

2 June 1860. There was a commotion in the Harmony class - our master for
 for ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~some~~ ^{the} reason to be insufficiently attended sections
 did too exorbitantly attended the idea of another meeting for it to
 success - so Mr. Lewis told Hays to take the harmony, & I
 counterpointed his lessons while away - I protected & when
 Dayton's room he was signing his reports, I asked him to give me
 Associate as Hays was to have Miss Porter - & then I asked Hays to
 give me one as well he said / before Miss Dayton & Mr. Legman
 I don't know any one else capable of it & that of me! poor
 me - I was fairly out of my wits for joy - then a delightful
 evening at the Bowerbanks, & best of all a friend was
 with W. Bowerbank here as for ~~as for~~ he thought I was
 never always talks ^{terrible} ~~delightfully~~ & will send a piece of the
 that things I was so tired we wished our with a great deal

Writing Women In

By Briony Cox Williams

has created - in fact he has a right to it. So a master the people
of his pupil is his fortune as the gold for which he stopped
is as much a robbery to check him of the one as of the other.

Abstract

The English composer Clara Macirone (1821-1914) and her music have often been seen as the embodiment of Victorian gendered sensibility and this, alongside the dismissive attitudes towards what has been seen as her alma mater the Royal Academy of Music's concentration on amateur music-making in the nineteenth century, has led to a misinterpretation of her place in her musical milieu. Forced from an early age to become the sole provider for her parents and siblings, Macirone's clarity of thought and understanding of the means by which she was proscribed through her gender offers us a vivid contemporary account of women's relationship with the musical world about them. This paper uses Macirone as a case study of ways that assumptions have either devalued women's music-making as both composers and performers, or written them out of music history altogether.

Keywords

Women, music, nineteenth-century, Victorian England

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ARTicles' front page shows figure 2, A page from Macirone's diary,

Clara Angela Macirone (1821-1914) was an English composer, singer, pianist, writer, teacher, editor, artist and advocate for women's and girls' education who was fully immersed in British music culture for the second half of the nineteenth century. There is an unusually large amount of literature on Macirone, partly because of her own considerable written output, both published and unpublished, and partly through secondary literature in recent years.

Patricia Neate has collated much of the extensive Macirone family correspondence into one volume, *All My Darlings*, as well as donating a vast wealth of Macirone's personal papers to the Bodleian and Royal Academy of Music libraries. Macirone herself contributed many writings to various publications that will be explored later in this article, and musical encyclopaedias of the late nineteenth century, including *Grove*, included entries on her. Additionally, scholarship in recent years has begun to take more of an interest in her, from Sophie Fuller's 1984 thesis *Women composers during the British musical renaissance, 1880-1918* to that of Kaylee Therieau's in 2024, *Musical Babes: Clara Macirone and Oliveria Prescott's Role In Victorian-Era Girls' Music Education*. Between completing her studies at the Royal Academy of Music in 1844 and her retirement in the 1890s, Macirone had a public profile further afield than only in Britain - an entry in the second biographical volume of *The American History and Encyclopedia of Music* (Green, 1908) published when she was

still alive, summed up several of the British encyclopaedia entries when it wrote: 'She was made a professor of the Royal Academy of Music and an associate of the Philharmonic Society, and was for several years the head music-teacher at Aske's School for Girls, and later at the Church of England High School for Girls, and during this time she also conducted a singing society called The Village Minstrels. She has now retired. Her *Te Deum* and *Jubilate*, sung at Hanover Chapel, were the first service composed by a woman ever sung in the church. She has published an admirable suite for the violin and piano, and many part-songs' (Green, 1908, p. 6). Why, then, has she been so comprehensively written out of music history since?

It has always been the case that the vast majority of professional music-making takes place below the level of visibility, and that most musicians and their spheres of activity vanish with their retirement and/or deaths (Ehrlich, 1985, p. 142). Teachers and performers have always been particu-

larly invisible, and this has meant that women can be especially vulnerable to being written out, given their historical concentration in these areas (Ehrlich, 1985, p. 105). Such dismissal is not only a result of a devaluation of women and women's spheres but is also a result of a musical hierarchy that has tended to privilege certain types of professional music-making and music makers over others, often those that have been male-dominated (e.g. orchestral membership in what have been considered "major", i.e. male, orchestras as a method of monitoring professional activity). This includes a changing assessment over the nineteenth century of the importance of amateur music making, as well as the related lowering of the status of private teaching. Gauging musical worth by longevity and reach - often calculated through composition and its recognition - hides an enormous hive of activity across the centuries, much of which was a necessary means of engendering income. Macirone is a model for how professionalism and musical networks operated for many female musicians in the

mid to late 19th century. Much as Macirone desired fame, her reliance was on income as a driving force for her engagement in the musical world, i.e. the here and now of musical activity. Such reliance highlights relationships between amateur music making, publishing, teaching, entrepreneurship, and the institutions that supported all of these. As a prominent female figure in these areas, Macirone demonstrates many of the ways that the landscapes of both music and of women's lives have been recast to render women invisible. This paper therefore uses her as a case study for exploring how history has been skewed for women, and the many contortions that writers have at times undergone to write them out of what could often be a vibrant and creative female environment. Attention will also be paid to the parallel and related fortune and public reputation of Macirone's alma mater, The Royal Academy of Music, for much of the nineteenth century the only institutional music education available to female students in Britain.

