The Victorian Concertina
Some Issues Relating to Performance[1]

Allan W. Atlas
The City University of New York

For Frances Degen Horowitz

Present-day players of the 'English' concertina (see Fig. 1[2]) must make a number of important decisions when delving into and performing the large repertory of art music that was written for the instrument in Victorian England.[3] These decisions become especially critical for those who would perform the music in a manner that may at least approximate the way it may have sounded in the

1 My essay grows out of the lecture-recitals that I have given with pianist David Cannata and, more recently, with the New York Victorian Consort (with Julia Grella O'Connell, mezzo-soprano, and Francesco Izzo, pianist). I wish to express my thanks to a number of people for their help in connection with this essay: Mr Wim Wakker, Director of Concertina Connection (Helmond, NL) and himself an extraordinary concertinist, for having read an early draft and for the many years of stimulating discussion about the instrument and its music. Thanks also to Messrs Robert Gaskins (San Francisco) and Wes Williams (North Cadbury, Somerset), both of whom checked sources for me and shared information from their own research; in addition, Mr Gaskins also read an early draft of the essay. Finally, Messrs Alexander C. N. Mackenzie of Ord and Kenneth Mobbs (both of Bristol) were kind enough to read the section on tuning and temperaments (§2).

2 The dates for the instruments – whether of manufacture or first sale – are derived from two series of Wheatstone & Co. ledgers now housed at the Horniman Museum, London; the nineteenth-century ledgers form part of the Wayne Archive (hereafter HMWA), those from the twentieth century, part of the Dickinson Archive (HMDA). Both the latter series of five volumes (SD 01–05) and the twelve volumes in the Wayne Archive (C1046–1056 and C104*a*) are available online at the Horniman website: www.horniman.info. For a brief description of the nineteenth-century ledgers, see Stephen Chambers, 'Some Notes on Lachenal Concertina Production and Serial Numbers', *Papers of the International Concertina Association*, 1 (2004): 15–16, n. 4 (also online at www.concertina.org/pica.php and www.concertina.com/chambers); I provide a fuller description in my 'Ladies in the Wheatstone Ledgers: The Gendered Concertina in Victorian England, 1835–1870', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, 39 (2006), 1–234.

3 One can gain some idea of the size and nature of the repertory around the middle of the century from the *Ewer & Co.'s Universal Circulating Music Library* (London: Ewer & Co. 1860): 232–7, which lists 447 titles under 'Music for the Concertina' (Nos. 31395–842), though this includes multiple items within a single collection; see Allan W. Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina in Victorian England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); on the Ewer *Catalogue*, see Nicholas Temperley, 'Ballroom and Drawing-Room Music', in *The Romantic Age, 1800–1914*, ed. Nicholas Temperley. The Athlone History of Music in Britain (London: The Athlone Press, 1981): 113.

Nineteenth-Century Music Review, 3/2(2006): 33–61. Copyright © Ashgate Publishing Ltd.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press



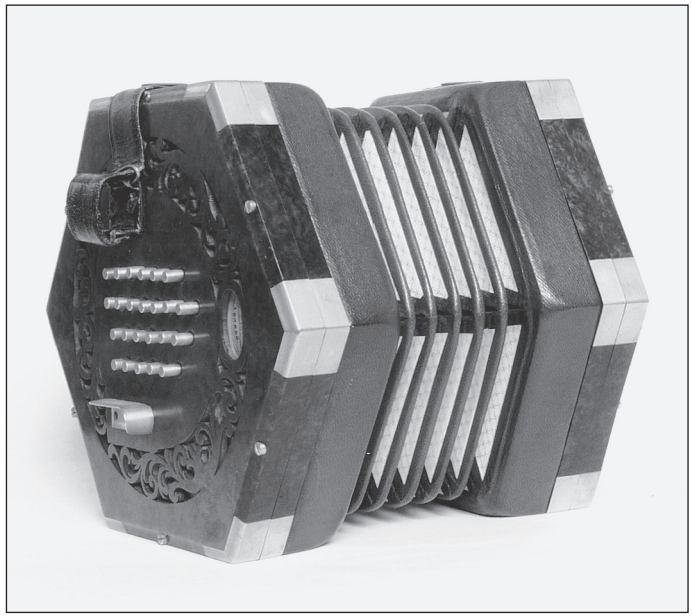
(a) No. 6760 – first known sale 8 November 1855 (HMWA, C1049, p. 75), 48-button treble, five-fold bellows, rosewood ends



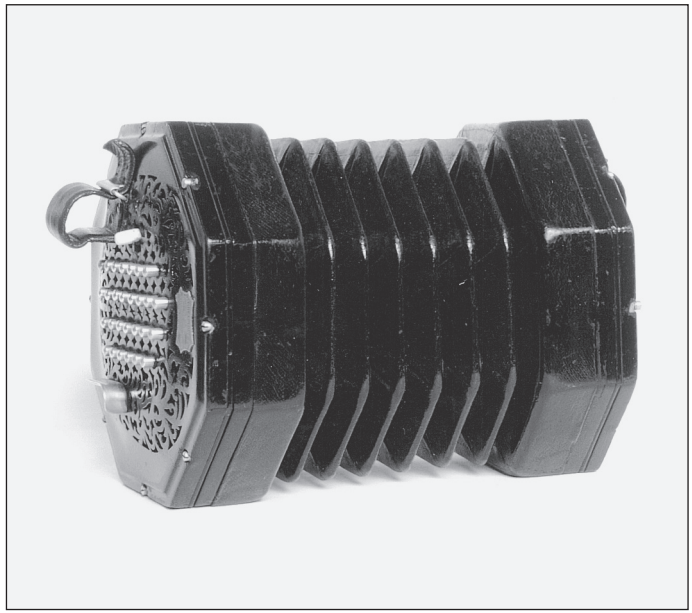
(b) No. 18090 – manufactured May 1866 (HMWA, C1054, p. 2), 48-button treble, four-fold bellows, rosewood ends

Fig. 1 Wheatstone concertinas (all in author's collection)

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press



(c) No. 18216 – manufactured April 1867 (HMWA, C1054, p. 7), 48-button baritone, five-fold bellows, amboyna ends



(d) No. 26507 – manufactured January 1914 (HMDA, SD 01, p. 61), 56-button treble, Æola model, six-fold bellows, ebonized pearwood ends

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

nineteenth century. Briefly, there are three basic decisions to be made. The first two concern the choice of instrument: (1) modern instrument or period (Victorian) instrument; and (2) if the latter, what kind of instrument in terms of reeds (type of metal), tuning, structure of the bellows and number of buttons. The third decision, on the other hand, has to do with a fundamental question of playing technique: should we use three or four fingers of each hand?

Before considering these issues, however, we should clear the air about two matters, the first of which concerns the name and nature of the instrument itself. The word 'English' in English concertina refers to two things: (1) the instrument's place of origin and (2) the characteristics of the system by which it works, which distinguish it from other types of concertinas. Developed circa 1830 – thus during the quarter-century that saw the invention of a slew of free-reed instruments[4] – by the soon-to-be-famous physicist Sir Charles Wheatstone (1802–1875),[5] the English concertina is a fully chromatic instrument on which each button produces a single pitch regardless of the direction in which the bellows are moving. By the late 1840s, the most popular version of the instrument was a 48-button treble with a range of *g*–*c*′′′′, though tenor, baritone, and bass models – their lowest pitches being *c*, *G*, and *C*, respectively – were also available and were often used in concertina ensembles. Finally, with contributions to its repertory by the likes of George Alexander Macfarren, Julius Benedict, John Barnett and Bernhard Molique, the English concertina was the only type of concertina that found a home in Victorian art-music circles, both in the recital hall and in the drawing rooms and salons of the middle and upper classes.[6]

---

4 Briefly, free-reed instruments have metal reeds that vibrate freely through an aperture in the frames in which they are mounted (see Fig. 3a, on p. 42); in addition to the various types of concertinas (see n. 6), such instruments include the harmonica (Christian F.L. Buschmann, 1821), accordion (Cyrillus Demian, 1829), harmonium (Alexander François Debain, 1842), and bandoneón (of tango fame – Heinrich Band, 1844), to name just a few that have continued to flourish up the present day, while Asian ancestors include the Chinese *sheng*, Japanese *shô*, and Lao-Thai *khaen*; see James Howarth, 'Free-Reed Instruments', in *Musical Instruments through the Ages*, ed. Anthony Baines (New York: Penguin Press, 1961); there is a comprehensive collection of essays about a wide range of free-reed instruments in Monika Lustig, ed., *Harmonium und Handharmonika: 20. Musikinstrumentenbau-Symposium, Michaelstein, 19. bis 21. November 1999*. Michaelsteiner Konferenzenberichte, 62 (Michaelstein: Stiftung Kloster Michaelstein, 2002); see also the four volumes of *The Free-Reed Journal* (1999–2002), published by Pendragon Press for The Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments at The Graduate Center of The City University of New York.

