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# **The Role of Music in Victorian England**

Bachelor Thesis

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Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci na téma "The Role of Music in Victorian England" vypracovala samostatně pod odborným dohledem vedoucího práce a uvedla jsem všechny použité podklady a literaturu.

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Podpis .....

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Music has always been an important element in every culture throughout the history. Its permanent presence in mankind's history is interwoven with many social contexts, social aspects and with expectations of social behaviour. In the period of Victorian times of England, music flourished within all classes and all aspects of life – from at home performances for family and friends, church services, to establishing a regular concert audience and opera attendance. Victorian era was a time of prosperity, in which not only the nobility could afford artistic interests, but the working and middle class, rising in power and wealth, became the main target group of music industry.

This thesis is concerned with examining the music life of the era. The principal aim is to justify why the idea of England being “the land without music”<sup>1</sup> prevailed in the minds of people for many years after the reign of Queen Victoria was over, to discuss the occasions on which music was performed and their social importance. In addition, the most important British composers, whose works are often forgotten these days, are listed. One of the focuses of this thesis is to provide a comparison of popularity of foreign and domestic composers of the time. To give concrete evidence of the found facts, an analysis of the music mentions in two works which were written in the Victorian period – *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) by Jane Austen and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) by Oscar Wilde – will be one of the objectives. The two authors differ not only in the parts of the epoch in which they were writing, but also in the environment in which they set their novels. Austen in *Pride and Prejudice* depicts a world of young women, complicated relationships, and temperance, yet Wilde brings the reader to the world of men with a strong interest in art and with a strong inclination to debauchery. In both of the works, the music mentions will be set in the context of the time and their significance and meaning analysed.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first one being the introduction, the second one is concerned with English musicality and musical background and lists the native English composers of the time as well as music schools which were active. The third chapter deals with music and the people – where they encountered music and

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<sup>1</sup> German author Oskar A. H. Schmitz wrote a book called *Das Land ohne Musik* (1914), in which he characterizes England as an unmusical country.

where they could practice it. The chapter containing literary analysis follows and is followed by a conclusion.

## 2 MUSICAL BACKGROUND OF THE VICTORIAN ERA

### 2.1 English Musicality

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was the time of the Romantic movement in music. Names such as Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt, Frederic Chopin, Robert Schumann, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and Richard Wagner were dominating all over Europe, while in England the name of Handel was still resonating. During the reign of Queen Victoria, England was regarded as an unmusical country which was dependent on foreign musicians and composers to provide quality music. English musicians were rather indifferent to new movements and trends and were also unproductive with music writing. This may have been caused by the social conditions of the time, as by 1830 the aristocratic class, who patronized arts in general, went more into the background while middle classes started to rise and gain power. However, the middle classes had not achieved the same level of artistic culture as the aristocracy had, but the concept of leisure “was more widely remarked because it was becoming more widely spread.”<sup>2</sup>

Another problem which caused England to rely on foreign musicians was that there was a lack of a real musical background – there were only a few concert halls, hardly any professional orchestras, no national operatic tradition (such as the Italian or French). Furthermore, poor educational facilities were not sufficient to provide good musical education. The poor musical educational system was criticized by the contemporary critics, who also criticized the music taste and the failure of producing any great composers. Above all, there was a feeling that music was of little real importance for society. Therefore, the overall failure within the music field was not only institutional but also held with the pupils – those who could have been educated in music regarded it more as an entertainment than a way of life.

Although the interest in getting professional musical education was low, the interest in hearing performances was, on the other hand, high. Arts were patronized by the uppermost classes, which also enjoyed the music of the highest type. The foreign

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<sup>2</sup> Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England: Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control, 1830-1885* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), 58.



performers were well paid, so were the music teachers, who mostly taught young ladies and the clergy. Just a very small number of men was interested in getting this kind of education, as “that a gentleman should become a real professional musician remained utterly unthinkable until almost the end of the Queen’s reign.”<sup>3</sup> This had not changed until around 1860 when musicians were able to get a better education in their craft, which was enabled by the newly emerging conservatories and music colleges.

## 2.2 Music Composers

English society was mostly dependant on foreign composers with delivering quality music. Foreign composers were more popular and had always overshadowed the native composers of England, as happened for example with John Field, who was overshadowed by Frederic Chopin, and with William Sterndale Bennett, whose compositional talent was hidden behind Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. According to Edward J. Dent, Field and Bennett are the only two composers who reached modest fame in their country, but neither of them is remembered today.

The musical taste of most of the English was still influenced by the works of Georg Friedrich Handel who imprinted an indelible mark into the history of English music, and his pieces were still often performed. There were also many of those whose taste derived from the works of Mozart, Beethoven or Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. The overall devotion for musicians was “arising more from affection than from critical admiration.”<sup>4</sup>

It was impossible to make a living only as a composer at the time and so many of the composers had no other choice but to engage either in teaching composition or giving piano lessons. Another option of earning extra wages was to conduct performances with orchestras or to accompany a church choir with organ playing. The piano lessons were highly popular – playing a musical instrument was an approved feminine accomplishment.

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<sup>3</sup> Edward J. Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, ed. Humphrey Milford (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 253.

<sup>4</sup> Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 254.

### **2.2.1 John Field (1782-1837)**

An Irish composer born in July 1782 who is the original “inventor” of nocturne – a musical piece which suggests night and usually is of quiet and meditative character. Chopin, by whom he was overshadowed during his life, also wrote nocturnes but Field’s compositions are antecedent to Chopin’s, though they are quite similar.

Field came from a family of musicians – his father was a professional violinist and his grandfather a professional organist. As a young man, he met with Tommaso Giordani who became his teacher and during his studies, Field performed 3 successful and difficult concerts. In 1793 he and his family left Ireland for London and there he got into an apprenticeship for Muzio Clementi – a seller of pianos. Young Field was helping him with his sales business by demonstrating the instruments’ virtues by playing them in front of the customers. Clementi had helped Field with establishing his musical career in London and kept him secured financially.

Later in his life, Field left England and spent some years in St Petersburg and played many series of concerts all over Europe as well. However, his Byronic lifestyle caused rectal cancer, which became the reason of his death in January 1837. He spent the last year of his life editing his music.

### **2.2.2 William Sterndale Bennett (1816-1875)**

William Sterndale Bennett owed for his musical education to his grandfather John Bennett, with whom he lived after his parents’ death. He started singing in the choir and before the age of ten was admitted to the Royal Academy of Music, “having been recommended as a ‘prodigy’”<sup>5</sup> He was studying violin, but later made piano his focus of learning. After Cipriani Potter, a teacher and an early member of the Royal Academy of Music, became his composition teacher, he wrote a piano concert which became a success and made a remarkable impression, which made the director of the Royal Academy of Music arrange the concerto to be published at the Academy’s expense. A few days later, the boy was called to Windsor to perform for the king and queen. There he met with Mendelssohn who invited him for a visit to Germany.

His most productive period was following a few years after he turned seventeen years old. He wrote some major orchestral works and developed a distinctive piano

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<sup>5</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. “Bennett, Sir William Sterndale,” by Rosemary Williamson and Nicholas Temperley, accessed March 11, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.42930>

style. He also kept the friendship with Mendelssohn who encouraged him to continue his work. Like many of other composers, he continued with performing piano concerts and occasionally played violin with the orchestra. When Bennett visited Mendelssohn in Germany, he met with Schumann with whom they became good friends, who admired each other.

After he came back to England, the long career of being a teacher started. Many believe it was because of this career that brought him to an early end of his promising career as a brilliant composer. After getting married to Mary Wood, Bennett found it even more necessary to find salaried positions. He continued playing at the Philharmonic concerts until 1848, but after a quarrel with Michael Costa, he decided to leave. From 1842 to 1856 he organized 'Classical Chamber Concerts' – the repertoire was of chamber music with piano and serious piano music. Later, in 1849, Bennett founded the Bach Society and directed its concerts for many years.

Although Bennett's life was mostly only playing and teaching, his earlier success brought him opportunities for conducting and being elected as a professor of music at Cambridge. However, these new positions added little to his income and did not provide him any more time for composing. He continued giving lectures and improving the musical education at Cambridge, where he was later named an honorary MA. After leaving the Royal Academy of Music 1858, he came back as its principal in 1866.

In 1858 Bennett was also asked to conduct the Leeds Festival, from which derived a festival cantata *The May-Queen*, an overture *Paradise and the Peri* in 1862, and another cantata *The Woman of Samaria* for the Birmingham Festival of 1867 alongside many other works. This period of his life marks a revival of his compositional qualities. The authors of the Grove Dictionary entry on Bennett suggest that "it was not so much overwork that caused a falling-off of creativity, but discouragement and the lack of a strong external stimulus"<sup>6</sup> combined with not enough recognition received in England.