Many female musicians of the early nineteenth century came from musical families, which offered two advantages; a childhood that was in many ways an apprenticeship, and a respectability bestowed by the protection of the family reputation in musical circles.

This is evident within the ranks of the early female students at the Academy, where girls such as Susannah Collier, Mary Chancellor, Charlotte Bromley (all students in the first two intakes of the Academy in 1823) and Kate Loder (1825-1904) seem at times to have a somewhat different pathway through the institution than those without such a background, including the kinds of opportunity on offer to these students and awards conferred upon them. A particular example of this is when Macirone's contemporary Kate Loder, a stellar student who was a member of the well-known Loder musical dynasty, was given an Associateship at the unprecedentedly young age of 15, while still a student. Associateship was supposed to be for ex-students who had excelled in the profession, so the conferral on Loder was a notable exception. As Macirone had a very similar profile to Loder, including her services as teacher within the Academy, she wrote to the Academy's Committee of Management in June 1842 to request an Associateship for herself, but the minutes of the committee recorded in the same month that the request

must 'stay over until the proper time' (RAM Minutes, 24 June 1842), i.e. after she completed her studies. The family to which she had been born in 1821 was well-to-do in the first years of her life, with a deep interest in education and the arts, but there were no professional musicians within its ranks prior to Macirone.

The Macirones did not struggle financially in the first few years of her life, as they would later, meaning that Macirone would remember her first decade as one rich in resource and education, firmly embedded within British upper middle-class culture. There were 'concerts, elocution classes, and lectures by the most eminent people on almost every subject under heaven at the Literary and Scientific Institution, to which their parents belonged' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). Music played a large part in Macirone's life from the beginning, and by the time she entered the Academy, at 18 a little older than most other students at the time, she had an extensive theoretical knowledge and a solid technical grasp of both singing and piano, both of which she would study at the institution. The early way of life that bestowed such education on the children, however, seems always to have been somewhat precarious, with ruin never far away. Clara would refer to 'gathering storm clouds' just prior to her entry to the Academy (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive), although one gains the impression that the clouds had been threatening for some time. As the oldest surviving child of six children, of whom only three survived infancy, she felt a great deal of responsibility for the wellbeing of her siblings and parents. The living family would eventually consist of parents George and Mary Ann, Clara, and her two younger siblings, sister Emily and a much younger brother, George Augustus. George's father Pietro also lived with the family until his death in 1826. Macirone remembered him as 'very grand [...] Mama told me often going into a room with him was like being taken in by a King, everyone else seemed so small and insignificant when he was by' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). Macirone can never bring herself to write negatively about anyone, and so when she treads a line precariously close to doing so, one can be sure that things were far worse than she suggests. So it is when she writes: 'Then, the year my grandfather

died the Bank or rich House in which he was partner lost thirty thousand pounds and all he had saved went with it – and so all they had reckoned on to repay the heavy expense of a style of living they only kept up for my grandfather's sake was gone' (Macirone, n.d., uncatalogued personal papers, RAM Macirone archive). This financial disaster was to start an economic landslide for the family that would colour the rest of Macirone's life.

Pietro Macirone had two sons, Macirone's father George, a stockbroker, and the famed army colonel and inventor Francis. George and Francis used different spellings of the family name, and this would later give rise to some of the difficulties Clara had with recognition, both during her time at the Academy and later in her publishing career. Pietro sent Francis Macerone (or less frequently Macerone) to Italy as a young man, where he joined the army as well as becoming a diplomat, inventor and writer. His memoirs show a fascinating life, but there is a real bitterness and sense of abandonment in how he writes about being sent away (Macerone, 1838, p. 18). This is a little disingenuous, given Francis was a bigamist who married two sisters, bringing up one family in England and one in Spain, and therefore being often absent from the lives of his daughters. Such scandal seems not to have been public, but his not infrequent run-ins with the law were reported in the papers. One example was a violent altercation with a bailiff sent to stop him from fishing in a navigable stretch of canal, a scuffle that earned him a fine. In the class-conscious Victorian society, these events had an effect on the rest of the family, and when Francis lost everything he had on his failed inventions, and died leaving his families destitute, it was left to the other branch of the Macirones to use their already stretched resources to support the widows.

