

**MUSICAL CYNICS OF
LONDON: A SATIRE
(SKETCH THE FIRST)**

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Musical Cynics of London: A Satire (sketch the First) by George Linley

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GEORGE LINLEY

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OF

LONDON,

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BY

GEORGE LINLEY.

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MUSICAL CYNICS

OF LONDON.

A man must serve his time to every trade,
Save censure—Critics all are ready made.

BYRON.

Well do they play the careful critic's part,
Instructing doubly with their matchless art ;
Rules for good writing first with pains indite,
Then show us what is bad by what they write.

CONGREVE.

FROM some lone swamp, some noxious spot of earth,
Where only pois'nous reptiles have their birth,
This Thing, corrupt in body as in mind,
A walking Upas, pest of human kind,
First crawled to light, devoid of soul or heart,
Foredoom'd to act the spiteful Cynic's part.
Some may remember when to London came
This awkward stripling, zealous for a name,
A crop-eared Puritan, of slender sense,
Of little learning, though of great pretence ;
With pocket-money savings got together
To serve in time of need, or stress of weather,
With eager longing to increase his store,
To ape the pedant, though unskilled in lore,

He gained a corner, at so much per diem,
 In that dull Newspaper, the Athenæum ;
 Or, as Sir Bulwer Lytton writes it, Assenæum ;
 A paste and scissors Journal, that Joe Miller
 Had likened, aptly, to a caterpillar,
 Upon the fresh, green leaves for ever feeding,
 To save a vast amount of time and reading ;
 Emasculating other men's fat volumes,
 To interlard their own lean, starving columns :

Sculpture, the Drama,
 Poetry and Painting,
 Architecture, Music,

All by turns attainting ;

Abusing Actors, Dancers, Fiddlers*, Singers,
 With edge-tools playing till they cut their fingers ;
 Lying to serve some protégé or friend,
 Condemning what they cannot comprehend ;
 Vain, ignorant, and prejudiced, to Truth averse,
 A public nuisance, and a private curse !

'Tis said, in this Review he vested his small gains,
 And part-proprietor became of all—but brains ;
 " Three joined in one," from then his motto shone—
 Bard, Publisher, and Printer, all in one.

O! envied Critic! born to make a noise!
 Presiding Deity o'er beardless boys!
 Whom scented Dowagers, long-waned, admire,
 When their Apollo strikes the tuneful lyre ;

* Vieuxtemps and Sivori, the violinists, are remarkable for always playing in tune—Ernst the reverse ; yet the musical critic in the Athenæum always abused the former and praised the latter.

Whom hungry frubbles praise, when hired to dine,
Applaud his verses, and imbibe his wine ;
Mayhap we'll prove, howe'er the Cynic curse,
His poetry's *not* verse at all, but prose—and *worse*.
Yet who that e'er beheld him in his chair,
That chair, so rich, so stuff'd with *real* horse-hair,
Whose gaze hath been but for an instant thrown
On that majestic, ample-folded gown,
With tassels twisted careless round the waist,
Who would not there discern the man of taste ?
Who would not thank the Gods for an invite
To be the guest of such a Sybarite ?

Good Reader ! has it ever been thy luck
To feast off haunches with so great a Buck ?
Hast ever heard him on the accordion play
The Hymn of Luther, or Auld Robin Gray ?
Imagin'd him a lover, 'neath some star,
Twanging—" Oh ! listen to my wild guitar !"
An instrument he plays to please his pets,
Though oft he's sorely troubled with the frets.
'Tis rumoured (falsely) he's given up guitarring,
And from Tom Sayers learns the art of sparring.
In this he's wise ; why should not a play-writer
Learn stage-effect, and practise as a fighter ?
We live in such contentious, ticklish times,
A lunge might serve him better than his rhymes.