Bennett spent his last years quietly in Eastbourne occupying himself with composing. He kept teaching in London, visited Cambridge several times a year and

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<sup>6</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. "Bennett, Sir William Sterndale," by Rosemary Williamson and Nicholas Temperley, accessed March 11, 2019).

gave occasional concerts. After his death, he was buried in Westminster Abbey. He is said to be one of the most distinguished composers of the Romantic school of music, however, he is not much remembered today.

### **2.2.3 Michael Costa (1808-1884)**

Born in Naples in February 1808, Costa was a gifted student of music in Italy, and thanks to that, he was sent to England to conduct one of his works in autumn 1829. This ended in him making England his home for another fifty years and eventually making himself one of the leading figures of London musical organizations. By showing his leading personality, Costa managed to gain the position of both director and conductor of the Italian opera at the King's Theatre by 1833, and the public almost immediately acknowledged how the standards of the orchestra became higher. Henry F. Chorley, an English writer and critic, wrote in 1840: "Since the day when Signor Costa took up the baton its orchestra steadily improved under his discipline, intelligence, and resolution to be content with nothing short of the best."<sup>7</sup> Although he was praised by Chorley, his composition never found its way to the public's favour. His only successful opera was *Malek Adel* from 1837, but it seems the opera lacks any musical innovation at all.

After leaving the King's Theatre in 1846, fifty-three out of eighty members of the orchestra followed Costa and a year later they founded the Royal Italian Opera at the Covent Garden Theatre. The same year he also took the position of a conductor within the Royal Philharmonic Society. He was praised by all until the end of his career when his music taste became old-fashioned and eventually was succeeded by Richard Wagner for a season. Until 1868 he remained in Covent Garden and then went to Her Majesty's Theatre in the Haymarket where he worked as its musical director.

Costa made his reputation by being an organized, disciplined and "contemporary accounts frequently refer to him as . . . 'despotic'."<sup>8</sup> Throughout the nation he was known as a conductor of oratorios and sacred music, conducting at Handel Festivals and provincial choral festivals, such as in Leeds, Bradford, and Birmingham.

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<sup>7</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. "Costa, Sir Michael," by Nigel Burton and Keith Horner, accessed March 12, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.06635>

<sup>8</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. "Costa, Sir Michael," by Nigel Burton and Keith Horner, accessed March 12, 2019.

#### **2.2.4 Charles Hallé (1819-1895)**

Charles Hallé was a pianist and composer of German birth. Born in 1819 in Hagen as Carl Halle, he later changed his name to Charles to secure the right pronunciation by the English and French. His father was an organist and taught his son to play the piano, organ, violin, and timpani.

In 1836 he moved to Paris where he became acquainted with Chopin, Liszt, Berlioz, and Wagner. There he was the first pianist to play Beethoven's sonatas. Because of the events of the revolutionary year 1848, he decided to move to London with his family, but London was overcrowded with refugee musicians and so they settled in Manchester, where Hallé decided to revive the musical life. Therefore, he was named the conductor of the Gentlemen's Concerts, which had a long tradition in Manchester. To match his ideas about the orchestra, he decided to enlarge it and eventually organized his own series of concerts starting in January 1858. The series was an immediate success and known as Hallé Concerts became the leading musical event in the city of Manchester and he took part until the end of his life 37 years later. In 1893 he was a witness to the fulfilment of his dream – the foundation of the Royal Manchester College of Music.

#### **2.2.5 John Hullah (1812-1884)**

An English composer and teacher, whose first success was an opera *The Village Coquettes* to a libretto by Charles Dickens. Hullah was inspired by singing classes taking place in Paris and so he decided to visit the teacher Maizner with Chorley accompanying him. However, he found that the classes were no longer continuing and so they decided to see the classes of Wilhelm. Upon Hullah's return to England, he met James Kay – the secretary to the Committee of Council of Education – who was planning to establish a new training college for teachers and chose Wilhelm's methods for teaching music. Hullah was appointed to prepare the new classes based on Wilhelm's model, and to be the music instructor when the St John's College opened.

The results Hullah achieved were impressive, and so the government supported the idea of 'singing school for schoolmasters' happening under Hullah's direction, taking place at Exeter Hall from 1841. The courses for schoolmistresses started only a month later and it seems that around four hundred teachers attended weekly. The

popularity of these classes led to an opening of the same singing classes for the general public.

Hullah secured a permanent place for music teaching in Britain and his influence on amateur musicians encouraged forming of many amateur choral societies. Although his schooling system was criticized by W.E. Hickson in *Westminster Review*, it cannot be denied that it provided a solid start base for many adults. He continued teaching at King's College, Queen's College and Bedford College, and at another six London teacher-training colleges. In 1872 he was appointed government inspector of music. Throughout his career, many textbooks, essays, and papers were published.

### **2.2.6 Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)**

Arthur Sullivan was an English composer and conductor of Irish origin. His father was a bandmaster at the Royal Military College and there he learned to play the piano. He had an exceptional voice and became a member of the Chapel Royal, although he was about two years older than the other boys in the choir. He was the first to receive the Mendelssohn Scholarship, which enabled him to a year of tuition at the Royal Academy of Music for free. Eventually, Sullivan studied there for three years, the piano lessons being taught by William Sterndale Bennett.

Sullivan's compositions were well received and often repeated. Therefore, he never was short of commission work. Nevertheless, as prestigious as all his works were, they never guaranteed any income and so Sullivan had to maintain his position as a church organist, a conductor of an amateur choir and occasional teaching. He befriended George Grove who eventually introduced him to Alfred Tennyson, and together they collaborated on a song cycle called *The Window* (1871).

Sullivan's greatest achievements were his operas with G. S. Gilbert as a librettist, though. The operas were an immense success, which even resulted in unauthorized copying in the USA, however, with a distinguishably lower level of quality, and the duo was recognized as a genre of their own. When the Savoy Theatre, the first theatre in London to be lit only by electric lighting, it was their new work called *Patience, Iolanthe* (1882) that the theatre was opened with. He developed a very close relationship with his collaborator Gilbert, but eventually was not sure of the collaboration's quality and decided he did not want to continue writing the Savoy-type operas, yet he had to continue for approximately another five years until about 1890.

Both authors had parted ways for a time and cooperated with other authors, until their reconciliation for a few more operas. Despite their former success, “the eggs were no longer golden.”<sup>9</sup> Sullivan was working until his death while suffering from a kidney illness.

### **2.2.7 George Grove (1820-1900)**

Grove’s mother was a woman of culture, and so he inherited his love for music from her and was learning music at home. The headmaster of a grammar school in Clapham, which Grove entered, also encouraged the passion for literature and music in his pupils. Later he studied to be an engineer and carried on with this profession.

In 1852 he met William Smith – a lexicographer, for whom Grove worked as an assistant editor in a Bible dictionary. Grove did an excellent job and was very agitated. It was by this time he showed an interest in making a dictionary concerned with music. George Grove was the editor of the first edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, originally titled as *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, which is one of the most used dictionaries nowadays.

While editing the dictionary, he continued to edit the programmes of Saturday Concerts. Grove was also considered with the research on Beethoven whom he admired, Schubert and Mendelssohn. As C. L. Graves and Percy M. Young claim in the Grove dictionary entry on Grove, “his research at home or abroad, his conversations with musicians and his general reading were constantly drawn upon to supply fresh and illuminative material.”<sup>10</sup> Not only was his contribution within the dictionary and the research on Beethoven, but also in writing commentaries on music for several newspapers.

Outside all his other work, Grove became the person to raise funds for the Royal College of Music, which he did more than sufficiently and in 1882 he became the director of the college. During his eleven years of directorship, he encouraged students to educate themselves in literature and poetry as well as in music.

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<sup>9</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. “Sullivan, Sir Arthur,” by Arthur Jacobs, accessed March 14, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27100>

<sup>10</sup> Grove Music Online, s.v. “Grove, Sir George,” by C.L. Graves, accessed March 14, 2019, <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.11847>

### **2.2.8 Thomas Attwood Walmisley (1814-1856)**

Young Walmisley was sent to his godfather Thomas Attwood who had been a pupil of Mozart, thus Mozart became Walmisley's model as a composer. During his studies of mathematics and literature, he occupied himself with music, which eventually led to studies of music at Cambridge, where he eventually succeeded John Clarke-Whitefield in the chair of music – as a 22-year-old undergraduate. This post was of low prestige though. By reaching an MA degree in music, Walmisley avoided a disability of not being able to regularly enter the Senate House to present candidates of music degrees and raise the faculty's standing in the university.

