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*DILETTANTE*  
AND  
*AMATEUR*  
Our Evolving Language

Beverly Jerold

Knowledge of how the terms *amateur*, *dilettante*, and *Liebhaver* were applied by early writers is often vital in interpreting their texts. In our usage, these terms imply an achievement level below that of a professional practitioner. Today's *Oxford English Dictionary*, however, makes a careful distinction between the original connotation of *dilettante* and our application:

A lover of the fine arts; originally, one who cultivates them for the love of them rather than professionally, and so = *amateur* as opposed to *professional*; but in later use generally applied more or less depreciatively to one who interests himself in an art or science merely as a pastime and without serious aim or study.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 4:665.

Another term for the same was *amateur*, derived from the French verb *aimer*. As adopted by the English, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1:379) offers two principal meanings for *amateur*:

1. One who loves or is fond of; one who has a taste for anything.
2. One who cultivates anything as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally; hence, sometimes used disparagingly, as = dabbler, or superficial student or worker.

Accurate as far as they go, these definitions leave much unsaid about the terms' early usage. The eighteenth-century literature associates them most often with some aspect of arts and letters, but sometimes applies them more broadly, as in *amateur de politique*, meaning a "person of quality" who invests considerable time and effort in studying and reporting on the subject. While many of the sources below concern music, similar information can be found in other fields.<sup>2</sup> Music is an especially fruitful avenue for study because so many "amateurs" practiced it, often gaining skills rivaling those of the best professional musicians. For the most part, this article's source material will be limited to the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Modern publications reflect our lack of consensus about these terms. One viewpoint is expressed by Otto Biba when writing about concert life in Beethoven's Vienna:

During the eighteenth and throughout most of the nineteenth century, a music dilettante was a trained musician who played his instrument perfectly, but for his own pleasure rather than for a living. A dilettante was simply a performer of professional caliber with amateur status. Of course, some dilettantes had more talent, more training, and more practical experience than others. But the unfavorable connotation which we are inclined to attach to this designation today was entirely unknown at the time.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> See Richard Hibbitt, *Dilettantism and Its Values: From Weimar Classicism to the Fin de Siècle* (London: Legenda, 2006), introduction (which cites modern studies of this subject) and chapter 1, "The Etymology of the Term."

<sup>3</sup> Otto Biba, "Concert Life in Beethoven's Vienna" in *Beethoven, Performers, and Critics: The International Beethoven Congress, Detroit, 1977*, ed. Robert Winter and Bruce Carr (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), 77–93 at 78f.

On the other hand, Bernd Sponheuer's article equates *Liebhaber* and *Dilettant* with "Musikfreund, Laie, Nichtkenner" as opposites to *Kenner* (one who is thoroughly knowledgeable about music). While he acknowledges that early usage of *Liebhaber* and *Dilettant* did not exclude professional training, he does not develop this subject, but contrasts the informed *Kenner* with the *Liebhaber*, for whom "the hedonistic component is decisive." He does, however, note the positive depiction of the *Dilettant* in Hans Georg Nägeli's book (1826).<sup>4</sup>

### \* The Terms as Indicators of Social Class \*

As sources below confirm, the terms *dilettante*, *amateur*, and *Liebhaber* originally were unrelated to proficiency with the subject under consideration, but referred to a socioeconomic class that had enjoyed the period's highest level of education. Broadly speaking, this group comprised those with the means to educate their children with private tutoring; that is, the aristocracy and the upper middle class.

In 1852 the composer Fromental Halévy made the sociological aspect explicit when observing that certain *amateurs* dedicate their entire lives to the art:

On ne leur donne le nom d'*amateurs* que parce que leur fortune leur permet de ne pas demander à leur talent une aisance que l'*artiste* de profession est obligé de rechercher par ses travaux. . . si quelques-uns ne s'élèvent pas au-dessus du *nocturne* ou de la *romance*. . . d'autres ont véritablement un talent de premier ordre: il y a eu souvent à Paris, il y a encore aujourd'hui, des *amateurs* dont le talent n'a rien à envier à celui des artistes les plus renommés.<sup>5</sup>

They are given the name of *amateur* only because their affluence frees them from asking of their talent the remuneration that the artist of profession is obliged to seek by his work. . . . If some [*amateurs*] do not rise above the nocturne or the romance. . . others truly have talent of the first order. In Paris, there have often been and still are today *amateurs* whose

<sup>4</sup> Bernd Sponheuer, "Kenner-Liebhaber-Dilettant," in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), part 1, 5:31–37.

<sup>5</sup> Fromental Halévy, "Dictionnaire des beaux-arts," *La Revue et Gazette musicale de Paris* 19 (1852): 303f.

talent leaves nothing to be desired in comparison with the most renowned artists.

Dividing the *amateurs* into active or passive participants, Halévy places Frederick the Great, who played and composed for the flute, in the former category. If the passive type of *amateur* happens to be wealthy, continues Halévy, he takes pleasure in nurturing budding talents. For example, M. de La Pouplinière of the previous century had the first act of Jean-Philippe Rameau's opera *Hippolyte et Aricie* (1733) performed at his mansion for an elegant audience including those men of letters whose support was so important, thereby opening to Rameau the theater's previously closed gates. Halévy also discusses the eighteenth-century writers who took part in musical controversies, and were given the name of *amateur* because they did not study music professionally, but judged questions with their intellect, and sometimes their particular tastes. Thus their writings did not have the special character that critiques by musicians, if there were any in this epoch, would have given them. (He is probably right in speculating that there were no professional-musician critics during Rameau's age. One of the earliest may have been Pascal Boyer, who began writing in the late 1760s.) According to Halévy, the mathematician Jean Le Rond d'Alembert rendered another type of service to the musical art when putting his pen at Rameau's disposal, thereby lending his new doctrines the authority of his name and reputation. Another type of *amateur* searches out manuscripts or collects scores; one such is the librarian at the Paris Conservatoire, M. Bottée de Toulmon, whom Halévy calls one of the best-informed *amateurs* of musical archaeology.

When an early German writer describes a single individual as both a *Liebhaber* and a *Kenner*, *Liebhaber* has to be a sociological term. For instance, the obituary for Johann Sebastian Bach, written by his son Carl Philipp Emanuel and others, states that Prince Leopold of Anhalt Cöthen, "a great *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* of music," called Bach to be his Capellmeister.<sup>6</sup> Translating *Liebhaber* as the modern "amateur" would negate the meaning of *Kenner*, so *Liebhaber* designates a member of the upper classes. Similar instances include: J. U. König writing to the literary critic Johann Christoph Gottsched (1729): "wie er nicht nur ein kenner und liebhaber der poesie (*sei*), sondern auch selbst einen zierlichen teutschen vers schreibe" ("he is not only a *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* of poetry, but also writes elegant German verse"); Johann Joachim Winckelmann (archaeologist, 1717–1768): "von diesem liebhaber und kenner der künste" ("from this *Liebhaber* and *Kenner* of the art").<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Bach-Dokumente*, ed. Hans-Joachim Schulze (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972), 3:84.

<sup>7</sup> Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, "Kenner" in *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel,

To be a *dilettante* was a mark of respect, as when the Italian composer Benedetto Marcello identified himself as a “nobile Veneto dilettante di contrappunto” in his *Concerti à cinque*, Op. 1 (1708). Tomaso Albinoni, a member of the upper middle class, and the aristocrat Emanuele d’Astorga did the same.<sup>8</sup> In citing Francesco Antonio Bonporti and Henrico Albicastro as composers who called themselves *dilettanti*, Erich Reimer observes that such usage defines a sociological category.<sup>9</sup> Instead of being simply interested in a subject, the eighteenth-century *dilettante*, *amateur*, and *Liebhaber* could be highly skilled in it and make a mark on history. In their original usage, these terms defined the highest social classes. They applied to the person who simply appreciates the matter at hand, as well as the one who has acquired the greatest knowledge and skill.