But not for him's decreed the warrior's wreath,
Whose voice is gentle as the summer's breath ;
Who, seated, maiden-like, at his tambour,
Dreams not of glory gained where cannons roar,

Devoting all the precious, fleeting hours,
 To work in Berlin wool dun Cows and Flow'rs,
 How well the occupation suits the mind
 Of such a Molly—emblem of his kind !
 His arms and crest embroider'd should be seen,
 Skull rampant, rather thick, vert baize between.

Time-honored Host ! Saints ! keep him long in health.
 Though he lack wit, he boasts some show of wealth ;
 And, after dinner, Grace perhaps he spares,
 Steals gently on the little dears up stairs,
 And sings, with still, small voice, *not* one of his own airs !
 Great Sultan of the Press ! whose orthodoxies
 Ensure the best of seats, and private boxes,
 Didst ever sit to hear them cry " Amen "
 To one of those bright sallies from thy pen ?
 One of those stage prescriptions, trite, not terse,
 Like the Newcastle Doctor's, writ in verse ?
 For spleen or ague not a good specific,
 Though sure and certain as a soporific.

O ! melancholy day ! when Muses weep,
 When Pit and Boxes nod or fall asleep :
 Such the result of thy sad piece, *White Magic**,
 Meant to be funxy, but, alas ! how tragic !

* *White Magic* : an Operetta, in two Acts, the music by Emanuel Biletta, performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, March 17th, 1852, with the result before stated. The Cynic,

Deterred by fear or shame,
 Did *not* reveal his name.

Though an Italian did with music cram it,
 The Audience, seldom wrong, thought fit to damn it.
 Had such ill fate some brother Author mark'd,
 Thou art the Dog that loudly would have bark'd;
 And at thy post well fatten'd and well fed,
 Wouldst joy to know a rival's heart had bled.
 The Public always judged thy works a flam*,
 And Jerrold said they were not *worth* a damn.†

Throughout the week may busy critics labour,
 Or play the fool, or dance to pipe and tabor;
 Invent, or lie, or laud, or fawn, or flatter;
 Write up the greatest dolt, or dunco—no matter;
 Condemn a play unseen, a book unread;
 Accept a bribe, and call it daily bread;
 Mis-like, mis-use, mis-judge, mis-quote, mis-guide,
 To make the black appear the whiter side;
 With hearts that feel no qualm, assassin-like,
 Conceal'd beneath a mask, their victim strike:
 But though they do so six days out of seven,
 They're Saints on Sunday—Candidates for Heav'n.

* *Old Love and New Fortune*: an indescribable piece, which threw the entire neighbourhood of the Surrey Theatre, where we believe it was performed for one night, into consternation.

† *Duchess Eleanour*: a Tragedy, in five Acts, first performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket, on Monday, March 13th, 1854. Of this Drama the modest author says, "it in no respect aspires to the dignity or correctness of a historical Play, and that the archives of Ferrara (where the scene is laid) might be searched long and late, without their yielding the traces of any *Duchess Eleanour like mine*." We believe it.

BALLAD,

Sung by an Outsider in the Vicinity of Belgrave Square.

The Sabbath bells are ringing,
 The rime is on the spray ;
 I mean not rhyme that Chorley writes
 (To take one's breath away) ;
 The sky is clear and cloudless,
 The air is crisp and keen,
 Unlike the maudlin articles
 In Dilke's dry Magazine.
 We hear the orange-woman's cry,
 In yonder quiet street,
 Reminding us of Chorley's voice,
 So high, and yet *not* sweet.

There's skating on the Serpentine,
 And thither we are bound ;
 What if H. F. should venture there ?
 What if he should be drown'd ?
 The very thought is harrowing,
 That such a fate should follow,
 And Farrance with ice-cream serve up
 A remnant of Apollo.
 We must no longer loiter here,
 Whate'er his end may be,
 To quote from Johnny Gilpin's tale,
 " May we be there to see."

'Tis Sunday night, the evening service hath commenc'd,
 The stars, like diamonds, round the moon are fenc'd,