Walmisley was the first lecturer to give lectures on music with illustrated examples for the public, all of it free of charge. In one of the lectures, he predicted Bach's music greatness – an unknown composer to the English audience at the time. He was the leader of local musical life, although his reputation soon became national. After his death, a hole in the musical life appeared which was not to be easily filled.

### **2.2.9 Edward Elgar (1857-1934)**

Elgar, one of the most unique Romantic artists, was born in Worcester to a father who owned a music shop and was engaged in playing organs, violin and piano as well. He received Catholic schooling, and when he was about ten years old, he composed music for a family play. His piano playing was praised, although he had not received any formal training in music except for violin lessons – he learned many things himself in his father's shop, organ loft and in any public occasion. His father's business included piano tuning in many country houses in Worcestershire – young Edward was often brought along “to demonstrate how well he [his father] had done his work by getting the boy to improvise on the newly-tuned instrument.”<sup>11</sup> Elgar had to give up his ambitions of studying music in Leipzig due to lack of finances. Nevertheless, he became a freelance musician at the age of sixteen and continued with this profession until the end of his life.

Elgar was engaged in many positions – an organist of St George's Cathedral (a post taken after his father), a violinist, the leader of the Worcester Amateur Instrumental Society (1882-1889) and of the Worcester Philharmonic, etc. At the same time, he

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Kennedy, “Music”, in *Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain - Vol. 7: The Later Victorian Age*, ed. Boris Ford (Cambridge: CUP, 1989), 292.



played violin himself at festivals and gave violin lessons to young ladies, which he disliked and said that “to teach the right pupils was a pleasure, but teaching in general was like turning a grindstone with a dislocated shoulder.”<sup>12</sup> He joined W. C. Stockley’s orchestra at Birmingham in 1882 and a year later, his work *Intermezzo: Sérénade moresque* was performed by the orchestra. One of his works was performed under August Manns’ conduct at the Crystal Palace in 1884 and since then, Elgar made London trips every day, until eventual resignation of all his former engagements and moving to London with his wife.

Some of Elgar’s work was played during the London period of his life in 1890’s, but after a short period of success no more performances were about to happen, and no pupils were interested in his lessons. This was the reason to move back to the country for the Elgar family, furthermore, Edward Elgar felt defeated and humiliated. He already suffered from deprivation of being a Roman Catholic in England, a son of piano-tuner and a husband to a woman socially above him.

Later in his life, Elgar wrote variations, which seem to describe his close friends, including his wife and himself. The variations, known as *Enigma Variations*, brought him national prominence and were popular for performances. Another of his significant works is *The Dream of Gerontius* (1866) composed on English Catholic poem by John Henry Newman. Following some other successful compositions, he finally achieved success and honorary titles.

#### **2.2.10 Foreign Music Composers**

Music composers from other countries than England predominated the music scene. English composers, even though they composed significant pieces, could never gain recognition as good as those from the main continent. In the 1830s, Handel’s glory was incomparable, Bach’s time was yet to come as predicted by Walmisley and Haydn was merely accepted. Mozart was popular for his operas and Beethoven thought of as promising by the more advanced figures in English music, however, even to them, his later compositions were too hard to understand.

The tradition of oratorios was stronger than operas and although there were efforts to write operas of English style, Italian styled operas still prevailed and were

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<sup>12</sup> William Henry Reed, *The Master Musicians: Elgar* (United Kingdom: Read Books, 2006), <https://books.google.cz/books?id=Sx1-CgAAQBAJ&lpg=PP1&hl=cs>

considered "the most important musical activity of London." <sup>13</sup> The repertory was made of works by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, Mozart, etc. In 1832, Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* appeared in programmes and later in 1845, *Ernani* by Verdi was "received with curiosity rather than sympathy." <sup>14</sup>

Another visitor to Britain was Czech composer Antonín Dvořák. He paid his first visit in 1884 when he conducted his *Stabat Mater* and *Symphony in D Major* at the Worcester Festival of choral music. Soon after, Dvořák became popular amongst British audiences, made an impression on Elgar, who admired Dvořák's orchestration. The composer visited England eight more times and dedicated some of his compositions to the country – e.g. *The Spectre's Bride*, *Symphony in D Minor*, oratorio *St Ludmila*, *Requiem* and others.

Towards the end of the century, completely new views on music were introduced, especially by Richard Wagner, whose music innovations divided the music community into two sections. Those who disliked him, however, could not stop the certain oncoming of new conceptions and new spirit of music. Wagner's monumental compositions include the tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung*, operas *Tristan and Isolde*, *Tannhäuser* or *Lohengrin*.

## 2.3 English Musical Education

The essential musical schooling was mostly provided in the form of apprenticeship, private lessons, education provided by the church for members of the choir as many talented young children were sent to join it. There was no institution specializing in training musicians. This, eventually, changed in 1822 with the founding of the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) in London. The RAM should not be confused with the association of the same name – Royal Academy of Music – which was a "London association of nobleman, supported by the king, founded in 1719 for the promotion of Italian opera." <sup>15</sup> The foundation of RAM was preceded with a creation of

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<sup>13</sup> Dent, "Early Victorian Music," in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 254-255.

<sup>14</sup> Dent, "Early Victorian Music," in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 255.

<sup>15</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 21, s.v. "Royal Academy of Music (i)."

Conservatoire of Music in 1818, which was a committee of noblemen and gentlemen headed by lord Burghersch – an amateur composer.<sup>16</sup>

In London, there were established seven Gresham professorships, including one in music, in 1596. This system was to provide free education for adults – appointed personas had to give lectures twice a week in both Latin and English. However, during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century, there was no one appointed in the chair of music. The reason behind the failure of appointing anybody could lay in the “lack of general education,”<sup>17</sup> for which the leading musicians of the time thought that it was unreasonable to insist on an appointment.

The University of London allowed the degrees of Bachelor and Doctor of Music in 1876, after almost forty years of its existence. Nevertheless, the university did not have a faculty of music or professorship until 1903, when Frederick Bridge was appointed. Another college which offered a music degree was the London College of Music founded in 1887.

### **2.3.1 Conservatories**

The first attempt for a conservatory was made in 1774 by Charles Burney, who was inspired by the conservatories in Italy (Naples and Venice), which produced remarkable musicians. This attempt was, however, sabotaged by a pamphleteer whose “sarcastic criticism”<sup>18</sup> led to an eventual defeat of the idea.

The first important conservatory was the London Academy of Music founded in 1861 by Henry Wilde. In 1904 it merged with other music institutions, such as London Music School, the Forest Gate College of Music and the Metropolitan College of Music. This merged institution provided education for teachers, but after World War II was reopened as a drama school.

Alongside with the London Academy of Music, there was the National Training School for Music, which was founded in 1873. The idea of the training school came from Prince Albert who wanted to provide “free musical training to the holders of

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<sup>16</sup> Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 253.

<sup>17</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 15, s.v. “London (i), §VIII, 1: The Gresham Chair of Music.”

<sup>18</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 15, s.v. “London (i), §VIII, 3: Educational institutions, Conservatories.”

scholarships awarded on a national basis.”<sup>19</sup> The idea was brought to life in 1876, after Prince Albert’s death, although he proposed it more than twenty years earlier. In 1878, there were proposals to merge the London Academy of Music with RAM, nevertheless, the institution remained separate until being replaced by the Royal College of Music (RCM) in 1882.

In the 1860s and 1870s, a considerable number of music schools had emerged. This development could be compared to the situation in Germany where “the mushroom-like growth of German conservatories”<sup>20</sup> caused Hans von Bülow – a German conductor, pianist, composer of the Romantic era – to protest. The estimated number of active music schools is set to ten, yet new, prominent ones were founded in the 1880s. What this continual need for music schooling reflects is the “increased interest in music within British society,”<sup>21</sup> as well as the feeling of nationalism – a need of having trained music artists comparable to the artists from continental Europe without having to study outside of Britain.

To this day, there are six important conservatories in London with their origins dating back to the age of Queen Victoria:

1. Royal Academy of Music (RAM)

Founded in 1822, opened in 1823 under the patronage of George IV. Its first principal was William Crotch, a composer and an organist. From its beginning, the academy struggled from the financial point of view. According to Michael Kennedy, this had possibly been caused by wrongly chosen professorial staff and by the fact that William Crotch was not a capable administrator. The situation eventually resolved after the institution received an annual grant and finally started prospering in 1868. RAM is to this day a prominent institution for musical schooling.

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<sup>19</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 15, s.v. “London (i), §VIII, 3: Educational institutions: Conservatories.”