5 The most comprehensive biography of Wheatstone, who played a major role in the development of telegraphy (and after whom the so-called 'Wheatstone Bridge' – an electrical circuit that measures resistances – is named, though he did not invent it), is Brian Bowers, *Sir Charles Wheatstone, FRS 1802–1875*, rev. ed. Institution of Electrical Engineers History of Technology Series, 29 (London: Institution of Electrical Engineers, 2001); see also Sigalia Dostrovsky, 'Wheatstone, Charles', in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*, ed. Charles Coulston Gillispie (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1976), xiv: 288–91; both of these deal with Wheatstone primarily as a physicist.

6 On the instrument's Victorian repertory and critical reception, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 48–75; on its popularity in fashionable circles in particular, see Allan W. Atlas, 'Who Bought Concertinas in the Winter of 1851? A Glimpse at the Sales Accounts of Wheatstone & Co.', in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, 1, ed. Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 55–87, and 'Ladies in the Wheatstone Ledgers'.

The Victorians knew two other types of concertinas, both of which, like the English, continue to flourish today: (1) the 'Anglo' (more accurately, 'Anglo-German' or 'Anglo-

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Clearing the air around the second matter will no doubt cause some readers to wonder why I've bothered to write this little essay in the first place. We can probably count the number of concertinists who cultivate the concertina's Victorian art-music repertory on the fingers of – to err on the high side – two hands. Who, then, might find any of what I have to say interesting? In fact, I can imagine three groups of readers, each of which brings a different concertina-related background to the topic: (1) those who have had the opportunity to hear snatches of the Victorian concertina repertory (surely the smallest of the three groups); (2) musicologists and others for whom the concertina – any kind of concertina – is an instrument associated mainly with pubs, street corners, village greens and whaling ships (surely the venues with which the concertina has generally been associated in both literature and films, usually – and sometimes quite inaccurately – in order to introduce a bit of 'local colour'),[7] and who might, therefore, find it interesting to learn that such questions even exist (as they have quite publicly for the more 'canonic' instruments); and (3) the many concertina players[8] who, while most at home with hornpipes, Morris dances and sea shanties,

---

Continental'), derived from the diatonic German *Konzertina* (once adopted in England it acquired chromatic capabilities), on which each button produces two pitches depending on the direction of the bellows; though initially identified mainly with street musicians, the 'Anglo' eventually became the concertina of choice among players of traditional music (it is, for example, the only concertina used in the Irish tradition); (2) the 'Duet', like the English, produces one pitch per button, but assigns its distinct treble and bass registers to separate hands in such a way as to promote the playing of a melody with a piano-like accompaniment; this concertina became particularly popular both in the music halls and with the street-corner Salvation Army bands. For surveys of the various types of concertinas, see Atlas, 'Concertina', in *Grove Music Online*, ed. Laura Macy (www.grovemusic.com; accessed 14 July 2004, hereafter *GMOL*, with same date of accession); Maria Dunkel, 'Harmonikainstrumente', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, rev. ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1996), *Sachteil*, iv, cols 168–210; three important studies on the concertina's role in traditional music are Gearóid Ó hAllmhuráin, 'The Concertina in the Traditional Music of Clare', PhD dissertation, Queen's University of Belfast (1995), Stuart Eydmann, 'The Concertina as an Emblem of the Folk Music Revival in the British Isles', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology*, 4 (1995): 41–50, and Dan Worrall, *The Anglo Concertina Music of William Kimber* (London: English Folk Dance and Song Society, 2005); on the music hall, see Percy Honri, *Working the Halls: The Honris in One Hundred Years of British Music Hall* (Farnborough: D.C. Heath, 1973); the German *Konzertina* receives thorough treatment in Maria Dunkel, *Bandonion und Konzertina: Ein Beitrag zur Darstellung des Instrumententyps.* Berliner musikwissenschaftliche Arbeiten, 30 (Munich and Salzburg: Katzbichler, 1987).

7 See Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, vii; 'George Gissing's Concertina', *The Journal of Musicology*, 17 (1999): 304–18 (the latter also online at www.concertina.com/atlas). A note on this fine website: developed by Robert Gaskins, it aims, among other things, to make available original documents pertaining to the history of the concertina (all types), 'reprint' recent articles (though there is even a dissertation) about the instrument that had appeared in scholarly journals that generally escape the attention of most concertinists (always with permission and always with a full citation of the original publication), post previously unpublished essays (carefully vetted), and highlight the life and career of John Hill MacCann, a noted player of the Duet concertina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (about whom Mr Gaskins is writing a biography).

8 Though I cannot even begin to estimate their number, I can note that, as of March 2004, the lively website www.concertina.net had 3,416 registered users (information from Mr Paul Schwartz, who developed the website). And since few concertinists will be reading this journal, the essay will – with the kind permission of Ashgate Publishing – eventually be posted online at www.concertina.com/atlas.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

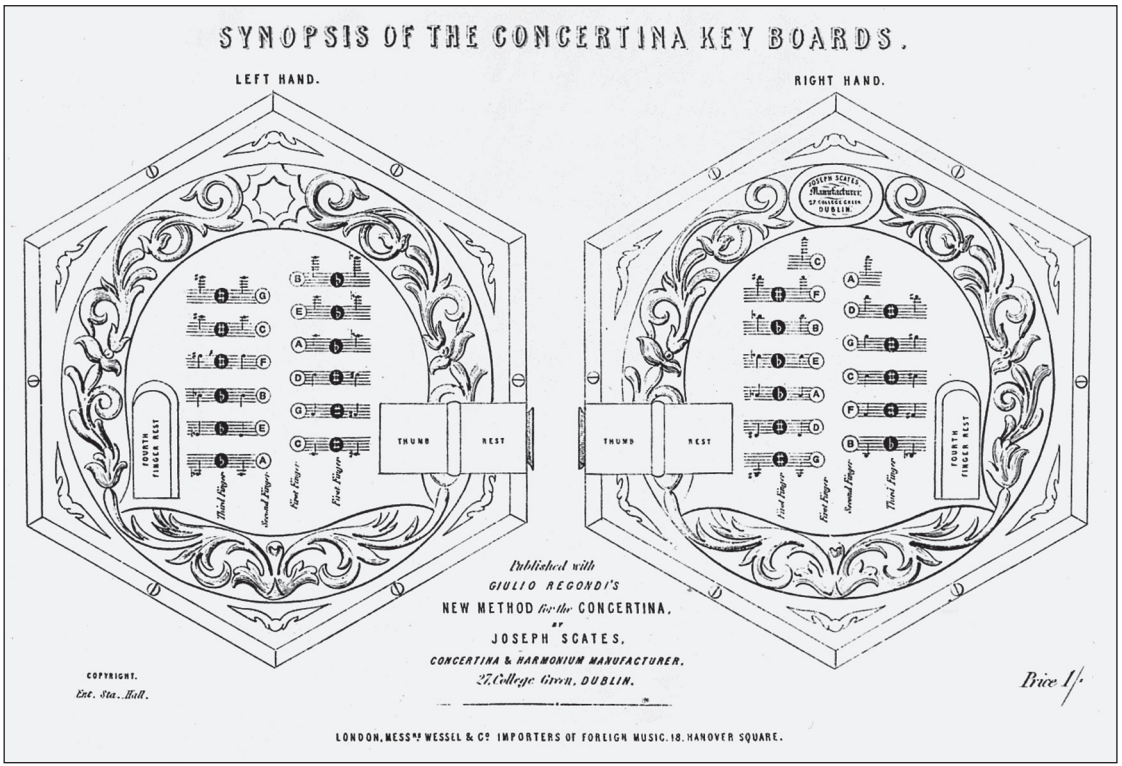


Fig. 2 Layout of buttons on the 48-button treble concertina (after Giulio Regondi, *New Method for the Concertina* [Dublin: Joseph Scates, 1857])

are nevertheless interested in the history of the instrument and might find it worthwhile to mull over at least one person's view about some of the decisions that go into the performance of its Victorian repertory.