### \* Dictionary Definitions \*

According to the *Dictionnaire de l’Académie française* (1694), an *amateur* is devoted to something; hence, an *amateur* of virtue, of the arts, of good books, of paintings, etc. Jacques Lacombe’s French dictionary of the fine arts (1753) defines the *amateur* as one who distinguishes himself by his taste in and knowledge of one of the fine arts, although he does not make of it a profession. “We also owe much,” he adds, “to this class of *amateurs* who enlighten our taste and extend our knowledge by their writings.”<sup>10</sup>

In his *Dictionnaire de la langue française*, Paul-Émile Littré quotes the French writer and politician François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand (1768–1848): “I have spoken at some length about the ruins of Athens because, after all, only the *amateurs* of the arts know them well.” Here, the *amateurs* have the highest attainment in the field. Littré also notes the difference between simply liking something and being an *amateur* of it. The latter

1873), 5:547.

<sup>8</sup> Cited by Arnold Schering, “Künstler, Kenner und Liebhaber der Musik im Zeitalter Haydns und Goethes,” *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters* 38 (1931): 9–23 at 19. See also Buckley Harris Crist, “The ‘Professional Amateur’: Noble Composers, Court Life, and Musical Innovation in Late Sixteenth-Century Italy” (PhD dissertation, Yale University, 2004).

<sup>9</sup> Erich Reimer, “Kenner—Liebhaber—Dilettant,” in *Handwörterbuch der musikalischen Terminologie*, ed. Hans Heinrich Eggebrecht (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1974), 1–17 at 12.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Lacombe, *Dictionnaire portatif des beaux-arts* (Paris, 1753). Quoted by Reimer, “Kenner,” 4.

usually indicates a particular preference that becomes a type of study. “I am an *amateur* of roses’ means that I investigate them; I collect them.”<sup>11</sup>

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s *Dictionnaire de musique* (1768), an *amateur* (which he equates with the Italian *dilettante*) is not a musician by profession, but performs his part in a concert for his own pleasure and love of music. Also called *amateur* are those who, without being trained in music or at least without practicing it, frequent the concerts.<sup>12</sup> What needs to be made more explicit to the modern reader is that the *amateurs* taking part in concerts are playing alongside professional musicians, but without remuneration.

In the *Encyclopédie méthodique*, Pierre-Louis Ginguené divides the *amateurs* into three categories, which can be summarized as follows. The first includes those who do not practice music, but retain a lifelong taste for it and attend the concerts and stage works. Sometimes their natural and sure instincts make them better judges of music than the experts who lack taste or impartiality. The second category of *amateur* comprises the now considerable number of those who have developed their natural gifts by study and contributed to the great progress recently made in music execution (which indicates the *amateurs*’ professional level of achievement):

Qu’il y peu de concerts particuliers où l’on ne trouve, dans des *amateurs*, de l’un & de l’autre sexe, plus de talent qu’on n’en trouvoit il y a vingt ans, en France, dans les virtuoses les plus célèbres.

[There are few concerts by invitation in which one does not find among the *amateurs* of both sexes more talent than there was among the most celebrated virtuosos twenty years ago in France.]

The third category of *amateur*, continues Ginguené, is the smallest and most distinguished. Not content with learning to perform music, they want to study music theory, in order to judge the practice better. Some learn the rules of composition, and may write music. If they also have natural sensibility, the professionals should like to have them as judges. But as this combination is not common and those who do have it are not always prompt to speak out, artists’ reputations are too often at the mercy of *amateurs* who substitute for their lack of insight an enthusiasm for or against without knowing why.

<sup>11</sup> Paul-Émile Littré, “Amateur,” in *Dictionnaire de la langue française* (Paris, 1880; rpt. Chicago, 1991), 1:182.

<sup>12</sup> Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Amateur,” in *Dictionnaire de musique* (Paris, 1768), 31.

Others are knowledgeable but cold—being able to detect the faults without feeling the beauties.<sup>13</sup> Ginguené's assessment reflects the higher level of general education among professional musicians toward the end of the century.

The latter type of *amateur* may have been the stimulus for the poet Jean-François Marmontel's portrayal of this individual as hindering writers' efforts.<sup>14</sup> Yet he takes care to describe also the laudatory type of *amateur*. On the other hand, Voltaire solicited the *amateurs'* advice about six volumes of *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie* (1777), a collection of new, enlarged or corrected articles: "It is to them [the *amateurs*] that we dedicate our collection, from which they can accept, correct or omit the articles, at their pleasure, in the large edition being prepared by the Paris publishers. We are offering them exotic plants which merit entering into their vast collection only insofar as they will be cultivated by such hands, and it is then that they can receive life."<sup>15</sup>

Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) omits *amateur* and *dilettante*, whether because they were not yet in common usage or because of their foreign etymology. Just after the turn of the nineteenth century, these terms did enter Abraham Rees's *Cyclopaedia*: "AMATEUR, in the *Arts*, is a foreign term introduced and now passing current amongst us, to denote a person understanding, and loving, or practising, the polite arts of painting, sculpture, or architecture, without any regard to pecuniary advantage."<sup>16</sup> The *Cyclopaedia* also translates most of Ginguené's above article. Its entry for "Dilettante" simply equates it with "Amateur."

The German usage of *Liebhaber*, too, denotes high social class. Around the 1760s, the term *Dilettant* begins to substitute for *Liebhaber* when used in the serious-musician sense and gradually becomes dominant, so that by century's end the *Liebhaber* is more often one who simply appreciates music. The changing nature of the term *Liebhaber* is seen in Heinrich Christoph Koch's German musical dictionary where a *Dilettant* is defined as one who sings or plays [for others] without making music his chief occupation or seeking remuneration: "Dilettant. . .eine Person, die eine Singstimme oder ein Instrument zu ihrem Vergnügen ausübt, ohne die Musik zu ihrer Hauptbeschäftigung zu

<sup>13</sup> Pierre-Louis Ginguené, "Amateur," in *Encyclopédie méthodique. Musique*, ed. Nicolas-Étienne Framery (Paris, 1791), 1:77–78.

<sup>14</sup> Jean-François Marmontel, "Amateur," in *Encyclopédie, ou, Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot (Paris, 1751–65).

<sup>15</sup> [Voltaire], *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie, par M. de V* (Geneva, 1777), 1:intro., 1, 6.

