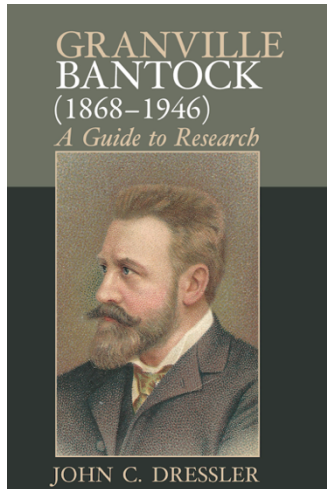
Given that the other subjects published in the *Composers in Context* series have featured musicians and composers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—Brahms, Mozart, Richard Strauss, Mahler, and Stravinsky—it may be that the issues raised by the relative proximity of the Beatles to audiences in the twenty-first century might require a different mode of inquiry and a different set of questions. Indeed, perhaps the earlier question “Do we need another book about the Beatles?” needs itself to be situated within the context of a broader discussion about culture and commerce. Despite the occasional release of reconstructed songs, alternative versions, demo recordings, and previously discarded tracks, very little genuinely new Beatles music has become available over the last five decades. However, since 1970, when they ceased to exist as a band, the Beatles have continued to exist as a brand. Across movies (*Backbeat*, *Nowhere Boy*, *Yesterday*), documentaries (*Eight Days A Week*, *The Beatles: Get Back*), stage shows (*Beatlemania*, *Let It Be*, *Love*), computer games (*Rock Band*), and tourist sites (in Hamburg, Liverpool, and London), the group and its music have been repeatedly, and enthusiastically, consumed.

That there remains an enormous interest in, and market for, the Beatles, is also evidenced by the number of academic publications, specialist conferences, undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs, exhibitions, and museums actively involved in the generation and circulation of knowledge about the group. In view of the finite amount of music the Beatles released on albums and singles (around ten hours in all) and the intellectual ambitions of popular music studies, researchers have routinely, and quite properly, expanded their investigations to locate and understand the various contexts and constraints within which the group lived and worked. In different ways, both these books have set this as their goal. Of the two, *The Beatles and Sixties Britain* is the more successful: the group’s capacity to inspire affection and animosity was a fascinating feature of that decade’s history, and the author illustrates those tendencies in forensic detail. In contrast, *The Beatles in Context* offers brief, descriptive accounts which may serve as introductions to some of the many notable periods and events in and around the group’s long history, but which fail to provide a sufficient context in which that history might be appreciated.

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John C. Dressler. *Granville Bantock (1868-1946): A Guide to Research*. Clemson: Clemson University Press, 2020. xix, 405 pp. ISBN: 9781942954798 (hardback).



Compiled with both researchers and Bantock enthusiasts in mind, Dressler's *Granville Bantock (1868-1946): A Guide to Research* is the first attempt to provide an index of primary sources, published scholarship, archival and commercial recordings, as well as an extensive list of Bantock's prodigious compositional output. With more than 7,000 extant letters, Bantock's pervasive presence in early twentieth-century music print culture, and his many compositions, a guide to Bantock resources is needed. Indeed, the dizzying array of people and libraries Dressler consulted illustrates Bantock's broad reach.

A short preface outlines and explains the four sections of the book: "Biographical Sketch," "Works and Performances," "Discography," and "Selected Bibliography." Each unit features subdivisions, which are outlined in the table of contents. The preface discusses the

purpose and organization of the book, though the reader must go to the discography and bibliography sections to find out more about what is included. Beyond this, Dressler does not explain his methodology. It would have been helpful to understand the rationale for how he decided what to include in the book.

The "Biographical Sketch" provides a helpful overview of Bantock's life. In the preface, Dressler offers a list of other valuable resources that "should be among the reader's first choice for biographical details" (x). These include articles by H.O. Anderton and Ernest Newman from the early part of the twentieth century; the biography by Bantock's daughter, Myrrha, written over twenty-five years after Bantock's death; more recent writings by Trevor Bray (1972-73) and Vincent Budd (1997-2000); and the entry on Bantock in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Apart from the *New Grove* entry, these were contemporary assessments of Bantock and his career, personal reflections on Bantock years after he died, or intended for general audiences. Given that, to date, there are no scholarly biographies of the composer, Dressler missed an opportunity to write a more detailed overview here. Instead, he repeats information found in these sources, with little reference to Bantock's letters published by Michael Allis or the archival resources mentioned in the book. In doing so, he repeats past errors, mostly notably Bantock's Royal Academy of Music date of enrollment, which is January 1889, not 22 September 1888 as Dressler notes. (Bray and a 1909 *Musical Times* article give the 1888 date, while Anderton and the RAM records indicated January 1889.)