<sup>20</sup> Janet Ritterman, “The Royal College of Music, 1883-1899: pianists and their contribution to the forming of a national conservatory,” in *Musical Education in Europe (1770-1914)*, vol. 2: *Compositional, Institutional, and Political Challenges*, ed. Michael Fend and Michel Noiray, (Berlin: BWV, 2005), 351

<sup>21</sup> Ritterman, “The Royal College of Music, 1883-1899: pianists and their contribution to the forming of a national conservatory,” in *Musical Education in Europe (1770-1914)*, vol. 2: *Compositional, Institutional, and Political Challenges*, 351

2. Royal Military School of Music

At the beginning of the century, the military bands were trained by bandmasters from outside the army. This practice went on for another fifty years until the year of 1856 when the Duke of Cambridge articulated the need of having bandmasters from within the military ranks. This led to the opening of the school the next year at Kneller Hall, Twickenham.

3. Trinity College of Music (TCM)

The origin of the Trinity College of Music dates to 1872. Founded as a college of church music, its focus was to train choirmasters and to provide “practical and theoretical studies” in “harmony and counterpoint, voice production, choir training and music history.”<sup>22</sup> Later in 1876, all branches of music were taught at the TCM, and the students of the college were enabled to proceed to a bachelor’s degree in music (BMus). Since 1874, the TCM provides certificated examinations in both speech and music.

4. Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD)

Founded in 1880 by the Corporation of London, GSMD was the first music college in Great Britain that was municipal. The college had to move locations several times as the number of students very quickly outgrew its premises’ capacity. To this day the school is owned, funded and managed by the Corporation of London.

5. Royal College of Music (RCM)

The RCM was founded under the presidency of Edward VII in February 1882. However, it was not opened until a year later under George Grove’s directorship, with fifty scholars, all supervised by a council and a president who always is a member of the royal family. The quick increase of RCM’S activities soon required larger premises for the school to function, and so it moved from Kensington Gore, former premises of the National Training School for Music, to a new location in Prince Consort Road.

To this day the RCM provides courses for composers and performers, the obtainable degrees vary from composing music for screen to performing of early music.

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<sup>22</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 15, s.v. “London (i), §VIII, 3 (iii): Educational institutions: Trinity College of Music (TCM).”

6. The Royal College of Organists (RCO)

The Royal College of Organists, founded in 1864, was designed mainly to provide a system of examination and to encourage the composition of church music. The institution is mostly “an examining body, not a teaching one, though the organization of lectures and recitals has always formed part of its work.”<sup>23</sup>

The RCO closely cooperates with The Royal School of Church Music.

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<sup>23</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 15, s.v. “London (i), §VIII, 4: Other Institutions.”

### 3 MUSIC AND THE PEOPLE

The people of Victorian England were enthusiastic about music across all classes of society. The prosperity of the golden Victorian age encouraged that the society was interested in the amusement music could offer, and often took part in it themselves – both men and women, although women were under more pressure to learn music to reach the status of “being accomplished”.

Encouragement came also from the Royal family, especially from Queen Victoria and her husband Prince Albert, who were both very artistically oriented. Queen Victoria studied singing with Luigi Lablache and even gave a concert at the Buckingham Palace under the direction of Michael Costa. The singer in Queen’s favour was Jenny Lind, whom she described as “perfection” in *Norma*.<sup>24</sup> Prince Albert played organs, sang, composed songs and gave performances of his music.

#### 3.1 Concerts

Concerts were the main impulses for music popularization in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Several concert societies actively organized regular concert programmes which were available for an accessible price to people of the middle class – in fact, the main part of the overall visitors of concerts were from the middle class or lower. But the trouble that came with organizing such concerts was in putting together an orchestra of well enough trained musicians capable of performing even more complex pieces – by 1850, Britain had no professional orchestra.

One of the societies bringing music concerts to a larger audience was The Ancient Concerts. The society was conservative in taste of its repertoire and performed no music that would be less than twenty years old. The programme changed in rotation depending on the director – usually a royal duke or an archbishop. The society ceased its activity in 1848.

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<sup>24</sup> Mark Edward Perugini, *Victorian Days and Ways* (London, 1956), 252-253.

The Royal Philharmonic society was, on the contrary, interested in playing contemporary music of the time. It was started by professional musicians in 1813 to promote instrumental music in London. At this time, there was no orchestra in London which would be capable of interpreting the music of the classical symphony type – most orchestras were put together only for special occasions or as “accompaniments to operas or to vocal and instrumental soloists.”<sup>25</sup> Regarding material, the society commissioned composers to provide new works to perform, and then also provided occasion for the appearance of all distinguished performers. The programmes turned to a more conservative character after the year 1845. In 1852, a new, less conservative rival arose – The New Philharmonic Society.

Regular concerts were given within the Monday Popular Concerts at St James’s Hall, taking place every week since 1859. The enormous length of some selected concerts forced the organizer to “beg his friends to buy tickets and the parents of his pupils usually felt it their duty to support him,”<sup>26</sup> which forced them to attend the performance as well. Occasionally, concerts by individual artists were given, but were of a mixed character – musicians were happy to help a colleague with his performance but often there was no time to rehearse and this resulted in a poor quality of the performance.

The Sacred Harmonic Society was founded in 1832 for amateurs who wanted to perform choral music. By 1836, the members could perform complete oratorios. This genre was appealing especially in the provinces, where a long-established tradition of choral singing was. Oratorio, unlike opera, is a non-scenic music genre and therefore it was more appealing to those who found theatre morally dangerous.

The prices of concert tickets determined the class to attend the concerts. When the New Philharmonic Society, which was in hands of wealthy music lovers, moved from Exeter Hall to Hanover Square in 1856, the price of seats rose and therefore, “more exclusive audience was obtained.”<sup>27</sup> But the Saturday concerts, which were

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<sup>25</sup> Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 258.

<sup>26</sup> Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 260.

<sup>27</sup> Derek B. Scott, “Music and Social Class in Victorian London,” *The Victorian Web*, last modified June 25, 2012, <http://www.victorianweb.org/mt/scott1.html>



started by August Mann in the Crystal Palace, needed a smaller price of tickets “in order to fill the enormous hall.”<sup>28</sup>

In 1871, the Albert Hall was opened and from the next year, the Penny Subscription Concerts, which was the first step to make concerts of classical music available for all classes. Seven years later, an amateur organization called The People’s Concert Society organized concerts of high-status music for the working-class people to attend. Their goal was to make this music known to the people of London who were poor. The attendance of these concerts was satisfactory and the following year after its founding, the society organized concerts where “admission was free, or a voluntary contribution could be made...”<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2 Operas

Italian opera was the most important musical activity in London with the main centre in Her Majesty’s Opera House in the Haymarket. This opera house was dependant on individual subscribers and performed three times a week – on Tuesdays, Saturdays and on Thursdays which were called “long night”-Thursdays because of the enormously long programme. With the invention of the railway, which enabled occasional visitors to come, the overall attendance of opera houses increased. Performances in French were rare, seasons of Italian opera and German opera mostly prevailed.

English opera, meaning all operas in the English language, drew the attention of a different class of audience. The introduction of *The Beggar’s Opera* in 1728 started a long series of ballad operas, then there were English operas of Bishop which were mostly made up from the music of various composers made exactly to suit the English taste. Mozart’s *Figaro* or Carl Maria von Weber’s *Freischütz* were more than popular. In the season of 1824, *Freischütz* was so successful that it resulted in Weber being invited to England to compose a new opera for Covent Garden – *Oberon* (1826). Composed to an English libretto by Planché, Weber followed tradition laid earlier by Henry Purcell.

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<sup>28</sup> Derek B. Scott, “Music and Social Class in Victorian London,” *The Victorian Web*, last modified June 25, 2012.

<sup>29</sup> Derek B. Scott, “Music and Social Class in Victorian London,” *The Victorian Web*, last modified June 25, 2012.

Almost a decade later, John Barnett attempted to compose a more serious opera – *The Mountain Sylph* (1834). Barnett composed many romantic operas which are forgotten nowadays. This development implies that the popularity of these English operas was not high. However, there are exceptions which survived the test of time and those are Michael William Balfe's *Bohemian Girl* (1843) and *Maritana* (1845) by William Vincent Wallace.

In the second half of the century, German opera found its place alongside with Italian opera. Many Wagner's works were introduced in the second half of the nineteenth century and some of them were still performed in the 1890's.

### 3.3 Music Halls

Especially towards the end of the Queen's reign, such entertainment as music halls gained popularity. It was a place "where drinking might be enjoyed together with musical acts, in particular popular songs,"<sup>30</sup> for which it became a major source. The first music halls appeared more commonly in approximately the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century by rebuilding taverns, in which singing evenings, mostly for working classes, had a long-established tradition. Because of the license music halls received, it was forbidden to deliver dramatic performances, but their relevancy regarding social contact is undeniable. It is estimated that "between 1829 and 1849 applications for music and dancing licenses to the Middlesex bench increased eightfold,"<sup>31</sup> which implies the fast elevation in popularity.