<sup>16</sup> "Amateur" in *The Cyclopaedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature*, ed. Abraham Rees; 1<sup>st</sup> American edition (Philadelphia, [1805–25]), vol. 2.

machen, oder sich durch dieselbe Unterhalt zu verschaffen." A *Liebhaber*, on the other hand, can be either a simple music lover or one who practices music in the same sense as the *Dilettant*, in which case the latter term is preferable to distinguish the individual from the *Liebhaber* having no particular knowledge about music. When the terms *Kenner* and *Liebhaber* are used together (with reference to multiple persons), adds Koch, the latter implies simple music appreciation, in contrast to the *Kenner's* authoritative knowledge.<sup>17</sup>

Between 1779 and 1787, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach wrote several collections of keyboard works for "Kenner und Liebhaber." By *Kenner*, says the German critic and editor Friedrich Rochlitz, Bach did not mean the knowledgeable fault-finder, nor did he think of *Liebhaber* as the person simply seeking amusement. He meant a *Kenner* who is at the same time a true *Liebhaber* (that is, a friend of the art); and a *Liebhaber* who is simultaneously a *Kenner* and understands the essence of the matter. This is evident from these works, adds Rochlitz; above all, the great rondos and fantasias.<sup>18</sup>

When the Berlin *Journal littéraire* published a French translation of the article "Kenner" from Johann Georg Sulzer's encyclopedia of the fine arts, it equated *artiste* with *Künstler*, *connoisseur* with *Kenner*, and *amateur* with *Liebhaber*.<sup>19</sup> In this instance, which refers to all the arts and humanities and reflects the changing usage, *amateur* and *Liebhaber* are limited to one who simply appreciates the subject. Writers, however, sometimes inadvertently omit an alternate usage. For this reason and all the contradictory evidence extending into the nineteenth century, it would be inadvisable to confine *amateur* and *Liebhaber* to this definition, for which Sulzer's article has probably been the principal source today. In the foreword to his work, Sulzer observes that he has written for the serious *Liebhaber*, and not for the *Liebhaber* or *Dilettante* who dabbles in the arts.<sup>20</sup> Yet his article "Kenner" describes the *Liebhaber* as judging a work "merely according to the unthinking impressions

<sup>17</sup> Heinrich Christoph Koch, *Musikalisches Lexikon* (Frankfurt am Main, 1802), 431, 900f.

<sup>18</sup> Friedrich Rochlitz, *Für Freunde der Tonkunst* (Leipzig, [1832] 1868), 4:210f. Quoted by Reimer, "Kenner," 8.

<sup>19</sup> Unsigned, "Article tiré du Dictionnaire de Mr. Sulzer," *Journal littéraire* 23 (Berlin, May-June 1776): 121-48 at 121.

<sup>20</sup> Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Leipzig, 1792-94; rpt. Hildesheim, 1967-70), 1: xvi-xvii: "Für den Liebhaber, nämlich nicht für den curiosen Liebhaber, oder den Dilettante, der ein Spiel und einen Zeitvertreib aus den schönen Künsten macht, sondern für den, der den wahren Genuss von den Werken des Geschmacks haben soll, habe ich dadurch gesorgt, dass ich ihm viel Vorurtheile über die Natur und die Anwendung der schönen Künste benehme."

it makes on him.”<sup>21</sup> In 1772, Johann Heinrich Merck, editor of the *Frankfurter Gelehrte Anzeigen*, took issue with Sulzer’s denigration of the *Dilettante*: “If Herr S. were a dilettante himself, his system of art would not be gloomy fervour, but more cheerful thought, which never belittles.”<sup>22</sup> And in response to a separate article by Sulzer in late 1772, Merck and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe together wrote a review in which the *Liebhaber* is depicted positively, while the *Kenner* is demoted to the diminutive “*Kennerchen*.”<sup>23</sup>

### \* Terms of Achievement \*

Unlike *dilettante*, *amateur*, and *Liebhaber*, which originally denoted social class, the following terms concern achievement. *Kenner* and *connoisseur* comprise those who are knowledgeable about the technical aspects of a subject. According to Koch (828), the *Kenner* not only correctly senses what is beautiful or lacking in a product of the art, but also can offer reasons why this is so. The German music historian Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1777) published a guide to acquiring training in music theory so that the musical *Liebhaber* could become “a genuine *Kenner*.”<sup>24</sup> His writings reflect the transition (which varied according to time and place) to defining the *Liebhaber* as a simple music lover.<sup>25</sup>

The term *virtuoso* often means a professional musician, but, particularly later in the century, is also applied to *amateur* musicians. While *artiste* and *Künstler* usually define a professional performer, they, too, are occasionally applied to *amateurs*. The *Künstler*, as Sulzer’s article mentions, is not necessarily a *Kenner*.<sup>26</sup> That is to say, his musical knowledge might not extend beyond performance.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 3:5–14 at 6: “Der Liebhaber beurtheilet das Werk bloß nach den unüberlegten Eindrücken, die es auf ihn macht.”

<sup>22</sup> Quoted by Hibbitt, *Dilettantism*, 14f.: “Wäre Herr S. selbst ein Dilettante, so würde sein Kunstsystem nicht trübsinniger Eifer, sondern heitrer Glaube seyn, der nie schmält.”

<sup>23</sup> Cited by Hibbitt, *Dilettantism*, 16f.

<sup>24</sup> Johann Nikolaus Forkel, *Ueber die Theorie der Musik, insofern sie Liebhabern und Kennern notwendig und nützlich ist* (Göttingen, 1777), 32. Quoted by Reimer, “Kenner,” 11.

<sup>25</sup> See also Matthew Riley, “Johann Nikolaus Forkel on the Listening Practices of ‘Kenner’ and ‘Liebhaber,’” *Music & Letters* 84/3 (2003): 414–33; and Matthew Riley, *Musical Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 88–100.

<sup>26</sup> Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie*, 3:5f.: “Der Künstler, wenn er nicht zugleich ein Kenner ist, und er ist es nicht allemal.”

\* Effects of the Class System \*

The upper classes fared best, for they could readily afford private lessons with the best teachers. Also doing well were those from the prosperous bourgeoisie, for they, too, could obtain adequate private instruction. Thus these two groups were closely matched in skill and knowledge, furnished most of the period's *Kenner* and *connoisseurs*, and often performed together. But usually only the bourgeois musician would practice music professionally. Except in straitened circumstances, the upper-class musician normally did not play or sing in a professional capacity because of its low status.

In general, professional musicians came from an ordinary middle- or working-class background, and for economic reasons had to settle for either lessons with a less qualified teacher or several years of apprenticeship with an authorized town musician, a course that was much less costly but whose instruction was often mediocre and worse.<sup>27</sup> Most German orchestral players were trained in this system and rarely had an education beyond the elementary school level.<sup>28</sup> Ecclesiastical settings, too, provided training, primarily vocal. The Naples conservatories, the only ones in Europe for training professional musicians, were widely admired, but the facilities were primitive. As the eyewitness Charles Burney observed, one large room sufficed for everyone's individual practicing, "obliging them to play loud in order to hear themselves; but in the midst of such...continued dissonance, it is wholly impossible to give any kind of polish or finishing to their performance."<sup>29</sup>

The average professional musician bore no resemblance to his counterpart today. For example, Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg's music journal (Berlin, 1760) notes that "many musicians have no sheet music at all and often only musical instruments of poor quality; without music and good instruments, they are almost not musicians."<sup>30</sup> Those not born into more

<sup>27</sup> Beverly Jerold, "Bach's lament about Leipzig's professional instrumentalists," *BACH, Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute* 36/1 (2005): 67–96.

<sup>28</sup> Christoph-Hellmut Mahling, "The Origin and Social Status of the Court Orchestral Musician in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Century in Germany," in *The Social Status of the Professional Musician*, ed. Walter Salmen, trans. H. Kaufman and B. Reisner (New York: Pendragon Press, 1983), 219–64 at 233–36.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Burney, *An Eighteenth-Century Musical Tour in France and Italy* [1773], ed. Percy A. Scholes (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 269.

