

**THIRTY YEARS' MUSICAL
RECOLLECTIONS, IN
TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I**

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Thirty Years' Musical Recollections, in Two Volumes. Vol. I by Henry F. Chorley

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HENRY F. CHORLEY

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TWO VOLUMES. VOL. I**

THIRTY YEARS'
MUSICAL RECOLLECTIONS.

BY

HENRY F. CHORLEY,

AUTHOR OF

"MODERN GERMAN MUSIC," "HANDEL STUDIES."
ETC., ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
HURST AND BLACKETT, PUBLISHERS,
SUCCESSORS TO HENRY COLBURN,
13, GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1862.

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TO MRS. FREDERICK LEHMANN.

You belong by birth to Literature—by marriage to Art.—You possess those powers of appreciating both, which indicate the existence of creative talent, did you care to exercise it.—But beyond this, you have the constancy and kindness, by which that rare thing—a true friend—is to be known.—And for these last, the following Recollections are inscribed to you—by

Yours faithfully and gratefully,

HENRY F. CHORLEY.

LONDON, May, 1862.

INTRODUCTION.

THERE is one only way in which a book like the following can be written, with any chance of its possessing some value.—This is by aid of faithfulness to recollection, and sincerity in offering opinion. In so much as either romance or suppression enter into the record, its worth is impaired.

Personality there must be—and such bias as is decided by individuality. If a judgment beyond appeal can be formed by human creature on any question—it is, surely, not on a question of Art.—In that imaginative world and its enjoyments, human sympathies will have their share, let Reason be

ever so conscientious.—Then there is association; That which we have heard during those good moments (of which Life contains many for all who will have them)—That which we have been obliged to hear, when the heart has been sad and the attention unwilling,—can, in neither case, be altogether truthfully presented.—I have tried my utmost to be a fair witness.—If there be more of myself in these pages than under other circumstances would be graceful or self-respecting, such egotism has been allowed, for the express purpose of enabling those who may read,—to agree or to differ with me in proportion as they approve my predilections, or dissent from my prejudices.

It is impossible to execute a task like mine without speaking of artists still living, as well as of those who have vanished from every scene. With regard to the former, this can only be done by considering them as they have presented themselves or been presented in public—setting on one

side such allusion, or anecdote, or experience belonging to rumour or intercourse, as are derived from private knowledge. There can be no offence, however, in writing of actors and actresses that which is to be seen, and may be remembered by every eye-witness, or reader of the news of the hour.

Thus, too, it has seemed best to be silent on all such tales of the green-room, as relate to the dealings of manager with artist—to the character of the one, or the grievances of the other.—My chronicle is written from *before the curtain*, and with no wish to rake up old quarrels, or to pronounce on vexed questions.—The result is the thing to be dealt with. The wisdom or the folly of this or the other line of policy,—may be judged by the evidence offered as to results—and such opinion of the trustworthiness of the witness as he may be able to inspire.

The reader who takes these recollections in hand will hardly do so without already possessing some in-

terest in, and knowledge of, their subject. Therefore I have refrained from encumbering my pages with too many minute references, and too many foreign words. The titles of the separate musical pieces in the Operas referred to, would be of small value or importance,—whereas their perpetual insertion would have made the text unreadable.

It has been difficult to arrange the matter of this book, without going over the same ground, more than once, or else making the whole collection tiresome, because of its fragmentary nature.— Thus it will be seen, that in attempting some characteristics of the composers and singers who have ruled the stage—a certain liberty of grouping has been taken: while the leading features of every year as it passed have been dwelt upon. I have endeavoured to distribute the portraits and speculations which form substantial essays, so as to vary a story at best liable to the charge of frivolity and monotony.

The lists here offered of the principal features which have marked the opera-campaigns of the past thirty years, may be found useful for purposes of reference.

Lastly, this book of mine is strictly what it professes to be—a book of Recollections.—I have merely resorted to former memoranda for the yearly lists of operas and singers,* and in *no one case* have consulted them with a view of refreshing my memory, or of fabricating an opinion of that which had passed from my mind. It has been gratifying to me, on comparing these pages, after they were written, with the notes thrown off at the time,—to have found no discrepancy betwixt past and present judgments worth adverting to.—Had I done so, I should have conceived it a duty to have pointed it out.

H. F. C.

* In the case of only two of the principal singers named—Madame Meric-Lalande;—and Signor David—have I spoken from hearsay.