Finally, to wrap up our discussion about concertina basics: though we shall not be dealing with the layout of the concertina's button board until we reach our discussions about tuning and fingering, it is just as well to introduce it here. Figure 2 presents the layout of the standard 48-button treble. Three things are worthy of note: (1) all notes that appear on the lines or ledger lines of the staff are in the left hand, while those that fall in the spaces or between ledger lines are in the right hand; (2) the two inner vertical rows of each hand are equivalent to the white notes of the keyboard, whereas the two outer vertical rows provide the black notes; and (3) there are separate buttons for the enharmonic notes G♯ and A♭, on the one hand, and D♯ and E♭, on the other (except in the highest octave, where the right hand lacks a separate button for $a'''♭$); as we shall see, these duplicate buttons for notes that are enharmonic equivalents are a vestige of the period in which the concertina employed a mean-tone temperament with fourteen separate notes to the octave (see p. 48).

1. Modern or Period (Victorian) Instrument[9]

The most basic of the concertinist's choices concerns the instrument itself: modern or period. And since there is more than a little variety within each of these (especially among the period instruments), I will proceed at the level of generalizations, concentrating exclusively on three features that determine the tone or timbre of the instruments.

The divide between period and modern instruments runs rather fuzzily through the 1890s, when, in response to the concertina's move from the intimacy of the recital hall and drawing room to such bigger and noisier venues as the music hall and the outdoor performances of the amateur concertina bands that were the pride of many a northern industrial city,[10] the two leading manufacturers of

9 From this point on, all references to the concertina are to the English concertina in particular.

10 On the ups and downs of the concertina's social status, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 3–11; 'George Gissing's Concertina'; 'Collins, Count Fosco, and the Concertina', *Wilkie Collins Society Journal*, 2 (1999): 57–61 (also online at www.concertina.com/atlas); 'Who Bought Concertinas in the Winter of 1851?'; 'Ladies in the Wheatstone Ledgers'. To be sure, the concertina had already entered the music hall by April/May 1851 at the latest, when Alfred B. Sedgwick appeared at the Royal Music Hall (Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 57, n. 45); Sedgwick was also a member of the Concertina Quartett, which made its debut at the Hanover Square Rooms on 12 June 1844, and for which landmark concert there is a highly favourable review in the *Musical World*, 19 (21 June 1844): 206 (Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 52); by the end of November 1851, Sedgwick had emigrated to New York (he lived in Brooklyn, then a separate city), where he enjoyed a successful career as a composer of theatre music and continued to play the concertina, often with his son Charlie, who played the bass concertina (reviews of his performances are scattered throughout the *New York Times* and *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, both of which are now conveniently available online at http://pqasb.pqarchiver.com/nytimes/advanced search/html and www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/eagle/ index/htm, respectively; on Sedgwick's career as a theatre composer, see Michael Meckna, *The Collected Works of Alfred B. Sedgwick*. Garland Nineteenth-Century American Musical Theater Series (New

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

concertinas – Wheatstone & Co. (the most prestigious) and Lachenal & Co. (Wheatstone's chief rival) – began full-scale production of high-quality, professional-level instruments that they called the Æola (see Fig. 1d) and Edeophone (twelve-sided), respectively.[11] Simply put, three important changes in the construction and design of these new instruments – longer and harder reeds, a better fit between the reeds and their frames, and the removal of the interior baffles – resulted in what most listeners would agree is a bigger, brighter, and more brilliant and cutting tone. What follows summarizes these changes and explains the effect that they have on the sound of the instrument.[12]

York: Garland, 1994); see also James D. Brown and Stephen S. Stratton, *British Musical Biography* (London: William Reeves, 1897/reprint: New York: Da Capo Press, 1971): 365. On the concertina bands, see Nigel Pickles, 'The Heckmondwike English Concertina Band', *International Concertina Association Newsletter*, 351 (October 1987): 4–8; there is a photograph of the 1909, 21-man 'edition' of the band in *Concertina & Squeezebox*, 23 (summer 1990), 26–7.

11 A reliable outline of the main vicissitudes of Wheatstone & Co. appears in Wes Williams, 'The Concertina History Resource: A Timeline of Snippets of Concertina History', online at www.lvcott.fsnet.co.uk/events.htm; see also Neil Wayne, 'Concertina Book – Final Edit', unpublished manuscript (1986): 29–51 (a copy in HMWA), and 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', *The Galpin Society Journal*, 44 (1991): 117–49 (also online at www.free-reed.co.uk/galpin); on Lachenal, see two important articles by Stephen Chambers: 'Louis Lachenal: "Engineer and Concertina Manufacturer" – Part 1', *The Free-Reed Journal*, 1 (1999): 7–18 (also online at www.concertina.com/chambers), and 'Some Notes on Lachenal Concertina Production', 6–23. Though we cannot date the beginning of Lachenal's full-scale production of its Edeophone any more precisely than the early 1890s, the firm seems to have produced a prototype by 1889 at the latest, its Registered Design having been entered on 27 July of that year; see Chambers, 'Some Notes on Lachenal Concertina Production', 11; it was also in 1889 (September–October) that Wheatstone began production of its Æola (a full decade earlier than the date given in Wayne, 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', 141); my thanks to Robert Gaskins for this earlier date (private communication, 30 July 2002).

12 My explanations assume a period instrument with steel reeds (but see p. 45). I am grateful to Wim Wakker for some of the technical information that follows; see also Wayne, 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', 137–9, which, however, generally treats these matters in a non-musical context. On the acoustics of free-reed instruments, a subject that has only lately gained currency (enough so, however, that the Acoustical Society of America devoted an entire session to it at its 1999 Annual Meeting), see, among others: Neville H. Fletcher and Thomas D. Rossing, *The Physics of Musical Instruments*, rev. ed. (New York: Springer, 1998): 413–15 (note that the original publication of 1991 lacked these few pages on free reeds); James P. Cottingham, *Free-Reed Acoustics: Some Experimental and Theoretical Studies of the American Reed Organ – A Collection of Papers from the Student-Faculty Research Program in Musical Acoustics at Coe College* (Cedar Rapids, IA: n.p., 1999); this extremely valuable compilation of six essays can be obtained from Professor Cottingham, Department of Physics, Coe College; R. B. Johnston, 'Pitch Control in Harmonica Playing', *Acoustics Australia*, 15 (1987): 69–75, which deals with the technique of 'pitch bending' on the harmonica; Arthur O. St Hilaire, Theodore A. Wilson and Gordon S. Beavers, 'Aerodynamic Excitation of the Harmonium Reed', *Journal of Fluid Mechanics*, 49 (1971): 803–16; Tom Tonon, 'Reed Cavity Design and Resonance', *Papers of the International Concertina Association*, 2 (2005), 30–51 (and online at www.concertina.org/pica/php); and Gotthard Richter, *Akustische Probleme bei Akkordeons und Mundharmonikas:* I. *Einführung in die allgemeinen Grundlagen*; II. *Untersuchungen spezieller Phänomene* (Bergkamen: Schmüling, 1985); note that only the article by Tonon deals specifically with concertina reeds, which differ somewhat from those for, say, the accordion or the harmonium.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Length and Hardness of Reed

Prior to c. 1890, concertinas had reeds that were relatively short and soft (soft enough that they measure under 40 on the Rockwell 'B' scale),[13] thus producing a tone (when set in motion by the flow of air) in which strong harmonics drop off after the third or fourth partial; in fact, only the first and second harmonics – octave and fifth – are audible. On the other hand, the reeds of post-1890 instruments are longer and harder;[14] and since they are also more flexible, they permit greater movement in the middle of the reed, thereby producing more harmonics and a more brilliant tone.

Reeds and Frames

Whether modern or Victorian, the reeds of the concertina are mounted on a frame in which there is an aperture through which the reed vibrates when set in motion by the flow of air (Fig. 3a–b). A well-constructed modern instrument will generally have a very tight fit between reed and aperture, the space between the edges of the reed and those of the aperture being as little as 0.01 mm. Victorian instruments, on the other hand, often have a wider gap (techniques of production were simply less precise) – so wide, in fact, that one can often see a good deal of daylight between reed and aperture (as one can on those modern instruments that are less than expertly made). And simply put, the tighter the fit between reed and aperture, the more the reed cuts off the air flow (since less air escapes around the reed), thus producing more in the way of harmonics and, once again, a more brilliant sound (not to mention faster response).