<sup>30</sup> *Historisch-kritische Beyträge zur Aufnahme der Musik*, ed. Friedrich Wilhelm Marpurg, 5 (Berlin, 1760): 9.

propitious circumstances had to have exceptional gifts and ambition to rise above this state. In an effort to raise standards, the Berlin Capellmeister Johann Friedrich Reichardt published a manual entitled *Ueber die Pflichten des Ripien-Violinisten* (1776), which was directed to those already holding a professional position in an orchestra. It covers the most elementary basics of technique, material that is mastered by today's string players when they are young children. The professional musician's low status is apparent from R. Campbell's career advice in his *London Tradesman* (1747):

If a Parent cannot make his Son a Gentleman, and finds, that he has got an Itch of Music, it is much the best Way to allot him entirely to that Study. The present general Taste of Music in the Gentry may find him better Bread than what perhaps this Art deserves.<sup>31</sup>

Considering the often inferior execution among professional musicians, Campbell's remark is not as philistine as it seems. Inevitably, coarse manners accompanied such musicians' low education level. In 1800, the pan-European *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AmZ*) reported that the Viennese musician is now less apt to be treated in a humiliating manner by the upper classes, but:

Many of our musicians have incurred an oppressive situation by their lack of cultivation, crude manners, dissolute life-style, etc. Just as there are exceptions among musicians, so too are there worthy homes where that complaint [about humiliating treatment] does not apply.<sup>32</sup>

Several months later, a reader responded, citing opportunities for musicians in Vienna: "But the artist must also be a polite man, and it redounds to the credit of Vienna, like several places in Germany, that we now see more of these than formerly, because little by little there must be an end to the vulgar disorder of so many musicians. I repeat, not without reason: the musician of genuine talent will meet with deserved respect in the homes of both the high-

<sup>31</sup> R. Campbell, *The London Tradesman* (1747): 89, 93. Quoted by John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw, *The Birth of the Orchestra. History of an Institution 1650-1815* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 405f.

<sup>32</sup> Unsigned, "Kurze Uebersicht des Bedeutendsten aus dem gesammten jetzigen Musikwesen in Wien," *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* (*AMZ*) 3 (Leipzig, 22 October 1800): 68.

est nobility and the cultured citizens. Only drunkards, or men without manners and upbringing will be excluded by cultivated company—not because they are musicians, but because they are indecent [“unsittliche”] men.”<sup>33</sup> Now it is clear why the upper classes did not want their sons to pursue music as a profession. From these reports, the number of ill-bred musicians made the musician with manners exceptional. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s letter to his father of 9 July 1778 speaks to this issue when discussing Salzburg’s “coarse, slovenly, run-down court orchestra”:

No decent man who has any self-respect can live with such musicians; —instead of being honored to associate with them, one has to be ashamed!—besides, and perhaps for this very reason, the orchestra is not well liked in Salzburg, it’s not held in high esteem—if only it were as well organized as the one in Mannheim! What discipline they have in that orchestra!—and what authority Cannabich has—everything they do is done with real dedication. Cannabich, who is the best music director I have ever seen, commands the love and respect of his musicians—he is well liked in town, and so are his Soldiers [players]—and that’s because they behave properly, have decent manners, are well dressed and don’t spend their time in local inns getting drunk.<sup>34</sup>

In Germany, the mediocre professional musician is often referred to pejoratively as a *Handwerker*. According to Rochlitz, the mere *Handwerker* (in the broadest sense of the word) knows nothing more than how to apply the fingers to produce the notes; his playing reflects simple mechanical practice and blind imitation more than his own thinking. He rises to the level of *Künstler* when he knows the theoretical basis of his art and applies this knowledge to his playing.<sup>35</sup> In 1838, the Berlin critic Ludwig Rellstab called

<sup>33</sup> Unsigned, “Neuer Versuch einer Darstellung des gesammten Musikwesens in Wien,” *AmZ* 3 (17 June 1801): 642–43.

<sup>34</sup> *Mozart’s Letters, Mozart’s Life*, trans. Robert Spaethling (New York: Norton, [2000]), 165.

<sup>35</sup> Editorial footnote to Johann Karl Friedrich Triest, “Bemerkungen über die Ausbildung der Tonkunst in Deutschland im achtzehnten Jahrhundert,” *AmZ* 3 (28 January 1801): 305: “Der bloss *Handwerker* (im weitesten Sinne) weiss, *als solcher*, nichts mehr als die praktischen Handgriffe zur Hervorbringung eines Werks, und was er thut, ist mehr die Frucht einer bloss mechanischen Uebung und blinden Nachahmung (der Routine) als des eignen Nachdenkens.” For more about the *Handwerker*, see David Gramit, *Cultivating Music. The Aspirations, Interests, and Limits of German Musical Culture, 1770–1848* (Berkeley: University of California Press,

it unfortunate that most of those permitting themselves the title of *Künstler* are nothing more than a mere *Handwerker*.<sup>36</sup>

What was considered socially acceptable activity for upper-class musicians might vary in different localities. The greatest distinction lay in music execution. As the English writer and composer John Potter observes (1762), making music for pay was an inferior station:

The elegant art of music, when consider'd as an occupation, is by some thought to have little dignity; as having for its object nothing better than mere pleasure and entertainment; and that tho' we may arrive to a great degree of perfection in it, a much less degree in many others is more reputable, and far more preferable.<sup>37</sup>

Unless they had little to lose in inheritance, the upper classes generally avoided music execution as a profession, although they offered their services gratis in appropriate situations, such as concerts or church. Composing or writing about music were more acceptable endeavors.

On the whole, the serious *amateurs'* performance skills did not differ noticeably from those of the upper-level professional musicians until well into the nineteenth century, when conservatories began to flourish and the latter's skills improved dramatically. Let us consider how terms are applied in Italy, England, France, and Germany, where the serious *amateurs* often joined forces with the best professional musicians.

### \* Italy \*

The association of *dilettante* with high social class is evident when Burney's *History of Music* cites a vocal performance in Naples (1553) in which some of the performers were entitled Count and Marchioness, enabling us, he says, to

2002), 19, 233 n94, 75–76, 164. In 1739, Johann Mattheson used *Handwerk* somewhat differently when observing that the arts and sciences are interdependent: "The person who knows only his *Handwerk* knows nothing, but is a pedant, even if he holds a high position like a general." *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739), 103.

<sup>36</sup> Ludwig Rellstab, "Kunst," in *Encyclopädie der gesammelten musikalischen Wissenschaften, oder Universal-Lexicon der Tonkunst*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Gustav Schilling (Stuttgart, 1840), 4:268.

<sup>37</sup> John Potter, *Observations on the present state of music and musicians* (London, 1762), 61.

distinguish the "professors" from the "Dilettanti."<sup>38</sup> Those with titles of nobility were *dilettanti*, while the *professore* were professional singers. In this case, a professional was censured for his faults, while an aristocrat had "all the requisites of vocal perfection."