Over time, the programme of music halls included even acrobats and magicians, but the overall spirit of the halls remained mainly musical, with the main "product" being popular songs. Although the songs were invented by composers, they did not gain their popularity because of the composer's name, but thanks to the performer who delivered them to the audience. "The performer mattered as much as the song,"<sup>32</sup> because he gave it its identity.

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<sup>30</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 17, s.v. "Music hall."

<sup>31</sup> Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (2001), vol. 17, s.v. "Music hall."

Music halls artists are mostly forgotten today, but some of them contributed with a large amount of widely popular songs (Alfred Lee, Le Brunn, Leslie Stuart, Fred Gilbert, etc.).

### 3.4 Festivals

‘Three Choirs’ festivals of choral music in Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford – all of them cathedral cities – was one of the biggest events for choral singing. These festivals had an important social function and were supported by nobility and gentry. It is likely that they started around the year of 1717. The most popular composer for the festivals was Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, whose oratorio *Elijah* was performed almost every year.

At this point in history, choral singing provided the “chief musical experience for most of the population.”<sup>33</sup> This claim is supported by the fact that there were many choral music festivals maintaining the tradition of choral singing, which acquired immense popularity. We can mention other important festivals such as the Birmingham Triennial Festival (dating back to 1768), the Manchester Festival, and the Leeds Festival (starting in 1858). They were widely attended by the working-class people.

### 3.5 Church Music

Church music had its own specific development which was subordinate to local needs of English liturgy. The tradition by which it proceeded was unchanged since the times of the Reformation. Organ music remained stagnant which was inflicted by the fact that the organists were “reluctant to adopt modern improvements.”<sup>34</sup>

Organs were possessed rarely in the country churches because the instrument was expensive and required a professional organ builder. The liturgy was accompanied by the village band or a brass band. The invention of harmonium, an instrument similar to pipe organs but based on a different principle, meant a significant change in this

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<sup>33</sup> Michael Kennedy, “Music”, in *Cambridge Guide to the Arts in Britain - Vol. 7: The Later Victorian Age*, 292.

<sup>34</sup> Dent, “Early Victorian Music,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 2*, 263.

matter – smaller churches could afford to buy harmonium as it was smaller, cheaper and easily played by a lady.

### 3.6 Music at Home

Long before the invention of television, internet or radio, the Victorian families and parties had to find entertainment for their evenings and gatherings. Such entertainments included for example reading, conversation, writing, round games, or music. Singing, playing the piano, harp or guitar were taken as “approved feminine accomplishments.”<sup>35</sup> Duets were in high favour and even gentlemen often sang but did not play any instruments. Playing piano was considered only fit for women or professional musicians, and “if a man loved music, he should pay fiddlers to play for him but never make himself appear frivolous and contemptible by playing himself.”<sup>36</sup> This quote by Lord Chesterfield reveals that men were supposed to be serious and to entertain the party with their humour and wit if it was needed.

When guests were invited for dinner, they were expected to arrive about a half an hour before the dinner. This half an hour was passed with looking at photograph albums and discussions about new music. After dinner, the party would gather in the drawing room where social activities, such as singing, dancing, or appropriate games, took place. Usually, the young ladies, whose life of leisure allowed them to achieve a high level of skill in music, would be asked to sing a song or play the piano for others as it was expected of them to be able to do so. The set of skills young ladies acquired was important for the evaluation of their accomplishments – the most accomplished lady from an appropriate family would be considered the best match for an unmarried man.

From 1830's, a middle-class family usually owned a pianoforte for their daughters to practice on. Pianofortes' prices were based on their quality. The highest demand for musical instruments was in the months of January, February, March, September, October, November and December.<sup>37</sup> As one can see, these are the months

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<sup>35</sup> C. S. Peel, “Homes and Habits,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 1*, ed. Humphrey Milford (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 98.

<sup>36</sup> Peel, “Homes and Habits,” in *Early Victorian England 1830-1865 Volume 1*, 98-99.

<sup>37</sup> Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), 36.

when the weather is cold, therefore indoor amusements were more needed than in the summer months. In the summer, the piano-makers would turn to making cabinets instead of pianofortes.<sup>38</sup> By far the best pianos were made in London from where they were shipped to the rest of Britain by rail.<sup>39</sup>

The sheet music people needed to be able to play a piece without memorizing it by heart was, on the other hand, quite expensive and that is why families sometimes passed their evenings with music copying. This was until some publishers, such as Novello, reduced the price for sheet music and the at home music copying was reduced to a minimum.<sup>40</sup>

### **3.7 Brass Bands**

Popular especially within the urban and rural working classes especially in the north of Britain were brass bands. The brass instruments were largely improved with valves from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century all over Europe – this improvement made the instruments easier to play and extended their range.

Since around 1855, brass bands started to appear widely and provided the basic musical education for masses. Their general high popularity was caused by the fact that brass bands are more suitable for outside playing and playing at dances because they are more audible in the outdoor environment compared to a string quartet.

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<sup>38</sup> Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society*, 40.

<sup>39</sup> Derek B. Scott, "Music and Social Class in Victorian London," *The Victorian Web*, last modified June 25, 2012.

<sup>40</sup> Derek B. Scott, "Music and Social Class in Victorian London," *The Victorian Web*, last modified June 25, 2012.

## 4 ANALYSIS OF MUSIC MENTIONS IN WORKS BY JANE AUSTEN AND OSCAR WILDE

In this chapter, the focus will be set on analysing mentions of music in books by Victorian authors. The authors portray short musical moments in their stories and with these short depictions, I will try to demonstrate my claims from the first part of the thesis. To contrast two different periods and approaches towards writing in general, I chose to analyse Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. In these two works, the depicted worlds are of a completely opposite nature – Austen is concerned with the world of young women striving for their accomplishments and social recognition, whereas Wilde gives a look into the world of decadent behaviour, a world full of vanity and art.

Siddon's proposition that "literature emerged as the vehicle for a synthesis between speculative and practical music,"<sup>41</sup> is a highly logical and relatable view. Almost all European music of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is interwoven with literature – be it an original artwork, an element taken from history, legends or myths. For example, Wagner's tetralogy *The Ring of the Nibelung* is based completely on German myths which were preserved by literature.

Another rightful point is made by Young when he writes: "We may easily forget how deeply our picture of the Victorian age is coloured by its satire, and how much that we call Victorian is known to us only because the Victorians laughed at it."<sup>42</sup> Both Austen and Wilde are masters of such portrayal of characters – they make the reader laugh at the vices of the characters or force the reader to think of the follies of everyday life.

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<sup>41</sup> Amy Elizabeth Siddons, *The Condition of Music in Victorian Literature* (University of Virginia, 2004), 13. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/305109192>

<sup>42</sup> G.M. Young, *Victorian England: A Portrait of an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), 163.

#### 4.1 Jane Austen: *Pride and Prejudice* (1813)

Jane Austen in her work *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) provides a detailed look at the lives of Bennet's daughters, whose mother's only goal is to find a good match for her daughters. The novel is set in Hertfordshire and Derbyshire around the year of 1812 and it contains several scenes which include music in the social context, especially regarding young women and their musical skills counted as very welcomed accomplishments alongside with drawing, embroidery, and reading. Austen depicts the world around her, she does not celebrate it, though, and "subjects many attitudes prevalent in her stratified society to humorous ridicule or moral condemnation."<sup>43</sup> The characters in her novels are "distinguished in accordance with the rightness and fitness of their feelings and taste, and taste is a moral quality,"<sup>44</sup> by which we can assume that this applies to character's music taste as well.

The first scene in which Elizabeth Bennet is asked to play for the party follows the conversation with her friend Charlotte Lucas. It is Charlotte who teases Elizabeth to play and we learn that it is not the first time Charlotte persuades Elizabeth to show off her skills of playing the piano:

"You are a very strange creature by way of a friend! —always wanting me to play and sing before any body and every body! —If my vanity had taken a musical turn, you would have been invaluable, but as it is, I would rather not sit down before those who must be in the habit of hearing the very best performers." On Miss Lucas's persevering, however, she added, "Very well; if it must be so, it must."<sup>45</sup>

This segment shows that Elizabeth Bennet is not comfortable playing in front of people, especially those who could regard her skills as inferior, but in general. She even suggests that she knows Mr. Darcy is used to hearing professional musicians, but eventually she gives up and fulfils her 'duty' of entertaining the party. The way Austen depicts Elizabeth suggests that although she can play well, she is the type of woman who prefers to be considered as intelligent than as a skilful, accomplished pianist.