Francis's brother George was rather less flamboyant, although the psychological pressures of the family affected him just as much and in just as financially ruinous a way. He succumbed to alcoholism – the 'illness' to which Clara would refer in her memoirs – and was removed to an 'asylum', where he would remain for several years. This meant that there was no income for the family, and it would fall to the practical and determined Clara to fill most of the gap. It was a responsibility that would shape her whole life, resulting in a breakup with her fiancé

and many other dashed hopes and dreams. The Academy, too, did its part in crafting a public link between Clara and her roots, and its knowledge of and disapproval of her wider family occasionally shows in its dealings with her. At times in lesson registers her name is misspelled as Macerone, i.e. one of the spellings by which Francis was known. There is also an odd little incident when the committee realises that they have failed to accord one of their best students with any tangible

especially in that study which, though most important, was generally most neglected—as to draw from them special commendation.

Then the room, and the lights, and the crowd of eager, excited girls, and Mr. Lucas—whom as long as I could see I watched—smiling at the piano—grew more and more indistinct, and I caught hold of her hand, for I trembled so that I could scarcely sit, and drew back to avoid the multitude of eyes

Nevertheless, the Academy was Clara's domain, away from the rest of her family, and it was clearly of fundamental importance in her lifelong view of herself and her belief in her ability to be the musician she desired to be. She entered in 1839, remaining until 1844, during which time she studied singing, piano and harmony/composition. While sections of the institution may have implicitly treated her with less respect than it did students from musical or upper-class families, many of the teachers and the principal Cipriani Potter (1792-1871) clearly recognised her talents and nurtured them. Clara remained profoundly grateful to many of them for her whole life.

The carelessness with which Clara's name was treated is common to many women throughout the nineteenth century and would follow her into her extensive publishing career.

In 1852, a review appeared in the Morning Chronicle in London for a 'Duet in Canon and Four Songs' by C. A. Macirone. The reviewer was positive about the new publication, writing that 'Mr Macirone is well known as an accomplished musician, and these works will support his reputation. The Canon is ingeniously treated and contains melodic passages of much beauty.' By 1852 Clara was already prolifically published, having several piano pieces, choral and solo songs to her name. She was also a busy performer, mounting concerts in which many of her compositions were heard. Not all of these appear to have gone on to be published, but they were recognised in the press with descriptions such as 'pleasing and expressive' (The Examiner, 1847) and 'strongly marked with fancy and originality' (Morning Herald, 1846). There is therefore no excuse for the reviewer of the Morning Chronicle – a reasonably well-versed paper in musical matters – to misgender Macirone in this way by assuming that the name C. A. Macirone belonged to a man. There was also perhaps an assumption that such a positive review could only be for the product of a male pen, especially when the more technical elements were involved, such as counterpoint (a requirement for all students at the Royal Academy of Music under Cipriani Potter's principalship). The fact that Clara Macirone published almost exclusively under her initials suggests that she was aware of the gendered nature of the publishing business; in many of her accounts of attempts to find paid employment, one can see her recognition of the difficulties



Figure 1. Title Page of Suite de Pieces for Violin and Piano, Clara Macirone, 1891. Image reproduced by permission of The Royal Academy of Music.

recognition and so decide to give her a leather-bound score of Handel's Israel in Egypt, which is handed over at the end of a vocal practice, rather than a public award ceremony. There is no other occurrence like this throughout the entire nineteenth century, and Clara's description of the 'ceremony' betrays a telling mix of gratitude and deflation:

[Mr Lucas, the conductor] went on to say that the committee wished him to express their approbation of the talents and exertions of a pupil who had shown such remarkable diligence, not in one but in all her studies, and who had made such great progress—more

that watched me, and the crowded room seemed more brilliant than ever I had seen it. The excitement seemed very great; I felt taken so completely unprepared for such a scene (for it was a scene); and when, Mr. Hamilton mentioned my name, and came forward with the book, applause burst forth from every corner of the room. He came round the piano and up to me. I believe I bowed low as I took the book which he gave me, saying that nothing then remained for him but to present it to me as a mark of the high approbation of the committee, and he begged to add his own warm congratulations (Macirone, Art-Student Life in the Forties, pp.14-15).

specific to her sex. Four decades later a review in *The Aberdeen Press and Journal*, this time for a concert given in 1895 in Castleton Scotland (for 'the fund for supplying village lamps'), included the popular part-song 'Sir Knight' (Macirone) in its programme list, using a spelling of the family name never associated with Macirone as a professional musician. Using names that belong to more famous male members of the family is of course common for women; we have only to think of Fanny Mendelssohn/Hensel and Clara Wieck/Schumann to see how this has worked historically.