In the account of his Italian tour, Burney occasionally mentions dilettante musicians. At a private concert for Naples's highest society hosted by the English ambassador William Hamilton, for example, Burney heard the professional composer Paolo Orgitano (who the following year directed the opera at His Majesty's Theatre in London), "one of the best Harpsichord players and writers for that instrument here. But Mrs. [Emma] Hamilton is herself a much better performer on that instrument than either he or any one I heard there. She has great neatness, and more expression and meaning in her playing."<sup>39</sup>

"Among the *Dilettanti* at Florence," says Burney, "the Marquis of Ligneville is regarded as a good theorist and composer." The title page of his setting of the *Salve Regina* identifies him as "Prince of Conca, chamberlain to their Imperial Majesties, director of the music of the court of Tuscany, and member of the philharmonic society of Bologna."<sup>40</sup>

Sometimes a dilettante had to turn professional, as Burney observes: "At Rome I also had frequent conversations with Rinaldo di Capua, an old and excellent Neapolitan composer. He is the natural son of a person of very high rank in that country, and at first only studied music as an accomplishment; but being left by his father with only a small fortune, which was soon dissipated, he was forced to make it his profession."<sup>41</sup>

Nearly half a century later, the Austrian writer Franz Sales Kandler's report about music in Venice indicates that dilettantes were on a par with professional instrumentalists:

The instrumentalists of Venice, including the dilettantes...distinguish themselves advantageously by energy in execution and by uniformity and rapid comprehension...Dilettantes and professionals also distinguish themselves in the precise, nuanced performance of quartets. Those of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Krommer, Romberg, etc. are often sightread with amazing competence.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Charles Burney, *A General History of Music* (London, 1789), 3:161.

<sup>39</sup> Burney, *Musical Tour*, 264.

<sup>40</sup> Burney, *Musical Tour*, 192.

<sup>41</sup> Burney, *Musical Tour*, 234.

<sup>42</sup> Quoted from the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung mit besonderer Rücksicht auf den*

An 1822 letter to Kandler from the Florence musician Ignazio Maria Colson describes how distinguished professional musicians combine with “excellent *Dilettanti*” to provide great pleasure in the private *accademie* (concerts). As outstanding singers, Colson names the professional Sig. Ceccherini and the dilettantes Sigg. Campana and Franceschini. The *AmZ* (1819) praises the same singers in these concerts, citing also four noteworthy female dilettante soloists by name.<sup>43</sup>

According to the Italian music theorist and historian Carlo Gervasoni (1812), four of Livorno’s leading professional musicians joined with dilettantes in forming a society of *amatori e dilettanti di musica* to sponsor a weekly *accademia* of vocal and instrumental music. And how could an institution not flourish, asks Gervasoni, when its members include a Sig. Teresa Gialdini, a dilettante of prodigious grace and strength who could rank among Europe’s principal singers? A Sig. Enrichetta Kellermann, whose great ability is combined with all possible knowledge of music? Space is insufficient to commend all the other *dilettanti* who make this establishment flourish: “I will only say that the Livorno *dilettanti*’s performance of the famous opera *Gli Orzi ed I Curiozi* [by Domenico Cimarosa] was such that its immortal composer would have been overcome by joy on hearing it.”<sup>44</sup>

### \* England \*

A “Society of Dilettanti”—upper class young men who had visited Italy—was formed in London in 1733–34, but *gentleman* is the term that eighteenth-century English texts apply to the non-professional gentry and aristocrat musicians; these had long played an important role in musical life. As the *Cyclopaedia* implies, the usage of *amateur* may have begun toward the end of the century; for example, Joseph Doane’s compilation of over 1,300 British musicians: *A Musical Directory for the Year 1794 Containing the Names and Address of the Composers & Professors*

österreichischen Kaiserstaat 1 (Vienna, 1817): 107, by Luca Aversano, *Die Wiener Klassik im Land der Oper, Analecta Musicologica* 34 (Laaber: Laaber-Verlag, 2004), 123.

<sup>43</sup> Colson’s letter quoted by Aversano, *Wiener Klassik*, 143. Unsigned, “Nachrichten. Florenz,” *AmZ* 21 (21 April 1819): 266–67.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted by Aversano, *Wiener Klassik*, 151, from Carlo Gervasoni, *Nuova teoria di musica* (Parma, 1812), 72–74.

of Music, with a Number of Amateurs, Vocal and Instrumental. The word *AMATEURS* appears in larger typeface than any but the first two words. The size of his undertaking did not permit Doane to assess the capability of the individuals listed, so he added this caveat: "Great pains have been taken to learn the various Places at which the several persons have of late performed, as well as the Societies which they have belonged to, the insertion of which will, it is hoped, apologize with gentlemen of the Profession, for the introduction of so many Amateurs and Performers of inferior note; for some such there undoubtedly must be in so large a collection of names."<sup>45</sup> According to Doane, those of inferior note include professionals as well as amateurs.

Gentlemen musicians with professional-level qualifications included such figures as John Blathwayt, who had studied with the Italian composer and violinist Arcangelo Corelli and became a director of the Royal Academy of Music, and Henry Needler, orchestra leader of the Academy of Ancient Music during the 1740s and early 1750s.<sup>46</sup> Another was the composer and music director John Marsh (1752–1828), subject of a substantial article in today's *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, and whose journals provide valuable insights into eighteenth-century musical life. From his commentary, we can judge that the skills of certain gentlemen musicians were commensurate with and in some cases superior to those of leading professional musicians. In one concert featuring the castrato Venanzio Rauzzini in the late 1770s, Marsh was disappointed in the qualifications of the leader Kammell, "as he by no means as a professor [professional] seem'd to rank above mediocrity; our own leader Tewksbury as well as many gent'n performers being indeed equal & some superior to him."<sup>47</sup>

An interesting incident involving social mores of class occurred after a performance of George Frideric Handel's *Messiah*. On this occasion, says Marsh (250f.): "Mr Carter played the 4<sup>th</sup>. of Handels Concertos very neatly upon the organ, after w'ch he with Mess'rs Toll & Brown. . .dined etc. with us. . .Mr Carter having, as we thought, agreed to take the organ at the church as a gent'n, we were much surprized at his giving strong hints when the concert was over of expecting to be paid, by asking me who was the

<sup>45</sup> Joseph Doane, *A Musical Directory for the Year 1794*. . . (London, 1794), v.

<sup>46</sup> Cited by William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 72.

<sup>47</sup> *The John Marsh Journals. The Life and Times of a Gentleman Composer (1752–1828)*, ed. Brian Robins (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon, 1998), 147.

person who *paid* the performers, as he wish'd to go away early the follow'g morning." All they could afford was 5 guineas, a sum they thought would affront him. But he was "(as it appear'd) ready to take anything he co'd get." Whatever he lacked in class awareness, Mr. Carter had the credentials of a professional musician.

In 1791 the famed Austrian composer Franz Joseph Haydn was invited to London and treated warmly by nearly all educated people during an extended sojourn, but that did not prevent a certain element of the upper classes from putting him in his place. As he entered the orchestra in the theater, the players stood up to welcome him. Some experts in the upper gallery were amazed at this courtesy, and when they learned that it was being accorded an artist and, moreover, a foreigner, they began to hiss, whistle, and shout "Fiddler! Fiddler!"<sup>48</sup> Even though attitudes were changing, some still clung to the belief that a professional musician, no matter how accomplished, was unworthy of respect.

### \* France \*

In France, the principal term for denoting someone pursuing an interest avidly without deriving a livelihood from it was *amateur*. When the composer André-Ernest-Modeste Grétry wrote to the Bolognese theorist Giovanni Battista Martini about Anton Bemetzrieder's practical keyboard harmony book (Paris, 1771), he applied the term *amateur* to highly skilled individuals: "This book is making a great stir in Paris; all the *amateurs* of Rameau's fundamental bass are crying heresy."<sup>49</sup> Understanding Rameau's principles requires the music theory known only by the elite professional musicians and the upper-class *amateurs*. One of the latter was d'Alembert, whose *Éléments de musique* (1752) made Rameau's theories more accessible. Another important contribution from d'Alembert is his critical essay "De la liberté de la musique" (1759).