The list of Bantock's compositions is the most comprehensive to date and is the book's main strength. Dressler notes that this "is not a truly complete catalogue" and wisely focuses on significant works omitting "arrangements for piano of ballet movements, symphony themes, and some lieder of other composers' works made toward the end of GB's career" (2). Organized by genre and alphabetically within genre, each entry includes the title of the composition, the author of the texts, manuscript information when available, published scores, "selected performances," and cross references to sources in the bibliography and discography sections. A clarifying statement on how performances were selected would have been helpful. While this section proves to be one of the strongest of the book, the organization could be better.



Compositions resulting from previous works are listed under the initial musical composition making them harder to find (though they are listed in the index). The alphabetical ordering, rather than the more traditional chronological approach, was at times confusing.

The discography “includes all known commercial and archival recordings” (x). There is no explanation of the formats included, though each entry indicates this information in brackets at the ends of entries. Commercial recordings make up the first half of the discography. The second half is entitled “Archival Recordings: British Library and Educational Institutions” (228). The introduction to this section notes that the “primary location is the British Library Sound Archive. Recordings are listed numerically by British Library or BBC catalog number and other accompanying remarks; recordings from educational institutions are listed at the end” (223). Though not clearly stated, the BBC recordings included are housed in the British Library Sound Archive. The seven (out of approximately 75) non-British Library recordings appear to be student recital or music festival recordings, though this is unclear. In both sections, records are organized alphabetically by label name or archival catalog numbers rather than composition, making finding specific works challenging. Readers must use the index or the cross-references in the list of works to locate recordings of particular compositions.

Given Bantock’s pervasive presence in early twentieth-century British musical culture, a comprehensive bibliography, even a “Selected Bibliography,” is much needed. Dressler compiles 1,058 primary and secondary sources in twelve subsections. Archival sources are listed by location and collection title with no shelfmarks included. Published sources include a full citation and many are annotated, though it is unclear why some receive annotations and others do not. The organization of the sources is unclear. The mixture of subsections focused on document type (e.g., obituaries, dissertations, etc.) and those focused on how Bantock is referred to in sources (e.g., general references, biographical references, etc.) can be confusing. This is compounded by combining archival, published, contemporary, and more recent sources in a single list. The location of entries in this organization can be confusing. For example, some of Bantock’s letters are listed in “General References” and others are in subsections devoted to specific archives. The *Musical Times* obituary, the lead article in the November 1946 issue, is listed in the “Biographical References” section rather than in the “Obituaries” section.

Dressler does not explain how sources were selected, and several omissions are puzzling. Few of the histories of British music that mention Bantock appear. Bantock’s letters to Sibelius in the National Library of Finland are not mentioned. The list of Bantock’s writings omits everything he wrote before 1907, including his two articles for the *New Musical Quarterly Review* (a journal he founded and ran between 1896 and 1898). This latter section would be an ideal place to point readers to the transcripts of Bantock’s BBC radio talks held in the Worcester Archives. Unfortunately, the entry for Worcester is woefully slim even though it is the largest archive devoted to Bantock’s letters and other documents, including extensive press clippings, Bantock’s diaries, class notes, and concert programs and tickets. While the BBC Written Archives entry offers more details, several folders relating to Bantock are not mentioned.

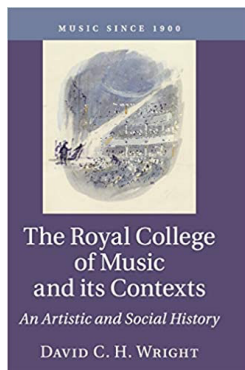
While Dressler has amassed an impressive amount of research and sources, the book falls short. A good reference tool, such as a research guide, needs to be user-friendly and provide easy access to the wealth of information it contains. This book does not. Students or others unfamiliar with different types of resources would have trouble navigating this volume. A particularly glaring problem is how chapters on Bantock in a collection of essays are listed by volume editors and not the authors of the articles devoted to Bantock. The editors’ names, not those of the author, are also listed in the index. This means that the scholarship by Fiona



Richards and Jennifer Oates, both published in a collection of essays, cannot be found in the index and are not listed by the author's names in the source entries. Other examples of overlooking details include the lack of a list of abbreviations (they are defined upon first used in the body of the text), and captions or citations for the two included images are also problematic. Though the volume is flawed and should be used with caution, it does serve as a helpful resource that begins to fill an important gap in scholarship on British music.