The demand for printed music, which continued to expand in the second quarter of the century as the lower middle- and working-classes gained

complete outputs became unwieldy and gave way to more specialised lists dedicated to genres, or to works for particular instruments or composers. Novello and d'Almaine were two of the main houses that used methods of printing that allowed for cheap mass runs; both also led an entrepreneurial drive to access a consumer base with the means and desire to buy the resulting music. The increasing numbers of published women composers amongst the ranks of Academy students over the middle decades of the nineteenth century demonstrates the burgeoning demand for the type of 'feminine' genres that constituted the bulk of the amateur market. This concentration on piano and vocal music was not simply because these were seen as feminine, however, but

large-scale choral works for the annual concerts of the Philanthropic Society, a charity in aid of homeless and criminal children of which her father Richard Collier was superintendent, before her early death in 1839, while the others ceased publishing soon after leaving the Academy. All three appear to have funded at least some of their own pieces by subscription, although two of Collier's songs appeared in *The Harmonicon* – and Bellchambers's ballad *The Spell Is Broken* was successful enough to run to three printings, as well as being the theme of a set of variations by popular composer Thomas Valentine in the early 1830s.

By the 1840s, the landscape was very different, and women were publishing in growing numbers. At least twelve of Macirone's contemporaries at the Academy during the 1840s had music published – Kate Lucy Ward, Annie Wybrow and Adeline Maxwell Cooper were all particularly successful with song, appearing with a range of London publishers from the smaller names to the larger houses such as Edwin Ashdown, while others such as singers Eliza Wagstaff and Emma Willis Browne had just one or two works in print. Augusta Amherst Austen found her success in writing hymn tunes for the new hymn collections being published at increasing rates, while Harriette Ward tended towards composing for piano. In publishing this kind of music, they joined the ranks of a broader cross-section of popular women songwriters such as Charlotte Alington Barnard who published under the pseudonym 'Claribel' (1830-1969), Virginia Gabriel (1825-1877), Harriet Browne (1798-1858) and the slightly earlier but still popular Harriett Abrams (c1762-1821). Besides such big names as Novello and D'Almaine, there was an explosion of smaller publishing houses, many of which appear to have had personal relationships with the composers they served – Macirone would write of dropping in on a publisher to discuss income or future projects. Further publication possibilities came with the parallel growth of journals and magazines, both musical and general, which included scores in their editions. For women, the growth of these publications for a female market led to entirely new publishing possibilities. Macirone's works appeared in *The Musical Times* as well as female-specific journals such as *The Girl's Own Paper*, as well as being published separately. She published solo songs in English, French and German (she was fluent in all three languages),

greater access to music, was of enormous benefit to composers like Macirone, who relied on this new appetite for printed music as an important source of income. Musical instrument ownership had increased, access to concerts had widened, and community groups such as choral societies and brass bands were now fixtures in many towns and cities. There was increased demand for cheap, popular domestic music as well as the scores required for community music-making. Market segmentation within publishing houses became a feature, even quite early in the century, as the catalogues containing publishers'

also because they were within the reach of the amateur musician, both technically and because of instrumentation. Of the female students at the Academy during the 1820s, only three appear to have published – Susannah Collier, Ann Rivière (later Anna Bishop) and Juliet Bellchambers – all of them confining themselves mostly to songs. Collier appears to have been most successful both as a student and in her later career as a composer, although this was not yet a principal study option in the Academy, whereas Bishop and Bellchambers were singers who composed as a response to expectation. Collier would go on to produce

part songs including duets and trios, piano solos and duets, and two string and piano chamber works, the violin and piano suite appearing after the violin became regarded as a suitable instrument for women to play and the short piano trio after the cello joined the ranks of acceptability. The songs were often categorised into subgenres in publisher lists, specifying sacred or Sunday songs, lullabies, ballads, etc.

Macirone's attention on smaller, so-called 'domestic' genres, particularly the nineteenth-century part song, has often led to a dismissive relabelling of the composer herself and of her output, but could be seen to be accounted for in large part by entrepreneurial shrewdness.

an opera from her pen. Pischek was a bass-baritone well-known across the Continent for opera and song and particularly well-known in England as a ballad-singer; Macirone's songs remained in his repertoire for his whole career. Pischek wanted her to write him an opera to be sung in opera-houses across Germany, a project that excited her. Macirone's sister Emily wrote an account of the two musicians conferring on possibilities: 'He grew quite in earnest about Clara's opera, and walked up and down for half an hour talking to her about it. He wants her to write one very much and says that she is throwing herself away writing disconnected songs... So Clara intends working at her opera. She has found a libretto ... and will ask Herr

How could she earn a living while sitting at her desk tussling with the enormity of such an undertaking? There are accounts from her family of Macirone returning home from a full day of teaching, drawn and exhausted, and certainly in no state to sit down and write an opera, plus her many contracts with publishers for the smaller works were far more lucrative at least in the shorter term.