In his 1732 book dedicated to the lives of those poets and musicians who had earned placement in a French Parnassus, Évrard Titon du Tillet included separately many "*beaux Esprits, amateurs* of poetry and music,

<sup>48</sup> Unsigned, "Anekdoten," *AmZ* 2 (23 October 1799): 80.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted by Jean Gribenski, "A propos des *Leçons de clavecin* (1771): Diderot et Bemetzrieder," *Revue de musicologie* 66 (1980): 143.

who also have composed beautiful verse or pleasing music, or who have excelled in the art of singing or playing some instrument." They appear in our Parnassus, he adds, as honorary associates and admirers of our great poets and famous musicians; they will at times recite their verse and join their voices and instruments in the concerts of Parnassus. His list of *amateur* poets is especially large and includes well-known names such as Saint-Evremond, as well as fifteen women. The *amateur* musicians, too, include women: four singers and four harpsichordists. While he believes that most of the illustrious individuals just cited can indeed be admitted to Parnassus [as full-fledged members], he leaves it to the true connoisseurs in poetry and music to assign them the places they merit.<sup>50</sup>

Not only did most of the writing about music before the latter part of the eighteenth century come from *amateurs* (except for practical music-instruction), it also seems directed largely to them as the educated musical elite. The first French music journal to survive beyond two issues, the *Journal de musique* (founded in 1770), changed its name in 1773 to read: *Journal de musique par une société d'amateurs*. It invited musicians, *amateurs*, men of letters, and all the academies of Europe to submit material. As a forceful voice for higher performance standards, the *Journal's* criticism of the long-standing Concert Spirituel series produced results: "With the greatest pleasure, we announce a revolution of interest to the *amateurs* of good music. Up to now this concert series has been an object of ridicule for true *connoisseurs*."<sup>51</sup>

To improve musical standards, the *Journal de musique* (1777/5: 10-11) recommended establishing a conservatory, a music library, and a music academy (probably to be patterned on the literary Académie française). The latter would be composed of *artistes & amateurs* and serve as a center of encouragement and communication. Sharing their ideas, says the *Journal*, will facilitate mutual enlightenment and contribute to artistic progress. Thus a well-informed *amateur* had as much musical status as the best professional musician. Similar music academies were subsequently established in various European centers.

As Halévy observed above, the *amateurs'* practical musical skills often equaled those of the best professional musicians:

<sup>50</sup> Évrard Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse françois* (Paris, 1732), 39f.

<sup>51</sup> Unsigned, "Concert Spirituel," *Journal de Musique par une société d'amateurs* (Paris, 1773/2): 74. In the preface to the reprint of this journal (Geneva, 1972), François Lesure reports that Nicolas Framery ceded his *privilege* to "MM. . ." on 22 January 1773, when it is likely that Charles-Joseph Mathon de La Cour assumed the journal's direction.

A female *amateur* whose keyboard and composition skills won her wide renown was Marie Emmanuelle Bayon (M<sup>me</sup> Louis), immortalized in a poem (1783), together with the composers Grétry, François-Joseph Gossec and François-André-Danican Philidor.<sup>52</sup>

According to the lexicographer Nicolas Framery, the *amateur* Michel-Paul-Guy de Chabanon (who wrote three books about music and became a member of the Académie française) would have acquired great fame had he chosen the career of violinist.<sup>53</sup>

In his four-volume *Essai sur la musique* (1780), Jean-Benjamin de La Borde (himself an *amateur*) included the *amateur* Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges among the composers of note, adding that he also executes music with the greatest precision and finest nuances.<sup>54</sup> Born in Guadeloupe of a French plantation owner and a native woman, he is thought to have studied violin with Antonio Lolli and composition with Gossec when his father returned to France. He performed as a soloist, and his compositions for violin require a virtuoso technique. Proposed as music director for the Paris Opéra in 1776, his nomination was blocked by four leading ladies who did not want to submit to the orders of a mulatto. Under Saint-Georges's direction, the Concert des Amateurs (an orchestra of the best *amateur* and professional players) acquired an enviable reputation. According to the *Almanach Musical* (1775): "Everyone knows that M. de Saint-Georges leads...the best orchestra for symphonies in Paris and perhaps in Europe."<sup>55</sup>

The high status and accomplishment of many *amateur* musicians is evident, too, in the *Dictionnaire historique des musiciens, artistes et amateurs* by Alexandre Choron and François-Joseph Fayolle (Paris, 1810–11).

<sup>52</sup> Cited by Jean-Baptiste Weckerlin, *Nouveau musiciana...* (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1890), 82.

<sup>53</sup> Framery, *Encyclopédie méthodique*, 1:ix.

<sup>54</sup> Jean-Benjamin de La Borde, *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (Paris, 1780), 3:484.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted from the *Almanach musical* (Paris, 1775, 2) by Barry S. Brook, *La Symphonie française* (Paris: Institut de musicologie de l'Université de Paris, 1962), 1:254–55: "On sait que M. de Saint-Georges conduit...le meilleur orchestre pour les symphonies qu'il ait à Paris et peut-être dans l'Europe."

## \* Germany and Austria \*

According to the tenor and composer Ernst Christoph Dressler (1767): “The *Liebhaber* often reaches a higher level of attainment in this art than the virtuosos themselves.”<sup>56</sup> And in 1802, the aesthete Christian Friedrich Michaelis observed: “It is easy to see that the...modest *Dilettant* can very often with more right deserve to be called a true artist and musical expert than can the artist of *Handwerk*.”<sup>57</sup> The *Dilettant’s* ability to practice the art free of necessity and outside pressures, continues Michaelis, gives him an advantage over the professional musician. Even if the latter belongs to the upper classes, he is tempted to follow false paths of affectation to please the public. Excluding *Dilettanten* who are dabblers, Michaelis adds that the professional musician can learn much from the true *Dilettant* who constantly strives for further knowledge and improvement, avoiding rote-like mechanical execution (“handwerksmässigen Betreiben”).

Upper-class women often achieved extraordinary musical skills for their time, but were restricted to performing for their peers in private settings. Some of Beethoven’s best keyboard interpreters were such women, one being the Baroness Dorothea von Ertmann who has a separate listing in today’s *New Grove Dictionary*. Beethoven’s associate and biographer Anton Schindler called her “unequaled,” adding: “She grasped intuitively even the most hidden subtleties of Beethoven’s works with as much certainty as if they had been written out before her eyes.”<sup>58</sup> *Das gelehrte Oesterreich* (1776/78), which describes the leading figures in Austrian arts, sciences and letters, includes the *dilettante* Anne Marie Koffler among the few musicians cited, noting her uncommon facility and excellence in *cantabile* singing.<sup>59</sup> According to the *Journal für Literatur, Kunst, Luxus und Mode* (1817), the accomplishments of the violinist Mariane von Berner are equaled by only a few of the greatest artists. Such a superb *virtuosa* should belong to the musical world, adds the

<sup>56</sup> Ernst Christoph Dressler, *Fragmente einiger Gedanken des musikalischen Zuschauers* (Gotha, 1767), 28: “Dem Liebhaber der Musik gereicht seine Geschicklichkeit in dieser Kunst oftmalen zu einer grössern Ehre als dem Virtuosen selbst.” Cited by Reimer, “Kenner,” 2.

<sup>57</sup> Christian Friedrich Michaelis, “In wie fern giebt es einen unschuldigen Dilettantismus in der Musik...?” *AmZ* 5 (22 December 1802): 210–11: “Man erkennt leicht, dass der...bescheidene Dilettant gar oft mit mehr Recht ein wahrer Künstler und Kunstkenner zu heissen verdienen könne, als der Künstler von Handwerk.”

