



# University Music Class Room.

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## SIX HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

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### CONCERT II.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1895.

Italian Chamber Music for Four Stringed Instruments.

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#### PRELIMINARY NOTE.

The history of Italian String Quartet and kindred Music is a brief tale, of which the beginning is almost also the end. When Haydn flourished in Germany (1732-1809), the Italians could boast of the older Sammartini, whose first symphony was produced in 1734, and of the contemporary Boccherini (1743-1805); but in after-times they had to content themselves with isolated and for the most part inferior achievements in this *genre*.

In one of last year's programmes, I remarked that it is impossible to say who wrote the first string quartet. Of the symphonies which Camerloher published at Amsterdam and Nürnberg about 1760, E. L. Gerber, the lexicographer, wrote in 1790 that in them was to be found almost the first tone of the concerted string quartets, which afterwards became such favourites. The Italian G. B. Sammartini has often been indicated as the model followed by Joseph Haydn, an assertion against which, however, the later composer protested. But although undoubtedly Camerloher, Sammartini, Agrell, Stamitz, and others assisted in laying the foundation of the quartet, Joseph Haydn may be regarded as the creator of this beautiful and noble

art-form, he who gave shape and character to it. And this may be said with full knowledge of the achievements of his contemporary Boccherini.

These achievements of Luigi Boccherini were indeed remarkable—remarkable for their number (his quartets amounting to no less than 91 and the quintets to 125), and still more remarkable for their originality and beauty. Out of them speaks to us a distinct individuality, and one of the sweetest and most amiable imaginable. Vigour and energy were not in his nature. On that account he has been called the wife of Haydn. After hearing the quartet that will be played to-night, you will agree with me that the neglect in which the master's music has fallen is undeserved. Boccherini was one of the most popular composers of his time, but for all that he died in poverty at Madrid, where he had lived since 1768 or 1769. His first quartets were published at Paris in 1768.

Luigi Cherubini, born at Florence in 1760, settled at Paris in 1788, and remained there till his death in 1842. He must be ranked not only with the greatest masters of his own time and country, but with those of all times and countries, being one of the most consummate craftsmen, and, if somewhat cold, full of spirit, exquisite imagination, and high intelligence. His strength lay in opera and in sacred music. As an instrumental composer, he is seen at his best in his overtures. The six string quartets he has given to the world may not be models of that style, but they are certainly most delightful and extremely interesting examples of it. The first quartet, in E flat, is generally regarded as the finest. The second, in C major, has a curious history. Cherubini wrote in 1815 a symphony for the London Philharmonic Society, which was not particularly successful. This symphony (in D major) he transformed into the C major quartet, for which he wrote an entirely new slow movement in 1829. Schumann describes this movement as having somewhat of the nature of a romance and of the Provençal character. The other movements are abounding in sparkling life and piquant charm.

Antonio Bazzini, born at Brescia in 1818, made himself first known as a violin virtuoso and a composer of virtuosic music. Afterwards he successfully devoted his energies to more serious work, including choral and orchestral composition. Bazzini, who since 1880 is director of the Milan conservatorio, has written five string-quartets. These compositions prove him to be, not a man of genius of the first order, but a distinguished talent with considerable creative power. Bazzini's taste and careful workmanship reveal the influence of Germany; the abundant flow of sweet, natural melody, and the simplicity and lucidity of the combinations and elaborations show unmistakably the undiminished sway of the Italian nationality.

Of the younger generations, Giovanni Sgambati is the most noteworthy, not to say the only noteworthy, writer of chamber-music; he has, however, been less successful in the string quartet than in music in which the pianoforte takes part.

## PART I.

QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in G minor, Op. 27, No. 2, composed by *Luigi Boccherini* (1743–1805).

- (a) Allegro assai.
- (b) Adagio.
- (c) Menuetto.

## PART II.

QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in C major, composed by *Luigi Cherubini* (1760–1842).

- (a) Lento and Allegro.
- (b) Lento.
- (c) Scherzo, Allegro assai.
- (d) Finale, Allegro vivace.

## PART III.

QUARTET for two Violins, Viola, and Violoncello, in G major, Op. 79, composed by *Antonio Bazzini* (b. 1818).

- (a) Allegro giusto.
- (b) Lento.
- (c) Tempo di Gavotta.
- (d) Allegro con fuoco.

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## PERFORMERS.

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| Professor NIECKS,      | . | . | . | <i>First Violin.</i>  |
| Madame AGNES HAMILTON, | . | . | . | <i>Second Violin.</i> |
| Mr J. F. GUYER,        | . | . | . | <i>Viola.</i>         |
| Mr CARL D. HAMILTON,   | . | . | . | <i>Violoncello.</i>   |

## DATES AND PROGRAMMES OF THE SIX HISTORICAL CONCERTS.

*November 13.*—English Glee, Songs, and Instrumental Music.

*December 5.*—Italian Chamber music for four stringed instruments. Quartets by Boccherini, Op. 27, No. 2, in G minor ; Cherubini in C major ; and Bazzini, Op. 79, in G major.

**December 19.**—French Chamber music for stringed instruments with and without the pianoforte. Quartet for pianoforte and strings, Op. 41, in B flat major, by Saint-Saëns ; Quartet for strings, Op. 68, C minor, by Gouvy ; and Quintet for pianoforte and strings, Op. 7, in D minor, by Widor.

*January 29.*—Old music, chiefly Italian, for the Lute, Viola d'Amore, Viola da Gamba, Harpsichord, &c., performed by Mr Arnold Dolmetsch, Miss Hélène Dolmetsch, and Mrs Elodie Dolmetsch.

*February 13.*—German Chamber music for stringed instruments. Quartets by Haydn in B flat major, Mozart in G major, and Beethoven, Op. 59, No. 1, in F major.

*March 5.*—Slavonic Chamber Music for stringed instruments. Quartets by Tschaïkowsky, Op. 22, in D minor ; Rubinstein, Op. 27, No. 2, in C minor ; and Dvořák, Op. 80, in E major.

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The Performers at the next Concert will be : Professor NIECKS (violin), Madame AGNES HAMILTON (violin), Mr J. F. GUYER (viola), Mr CARL D. HAMILTON (violoncello), and Mr W. TOWNSEND (pianoforte).

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 Please take note of the changed dates of the 3rd and 6th Concerts, which will be held on the 19th December and the 5th March, and not as printed on the tickets.

FREDERICK NIECKS,  
*Reid Professor of Music.*