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David C. H. Wright. *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History*. Cambridge, UK and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. xix, 386 pp. ISBN: 978-1107163386 (hardback).



David Wright's *The Royal College of Music and its Contexts: An Artistic and Social History* is a welcome addition to CUP's series, *Music since 1900*. This history of the Royal College of Music meets the requirements of a multiplicity of readers: detail aplenty for the archivally-minded (yet not miring us in minutiae); narrative and human interest to engage the reader with a broad interest in the period; fair and measured assessments of the successes and failures of RCM leadership (at least until the end of the Willcocks era in 1984); and—perhaps this work's most significant contribution to the literature—the successful interweaving of the RCM into its social, cultural, and political contexts, reminding us all how the interlinking of disparate factors affects our abilities to engage with, learn, teach, and appreciate music.

Despite Wright's close professional association with the RCM—he taught there for 13 years, to 2010—this is clearly an independent work, unafraid to engage in sound critical analysis of both positive and negative factors in the college's history. Wright has made the most of the independence he was afforded and profited fully from the RCM's rich archives. Inevitably, the years to the latter part of the twentieth century are richer in detail from letters, minute books and the like. The closing portion feels a little light in comparison—1992-2018 takes just 17 pages—perhaps an inevitable outcome of examining “history” which has not yet become history.

Wright claims that the RCM has been a central influence on British musical life since its foundation; on the evidence of this minutely researched and persuasively communicated volume, that is no exaggeration. The book is divided into four sections: Building and Consolidating (1883-1914); Renewal and Conventionality (1919-1960); Changing Musical Cultures (1960-1984); and Into its Second Century (1984-2018). Within this chronological structure is a satisfyingly deep investigation into facts, figures, and personalities of the college, all set in their wider societal and cultural contexts. This makes the book of practical use to the social historian as much as to the musicologist.

Wright justifies his arrangement of material—setting the Directors of the college “side by side” and weaving thematic strands of students, staff, finances, etc. around these pillars—as a means of avoiding a potentially monochromatic institutional feel had he structured his chapters thematically. While his approach is successful, the chronology occasionally works against the



timelines of the “chapter by directorial reign” approach, as when we learn about the effect of the 1992 Education Act in a chapter on Keith Falkner’s directorship (1960-1974). These occasional moments of confusion are compensated for by the revisiting of the themes, developed in more detail, in their proper timeline.

Wright clarifies the “erroneous myths” of the RCM’s founding: it was neither modelled on the RAM, nor grew out of the short-lived National Training School for Music (1876-1882). A clearer picture of the college’s origins appears in Wright’s highlighting of the jointly powerful impetus of George Grove’s leadership of the Crystal Palace Company and August Mann’s musical directorship thereof. The linking of Grove, through his Crystal Palace connection, to the world of professional music appears key to the RCM’s establishment. Wright takes the reader concisely through the rationale for certain core elements—the need for systematic orchestral training leading to Stanford’s appointment, for example—while challenging many of the English Musical Renaissance tropes. A brief history of thriving British musical life in the mid- to late nineteenth century foregrounds the importance of context to this work, and these societal factors ground the entire monograph. The RCM was designed—powered by Grove’s drive and vision—to be “vital for the nature of the nation’s life,” including not just star performers but legions of less well-known former students, whose activities have been woven into and improved the quality of British musical life. Grove strove to create a European styled conservatoire, adapted to both professional and amateur British musical culture.

Wright paints clear and engaging pictures of each director, charting the college’s evolution in their personalities, and providing detailed information on students, staff, evolving qualifications, finances, societal developments in each of the director’s reigns. This is a skillful tactic, masterfully corralling a potentially overwhelming amount of information. Directors (such as Grove and C. Hubert Parry) emerge more clearly in the college’s early years, with less archival detail as we travel forward in time, but this is no loss as the business of the developing college completes each picture. Some of these vignettes of personality bring the book to particular life, leaving the reader with a clear sense of an institution with a human face. The closer we get to the present, the more challenging it is to depict these personalities with distance, but Wright succeeds admirably; an example is his diplomatic and sympathetic treatment of Janet Ritterman’s introduction of far-reaching reforms to keep pace with higher education’s changing landscape. Current director Colin Lawson appears largely as focused on establishing the college’s future in a changed landscape; innovations include a YouTube channel, an outreach program (RCM Sparks), and a significant building program.