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<sup>43</sup> Douglas Bush, *Jane Austen* (New York: Collier Books, 1975), 2.

<sup>44</sup> Bush, *Jane Austen*, 2-3.

<sup>45</sup> Jane Austen, *Pride and Prejudice* (Penguin Books, 1999), 23.

Elizabeth's performance is considered "pleasing, though by no means capital."<sup>46</sup> Her sister Mary, who is described as "the only plain one in the family"<sup>47</sup> and therefore has to work hard to attain knowledge and accomplishments, gives a performance as well, though much less pleasant. Mary is mentioned to play a long concerto and then Scottish and Irish airs – instrumental song-like pieces one can dance to.

As Linda Zionkowski points out, the practice of playing the piano or other instrument was considered as "the hallmarks of proper liberal education,"<sup>48</sup> but at the same time, it increased the level of cultural anxiety of the actual use of such skills. She continues with the fact that "practicing too much or performing too well was believed detrimental to women, who foolishly risked making spectacles of themselves – or becoming mere entertainers – by exhibiting their talent too insistently, even in the relatively private sphere of the home."<sup>49</sup> With this in mind, Marry's attitude towards performing in public becomes highly unfortunate for its lack of modesty, which added a welcomed feminine undertone as well as the sense of amateurism – a necessary attribute "to avoid self-display, competition with other women, and the quest for admiration of their playing."<sup>50</sup> She continues with stating that Austen depicts another aspect of women playing an instrument and that is "the maintenance of a rich domestic life lived among friends and family, in which music allows communication, pleasure, growth of affection and sympathy, . . ."<sup>51</sup> This aspect is embodied in Elizabeth Bennet who never shows any desire to make an exhibition of herself.

When Elizabeth is visiting her ill sister in the Bingley's residence, one day she and Miss Bingley are asked to play some music for Mr. Darcy. After Elizabeth politely refuses, Miss Bingley plays the piano and her sister Mrs. Hurst sings a song. In the meantime, Elizabeth is observing music books laying on the instrument. It is stated that the two ladies perform "some Italian songs" and a "lively Scotch air."<sup>52</sup> The choice of

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<sup>46</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 23.

<sup>47</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 23.

<sup>48</sup> Linda Zionkowski, "'Aunt Jane began her day with music': Austen and the female amateur," *Persuasions no. 37* (2015): 165-185, <https://literature.proquest.com/pagelimage.do?ftnum=4206625601&fmt=page&area=criticism&journalid=08210314&articleid=R05457414&pubdate=2015>

<sup>49</sup> Linda Zionkowski, "'Aunt Jane began her day with music': Austen and the female amateur," 166.

<sup>50</sup> Zionkowski, "'Aunt Jane began her day with music': Austen and the female amateur," 166.

<sup>51</sup> Zionkowski, "'Aunt Jane began her day with music': Austen and the female amateur," 166.

<sup>52</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 46.



Italian songs suggests that the music in English nobility's favour was Italian and therefore imported from Italian music centres.

At the Netherfield ball supper, Mary performs poorly, this time with singing, and Elizabeth is embarrassed for her. Mr. Collins delivers a ridiculous speech, by which Austen satirizes snobbery stating that:

“If I,” said Mr. Collins, “were so fortunate as to be able to sing, I should have great pleasure, I am sure, in obliging the company with an air; for I consider music as a very innocent diversion, and perfectly compatible with the profession of a clergyman. —I do not mean however to assert that we can be justified in devoting too much of our time to music, for there are certainly other things to be attended to.”<sup>53</sup>

What Austen did with her characters is that she “seized on qualities which are frequently found in human nature,”<sup>54</sup> and portrayed them into the characters in her novels. Mr. Collins, in this case, is that one conceited person everyone knows – the one who would do everything if only he was gifted. At the same time, he represents the opinion of the clergy – singing is compatible with the profession, a clergyman should be able to sing during his services, and he thinks the music on other occasions harmless, but only in a limited amount.

After Charlotte Lucas marries Mr. Collins, Elizabeth visits them in their parish where she meets Lady Catherine de Bourgh. They are all invited for dinner where Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth whether she sings and plays and whether her sisters do. When she hears that only one does, she cannot hide her surprise and exasperation. Lady Catherine immediately compares Bennet's daughters to Webb's daughters and says: “Why did not you all learn?—You ought to have learned. The Miss Webbs all play, and their father has not so good an income as your's.”<sup>55</sup> According to Mitton, people like Lady Catherine are “well born and well bred, but their manners and conduct are impossible,”<sup>56</sup> which seems to be the case in this scene. Lady Catherine feels it appropriate to make such statements because of her position and thinks it unacceptable that Bennet's daughters all don't play, which her mind immediately connects to the idea

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<sup>53</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 90.

<sup>54</sup> G. E. Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1917), 58.

<sup>55</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 145.

<sup>56</sup> Mitton, *Jane Austen and Her Times*, 66.

of money. Mr. Bennet, who according to her statement has a better income than Mr. Webb, was expected to hire a music teacher for his daughters.

Another scene with mentions of music is when Elizabeth Bennet, Mr. Darcy and his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam all come for dinner to Lady Catherine's home – Rosings Park. Colonel Fitzwilliam entertains Elizabeth, who is having a good time, and this draws the attention of Lady Catherine. When she hears they are discussing music she states:

“Of music! Then pray speak aloud. It is of all subjects my delight. I must have my share in the conversation, if you are speaking of music. There are few people in England, I suppose, who have more true enjoyment of music than myself, or a better natural taste. If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient...”

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Lady Catherine is an example of English nobility with a strong interest in music. She gives advice to all the ladies around her to practice as much as they can to reach a high skill set. English nobility were often the patrons of important music events or their favourite composers. These patronages enabled the composers to live and work without having to worry about their sustenance or without having to teach music. Sarah Tytler described Lady Catherine as “a domineering, self-sufficient woman, who tells Mr. Collins how to manage his parish, Mrs. Collins how to keep her house and rear her poultry, Elizabeth how to practice her music, and Maria Lucas how to pack her trunk.”<sup>58</sup> She persistently demands that everyone around her do things in the manner she expects, including music learning.

Right afterward, Elizabeth is asked by Colonel Fitzwilliam to play for him and the party and she goes to play without hesitation. Lady Catherine listens to her playing half a song but then continues with her conversation. The reason behind this behaviour might be that Lady Catherine does not perceive Elizabeth as worth a thought – Lady's main concern is to get Mr. Darcy to marry her daughter and she puts all her effort into praising her daughter over other ladies. It could be stated that there is a parallel between Lady Catherine and Mrs. Bennet who, as well, is praising her daughters whenever she has a chance. The main difference between these two mother characters is in their

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<sup>57</sup> Austen, *Pride and Prejudice*, 152.

<sup>58</sup> Sarah Tytler, *Jane Austen and Her Works* (London: Cassell & Company, 1900), 78.

possessed discretion – Mrs. Bennet boasts loudly at any occasion about her daughters' possible acquittance, which proves to drive them away, whereas Lady Catherine proceeds with intelligence in these matters.

## 4.2 Oscar Wilde: *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890)

*The Picture of Dorian Gray*, which first appeared in 1890 in *Lippincott's Monthly Magazine*, is a Victorian novel with elements of gothic and philosophical novel and it is the only novel by Oscar Wilde. It caused a considerable degree of controversy when it first came out and the pioneering figure of the aesthetic movement defended his novel, later revised it and added the preface, in which he defends artist's rights and the notion of art for art's sake. Wilde wanted to free art from its moral and educational purpose. The story itself includes many mentions of music practicing, composers and art in general. The exact years in which the novel takes place are not specified.

With the analysis, we must bear in mind that the book came out in 1890 under a strong influence of neoromantic ideas in music and the works of Hector Berlioz, Franz Liszt and Richard Wagner. Especially Wagner's work leading to disintegration of tonality divided the musical circles into two sections – those who loathed Wagner's innovation and those who admired it. These new aspects of music could be seen as a parallel to the decadent period of literature, influenced by the French decadent movement, in the sense of dissolution. In music, it was tonality and conventional harmony, in literature and society they were the standard moral values.

The first music mention is when Lord Henry Wotton and Hallward Basil are entering the house where Dorian Gray is waiting for them. The scene is depicted as:

As they entered they saw Dorian Gray. He was seated at the piano with his back to them, turning over the pages of a volume of Schumann's "Forest Scenes."  
"You must lend me these, Basil," he cried. "I want to learn them. They are perfectly charming."<sup>59</sup>

Robert Schumann (1810 – 1856) was one of the most important German composers of the Romantic movement. Most known for composing songs and piano pieces, the

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<sup>59</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Hertfordshire, Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1992), 25.