The relabelling of smaller genres and pieces suitable for the amateur market as less worthy of inclusion in canons is common in later evaluations of nineteenth-century women's composing and is another way of rendering musical endeavour invisible within solely teleological conceptualisations of music history. In an interview that appeared in the London newspaper Hampstead and Highgate Express in 1889, Macirone was clear that her choices of genre were a response to need and an outcome of her belief in the fundamental social importance of amateur music-making. When asked why she wrote so many part-songs, she responded:

I took it up because it is the most popular, the most far-reaching form of musical enjoyment. In my early days I wanted to make the lives of the many brighter to admit them to a share in the enjoyment of that art which had done so much for me, to take some share in the efforts dear friends were making to give brighter and better hours of rest and recreation to dark and dreary homes. [...] In those days there were not many part-songs written, so I tried to supply the want. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1889, p.3)

Macirone's views highlight the differing priorities of earlier eras, particularly around amateur music. In 1822, when the Academy was founded, the discussion around it largely centred on the employability of its students and the effect on current practitioners of the influx of trained musicians. While there was concern that the market would be flooded, resulting in starvation and penury, some writers pointed to the burgeoning amateur market and a growing need for high-quality teaching:

The love of music is certainly spreading with prodigious rapidity through all classes, and we hail this with unfeigned satisfaction, as we are practically sure it is an innocent and a never-failing recreation, which tends to

As an alumna of the Academy, she would have been well aware of its founding assertion that its purpose was to train musicians 'to provide for themselves the means of an honourable and comfortable livelihood' (Cazallet, p. 261). While Macirone's letters and diaries show her creative ambition and desire for recognition, the more pressing and practical need for enough income to support her family had to take precedence. Songs generated income; larger forms that might demonstrate her compositional dexterity (and render her visible to later histories) would not, as highlighted by Johann Baptist Pischek's request in 1847 for

Freiligrath to set it to German poetry' (Neate, 167). Eventually, however, practicality overtook proceedings, and Macirone had to give up the idea:

[Pischek] wished her to write an opera of which he would take the chief part, and see to its being brought out at the Stuttgardt Theatre; - the poet Freiligrath would have rendered the beautiful play she chose into German. But insuperable home duties made the plan impossible, though the kindness and zeal which prompted the proposal could never be forgotten (Macirone, Art-Student Life in the Forties, p. 21).

preclude an immoral employment of leisure hours, and to refine and purify the mind. [...] To exalt the profession by the real elevation of its members in knowledge and moral and intellectual refinement, is the first object with us in promulgating these opinions – to extend the apprehension and the love of the beauties of art by making some proficiency in music a qualification demanded in our public education, is the second – because each will contribute to the value and the excellence of the other, and both to the happiness of mankind (Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review 4, pp. 399–400).

Macirone lived at a time still on the cusp of earlier functional music, and later conceptualisations of music as aesthetic, or as a 'religious experience,' as Timothy Day terms it (Day, 2000, p. 205). As Robert Philip points out, prior to the recording era composers had a duty to supply the amateur market, a duty which receded with the advancing tide of accessible performance. Composers began to disregard the amateur need, until this disregard even became a mandated aesthetic priority (Philip, 2004, p. 8). That the ability to negotiate with the amateur listener is a yardstick by which nineteenth-century composers were to be measured is demonstrated in an 1879 review of Macirone's quartet 'O Musa!' in The Musical Times: 'It is difficult, we know, to produce a work which shall equally please trained and untrained listeners – but Miss Macirone has successfully achieved this task' ('O Musa! Quartet-to', The Musical Times, 1879, p. 601).

In an 1889 interview, Macirone offered the opinion that a woman composer 'will express herself more naturally in the smaller musical forms; those which come to a hearing at the fire-side and in the drawing-room, and are sufficient to occupy the circle in which she lives.' On the surface, this might suggest that she believed that women should by nature confine themselves to the domestic sphere; but much of her extensive writing, and even the same interview quoted above, shows that it is not restriction that underpins her statement, but her views on the relationship between musical experience and authority. Macirone is suggesting that women were unable to compete in larger and more public

circles because of their lack of aural experience in these genres, rather than because of a lack of talent or suitability, as she explains in this quotation:

Women are already members of orchestras, and their minds must inevitably expand beyond the limits of the pianoforte and song as they become accustomed to the colour and accent, the large expression and extended form of the symphony. She thinks that this will increase the range and vision of women composers. The

recent success of Middle. Holmes' dramatic symphony, 'Lutece,' at Paris, confirms this anticipation. By the way, Miss Macirone rejoices that girls are turning their attention to the violin. She wishes, however,

that some of them would learn the viola or the 'cello, to say nothing of other orchestral instruments. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1889, p.3)

The sympathetic interviewer takes Macirone's suggestion even further, pointing out the advantage of being the conductor of the ensemble:

[O]ne of the most important advantages that men composers have had is in being nearly all orchestral conductors. They have been able quickly and constantly to bring their works to a hearing, to attract public attention to themselves, and to make their works stepping-stones on which to rise to higher things. (Hampstead and Highgate Express, 1889, p.3)

Recognition that visibility was fundamental to musical life is evident throughout the lengthy interview. Such public verification remains an issue beyond a lifespan, however, particularly when viewed in combination with fluctuating fashions in genre, leading to whole events or the musicians present at them going unacknowledged, and thus discounting their presence in mainstream events that are considered important in driving forward progress. The part songs for which Macirone became especially well known have become obsolete in themselves, despite their considerable prominence at the time in wider society. In the famous story of Alexander Graham Bell demonstrating the newfangled telephone to Queen Victoria and her family in January