<sup>58</sup> John Warrack, “Ertmann, Dorothea von,” in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), 8:309.

<sup>59</sup> Ignaz de Luca, *Das gelehrte Oesterreich* (Vienna, 1776/78), vol. 1, part 2, 323f.

writer, but as the daughter of a banker she will never bring her art to the rest of Europe. Yet no friend of music travels through Mitau without making a point of hearing her at her father's home.<sup>60</sup>

\* Leipzig \*

The *Liebhaber's* superior skill is suggested by Johann Sebastian Bach's note on the title page of his published keyboard collections (such as the six partitas) offering them for the *Liebhaber's* pleasure. In comparison with other keyboard literature of the period, these are so very difficult that they could have been executed by few individuals other than those whom Bach had trained with his advanced system of fingering.<sup>61</sup> A number of Bach's students probably fell into the *Liebhaber* category. One would have been the theorist and writer Lorenz Christoph Mizler von Kolof; another was Johann Friedrich Agricola, who had studied law, but turned to music, becoming a composer at the Berlin court and writing fluent criticism. In fact, Agricola used this term to describe himself in his pamphlet *Schreiben eines reisenden Liebhabers*, published under the pseudonym Flavio Anicio Olibrio (Berlin, 1749).

The *Liebhaber's* capability is the subject of a response in the Berlin *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek* to Burney's account of his 1772 journey through Germany. To the Englishman's slighting of Leipzig musicians, the writer cites one singer, one flutist, two violinists, and one cellist as virtuosos there, adding:

Besides these artists, there are skilled *Liebhaber* and *Liebhaberinnen* on various instruments. To be sure, these musicians are all so modest that they do not refer to themselves as virtuosos, although they perhaps could make more claim to it than many whom Dr. Burney honors with this title.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, with excerpts from the *Journal für Literature, Kunst, Luxus und Mode* [1786–1827], ed. F. J. Bertuch and G. M. Kraus (Leipzig: Leipzig, 1967–68), 4:285f.

<sup>61</sup> Among writers implying this is Triest, "Bemerkungen," 306–7.

<sup>62</sup> Unsigned, "D. Burneys Tagebuch seiner musikalischen Reisen..." *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, Friedrich Nicolai, ed. (Berlin, 1777), *Anhang* to vols. 13–24, 490–93 at 492: "Nebst diesen Künstlern giebt es auf unterschiedenen Instrumenten geschickte Liebhaber und Liebhaberinnen daselbst. Freylich sind diese Musiker alle so bescheiden, dass sie sich nicht den

Besides indicating that the amateurs' playing level sometimes rivaled or exceeded that of professionals, this quotation confirms that women participated.

\* Berlin \*

When praising (1774) the concert series whose orchestra included many *Liebhaber* musicians, Reichardt calls Friedrich Nicolai, editor of the *Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek*, a fine *Kenner* of music who constantly strives to improve these concerts.<sup>63</sup> Another *Kenner* and *Dilettant* well-known to us is the theorist and journalist Marpurg, a major authority on a wide variety of musical subjects during the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>64</sup>

Under the direction of the composer and writer Johann Adam Hiller, the Berlin court orchestra combined with "a large number of excellent *Dilettanten*" to present George Frideric Handel's *Messiah* in 1786. The orchestra comprised 78 violins, 19 violas, 22 violoncellos, 15 double basses, 10 bassoons, 12 oboes, 12 flutes, 3 horns, 6 trumpets, 4 trombones and two pair of kettle drums. The visiting violinist and composer Carl Stamitz, too, joined in.<sup>65</sup> These numbers suggest that well over half of the players were *Dilettanten*.

For the benefit of musicians' widows in 1801, Berlin's best musicians performed Haydn's oratorio *The Creation* with an orchestra of 55 strings, 20 woodwinds and horns, plus trumpets and tympani. After naming fifteen of the city's highest ranking professional musicians, the reviewer adds: "Berlin's best *Musikliebhaber*, among whom are *Virtuosen*, combined their talents with those of the famous names."<sup>66</sup>

When the English music critic Edward Holmes visited Germany in 1830, he was impressed by the musical accomplishments of the many *dilettanti*:

Namen *Virtuosen* beylegen, ob sie gleich vielleicht mehr Anspruch darauf machen könnten, als mancher, den der Herr Doctor B. mit diesem Titel bechret."

<sup>63</sup> Johann Friedrich Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden die Musik betreffend* (Frankfurt, 1774), 1:32f.

<sup>64</sup> Marpurg's birth in Marpurgshof (cited by Ernst Ludwig Gerber, *Historisch-biographisches Lexicon der Tonkünstler* (Leipzig, 1790/92) defines his aristocratic origins.

<sup>65</sup> *Magazin der Musik*, Carl Friedrich Cramer, ed., 2.2 (Hamburg, 1786): 974f.

<sup>66</sup> Unsigned, "Briefe an einen Freund über die Musik in Berlin," *AmZ* 3 (21 January 1801): 289-90.

The amateurs in Berlin are all little *maestri*; they dabble in composition, and have most of them the score of a mass, sinfonia, or overture locked up in their desks, the consciousness of which helps to sweeten their lives. . . . The question is not answered in Berlin as it used to be with us—"Is Mr. \_\_\_\_\_ musical?" "Yes, he plays a *little* on the flute": after which the wary inquirer would be sure to avoid a demonstration of the fact. But the answer might run thus: "Yes, he plays Sebastian Bach, sings at sight, and has written a set of quintetts."<sup>67</sup>

For professionals and *dilettanti* alike, the ability to play the demanding works of Sebastian Bach was noteworthy.

### \* Hamburg \*

When Reichardt visited Hamburg in the early 1770s, he found only Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach worthy of mention, but added a footnote: "Hamburg is very rich in musical *Liebhaber* (*dilettanti*), who are not only skilled in practice but also have solid knowledge and insight. But I do not consider it appropriate to name them here."<sup>68</sup> Because Reichardt's book describes the state of music as practiced by professionals, it would not have been judicious to name specific *Liebhaber* as exceeding the qualifications of professionals. Moreover, the *Liebhaber* themselves would not have sought this recognition because it would identify them too closely with an inferior class to which they did not aspire. Also pertinent are Johann Joachim Christoph Bode's remarks appended to his German translation of Burney's travels: "He has praised certain singers [in other localities] who are certainly not better than the *Liebhaberinnen* here of whom I am thinking."<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Edward Holmes, *A ramble among the musicians of Germany* (London, 1828), 236f.

<sup>68</sup> Reichardt, *Briefe eines aufmerksamen Reisenden* (1776), 2:40.

<sup>69</sup> Charles Burney, *Tagebuch einer musikalischen Reise*, trans. Johann Joachim Christoph Bode (Hamburg, 1773), 3:286f.