Baffles

As a close look at Fig. 1a–c will show, the wooden ends of the three period instruments display a circular pattern of carved-out, filigree-like designs called 'fretwork'. These pierced openings are covered – inside the wooden ends – by a baffle (not clearly visible in Fig. 1), that is, a thin strip of paper or leather (usually sheepskin) that serves to diffuse and mute the sound by cutting off the higher harmonics.[15] It is as if we are always playing *con sordino.* The modern instrument,

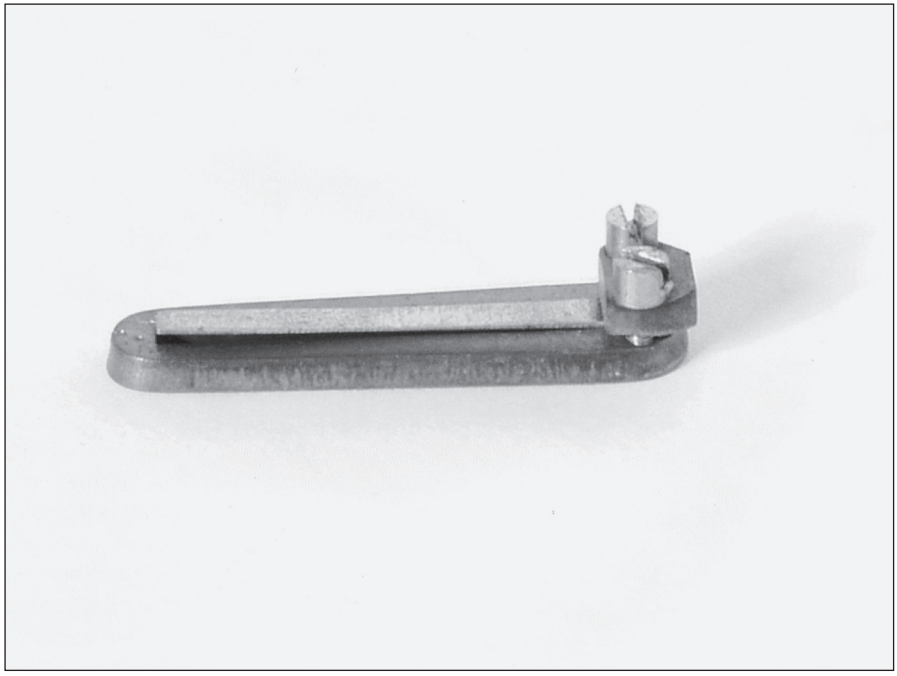
---

13 Developed by the metallurgist Stanley P. Rockwell in 1919, the Rockwell scale measures the surface hardness of steel and other metals and alloys; for a comprehensive discussion, see Samuel L. Low, *Rockwell Hardness Measurements of Metallic Materials.* National Institute of Standards and Technology Practice Guide, Special Publication 960-5 (Washington, DC: National Institute of Standards, 2001); my thanks to Mr Jeffrey Mason, Hewlett-Woodmere Public Library, for directing me to this item, which also appears online at www.msel.nist.gov/practiceguides/sp960_5.pdf; there are also short descriptions of the scale in the *McGraw-Hill Encyclopedia of Science and Technology*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), viii: 366; x: 724.

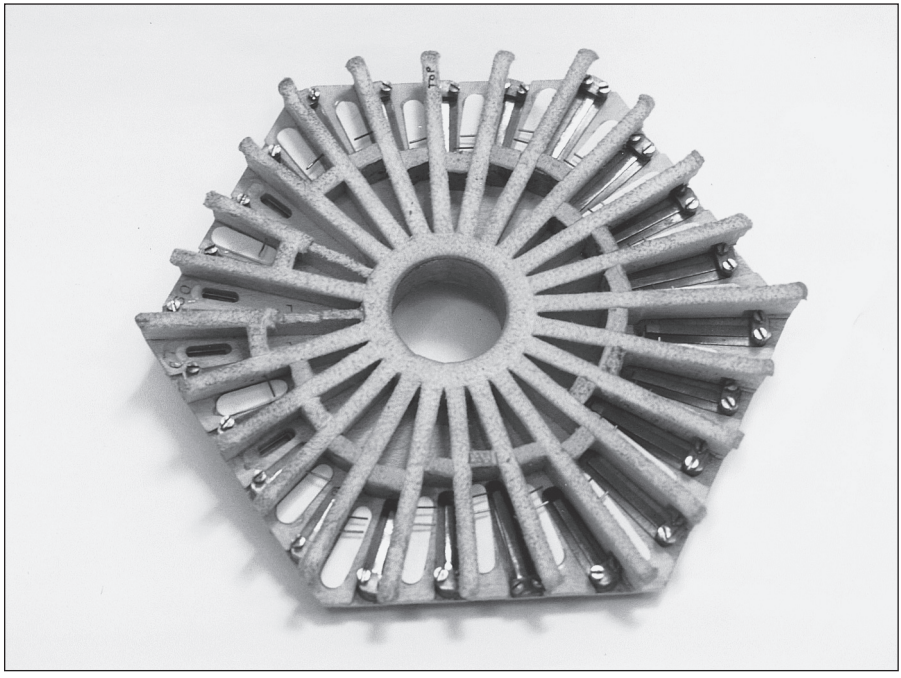
14 A comparison of the length of two reeds for *c'* underscores the difference: Wheatstone No. 9889 (initial sale in 1856) = 26.36 mm; Wheatstone No. 24877, an Æola (manufactured in 1909) = 29.14 mm; my thanks to Wim Wakker for measuring the reeds with precision instruments. Note that this difference in length of approximately 10 per cent decreases in the reeds for the higher notes.

15 The earliest baffles were made out of a thin strip of wood – pine or spruce – and actually amplified the first few harmonics in order to compensate for the weakness of the reeds themselves. On baffles, see Robert Gaskins, 'Baffles for Maccann Duet Concertinas'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press



(a) A reed mounted in a frame (its aperture visible as the dark grey area below it)



(b) The reed pan of a 48-button treble as a whole; each reed has a counterpart tuned to the same pitch on the other side of the pan, with the reed (side) that vibrates dependent on the direction of the bellows; both reed and and reed pan are from Wheatstone, No. 6760 (see Fig. 1a); the word 'top' on the reed pan is my own note to myself, intended as a reminder of how to replace the reed pan after removing it for minor repairs

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

on the other hand, lacks baffles, and simply lines the fretwork with a piece of red, gauze-like material, the function of which is purely decorative (though it also keeps bugs from flying into the instrument).

In all, then, the three changes in the construction and design of the instrument during the 1890s combined to unleash and emphasize the higher harmonics, thus resulting in an instrument with a more vibrant, brilliant and seemingly louder tone.

What effect do the differences between period and modern instruments have on our decision about which kind of instrument to use? To my ears – and my judgement has generally been confirmed by audiences – the use of a modern instrument in the Victorian repertory is somewhat analogous to letting the proverbial bull loose in a china shop. With its brilliant, cutting and less nuanced tone, the modern instrument, I think, overpowers and rubs against the lyricism with which, say, Macfarren approached the instrument (Ex. 1a),[16] just as it blurs – and even makes harsh – the sometimes thick chordal and contrapuntal writing of Giulio Regondi, the great concertina virtuoso of the nineteenth century (Ex. 1b).[17]
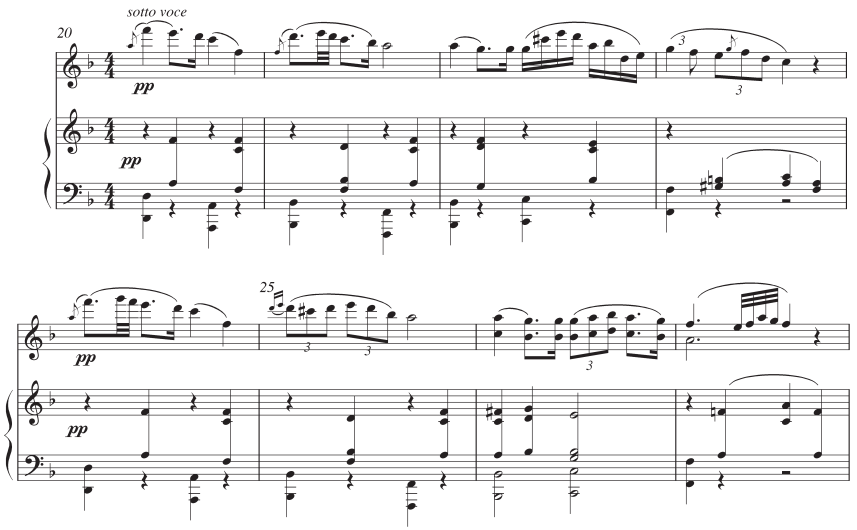
(especially § I/3, 'Original Baffles on Vintage Concertinas'), online at www.concertina.com/baffles.