While the Directors do figure largely in the structure of the book, Wright still manages to illuminate many other aspects of RCM’s musical life, administration, and personnel. Inevitably the RCM’s early staff and students receive perhaps more than their fair apportionment of attention in the book, but the social and historical aspects of these early years—the initial choice of teaching staff, scholars versus fee-payers, and the establishment of the RCM’s “musical and educational ethos” (the subject of chapter 3)—ground this volume solidly. The book also opens surprising and informative windows of perspective. We read for example of the 1889 reception of the performance of a symphony by RCM piano teacher and composer Frederic Cliffe, whom Grove described as “the most commonplace and uninteresting of mortals,” at which “People went mad – stood on chairs and bellowed and shrieked in the wildest way.” We learn of the concert Barry Manilow gave in 1983 at the Royal Albert Hall to support the centenary appeal. The volume’s engaging epilogue, entitled, “Prosopography” (a collective biography), briefly introduces many of the college’s instrumental and compositional teachers. This selection inevitably leaves out many more significant teachers. But with a plethora of staff who taught at

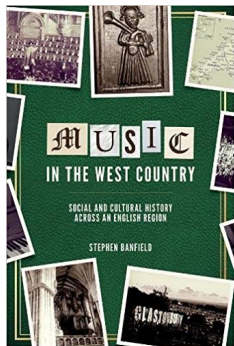


the college for decades (Kendall Taylor, for example, for 63 years), it gives a clear idea of the college's exceptional legacy of teachers, with many of those named having taught students who in turn became college teachers or leading lights in the British musical profession.

This history fosters deep understanding of conservatoire education, applicable by extension to the whole sector of higher education. This is a richly rewarding volume, whether explaining the musical conservatism that can characterize conservatoire culture (the "routine discouragement of the radical or unorthodox"), highlighting the unique conservatoire apprenticeship model's primacy of one-to-one teaching, or exploring how conservatoire-trained musicians are woven into British musical fabric (as leaders of orchestras and choirs all over the country, as professional soloists, teachers, orchestral and ensemble musicians). The volume confirms Wright's summary of the RCM's significance; the college provides "enriched awareness" of what constitutes performance training, "not confined to the behaviors of performance itself, but extend[ing] to an appreciation and understanding of its cultural and social context."

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Stephen Banfield. *Music in the West Country: Social and Cultural History Across an English Region*. Music in Britain, 1600–2000. Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 2018. xx, 456 pp. ISBN 9781783272730 (hardback).



Stephen Banfield describes *Music in the West Country* as "a provisional history, opening the door for the real work to come" (xiii). It is a history not of topics, but of the forces that have shaped the region—money and patronage, institutions, technologies and access to them, and the movements of individuals and their ideas. Banfield acknowledges that "the region as such [the West Country], despite its topographical boundedness as a peninsula, can only be an arbitrary construct" (5). Its boundaries, for his purposes, are the sea to the west and south (naturally), the M4 motorway that runs east-west north of Bristol, and the Hampshire Avon as an east boundary that runs north-south through Wiltshire and Dorset; this includes all of Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset, the western parts of Dorset and

Wiltshire, and the southern edge of Gloucestershire (6–7). He also acknowledges that Cornwall could easily be its own region within the West Country, given both its geographic removal from the rest of the region and its rich Celtic history.

These forces operate across specific musical activities, and Banfield's analysis focuses on a chosen geography instead of a political entity or a nation-state. "Until the Romantics began to idealize inaccessible scenery," Banfield writes, "the West Country was more likely to be satirized than celebrated in music" (255). Ideas about the West Country, and indeed about western areas more generally, have been in circulation since the Middle Ages; it was in the nineteenth century and with improved rail transportation, however, that the region's specialized identity became distinct in relation to the urban, the nation, and the metropolis.

