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Introduction

Distinguished music can be forgotten by history for many reasons. A composer's life circumstances may change, costing him or her the attention of audiences and critics. A once-established composer's works may subsequently land outside of linear historical narratives that privilege the idea of forward motion, or a composer's oeuvre may be victimized by changing cultural trends. The music of German-American composer Herrman S. Saroni (1823/24–1900) appears to have suffered from all of these factors, and his works are now almost completely unknown.

After success in New York as a composer of songs and short piano works from 1844 to 1852, Saroni lived in smaller towns and cities, where his declining publication rate also contributed to his obscurity.¹ Saroni's mid-nineteenth century style, which did not showcase obviously new technical challenges or aesthetic approaches to writing music, may have clashed with developing progression-based historical narratives, and his status as an immigrant may have excluded him from the historical discourse on nascent American musical nationalism. Technological changes that caused both a decline in amateur music-making and an expansion of the amount of music available to consumers probably limited his posthumous reception.

Saroni's works deserve reconsideration for both historical and musical reasons. His New York career coincided with an important period in the city's musical development. His varied musical activities illustrate many of the ways that musicians earned a living in this era. His diverse body of songs clarifies the existing historical picture, highlighting the types of publications that appealed to contemporary music publishers and consumers. His works exemplify the use of music in immigrant communities to acculturate and maintain connections to their countries of origin. Most importantly, Saroni's songs are well crafted and musically rewarding, ranking among the best examples of the period's American song.

1. Recently published writings on Saroni include Lars Helgert, "Herrman S. Saroni: Paths to Success as a Composer in New York, 1844–52," *American Music* 40, no. 2 (Summer 2022): 141–79; *The Grove Dictionary of American Music*, 2nd ed., s.v. "Saroni, Herrman S." (p. 348), by David Francis Urrows; and Daniel A. Bellware, "The Musical and Mechanical Genius of Herrman S. Saroni," *Muscogiana: Journal of the Muscogee Genealogical Society* 29, no. 2 (Fall 2018): 1–20.

Origin, Immigration, and Career Synopsis

Herrman S. Saroni was born in Bernburg in 1823 or 1824.² Bernburg (1820 population 5,000) was the largest town in the Duchy of Anhalt-Bernburg, an Evangelical Protestant territory ruled by Alexius Friedrich Christian (r. 1807–34) and later by his son Alexander Karl (r. 1834–63).³ Bernburg had an active court musical establishment with a Hoftheater that offered concerts of instrumental music and opera. Notable contributors to the town's music scene before Saroni's departure in 1844 included Richard Wagner (1813–83), who conducted several performances there with the Magdeburg Theatre Company in 1834–36; organist and composer Gustav Flügel (1812–1900), who taught in Bernburg during the 1830s; Victor Clauss (or Klauss) (1805–88 or after), court music director in 1834–37 and founder of a local choral singing society; and composer Franz Wilhelm Abt (1819–85), briefly court music director in 1841.⁴ According to Saroni, Nicolò Paganini (1782–1840) and Ole Bull (1810–80) played concerts in Bernburg.⁵

Despite his Italian surname, Saroni was at least a second-generation German. I could not find any information on his parents, but the 1900 census indicated that both were of German birth.⁶ Documented facts about

2. Primary sources include U.S. Federal Census records; a passenger manifest documenting Saroni's arrival in New York (available on Ancestry.com); and obituaries published in the *Marietta Daily Leader*, 29 August 1900; *Marietta Daily Register*, 29 August 1900; and *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 30 August 1900.

3. Joseph Emerson Worcester, *An Epitome of Modern Geography, with Maps: For the Use of Common Schools* (Boston: Cummings and Hilliard, 1820), 99; Francis Bisset Hawkins, *Germany: The Spirit of Her History, Literature, Social Condition, and National Economy* (London: John W. Parker, 1838), 444.

4. Warren Bebbington, "The Orchestral Conducting Practice of Richard Wagner (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1984), 384–87 (Wagner); Hugo Riemann, *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Music* (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser, 1908), 243 (Flügel); John Denison Champlin Jr., *Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians* (New York: Charles Scribner and Sons, 1899), 330–31 (Clauss) and 4–5 (Abt).

5. Herrman S. Saroni, "Christmas of Olden Times," *Music: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to the Art, Science, Technic and Literature of Music* 11, no. 3 (January 1897): 243–48. Volker Ebersbach notes a Bernburg appearance by Paganini in 1829; see *Geschichte der Stadt Bernburg*, 2 vols. (Dessau: Anhaltische Verlagsgesellschaft, 1998), 1:230.