16 All dates of publication for the music and the method books follow the *British Library Integrated Catalogue*, online at http://catalogue.bl.uk. Although this catalogue lists dates of acquisition, these are generally assumed to coincide with the dates of publication. Nevertheless, Robert Gaskins has plausibly questioned whether this is always the case with respect to the dates of Wheatstone & Co.'s concertina publications (communication of 27 October 2002). Unless otherwise noted, all items cited were published in London.
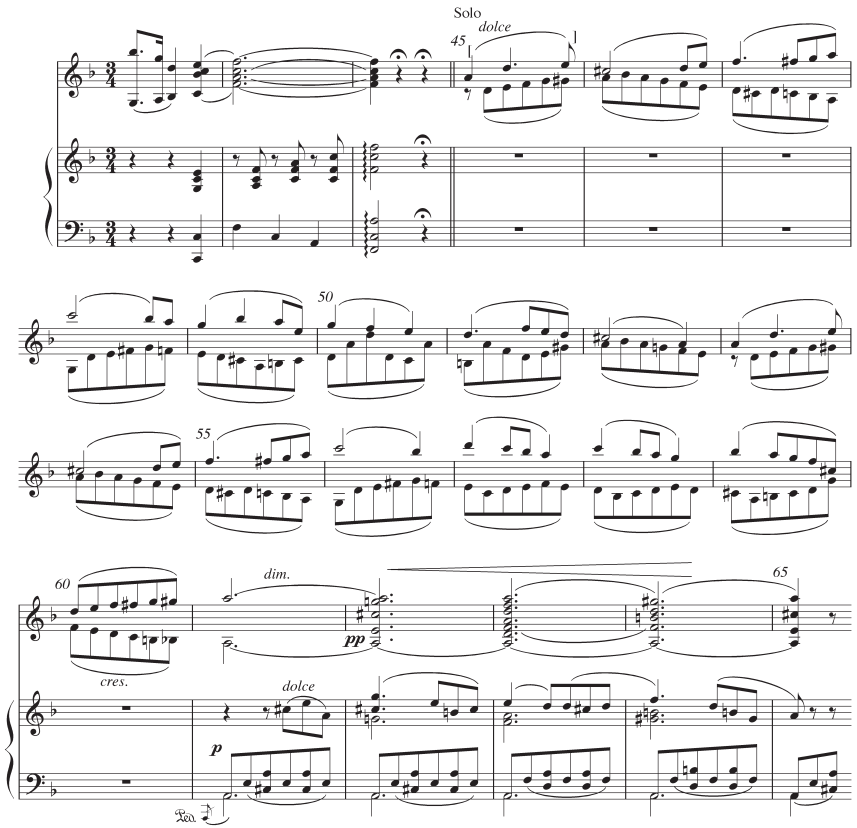
17 On Regondi, who was also one of the leading guitarists of the period, see Douglas Rogers, 'Giulio Regondi: Guitarist, Concertinist or Melophonist? A Reconnaissance', *Guitar Review*, xci (fall 1992): 1–9; xcii (winter 1993): 14–21; xcvii (spring 1994): 11–17; Tom Lawrence, 'Giulio Regondi and the Concertina in Ireland', *Concertina World: Newsletter of the International Concertina Association* 411 (Jul. 1998): 21–5 (also online at www.concertina.com/Lawrence); Helmut C. Jacobs, *Der junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi: Eine kritische Dokumentation seiner Konzertreise durch Europa, 1840 und 1841* (Bochum: Augemus, 2001); 'Giulio Regondi', in *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart*, rev. ed., ed. Ludwig Finscher (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2005), *Personenteil*, xiii: cols 1443–5; Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 48–54; 'Giulio Regondi: Two Newly Discovered Letters', *The Free-Reed Journal*, iv (2002): 70–84; 'Collins, Count Fosco, and the Concertina', 56–60; and 'A 41-Cent Emendation', 609–17 (the last three articles also online at www.concertina.com/atlas); Susan Wollenberg, 'Giulio Regondi at Oxford', *Papers of the International Concertina Association*, *3* (2006): 18–24 (also online at www.concertina.org/pica.php); *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (New York, 2003): 171. On Regondi as guitarist, see Stewart Button, *The Guitar in England: 1800–1924*, 100–13, 126–33 (New York: Garland, 1989): Alessandro Boris Amisich, *Giulio Regondi (1822–1872): concertista e compositore del romanticismo – documentazione* (Milan: n.p., 1995), and a series of six articles by him: two in the Italian journal *GuitArt*: 'Giulio Regondi', ii/8 (1997): 24–49, 'La prima tournée europea di Giulio Regondi. Nuovi elementi', viii/29 (2000): 32–9; and four in *Il 'Fronimo'*: 'Giulio Regondi: Un bambino prodigio', xi/45 (October 1983): 32–4; 'Giulio Regondi: La carriera concertistica negli anni '40', xv/58 (January 1987): 34–43; 'Giulio Regondi: Compositore e concertista', xvi/62 (January 1988), 28–40; 'Giulio Regondi: Dieci studi ed una foto', xix/76 (July 1991): 38–45. There is a modern edition of Regondi's works for guitar in *Giulio Regondi: The Complete Works for Guitar*, ed. Simon Wynberg (Monaco: Chanterelle, 1981), which, however, must be supplemented by *Giulio Regondi: Ten Etudes for Guitar*, ed. John Holmquist (Columbus, OH: Editions Orphée, 1990); unfortunately there is no such edition of his much more substantial output for English concertina.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 1a Macfarren, *Violetta: A Romance* (Wheatstone, 1859), bars 20–27



Ex. 1b Regondi, *Morceau de salon: Andantino et capriccio-mazurka* (Wessel, 1855), bars 42–65



https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In the end, I use period instruments for everything save the occasional foray into the music hall or 'traditional' repertories.[18]

2. Choices Among Period (Victorian) Instruments

Having chosen to use a period instrument, we still have a number of decisions to make, for there is no single period concertina; rather the instrument evolved throughout the century, and concertinas from around 1840 and 1870, say, can differ from one another in a number of respects, all of which will have an effect on both the tone and the technical capabilities of the instrument.[19] Among these differences are those that concern the type of metal used for the reeds, the tuning of the instrument, the structure of the bellows, and the number of buttons available, and I shall consider them – and the decisions that they force upon us – one by one.

Reeds and Metals

The earliest concertinas – from the 1830s and early 1840s – had reeds that were generally made of nickel or imported 'German silver' (actually an alloy of nickel, zinc and copper);[20] the reeds were soft and thick, and their response time, when set in motion by the flow of air, was rather slow, which may well have resulted in performances that were less than precise and crisp, especially in rapid passages. In the end, it is difficult to imagine anyone wanting to perform on such an instrument today except for purposes of historical demonstration (though it must have been on just such an instrument that Regondi scored his initial success with both audiences and critics in the 1830s and early 1840s – see p. 47 and note 26). By the late 1840s these materials were supplanted by brass reeds, while the 1850s saw the introduction of steel reeds, these with a capacity for greater volume and brilliance (though still relatively modest by the standards of modern instruments).[21]

---

18 One can compare the sound of the Victorian repertory on period and modern instruments by listening to the following: for a period instrument, *The Great Regondi: Original Compositions by the 19th Century's Unparalleled Guitarist & Concertinist*, The Regondi Guild, Douglas Rogers, concertina, Bridge Records BCD 9039 (1993) and 9055 (1994), which includes recordings of a number of pieces by Regondi, including one for unaccompanied baritone concertina; for a modern instrument, *Concertina Landscape*, Dave Townsend, concertina, Serpent Press SER 006 (1998), with the 'Serenade' from Molique's *Six Characteristic Pieces*, op. 61; *Music of Dickens and his Time*, The Mellstock Band, Dave Townsend, concertina, Beautiful Jo Records BEJOCD-9 (1996), with a performance of Joseph Warren's, *Popular Melodies with Variations [on 'Home, Sweet Home']*; finally, there are sound files www.concertinaconnection.com/soundfiles.htp recorded by Wim Wakker, with excerpts from a number of pieces by Regondi, Benedict, Macfarren, Molique, George Case and James Harcourt, some performed on period instruments, some on modern instruments, and some with images of the instruments on which they are played. Finally, listen also to my own recordings of Molique and Regondi on the three-CD collection *English International*, Folksounds Records (forthcoming).