Establishing the boundaries of what he terms "the West Country" is the first important piece of work that Banfield undertakes, particularly because he has chosen a narrower range of territory than other scholars: Gloucestershire and Swindon are out; Bristol, Salisbury, and west Wiltshire are in, the former two considered specifically as gateway cities with significant socio-economic



influence in the region (7). Also, because he is not only examining the region itself but also the forces at work within it, he chose a framework more mobile than geography. Banfield uses institutions as both his materials for defining the West Country and as his means of tracking less systematic movements within it (e.g., individuals). His approach to institutions is, necessarily, open-handed: he includes private patronage, the Church, military and civil authorities, educational establishments, the entertainment industry, and varieties of individual enterprise in his consideration. He writes that, “Music, even folksinging, only happens with institutional support” (298). At the same time, these are not faceless institutions. The people who constitute the networks of teaching and learning; of intellectual, musical, and material exchange; of playing or singing and listening; who are moved or affected by the forces he examines, are never removed from the idea of any of them. They perpetuate the norms and perform the collective behaviors that define the institutions, and they accumulate the resources that make musicking (re: Small) possible.

In Chapter One, “Landscapes and Soundscapes,” Banfield considers the West Country as an institution in itself—as a specific geography, an administrative designation, a linguistic region, and a literary place. He uses Chapter Two, “Musical Authority: Organs” to examine church pipe organs and later concert organs as a central fixture of music in public life, and Chapter Three, “Musical Incorporation: Bands and Choirs,” to investigate the development of various types of bands, choirs, and musical clubs—both church and civic, including waits, glees, freelance groups, wind bands (military and municipal), brass bands, choral societies—considering all as participatory musical institutions that persist in the region.

In Chapters Four and Five, “Musical Livings I: The Prosopography,” and “Musical Livings II: Individual Case Studies,” Banfield expands his ideas of musical institutions to include freelance musicians, their social and career considerations, and the ways in which they have negotiated their place in the region throughout history. Chapters Six and Seven, “Musical Capitalisations I: Events and Inventions,” and “Musical Capitalisations II: Institutions,” examine music in the West Country as symbolic or cultural capital (re: Bourdieu), as, “an attitude, a thing staked out, a possession invested with exchange value, a guarded or cherished identity, or even a fortune.” (253) He finishes with a short summative epilogue, “The Measure of a Region,” in which he considers both the future of music in the West Country in light of Brexit and how the future value of music made in the West Country might be measured—in production costs, in exchange value, and in returns on investments.

Banfield’s methods for examining musicking and soundscapes through the forces in a region in *Music in the West Country* may be the most important contribution that he makes with this volume: not only has he contributed to interdisciplinary scholarship on a musically under-served region, but he has offered a model for doing similar work in others. It makes an excellent addition to Boydell’s *Music in Britain, 1600–2000* series: it is not a survey text; it is not a time period, gender, race, or class investigation; and yet, it is more than a series of case studies. The text *does* many of these things, but does not fit neatly into any of these categories.

Banfield is, in many ways, a generous writer, and this is what makes his book compulsively readable. He presents details of musical life that are evocative and that reveal the deep personal and intellectual investments that he has made in the region over his career. His chosen examples reflect both the geographic isolation of the region that can render its musical institutions unique—the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and Bristol’s remarkable place in rock music—and the similarity of them to English musical practices in other regions—music festivals, psalmody, and folk music—over the course of seven centuries. Banfield brings all of



his interests in regional art, popular, and church musics together with minimal fuss. He considers the Glastonbury festival, town waits from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century, psalmody, folk song, the education of choristers, radio culture, the Sarum Rite, performing arts audiences, the dismantling and preservation of church organs during the English Civil War (to name a selection) from a variety of angles, as well as sound in literature set in the West Country, including Hardy's *A Pair of Blue Eyes*, *Under the Greenwood Tree*, and *The Queen of Cornwall*. All of these things—the musics and sounds, the ideas, the movements of people and exchanges of capital, the developments of technology—are essential, he argues, to understanding both musical culture of the region and the region more generally.

As an enthusiast of institutional history, I admit that I was predisposed to enjoy this book. Even so, I was surprised by how compelling I found it, particularly as a contributor to a larger collection of texts that acknowledge and document musical histories and practices outside of London. No single meta-narrative of any one of the institutions that Banfield describes could have done comparable work. Institutions seldom act alone, and it is the interaction of these institutions—e.g., military with civic authorities, patrons with churches, freelancers with everyone—and his skill in showing how they play out through regional histories that sets *Music in the West Country* in its own class.

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