Brahms contemporary was of a melancholic nature which shows in his composition. That might be the reason why Wilde chose to mention Schumann's *Forest Scenes* in this situation – to show that Dorian himself is a melancholic soul sympathizing with Schumann's music. Another thing worth mentioning is that Dorian wants to learn the piano pieces himself, which suggests a shift from the unwritten rule that gentlemen should not play instruments, as mentioned in the section concerned with music at home.

Basil Hallward introduces Dorian to Lord Henry whose aunt is very fond of Dorian, but he confesses that he forgot about an arranged meeting in Whitechapel's club by saying:

“I am in Lady Agatha's black books at present,” answered Dorian, with a funny look of penitence. “I promised to go to a club in Whitechapel with her last Tuesday, and I really forgot all about it. We were to have played a duet together—three duets I believe. I don't know what she will say to me. I am far too frightened to call.”<sup>60</sup>

This excerpt proves that duets were continuously in high favour of practicing. In this case, they were supposed to be performed in a club, therefore, to entertain a party.

In another scene where Dorian meets Lord Henry's wife, they discuss where they have first seen each other. Lady Henry says she had seen Dorian with her husband “the other night at the Opera.”<sup>61</sup> It is unspecified which opera house is meant, but the capital lettering at the beginning of the word suggests Lady Henry might mean the Royal Italian Opera or the Royal Opera House. It seems that The Royal Opera House, however, officially acquired this exact name not earlier than 1892 according to its official website.<sup>62</sup>

The scene continues with discussing the opera of that particular evening – *Lohengrin* by Richard Wagner. Although its first premiere was in 1850, the British premiere took place in May of 1875. As the novel probably occurs around the real time of its publication, it suggests that Wagner's work, in this case, *Lohengrin*, was popular and kept its place in the repertoire of opera houses in London. Lady Henry continues by saying:

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<sup>60</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 65.

<sup>62</sup> “History,” on the Royal Opera House's official website, accessed June 16, 2019, <http://www.roh.org.uk/about/history>

“Yes; it was at dear ‘Lohengrin.’ I like Wagner’s music better than anybody’s. It is so loud that one can talk the whole time without other people hearing what one says. That is a great advantage: don’t you think so, Mr. Gray?”<sup>63</sup>

This claim made by Lady Henry is paradoxical and as Ransom says: “His [Wilde’s] paradoxes are only unfamiliar truths.”<sup>64</sup> She alleges that she likes Wagner music above any other, but at the same time disparages the claim by adding that because of its loudness it allows one to talk throughout its duration. This ambivalent opinion suggests how upper-class people perceived such complicated music. Dorian’s opinion about Wagner’s music is, on the other hand, a straightforward one, suggesting he considers the quality of *Lohengrin* to be, at least, good, as he responds with: “I never talk during music—at least, during good music. If one hears bad music, it is one’s duty to drown it in conversation.”<sup>65</sup> Wagner’s music especially, but the period in music, corresponding with late Victorian time, in general, was revolutionary in a sense that “no longer is music wholly dedicated to bourgeois purposes of commonality and sentiment.”<sup>66</sup> Unfortunately, not everybody was predestined to understand or, moreover, enjoy it.

The conversation continues as Lady Henry continues to elaborate on her opinions:

“But you must not think I don’t like good music. I adore it, but I am afraid of it. It makes me too romantic. I have simply worshipped pianists—two at a time, sometimes, Harry tells me. I don’t know what it is about them. Perhaps it is that they are foreigners. They all are, ain’t they? Even those who are born in England become foreigners after a time, don’t they? It is so clever of them, and such a compliment to art. Makes it quite cosmopolitan, doesn’t it? You have never been to one of my parties, have you, Mr. Gray? You must come. I can’t afford orchids, but I spare no expense in foreigners. . . .”<sup>67</sup>

There are several matters to comment on. Firstly, Lady Henry’s concern of being too romantic when hearing music might be related to the notion of an ideal Victorian woman who always holds her composure – such as Jane Bennet in Austen’s novel. It

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<sup>63</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 65.

<sup>64</sup> Arthur Ransome, *Oscar Wilde: A Critical Study* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1913), 111.

<sup>65</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 66.

<sup>66</sup> Siddons, *The Condition of Music in Victorian Literature*, 3-4.

<sup>67</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 66.

seems likely that Lady Henry is afraid of becoming too emotionally involved in music and tries to keep her emotional distance in order to not let her romantic nature show, which would be inappropriate for a lady of her status.

Secondly, she mentions that all the pianists are foreigners, which supports the widely shared opinion that England did not have good musicians of its own, and therefore all the good pianists and composers were foreigners, who visited the country or moved there for a work opportunity.

Thirdly, Lady Henry claims that even native Englanders become foreigners. From the musicological point of view, this claim has several reasons behind it. Although the situation with music education in England was improving and there were several schooling institutions with a good reputation, they were too new to exceed the reputation of long-established continental music centres, which had long-established prestige. Furthermore, as there was almost no model of English music to look up to, except for monumental names such as Purcell and Handel, the composers and musicians had to look for their ideal form of music elsewhere. Often influenced by European musicians, English ones strived to reach the example which continental Europe had set. Nicholas Temperley, supported by Siddons, claims that from the point of view of Britain being “a nineteenth-century world leader at the time”<sup>68</sup> it was tolerable to “welcome... foreign imports, including music.”<sup>69</sup>

Finally, Lady Henry invites Dorian to come to one of her parties. What follows from the statement she doesn't spare money on foreigners is that those from higher social classes who could afford it did invite foreign performers to play at the parties and entertain their guests.

Dorian later tells Lord Henry about his love interest in an actress Sibyl Vane and explains where he came across her. Dorian describes how he found himself in a “wretched hole of a place”<sup>70</sup> where a “dreadful orchestra, presided over by a young Hebrew who sat at a cracked piano” accompanied Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*. This scene is from a working-class theatre of doubtful quality. Shakespeare was still the most played playwright of the period, and it was those who followed the Shakespearean

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<sup>68</sup> Siddons, *The Condition of Music in Victorian Literature*, 8.

<sup>69</sup> Nicholas Temperley, „Xenophilia in British Musical History,“ in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, Vol. 1, ed. Bennett Zon (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 1999), 8.

<sup>70</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 72.

tradition that were considered the best. As Perugini points out: “When one thinks of the Victorian playwrights, it is of the men who followed in the Shakespearean tradition, . . .”<sup>71</sup>

Wilde depicts Dorian’s decadent behaviour over the years, where he devotes himself to different arts and crafts depending on his contemporary interest, but nothing satisfies him for long. As Walter Pater, the man who had a great deal of influence on Wilde, wrote in his conclusion of “The Renaissance” - “While all melts under our feet, we may well grasp at any exquisite passion, or any contribution to knowledge that seems by a lifted horizon to set the spirit free for a moment, or any stirring of the senses, strange dyes, strange colors, and curious odors, or work of the artist's hands, or the face of one's friend.”<sup>72</sup> It is undeniable that Dorian does this exact thing. One time, he devoted himself to music and “used to give curious concerts, in which mad gypsies tore wild music from little zithers, . . .”<sup>73</sup> Dorian is said to collect various interesting musical instruments from various parts of the world but what fascinated him was that “Art, like Nature, has her monsters, things of bestial shape and with hideous voices.”<sup>74</sup> There seems to be a parallel between Dorian’s monstrous behaviour and his trying to find such instruments with distasteful tones.

After Dorian grows tired of the ethnic instruments, he is depicted in the Opera again, “listening in rapt pleasure of to ‘Tannhauser,’ and seeing in the prelude to that great work of art a presentation of the tragedy of his own soul.”<sup>75</sup> Again, we can see the popularity of Richard Wagner, this time with his work from 1845, which Wagner was revising repeatedly during his life.

Once Dorian kills Basil Howard, who finds out about Dorian’s horrible secret, he remembers Allan Campbell, an old friend, and a scientist. He remembers that his ways with Allan crossed thanks to music, because Allan was “an excellent musician, however, as well, and played both the violin and the piano, better than most amateurs.”

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<sup>71</sup> Perugini, *Victorian Days and Ways*, 203.

<sup>72</sup> Walter Pater & Oscar Wilde, “Art for art's sake,” in *Arts Education Policy Review* 104, no.5, 29-31. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/211012137?accountid=16730>

<sup>73</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 186.

<sup>74</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 188.

<sup>75</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 188.

<sup>76</sup> The excerpt seems to imply that the people who were gifted with musical talents, alongside with other talents, were regarded as more honourable.