19 Wayne's remark, in 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', 132, that 'the internal construction of the "standard" 48-key English concertina changed little from 1846 onwards' misses the point to some extent; in general, Wayne too often emphasizes the 'appearance' of the instrument (both internal and external) at the expense of the musical context.

20 Wayne, 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', 138, upon which I draw for the basic outline of events.

21 Though the *Price List of Treble, Tenor, Baritone, Bass & Double Bass Concertinas and Æolas, Manufactured by C. Wheatstone & Co., Inventors and Patentees*, likely issued in the early

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

In all, the concertinist has a legitimate choice: brass reeds or steel reeds, both of which were in use at the same time for most of the third quarter of the century. Brass reeds will produce a soft, some might say mellow, tone; steel reeds will be somewhat more brilliant and 'focused'.[22]

If we choose an instrument with steel reeds, we have still another decision to make. As we can see from Figure 3a, the reed is customarily attached to its frame with a clamp that is held in place by two screws. During the period from the late 1860s to the 1880s, however, Wheatstone & Co. introduced another method of securing the reeds; they did away with clamp and screws, and replaced them with a single rivet. In addition, the reeds were now thinner and slightly tapered (this last feature perhaps taken over from Continental accordion manufacturers). The result of all this was that the reed was less encumbered, thus amplifying certain harmonics (produced by the thinner, tapered reeds) and producing a rounder, almost flute-like tone.[23] For some, these instruments are the sweetest-sounding concertinas ever produced, and I use such an instrument, for example, when Julia Grella O'Connell and I perform Gaetano Braga's *La serenata*, in which the obbligato represents the other-worldly voice of the angels (Ex. 2).[24]

Tuning and Temperament[25]

There is no better way to introduce this knotty subject and the decisions that it forces upon us than by quoting short excerpts from two pieces: Joseph Warren's *Grand Fantasia, in which is Introduced 'Deh! con te' from Bellini's Opera Norma* – which, though first published by Wheatstone in 1855, was one of the pieces with which

---

or mid-1910s, claims that 'steel vibrators [reeds] were first introduced … in the year 1862, for the use of Signor Giulio Regondi and Mr. Richard Blagrove', there are certainly concertinas from the mid-1850s on – my own Wheatstone no. 6760 among them (see Fig. 1a) – that have steel reeds and show no obvious signs of having had an earlier set of brass reeds replaced. Indeed, steel and brass would co-exist, as it were, until the 1880s, at which time brass reeds more or less fell out of use (though they continued to be used in inexpensive Anglos and even in good Æolas that were produced specifically for the lucrative market among English military personnel in India, where steel reeds did not take well to the exceptionally humid climate). In general, Wheatstone's publicity material must always be taken with a grain of salt. The *Price List* cited must date from after 1908, the date of the latest 'Grand Prize' proudly trumpeted on the title page, and from before 1917, when numerals – absent on the price list – were added to the London postal codes. There are a number of early twentieth-century Wheatstone *Price Lists* in the private collection of Mr Chris Algar (Barleycorn Concertinas, Stoke-on-Trent), all of which appear online at www.concertina.com/price lists/English. My thanks to Wes Williams for information about the postal codes.

22 All the recordings and sound files of period instruments cited in note 18 (except for my recording of Regondi) utilize instruments with steel reeds.
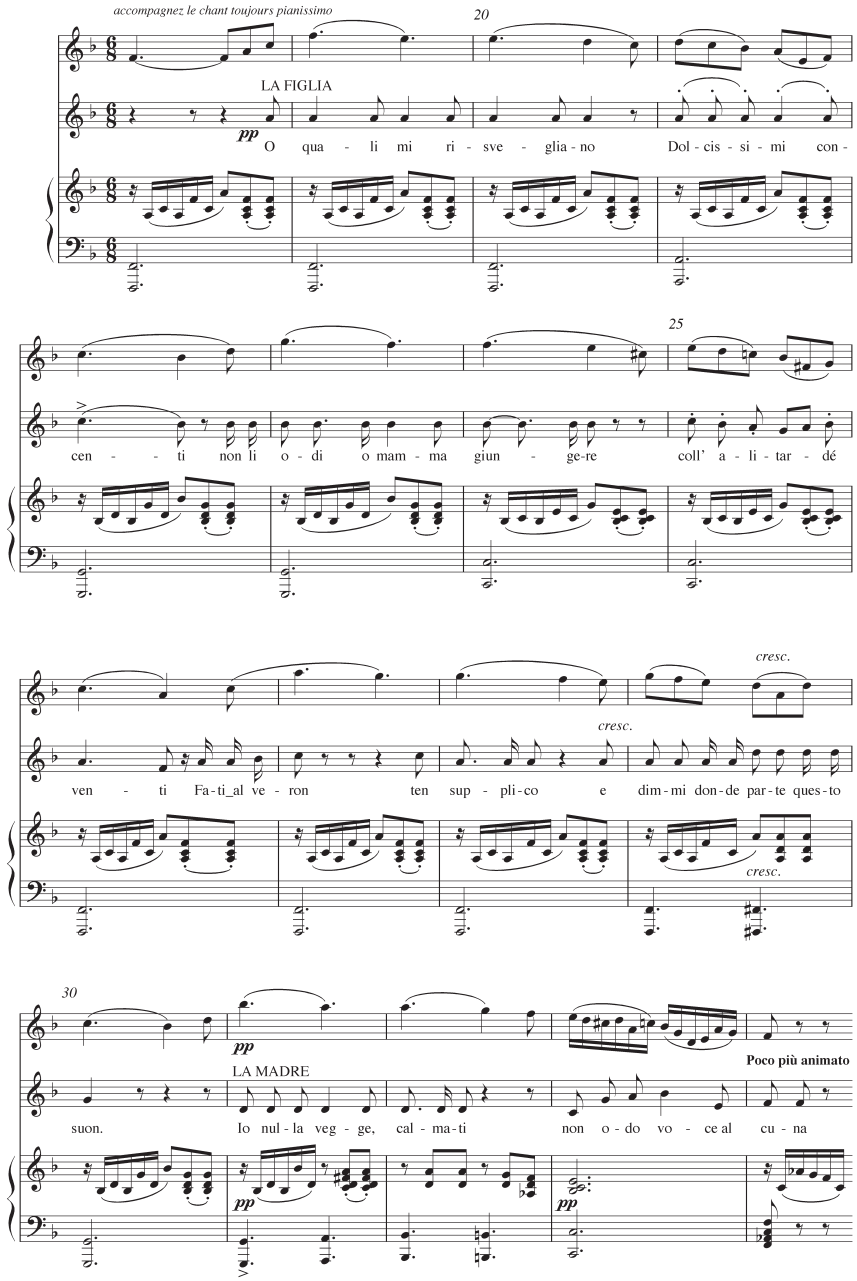
23 My thanks to Wim Wakker for the explanation.

24 The title page also bears the title *Der* [*sic*!] *Engel Lied* (and carries the subtitle *Légend valaque*). Although Braga originally wrote the obbligato for cello (his own instrument), the Schott edition notes that it can just as well be performed on violin or flute (it also provides texts in Italian, German and English), and it sounds just as wonderful on the concertina. The piece was popular – indeed, it sustained Braga's reputation – in the early twentieth century thanks in part to John McCormack and Alma Gluck, both of whom made it part of their repertories (Gluck often performed it with her husband, the violinist Efrem Zimbalist); there is also a transcription for violin by Fritz Kreisler.