6. U.S. Federal Census for 1900 (accessed via Ancestry.com).

Texts

The main source for each text reproduced below is the published song (PS) that is cited in full in the critical report. If an independent text source (TS) exists, it is cited below in the comments, which also include information about text authors (some of whom are further discussed in the introduction). The text sources have been used where necessary to correct or clarify the words, versification, spelling, and capitalization shown in the published songs. The punctuation in the published songs ranges from being largely complete (e.g., nos. 1 and 35) to being largely absent (e.g., nos. 7 and 29); in several cases, the songs use dashes (or underscores that appear to act as dashes), which have been changed to commas in the edition. Punctuation has been regularized between stanzas where appropriate, and it has also been added for sense either tacitly or drawing on any of the text sources as needed. For the four non-English texts (see nos. 27a/27b, 29, 30, and 34), accent marks, punctuation, and capitalization have been modernized tacitly; these texts are italicized and placed directly below the English texts with which they are associated. Except for tacit changes in punctuation as noted above, each rejected PS text reading is reported in the notes below with reference to its stanza and line; the measure number is also included when the text is underlaid in the edition, as well as the note of the voice part in a few cases. The edits to these rejected readings are taken from the cited TS unless the note indicates that the reading is also in TS. Stanza numbers have been added throughout to aid in finding the readings reported in the notes; stanza numbers are added in brackets for reference only in the texts of the three through-composed songs (see nos. 18, 30, and 34).

1. *The Child's First Grief*

1. O call my brother back to me,
I cannot play alone;
The summer comes with flow'r and bee;
O where is my brother gone?
The butterfly is glancing bright
Across the sunbeams' track;
I care not now to chase its flight,
O call my brother back.
2. The flow'rs run wild, the flow'rs we sowed
Around our garden tree;
Our vine is drooping with its load,
O call him back to me!
And has he left his birds and flow'rs,

And must I call in vain?
And through the long, long summer hours,
Will he not come again?

Felicia Dorothea Hemans

Comments. Published many times in the United States and United Kingdom (Hemans was British); the earliest source I have found is dated 1828. Saroni's source is unknown, but *The Works of Mrs. Hemans*, vol. 6 (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), 211–12 is an edition that is relatively close to the composer in time and place and is used here as the TS. There are numerous settings of Hemans' poetry in MN, by composers such as Isaac Baker Woodbury, George Henry Derwort, and Charles Grobe. There is also another setting of this specific text by "G. Kingsley" (presumably American composer George Kingsley, 1811–84).¹ TS shows a seven-stanza poem with four lines each; Saroni uses only stanzas 1, 2, 3, and 6 and divides them into two eight-line stanzas.

Notes. Stanza 1, line 3, PS (m. 7) and TS have "flower." Stanza 2, line 5, PS (m. 15) and TS have "flowers."

2. *'Tis Best to Be Free*

1. I loved her! and her azure eyes
Haunted me from sweet sunrise
To the dewy evening's close,
Dyeing rosier the rose.
Yet I said, 'tis best to be,
Yet I said, 'tis best to be
Free, free, free,
And I again was free.
2. But I changed, and auburn hair
Seemed to float upon the air;
Till I thought the orange-flower
Breathed of nothing but her bower.
Yet I said, 'tis best to be,
Yet I said, 'tis best to be
Free, free, free,
And I again was free.
3. Next I loved a Moorish maid,
And her cheek of moonlit shade;
Pale and languid, left my sleep
Not a shade but hers to keep.
Yet I said, 'tis best to be,
Yet I said, 'tis best to be
Free, free, free,

9. Strike Soft the Lute!

G[eorge] W[ashington] Patten

Dolce

3

6 **Moderato** *p*

1. Strike soft the lute! the hour is

10 near, Of eve and balm-y rest;

22. Nay Weep No More My Lov'd One

Eugene Liés

Andante

p

4

8

p

1. Nay weep no more my lov'd one, We —
 -hold yon wav- ing um- brage, All —
 hope warm as the sun- beam That —

11

part but weep no more, Thou'rt love- lier in thy
 steep'd in yel- low sun, Tho' — rich the dress it
 kiss yon gems a- way, In — those eyes once more

28. Our Childhood's Home

Henry John Sharpe

If there is one subject for the medium of song, more spiritual than every other, it is surely that which conjures up the recollection of Childhood. There is a dreamy witchery around it which never vanishes from our thoughts, which neither adversity can subdue nor prosperity annihilate—It touches the magic chord which vibrates in harmony with other times—It is the subdued and mellow tint reflected from the light of other days. It breathes of repose, environ'd by the freshness of youthful verdure, when its enamelled paths were redolent of flowers. Those days are fled—but the recollection of Our Childhood's Home, is indelibly engraven upon the tablets of our hearts and will find an echo in every bosom of sensibility. THE AUTHOR.

Andantino

Voice

Violoncello

Piano

5

29. The Awakening of Italy

[English translation by William Cullen Bryant]

[Italian] words by G[iovanni] F[rancesco] Secchi de Casali

Tempo di marcia

The musical score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes several triplet figures and a dynamic marking of *ff* (fortissimo). The vocal line includes lyrics in both English and Italian.