One day when Lord Henry and Dorian meet, Lord Henry demands that Dorian plays him Chopin, and so Dorian performs an unspecified piece. <sup>77</sup> Later Lord Henry asks Dorian to play a nocturne, assumingly by Chopin again, and at the same time to reveal his secret of a youthful look. Again, it can be assumed that Chopin's melancholic nocturnes were popular at the time, although it was almost half a century old, and simultaneously they underline Dorian's inner melancholy.

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<sup>76</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 230.

<sup>77</sup> Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, 296.



## 5 CONCLUSION

The main goal of the thesis was to set the background of the Victorian era music life of all classes. The musical life of the poor and working classes, however, is only briefly outlined as there is “little critical scholarship completed”<sup>78</sup> in literature which would be concerned with the matter. It is possible to assume that the poor participated in the music activities of the church, attended festivals of choir music, and were familiar with popular and folk songs, and that the working class visited the singing evenings in taverns, which later became music halls.

Middle classes are discussed in more detail in various sections according to the purpose of the music they attended to. Based on secondary literature, it was proven that the middle-class people’s interest in music rose throughout the whole century. The concerts attendance largely consisted of the middle class, for whom the seat prices were accessible. Another aspect of middle-class music life was that the prosperity of the Victorian age allowed to live a bourgeois life of leisure thanks to which people had time to cultivate the available hobbies of reading, sport, drawing and of course – music. The families of this social status could afford to own a piano, guitar or a harp, on which the young ladies were to exercise their skill. The wealthier families provided their daughters with music teachers, which supplied the teachers, who were often composers at the same time, with a stable income of money, to which an utterance of Lady Catherine de Borough points in *Pride and Prejudice*. As the custom of playing an instrument at home spread, it became one of the accomplishments which the prototype of a Victorian woman should possess. The analysis of Jane Austen’s novel supports the propositions made in the first part of the thesis – young ladies were expected to achieve the status of being accomplished based on their leisure time activities. The Bennet’s being a prototypical upper-class family with five daughters, two of which can play the pianoforte, provide many instances where music plays a role in social interactions. It is not only discussed, but also performed, which enables to analyse the notion of amateur playing and women’s accomplishments.

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<sup>78</sup> Donna S. Parsons, review of *The Idea of Music in Victorian Fiction*, by Sophie Fuller and Nicky Losseff, ed. *Victorian Studies*, Vol. 48 Issue 1, (Autumn 2005): 175.

Austen provides a short encounter with higher class of the society with Lady Catherine de Bourgh. However, these instants only present the nobility's superficial interest in art as it is expected of them. Wilde, on the contrary, introduces the views on art from the point of view of nobility. The aesthetic and artistic views provided by his novel are an invaluable evidence of musical preferences of the late Victorianism. Dorian Gray and his visits of the opera houses underline the established popularity of opera in the nineteenth century. The multiple mentions of music composers and their works give space for the evaluation of overall popularity of foreign composers, which was one of the focuses of the thesis, and the evaluation shows that music composers of foreign nationality were generally more popular than the native-born English ones. One scene in Wilde's novel suggests an idea of all musicians eventually becoming foreigners, which might be caused by the need of studying music abroad and therefore adopting the influences of continental Europe, which adds to the notion of England being an unmusical country without its own national style.

Further, the thesis provides a basic overview of occasional and regular encounters between people with an overview of the basic institutions such as concert societies, opera houses, choir festivals, which had a crucial social function, sheds light on the phenomenon of music halls, brass band and music practice at home.

The obvious similarities between the end of the Victorian era, such as decomposition of standard values, and the development of the late nineteenth century music, with Wagner's dissolution of tonality and conventional harmony, should be also noted and kept in mind. The tendencies to destruct the basic conceptions were prevalent in all branches of art.

To conclude, the theoretical information included in the first three chapters of the thesis provide a steady base for the literary analysis in the fourth chapter. There are no downright contradictory statements which would oppose each other in terms of truthfulness, the analysis rather completes the general facts with specific moments and examples of music practice in the Victorian period. The analysed novels both contribute to the overall concept of the role of music in the time of Queen Victoria's reign, both of them in different aspects, and at the same time provide evidence that music was an important aspect of social life.

## RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem role hudby ve viktoriánské Anglii, s následnou analýzou dvou vybraných děl autorů té doby – *Pýcha a předsudek* od Jane Austenové a *Obraz Doriana Graye* Oscara Wildea. Tato díla díky časovému rozdílu mezi jejich vydáním poskytují cenný náhled do hudebních praktik a vkusu dvou časových úseků devatenáctého století. Dále je práce zaměřena na celkový koncept hudebnosti anglického národa a jeho pojetí v kontinentální Evropě, se snahou najít důvody pro tvrzení, že Anglie je nehudební země, a také na výskyt hudby v každodenním kulturním životě lidí dané doby.

První kapitola jakožto úvod nastiňuje problematiku, jíž se práce zabývá. Druhá kapitola je věnována pozadí anglické hudební činnosti, konceptu anglické hudebnosti a také významným anglickým skladatelům, kterým se v dnešní době a výzkumu nedostává velké pozornosti kvůli jejich zastínění evropskými kontinentálními skladateli, zejména německými a italskými, kteří získali renomé po celé Evropě. Tito skladatelé ale hráli nenahraditelnou roli ve formování anglické národní hudební kultury. Zmíněni jsou i vlivní skladatelé jiných národností, kteří v Anglii byli populární. Dále kapitola obsahuje školní hudební instituce, díky kterým byl položen základ pro zrod nové hudební generace s profesionálním vzděláním.

Třetí kapitola se zabývá hudbou mezi lidmi, jejich vztahem k ní a příležitostmi, při kterých měli lidé v tomto období hudbu slyšet. Jmenovitě jsou uvedeny koncerty, které získávaly značnou popularitu i mezi střední až vyšší střední třídou a úskalí, se kterými se organizace takových koncertů mohla potýkat. Dále práce objasňuje důležitost opery ve společnosti. Osvětlen je fenomén dechovek, festivalů chorální hudby, jež měly důležitou sociální funkci, a také fenomén „music halls“, jež má v češtině ekvivalent ve výrazu „kabaret“. Neméně důležitý je fenomén hudební praxe v domácím prostředí, která definovala střední a vyšší třídy po celou dobu trvání viktoriánské epochy.

Následující část práce je věnována analýze literárních děl *Pýcha a předsudek* a *Obraz Doriana Graye*. U obou děl je vysvětleno, v čem jsou mezi sebou kontrastní, avšak prováděná analýza je oddělená. Její podstatou je usazení hudebních úryvků do sociálního kontextu, do kontextu doby a jejich interpretace. Oba autoři ve svých

románech zobrazují několik scén, ve kterých hudba hraje důležitou roli, ale každý se na ni dívá z jiného úhlu pohledu v jiném prostředí. Jane Austenová ji zobrazuje v případě rodiny z vyšší střední třídy, kdežto Wilde píše o vyšší vrstvě společnosti, která má sklony ke zhýralosti.

Práce se prostřednictvím stanovení historicky obecných faktů a následné analýzy románů, které mohou sloužit jako dobové svědectví, snaží o rozkrytí sociální funkce hudby ve stanoveném období. Poté analyzované úseky nevyvrací tvrzení obecné části bakalářské práce, naopak je potvrzují, a tudíž se analýza i teoretická část navzájem podepírají.

Jane Austenová poskytuje důkazy o důležitosti amatérského hudebního umění v životě mladých žen. Wilde pro změnu dává prostor snobství vyšších vrstev, jež hudbu berou pouze jako rozptýlení, jež jim poskytují vyšší formy umění.

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# ANOTACE

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Název práce: Role hudby ve viktoriánské Anglii

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

Počet stran: 48

Klíčová slova: viktoriánská literatura, britský román, hudba, role hudby, Jane Austen, Oscar Wilde

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá tématem role hudby ve viktoriánské Anglii, k čemuž využívá analýzu románů *Pýcha a předsudek* Jane Austenové a *Obraz Doriana Graye* Oscara Wildea. Důležitou součástí práce jsou kapitoly, které o hudbě viktoriánské doby pojednávají z teoretického hlediska. Hlavním cílem je zjistit, jakou roli hrála ve viktoriánské společnosti hudba, a zjištěné skutečnosti dokázat analýzou románů, které slouží jako dobové svědectví.

# ANOTATION

Author: Eliška Richterová

Department: The Department of English and American Studies

Title of the thesis: The Role of Music in Victorian England

Thesis supervisor: Mgr. Pavlína Flajšarová, Ph.D.

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This bachelor thesis is concerned with the role of music in Victorian England, for which it uses an analysis of the novels *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. An important part of the thesis are the chapters in which the music of the Victorian era is talked about from theoretical point of view. The main goal is to find out what role music had in Victorian society and to prove the results with the analysis, which serves as a testimony from the time.