1878, there were two demonstrations, both involving music. On the first day, Queen Victoria heard several popular songs such as 'Coming Through the Rye' and 'Kathleen Mavourneen.' On the second day, a second demonstration was held for other members of the Royal household, including two of Queen Victoria's children. Several more musical numbers were played, one of them Macirone's part-song 'Sir Knight, Sir Knight,' sung by a 'quartette of tonic sol-fa singers' (London Evening Standard, 1878) – the same song as in the village-lamp fundraiser we saw earlier. Why would it have been chosen? Because it was extremely popular, and most people present would have known it and probably have sung it in one of its iterations; given the still-imperfect transmission of a phone line, it would still be recognisable.

One already-mentioned journal that was particularly important in maintaining Macirone's status within music, particularly 'as a teacher and trainer [that] has scarcely been equalled by any of her sex' (Bristol Times and Mirror, 1889), was The Girl's Own Paper, founded in 1880 by the Religious Tract Society.

One can see parallels between its insistence on a good, all-round education for girls, and Macirone's own upbringing. Her lifelong passion for championing education for girls and women found written outlet here, and far from being confined to a feminine sphere sometimes seen to be insipid and narrowing, she saw the magazine as a way of helping women accomplish more of what she realised she could not in the midst of the gender strictures by which she had been bound over the past decades. Macirone was interested in broadening knowledge and opportunity within the areas she knew well; she tended not to advocate here for wider opportunities or offer articles on anything other than traditionally 'female' genres. It should be remembered that at this point, the term 'girl' was both age and class related in Britain – it was used for those of a young age, but also those in the so-called 'lower' classes of occupation, such as servants, typists, etc. Macirone was not only advocating for the education of girls who might later become musicians, but even more, for a broadening knowledge and musical experience for the amateur market about which she cared so passionately. Macirone's name first appeared in print in the publication in 1881, in a slightly lacklustre review of her trio, 'The Cavalier' (The Girl's Own

Paper, 1881, p. 762). In 1883 several more reviews appeared of part songs, solo songs and piano pieces, this time positive, and from this point onwards, Macirone was a regular appearance in the publication, both in reviews and in contributions from her own pen, which included twenty-four pieces of music and around thirty texts, mostly in the form of extended letters to the editor. Her first offering, also in 1883, was entitled 'A Girl's Morning Hymn' and was a nine-verse poem (The Girl's Own Paper, 1881, pp. 801-802). 1884 saw the first of her multi-part 'letters' with 'A Plea for Music' (the first instalment was called 'The Power of Music' but belongs to the same set of writing), also the first time that Macirone appended her name in the paper with 'late professor of the Royal Academy of Music' (The Girl's Own Paper, 1883, pp. 163, 268, 330, 410, 457, 580, 660). It was an argument not just for music itself, but also for a proper education of women and girls, which Macirone believed should include 'a systematic and thorough instruction' in music in the same way that the best boys' schools did (Macirone, 1884, p. 330). Later articles became even more practical, such as her four-part 'On Taste in the Choice of Songs' (The Girl's Own Paper, 1885, pp. 390, 548, 634, 696). In this, she covered topics such as accompaniment, national style, language and text, ensuring that the song suits the range of one's voice, and the purpose of performing songs. Interestingly, she also commented that 'the restraints which society imposes on young girls are very heavy' (Macirone, 1885, p. 391), going on to imply that this constrained choice as much as more interpretive considerations. Macirone's contributions to The Girl's Own Paper ended in 1908 with her part-song, 'Chirp and Twitter.'

Macirone's work with amateurs was not about lowering standards, as much of her writing demonstrates. Along with other illustrious names such as Lady Benedict (Mary Fortey), Lady Lindsay (Caroline Fitzroy), Lindsay Sloper and Charles Peters, she contributed a chapter to the multi-author book *How to Play the Pianoforte* (Benedict et al., 1884). Her chapter, titled 'Method of Study', is briskly practical; while the preceding chapter had been Lady Benedict's reflections on the purpose of practice and warnings not to overreach one's talents, Macirone offered ways to ensure that practice time is used efficiently, even setting out a chart to be filled in daily (Benedict et al., 1884, 39). She was always