4

8 **ff**

1. Hear ye the trum- pet that calls to the com- bat, Up with your
 1. U- di- te lo squil- lo di trom- ba guer- rie- ra, Al- za- te I- ta-

11

ban- ner to stream— in the sky, Chil- dren of It- a- ly for- ward to-
 -lia- ni la vo- stra ban- die- ra, Sor- ge- te da for- ti u- ni- ti a pu-

34. I Wandered in the Woodland

English words by Mrs. [Frances Sargent] Osgood
 German [translation] by H[errman] S. Saroni

Andante

The musical score is written in 6/8 time with a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a prominent eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand and a more rhythmic bass line in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The score includes dynamic markings such as *p*, *pp*, and *[a tempo]*, as well as performance instructions like *[rit.]* and *la melodia ben tenuto*. The lyrics are provided in both English and German.

4

la melodia ben tenuto

7 *[rit.]* *p* *[a tempo]*

I wan- dered in— the
 Ich irrt' un- her— in

rit. *pp* *[a tempo]*

10

wood- land, My heart beat cold and slow, — And not— a tear of
 Wal- de, Mir klopf- te bang das Herz; — Doch kei- ne Thrän' wollt'

Critical Report

Editorial Methods

The sources for the songs in this edition were all published during Saroni's lifetime, with the exception of one additional song (undated) that survives only in manuscript and is presented in the appendix. The datable published songs are presented in chronological order by year of publication. Within each calendar year, precisely datable works are given in chronological order first; pieces for which only the year of publication is known are then presented in alphabetical order by title. Published songs that are undated are listed in their latest possible year of publication. Complete bibliographic information for each published song is given below under "Sources, Comments, and Critical Notes." The last section of this critical report includes information about presumably lost Saroni songs.

Policies for the addition of editorial notational elements are as follows. Editorial slurs, ties, and hairpins are indicated with dashed lines. Letter dynamic markings use bold type rather than bold-italic. Articulations are placed in parentheses. Added accidentals are placed in square brackets or in parentheses if they are cautionary in nature. All other editorial emendations are shown in square brackets, are added tacitly as discussed below, or are reported in the critical notes.

The following editorial methods detail changes made to the original sources not specifically cited in the critical notes. Modern conventions of beaming, stem directions, and placement of articulation markings have been generally implemented for ease of use. Internal double barlines in the sources are often thick-thick or even thin-thick, all of which are tacitly altered to thin-thin. Slurs are drawn to enclose ties as needed. Note and measure repeat symbols in the sources have generally been written out; the only exceptions are some cases where tremolo notation used to indicate an alternation between notes has been retained. Where a single stem is used for notes of more than one note value, half notes are separated from notes of lesser value. Octave transpositions or doublings marked by *all'ottava* signs are tacitly realized where appropriate. Single ornamental (reduced-size) eighth notes are sometimes slashed and sometimes are not in the sources; these have been regularized to be non-slashed. Articulations that appear as wedges or as strokes are not always entirely distinct and have been

regularized as strokes in the edition. Triplet and other tuplet symbols appear inconsistently in the sources; the needed markings have been tacitly supplied where the musical context is clear. Source cautionary accidentals are generally retained unless they are deemed superfluous. Source vocal slurs for melismatic declamation have been retained, except where they coincide with a single group of beamed notes; vocal slurs have also been retained if they have a clear phrasing purpose. Rest patterns have been modernized (e.g., dotted eighth rather than eighth and sixteenth) as has the appearance of the quarter rest. Rests are added in brackets primarily to clarify passages in the piano that utilize opposing stems; otherwise, if they are simply missing (for instance, from an empty measure with no whole rest or an empty beat with no quarter rest), they are added tacitly. Guitar fingerings in the arrangement of "The Lonely Tear" (no. 27b) have been omitted.

The edition generally follows the source notation with regard to indicating repeats in the strophic songs. Thus repeat dots are not added in the edition unless they are indicated by segnos appearing in the sources (as in nos. 9, 13, 24, and 37b), are tacitly included as part of a first ending (as in nos. 6, 39, 40, and 42), or where the music is printed twice in the source without the use of residual stanzas in the edition (as in no. 22); only one song (no. 35) includes modern repeat dots for one of its repeats, so additional dots are added for its other repeat. In some cases (see nos. 5, 6, 14, and 39), the sources call for a repeat of the piano introduction (with instructions such as "Symphonie D.C."); these markings are modernized to read only "D.C." Double barlines after a piano introduction appear to indicate a repeat only back to the vocal entrance, but this decision is left to the performers. Verbal repeat instructions from the sources, when present, are given in the critical notes.

Initial tempo/expression markings are shown in the first measure above the vocal staff. All staff names have been deleted, except in the two works that include a part for the violoncello, "Speed Away!" (no. 24) and "Our Childhood's Home" (no. 28). Tempo, performance, and dynamic markings are shown in between the right- and left-hand staves for the piano and above the staff for the voice part regardless of placement in the sources. Some performance instructions have been regularized (e.g., *ritard.* is given as *rit.*) or have had their abbreviations