25 In part I draw here on Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 39–47.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 2 Braga, *La serenata* (Schott, 1874), bars 18–34
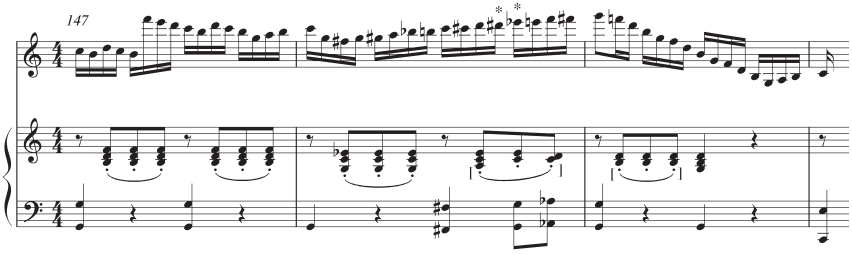


Giulio Regondi put the concertina on the map, as it were, at the Birmingham Music Festival in 1837[26] – and Macfarren's lovely *Barcarole* (Wheatstone, 1859 – Ex. 3a–b).

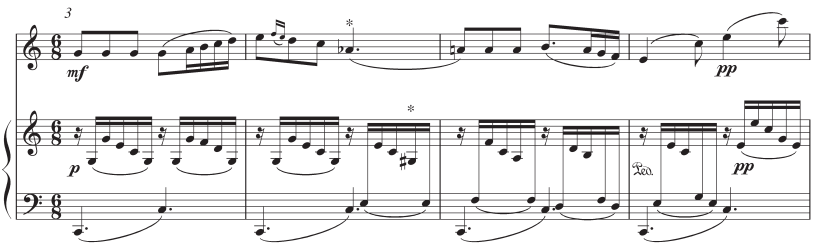
26 The piece is edited, together with a reproduction of the title page, in Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 87–107. Regondi also performed Warren's *Introduction with*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 3a Warren, *Grand Fantasia*, bars 147–50



Ex. 3b Macfarren, *Barcarole*, bars 3–6



The notes marked with asterisks are neither typographical errors nor 'misspellings' by the composers. Rather, from the earliest days of production in the 1830s to some point probably in the mid- to late 1850s, Wheatstone's and other concertina manufacturers customarily employed a quarter-comma mean-tone tuning in which they divided the octave into fourteen notes and provided separate buttons – with different pitches – for D♯ and E♭, on the one hand, and G♯ and A♭ on the other,[27] with the E♭ and A♭ being 41 cents higher than the D♯ and G♯, respectively.[28]

Variations and Coda on The Last Rose of Summer (see Ex. 5 on p. 53. On Warren (1804–1881), organist (at the Roman Catholic Church of St Mary, Chelsea, from 1843), music historian and antiquarian, and prolific composer and arranger for the concertina, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 57, 76–7; Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography*, 434; Alex Hyatt King, *Some British Collectors of Music, c. 1600–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963), *passim.* It was at the 1837 Birmingham Festival that Regondi likely met both Mendelssohn (his oratiorio *St Paul* was performed there) and William Sterndale Bennett, meetings that may have led to his appearance at Leipzig's Gewandhaus on 31 March 1841, as part of a programme that included the premiere of Schumann's Symphony No. 1 in B♭; see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 50–51 and Plate 10; see also Jacobs, *Der junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi*, 86–88 and 89–92 (for the entire programme).

27 As already noted, there is no separate button for the *a'''*♭ in the highest octave (see Fig. 2).

28 In addition to the reference cited in note 25, see Hermann L.F. Helmholtz, *On the Sensations of Tone*, trans. and ed. Alexander J. Ellis, 6th ed. (New York: Dover, 1948): 434 (hereafter Helmholtz/Ellis, with edition). Ellis (1814–1890), musician-mathematician-philologist, was himself familiar with the concertina, having purchased instruments on at least 1 November 1838 and 10 September 1847, dates on which his name appears in the Wheatstone sales ledger C104*a* (pp. 13, 67) in HMWA. In fact, Ellis experimented with

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Though Berlioz railed against the tuning in his treatise on orchestration,[29] concertinists often praised it, as witness the testimony from two concertina method books (among many) of the period. Edward Chidley (1830–1899), who, together with his brother Rock, worked for Wheatstone's in the 1840s and eventually became its manager,[30] writes as follows in the third edition of *Chidley's Instructions for the Concertina* (Rock Chidley, 1854): '[There is] a difference between G♯ and A♭ and D♯ and E♭ throughout … to allow for the instrument to be more perfectly in tune in the usual keys' (p. 4). Likewise, Carlo Minasi, who turned out instruction manuals for a wide range of instruments,[31] praises the tuning in his *Instructions for the Concertina* (Wheatstone, 1855):

> D♯ and E♭, and also G♯ and A♭, on any Instrument (except some Organs) is the same sound, but on the Concertina the pupil will find a difference in the sound … the Concertina in consequence is more in tune than any other wind instrument. (p. 2)

Finally, George Case (1823–1892), a concertina virtuoso who earned his living primarily as a violinist at the Royal Opera House,[32] simply explains things in

---

various tunings on the instrument, and, in Helmholtz/Ellis, 2nd ed. (1885): 470, describes a 'Just English Concertina' which he had had specially tuned by the firm of Lachenal; see also, Charles A. Padgham, *The Well-Tempered Organ* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986): 55. Sir Charles Wheatstone explains his ideas about tuning and temperaments in 'The Harmonic Diagram Invented by C. Wheatstone' (1824) and its accompanying pamphlet, 'An Explanation of the Harmonic Diagram Invented by C. Wheatstone'; the 'Harmonic Diagram' is preserved in the British Library, Music Division, shelf-mark M. 23, and is reproduced in Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, Pl. 8; and 'A 41-Cent Emendation', 614; the pamphlet is reprinted in *The Scientific Papers of Sir Charles Wheatstone* (London: Taylor and Francis, 1879): 14–20. Briefly, Wheatstone divided the whole tone into major and minor semitones, and then divided each major semitone into a minor semitone and diesis, calling the resulting scale the 'enharmonic' scale (*Scientific Papers*, 15–17). On Wheatstone as acoustician, see William Gryllis Adams, 'On the Musical Inventions and Discoveries of the Late Sir Charles Wheatstone, F.R.S.', *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 2 (1875–76): 85–94; Benjamin R. Gossick, 'Wheatstone's Work on Acoustics', *Catgut Acoustical Society Newsletter*, 27 (May 1977), 6–9.

29 *Grande traité d'instrumentation et d'orchestration modernes* (Paris, 1855): 287; Berlioz would have become familiar with the concertina when he served as a juror for musical instruments at the Great Exhibition of 1851; see D. Kern Holomon, *Berlioz* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989): 423–5. Wheatstone & Co. exhibited five concertinas at the Exhibition; see *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations, 1851. Official Descriptive and Illustrated Catalogue* (London, 1851): 469–70; see also Peter and Ann Mactaggart, *Musical Instruments in the 1851 Exhibition* (Welwyn: Mac & Me, 1986): 60; and the *Illustrated London News*, supplement to vol. xix, no. 512 (23 August 1851).

30 On Chidley, see Chambers, 'Some Notes on Lachenal Concertina Production', 20, n. 18. For information about the method books cited, see Randall C. Merris, 'Instruction Manuals for the English, Anglo, and Duet Concertina: An Annotated Bibliography', *The Free-Reed Journal*, 4 (2002): 91–2, 95 (and online at www.concertina.com/merris, where it is periodically updated).

31 Minasi is listed as a professor of pianoforte, voice and concertina, residing at 16 Brecknock Place, Camden Town, in the *Musical Directory, Register and Almanack, and Royal Academy of Music Calendar for the Year 1855* (Rudall, Rose & Carte, 1855): 65 (my thanks to Professor Deborah Rohr for having called this reference to my attention).