clear that she believed that amateurs could reach a high level of execution, both technically and interpretatively, if they were taught correctly. These views highlight the differing priorities of earlier eras around amateur music. This dignifying of the amateur pursuit of music would become a factor in the argument that ensued from the Society of Arts' 1866 report into the state of musical education in Britain. This report included recommendations for the future, as well as attempting a summary of the current offerings. The compilation of the report was from many months of evidence and input given before the committee from critics, educators, musicians and administrators. As one of the few places offering music education that was in any way institutional, the Royal Academy of Music was well documented, both by supporters and by detractors. One of the most well-known names to give evidence was Henry Chorley, music critic of The Athenaeum and writer on music events throughout the UK and Europe. Seen as one of the leading authorities in such matters, his excoriating take-down of the Academy thus held much weight. For Chorley, the Academy simply trained young women as piano teachers of amateurs, an undertaking unworthy of the lofty ideals of its staff, and as a result, 'There has not been one commanding English artist, vocal or instrumental, turned out of the Academy during the last twenty-five years (Chorley, 1865, p. 656).' A member of the listening committee challenged this statement, leading to Chorley admitting singer Charlotte Dolby as a possible exception, but he has remained largely unchallenged in this view ever since, a view which causes the mediocrity of some of the Academy's student body at the time to dominate the discourse. It might be noted here that every witness in the Society's investigation was male. The notion of 'greatness' in music – in itself of course an indefinable concept – also being tied to male canons and male performance opportunities means that an enormous amount of musical activity goes unnoticed. This is in part due to the devaluing of amateur music, in part as a result of the rise of recorded music which allowed for the experiencing of music no longer being dependent on in-person performance, and in part due to an overlooking of female musicmaking as less progressive. Even Frederick Corder, in his centenary history of the Academy, describes it as a 'school devoted chiefly to the training of young women for music-teachers

(Corder, 1922, p. 74). The idea that it therefore turned out few musicians of any calibre says much about the hierarchies the structure our reading of music history. The permanently and critically cash-strapped Academy was indeed in a precarious state for much of the nineteenth century and therefore often needed to admit students that were not of the ideal standard – principal Cipriani Potter's despairing notes on some of the auditionees make for amusing reading – but the binary nature of the amateur/professional divide of later decades does little to help unpack the complexity of the Academy's provision. It is certainly true that amateur music encompassed the facile accomplishment and marriage market ideals of which critics such as Chorley were wary, but a broader remit is evident. Chorley's rather curmudgeonly view of the music scene fails to take into account the many composers, pianists, singers, teachers and other busy musicians, particularly amongst the women graduates, who were active at the time and may be rather surprised to learn that their lives (and incomes) don't count. Indeed, John Hullah, that champion of the amateur musician, offered this to the Committee in his own deposition:

The inevitable occupation of the majority of English musicians is teaching - principally teaching one instrument - the pianoforte - and the Academy has improved the quality of English pianoforte teaching, and educated a large number of teachers. These, for the most part, lead quiet and unnoted, but very useful lives. I think that a good deal too much is expected of academies. They cannot create genius. (Hullah, 1866, p. 385)

Chorley was looking at possibilities and the Academy's duty to drive musical progress; Hullah was concerned with current supply and demand. George Macfarren, too, tried to defend the students in his testimony when he was called in January 1865:

[T]he success of many of its pupils, and the high position gained by them as composers, singers, players, and teachers – the last, most particularly throughout the provinces, has gained the academy a reputation, and won for it a confidence such as would cost any new foundation many years to acquire; thirdly, the regard for the Academy of those whom it has educated, and the feeling of fraternity among them [...] (Macfarren, 1865, p.118)

Macfarren's highlighting of 'fraternity' as fundamental to the success of Academy students is particularly worth noting, as study at the Academy afforded female students a sense of musical community for the first time in the UK, one which would follow many of them throughout their careers. It is always notable how many fellow alumnae were chosen by concert organisers, or who helped set up a teacher's school, or who chose to perform the repertoire of Academy composers. Macirone, whose networks were second to none, was no exception in this, for example recruiting Charlotte Dolby to sing her songs in many of Dolby's own concerts and Gabrielle Vaillant to teach violin in Macirone's supremely successful music department at the Baker Street Church of England School for Girls. In a musical world where many (male) avenues were still closed to women and would be for decades, these relationships were professionally essential. The Academy itself also was seen by many of the women as fundamental in upholding those communities, and many women were proud to have studied and taught there. Although Chorley raised concerns about the sub-professor method at the Academy, wherein advanced students taught other students for a remission in fees, this was often a route into full professorship, as for Macirone, or at least provided supervised teaching experience for those who would become 'provincial' teachers.

Figure 2, A page from Macirone's diary, outlining a teaching incident while she was a sub-professor. Image reproduced by permission of The Royal Academy of Music. (See articles' front page)

During her own studentship, Macirone was in great demand by Academy staff to teach Italian, harmony and piano (this last was a substitution for the harmony classes after some complaints about Macirone's style). Upon leaving the Academy she remained as an associate professor, becoming a full (and therefore paid) professor in 1847. This position continued until 1866, when in a particularly chaotic episode of the Academy's history, it closed for several months, reopening with male professors only. The female professors like Macirone were summarily dismissed. Not only was this a financial blow to Macirone, but it was also a betrayal by the institution she thought of as a support and a shelter. Many years later, in her

obituary of her dear friend and Academy principal George Macfarren, she makes her feelings very clear:

In the drives together, to one of the schools mentioned, many subjects were discussed, in which the Professor took a keen interest. Amongst them was one which bore on the welfare of those sisters in the profession who, like myself, entered the Royal Academy at a time when women were allowed to share its honours and privileges. It is unknown how many paid those heavy fees from straitened means, with the hope that after years of hard work, they might obtain ample power of helping the homes they loved: those homes which had endured difficulties and privations to give them an education possessing such hopes of reward. (Macirone, 1888, p. 28)

Nevertheless, Macirone would continue to sign herself 'late professor of the Royal Academy of Music' for the rest of her career.