## \* Vienna \*

Johann Adolph Hasse's letter of 17 December 1768 about the performance of his opera *Piramo e Tisbe* discusses a promising dilettante who may turn professional from necessity:

Another dilettante here has the role of Piramo. He doesn't have a lot of experience in music, but his voice is beautiful and nature has given him a special gift for acting. This person is a dilettante now, but I believe that with time he will be on stage as a professional because he does not have a large fortune.<sup>70</sup>

In Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld's *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (1796), the accomplishments of these cities' most outstanding *Virtuosen und Dilettanten* are described. Only the best professional musicians are listed (including Haydn and Beethoven), implying that the *Dilettanten's* achievements, too, are equally noteworthy. Nanette von Martines, for example, is "one of the most superior *Kennerinnen* among our numerous *Dilettantinnen*. She sight-reads, accompanies from the score, is an excellent singer, and is rigorously grammatical in composition and execution... She has composed masses and many arias."<sup>71</sup>

Vienna was known for its many capable *Dilettanten*. When Haydn conducted the first performance of his *Creation* at an aristocrat's mansion in 1798, the soprano soloist was an acclaimed *dilettante* named Christine Gerardi. And the violinist and conductor Paul Wranitsky's letter (1799) about Vienna's best composers included "Hauschka—virtuoso on the violoncello. A Bohemian, a dilettante. Has written some songs."<sup>72</sup>

With the Kaiser's support, Handel's cantata *Timotheus* with instrumentation by Mozart was given a splendid performance in 1812. The conductor was a noted *Dilettant*—the composer and writer on music Ignaz Franz von Mosel, Hr. Hofconciptist des k. k. Obersthofmeisteramts. Of the seven vocal soloists, four can be identified as *Dilettanten* by their titles: Frau v. Geymüller, Hr. Hofrath

<sup>70</sup> Johann Adolph Hasse e Giammaria Ortes: *Lettere, 1760-1783*, ed. Livia Pancino (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 168.

<sup>71</sup> Johann Ferdinand von Schönfeld, *Jahrbuch der Tonkunst von Wien und Prag* (Vienna, 1796; rpt. Munich, 1976), 41f.

<sup>72</sup> H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), 4:319, 321, 332.

v. Kiesewetter, der k. k. Rath und Doktor der Rechten Hr. Sonnleithner, and the silk manufacturer Hr. Soini. The concertmaster, too, was a *Dilettant*—the wholesale merchant Hr. J. Tost. The remaining solo and principal instrumentalists comprised "*Dilettanten* and the best professional musicians".<sup>73</sup>

Violoncello: Hr. Hauschka

Double bass: Hr. Langhamer

Viola: Hr. Toeuber and Hr. Kratki

Flute: Hr. Bogner and Hr. Baron v. Knorr

Oboe: Hr. Czerwenka and Hr. Kiess

Clarinet: Hr. Graf v. Troier and Hr. Friedlovky

Bassoon: Hr. Romberg and Fürst Corolat

Horn: Hr. Radezky and Hr. Gowerlovsky

We already know that Hauschka was a *Dilettant*; so perhaps others with the title of Hr. were *Dilettanten* as well. The review mentions that the chorus, too, included *Dilettanten* of high rank, which "further increased the merit of the whole undertaking."

According to Biba's research, the Viennese *Dilettant's* capability generally exceeded that of many professional orchestral players: "When, in 1808, Beethoven engaged the orchestra of the Theater-an-der-Wien for an 'Akademie' at which the Fifth and Sixth symphonies were premiered, the result was a very unsatisfactory performance—even though only professional musicians were used. Thereafter it again became the rule that orchestras for concerts were composed of dilettantes, or at the most some mixture of dilettantes and professional musicians."<sup>74</sup>

### \* Prague \*

An article (1800) about the state of music in Bohemia first lists various professional performers, adding that the *Dilettanten* include many solid experts and trained artists who are little inferior to the musicians of profession. Exclaiming that listing all of them would lengthen the article too much, the writer limits it

<sup>73</sup> Unsigned, "Nachrichten. Wien im November," *Musikalische Zeitung für die österreichischen Staaten* 1 (Vienna, 1812): 130f. Quoted by Gramit, *Cultivating Music*, 228f, n63.

<sup>74</sup> Biba, "Concert Life," 79.

to about a dozen, including the composer, pianist and inventor Thomas Kunz, whose biography appears in *The New Grove Dictionary*. Others are described as "one of the most important pianists in Prague," "one of our best violinists," "deserves to rank with our best singers," "our best artist on wind instruments," etc.<sup>75</sup>

### \* Eventual Change \*

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, *Dilettant* began to acquire a negative connotation in literature.<sup>76</sup> But in music, this meaning did not become dominant until much later. For example, the German critic and editor Gottfried Wilhelm Fink still used *Dilettant* in its positive sense in 1833 when asking: "Don't we have the most excellent artists of all types among our German *Dilettanten*? Their number, abilities and knowledge are so significant as to give the whole musical establishment a reputation that all the musicians of profession are scarcely able to surpass."<sup>77</sup> Undoubtedly there were different interpretations and applications of the terms *amateur* and *dilettante* during this period of rapid change. The French Revolution had repercussions far beyond its borders, and social revision was in the air. Class distinctions were beginning to diminish, but continued to be an important force in people's lives for many years to come.

In Arrey von Dommer's updating (1865) of Koch's dictionary, *Dilettant* now means someone who practices music or another art as a hobby instead of professionally, and thus has no standing as an artist. But, he adds, a clear line between artist and *Dilettant* is not easily determined. When it comes to judging the performance of many artists and *Dilettanten*, this definition is very imprecise; many musicians in both practical music and music scholarship are not professionals, yet are highly productive. For the *Liebhaber*, the term *Dilettant* is never degrading, adds Dommer, but it carries a strong flavor of disdain when applied to the artist, for it indicates a carelessness in fulfilling the requirements of the art.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>75</sup> Unsigned, "Ueber den Zustand der Musik in Böhmen," *AmZ* 2 (23 and 30 April 1800): 513-23, 537-42.

<sup>76</sup> See Reimer, "Kenner," 13f.

<sup>77</sup> Gottfried Wilhelm Fink, "Ueber den Dilettantismus der Teutschen in der Musik," *AmZ* 35 (2 January 1833): 10.

<sup>78</sup> "Dilettant" in *Musikalisches Lexicon auf Grundlage des Lexicons von H. Ch. Koch*, ed. Arrey

At some point, the term *dilettante* acquired a different connotation also in France, as in the French critic Joseph d'Ortigue's discussion (1833) of Italian opera in Paris: "But between these two extremes [the informed connoisseurs and the public interested only in the plot] is a group that in fact forms the clever part of the public—the *dilettantes*. These affected, perfumed, and good-form people are nearly to music what the pedants are to politics, and hold the middle ground between the artists and distinguished *amateurs* propelling the art forward, and the crowd of reactionaries comprising the resistance. This third group...displays an excessive fastidiousness for everything relating to performance, and especially vocal performance. They meet at the Théâtre-Italien."<sup>79</sup> As with Halévy's text above, the *amateur* is still a highly regarded individual.



While early usage of the terms *amateur*, *dilettante*, and *Liebhaber* denoted a social class, ours implies an achievement level. In the former instance, context determines whether the *amateur* is pursuing a subject seriously or simply appreciates it. It will often be misleading to let our definition represent what the early writers meant. The above texts indicate that the music execution skills of the high-level professional musicians and the serious *amateurs* were much more closely matched than today. Such *amateurs* were professional musicians in everything but name—a name they themselves did not wish to adopt. Our present interpretation of *amateur*, *dilettante*, and *Liebhaber* took root in the late eighteenth century and gradually increased as class distinctions lost ground and professional skills increased markedly, helped in large part by the establishment of conservatories. In other fields, early usage of these terms was similar, although change may have occurred at differing times.

von Dommer (Heidelberg: Mohr, 1865), 237f.

<sup>79</sup> Joseph d'Ortigue, *Le Balcon de l'opéra* (Paris, 1833), 148f.