The removal of the Academy income strand meant that Macirone had to look for other teaching work. In 1872 she was appointed Head of the music school at Aske's School for Girls, Hatcham, a post she resigned in 1878 to concentrate on her other job as Head of the music department of the Church of England High School for Girls at Baker Street in central London. Her success here led to an expansion in the early 1880s, including the beginning of violin teaching, under fellow RAM alumna Gabrielle Vaillant. Macirone kept this post until her retirement in the early 1890s, although she remained active in the school by continuing to adjudicate competitions and conduct examinations. Her name was an important drawcard for the school, which advertised almost monthly for pupils. The 'systematic and thorough' education that Macirone outlined in *The Girl's Own Paper* was on display here, in a 'system' specific to Macirone herself:

I have been just to see about all the music for college tomorrow and shall have it home tonight, so I feel through the wood, and I think I shall very much enjoy this new system. It will, as soon as I get it fairly in work, save me an infinity

of trouble, it will give me a definite system to work on.

I have had a capital practice of the new music and like it exceedingly, and think I shall learn the system to good purpose and get it going with all my pupils. Once I get this college scheme fully afloat and in work, I think it will work capitally. (Neate, 2018, p. 634)

It was indeed successful, as George Macfarren noted at the 1877 prizegiving at Aske's:

It is most dangerous to have bad teaching or to gain bad habits; thus these pupils are fortunate in having in the lady at the head of the music-school a distinguished musician in high esteem in our profession. The many proofs of her care and qualifications give great cause for confidence in her skill as a teacher and director of teachers. I think the institution fortunate in having secured her services, and I thank Miss Macirone, in the name of the profession, for the work she has done here in the cause of music, and for the care she has bestowed on the progress of the pupils of this school. (Macfarren, 1877, p.80)

Macirone's diverse and full career lasted for over sixty years, from the 1840s to the early 1900s, over a period that saw an enormous social and musical revolution for women. This trajectory of change was not always forward, however, but also sometimes in reverse, as Macirone herself acknowledges in Macfarren's obituary, particularly as women and their activity entered more written history. Changing ideals and priorities within music helped to consign Macirone to obscurity (although even this raises the question of what obscurity really means, given that her music remained in print and was publicised in publisher distribution lists until WWII). Macirone's teaching and her work with amateurs is a prime example of a different set of priorities that informed an earlier era and is a career choice that has relegated her to 'an ordinary life' and led to her creative output being relabelled dismissively. She was not in many ways musically 'progressive', but she was socially progressive in the ways in which she campaigned for women in music. For example, when conservatoires and

“Macirone's diverse and full career lasted for over sixty years”



Foto: Tord F Paulsen

universities began to admit women to study a wider range of subjects than was previously available to them, Macirone was paramount in allowing this to happen, having helped to educate a generation that could make use of an advanced level of education. In this she was a pioneer, although the idea of biography as requiring a certain kind of dominance in historical narratives means that the pioneer trope can become overused, clouding stories that follow, or are parallel. Pianist, teacher and composer Kate Loder has often dominated the narrative of the 1840s Academy women, right from their shared studentship. During their lives this was due to Loder's family ties both through birth and marriage, while later recognition is in large part thanks to her association with the canonic figures of Brahms and the

Schumanns. It is much to the credit of both Macirone and Loder that they were such good friends for life.

This paper has examined only a few of the ways in which history has skewed Macirone's story, although many of these can be summed up in large part as a set of moral codes that are applied to women but not to men. Anna Fels (2005) highlights the difficulties in negotiating these moral codes when a woman is ambitious, pointing out ways in which men have external approbation and recognition that women must find for themselves:

It falls nearly entirely on the individual woman to carve out a life for herself with adequate meaning and satisfactions – not an easy task for anyone, let alone an impressionable young person. For each woman life must be a

creation of sorts and also an assertion of values, priorities, and identity, because no role is accepted unquestioningly. (Fels, 2005, p. xvi)

The portrait of Macirone that emerges is of not only of a woman caught in the gendered strictures of her times, and enmeshed in familial responsibilities, but also of a fiercely determined, energetic and ambitious person, with a sharp eye for how structures and systems worked, and how she might make the best of her position. Macirone was well aware of the prejudices that made her life even more difficult than necessary and was not afraid to confront them. It is clear from her writing and from descriptions that Clara Macirone indeed 'carved out a life for herself' in the words of Fels, and helped other women and girls to do the same.

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