32 On Case, who was one of the original members of the Concertina Quartett (see note 10) and a prolific arranger for the instrument, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 56–7; Rogers, 'Giulio Regondi', Pt III, 17, note 29; Brown and Stratton, *British Musical*

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

matter-of-fact fashion in his *Instructions for Performing on the Concertina* (Wheatstone, 1849):

> on the Concertina, and some Organs, the whole tones from G to A, and from D to E, are divided into three distinct parts by two distinct keys, one for G sharp and another for A flat, also one for D sharp and another for E flat. But this is disregarded in practice, and semitones only, and not quarter tones are recognized in music. (p. 17)

The concertina, however, may not have been the only instrument other than the organ so tuned in England, and until 1846, when the firm of Broadwood adopted equal temperament as the customary tuning for its pianos, the concertina *could* have been paired with a similarly tuned piano, albeit one that lacked the concertina's 'split key'-like feature.[33] Yet without that feature, the mean-tone piano with which the concertina might have been paired could only produce a single note for, say, the concertina's differentiated G♯/A♭ pair. And if we assume that the piano's single note for that pair was the G♯, Macfarren's use of that note in the piano against the higher A♭ in the concertina (Ex. 3b) would have caused a momentary 41-cent 'twang', one that, however, audiences that were still acclimatized to a wide array of temperaments seemed to have taken in their stride.[34]
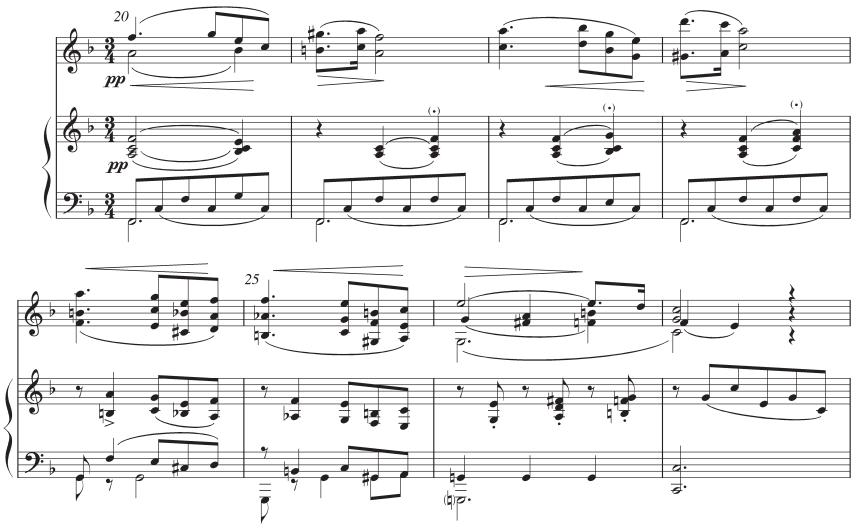
Biography, 81; Betty Matthews, *The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain: List of Members 1738–1984* (London: The Society, 1985); John Charles Ward, 'The English Concertina', *Musical News*, 25 (21 August 1891), 511; and, for his activities as a manufacturer of instruments, Wayne, 'Concertina Book – Final Edit', 55–8.

[33] Helmholtz/Ellis, 2nd ed., 549. I emphasize the word 'could' in light of Alexander C.N. Mackenzie of Ord's persuasive arguments that pre-equal-tempered English pianos (and at least some organs, which came around to equal temperament even more slowly than the piano) were just as – perhaps even more – likely to have been tuned in one or another of the so-called 'well' – or 'unequal' – temperaments in which the various keys are truly unequal and retain a tonal character of their own; see Alexander C.N. Mackenzie of Ord, 'The Well-Tuned Organ: An Introduction to Keyboard Temperaments in 18th and 19th Century England', *British Institute for Organ Studies Journal*, 3 (1979): 56–72, and 'The Adoption of Equal-Temperament Tuning – A Performing Imperative or A Fashionable Fad?', *British Institute for Organ Studies Journal*, 27 (2003): 91–111; in addition, I am grateful to Mr Mackenzie of Ord for his kind communication of 27 April 2004. On the various 'well' temperaments, see Owen H. Jorgensen, *Tuning: Containing the Perfection of Eighteenth-Century Temperament, the Lost Art of Nineteenth-Century Temperament and the Science of Equal Temperament* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1991), *passim*; Padgham, *The Well-Tuned Organ, passim*; Thomas Donahue, *A Guide to Musical Temperament* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005): 25–57.

[34] See, for example, the review of Giulio Regondi's Dresden recital of 26 October 1846 (his accompanist was the well-known Madame Louise Dulcken, sister of the violinist–composer Ferdinand David and piano teacher to the royal household) in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, x/viii/50 (16 December 1846), cols 853–4, in which the reviewer – 'Dr. J.S.' – having heard the mean-tone concertina paired with a piano that was presumably tuned in equal temperament (see below), writes – and without a trace of Berlioz's contempt – that the concertina is characterized by 'wirklicher Chromatic, d.h. verschiedenen Tasten z.B. für *es* und *dis*'. The entire review is printed in Jacobs, *Der junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi*, 241–3; the excerpt just cited is also quoted in Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 43; see also, Dunkel, *Bandonion und Konzertina*, 7, who takes note of the reviewer's nonchalance with respect to the concertina's 'chromatic' tuning. That the piano at Regondi's Dresden recital would likely have been tuned in equal temperament seems evident from the research of Thomas McGeary, 'German-Austrian Keyboard

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 4 Regondi, *Morceau de salon: Andantino et capriccio-mazurka*, bars 20–27



Though we cannot date Wheatstone's conversion from mean tone to equal temperament precisely – and we know that the systems overlapped (see p. 52) – I would argue that the switchover probably began in the mid-1850s, no doubt in reaction to new stylistic trends in the concertina repertory, which, as it began to break out of its C-, G-, D-, and A-major rut, was beginning to catch up to the rest of the musical world.[35] Certainly, a passage such as that in bar 25 of Regondi's *Morceau de salon: Andantino et capriccio-mazurka* (1855), with its concentration of A♭s and G♯s in both instruments would, if played on a mean-tone concertina, probably have sounded somewhat rough even to ears more flexible than ours (Ex. 4).

Yet some concertinists undoubtedly performed Regondi's *Morceau* on just such an instrument, for, if nothing else, we can hardly expect someone who had recently spent as much as sixteen guineas for a top-of-the-line instrument (to quote the highest price in a Wheatstone catalogue dated 1848)[36] to have

Temperaments and Tuning Methods, 1770–1840: Evidence from Contemporary Sources', *Journal of the American Musical Instrument Society*, 15 (1989), 90–118. Finally, on the Continental tradition of pairing instruments – keyboard with non-keyboard (or voice) – that used contrasting temperaments, see John Hind Chesnut, 'Mozart's Teaching of Intonation', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 30 (1977), 254–71; David D. Boyden, 'Prelleur, Gemininai, and Just Intonation', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 4 (1951), 202–19.

35 Though Pat Robson, 'Mainly About Concertinas', *English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 45/2 (summer 1983): 4–5; Brian Hayden, 'Fingering Systems', *Concertina Magazine*, 16 (1986): 22; and Richard Carlin, 'Dating Wheatstone Concertinas', *Mugwumps*, 7/1 (June 1981): 17, all propose the early 1860s as the time of the conversion (with Carlin allowing for the production of some equal-tempered instruments in the 1850s), none of them provides any evidence; moreover, none of them considers the harmonically more adventurous music that was beginning to be written for the instrument from the mid-1850s on.

36 There is a copy of the catalogue (a two-page pamphlet), titled *The Concertina, A New Musical Instrument* and dated January 1848, in HMWA, C824; it is available online at www.concertina.com/docs/wheatstone-pricelist-1848-C824.pdf and (in the form of a

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

necessarily discarded it when the shift to equal temperament took place a few years later. But we need not rely solely on human nature, since there is ample evidence to show that mean-tone and equal-tempered concertinas co-existed until nearly the end of the nineteenth century. Thus William Cawdell, writing in 1865, tells us that both mean-tone and equal-tempered instruments were readily available,[37] while an undated Wheatstone catalogue – surely from later in the century – titled *Instruction Books and Methods for the Concertina* – rebuked those manufacturers who still continued to produce mean-tone instruments: 'all [of our] Concertinas are tuned on the EQUAL TEMPERAMENT system … Nearly all inferior makes of Concertinas are tuned on a plan called *unequal* temperament'.[38] And as late as 1885, Ellis could still write about concertinas tuned in mean tone,[39] as could John Charles Ward in 1891: 'amongst inferior makers the unequal temperament and other defects still flourish, to the detriment of the instrument's good name'.[40]

Obviously, we must pick our mean-tone spots carefully; and if I do use a mean-tone instrument against the equal-tempered piano, I generally choose pieces in which the crucial notes – G♯/A♭ and D♯/E♭ – neither function as chord tones nor get doubled in the accompaniment. The passage from Joseph Warren's variations on *The Last Rose of Summer* shown in Ex. 5 works well. On the other hand, I risk the clashes in Robert Sidney Pratten's *'Francesca': Romance* (Addison, Hollier & Lucas, 1859), despite the doubling (Ex. 6).[41] Indeed, I rather like the concertina's movement from the low-pitched G♯ to the G♮ at bars 69–70, even if the equal-tempered piano lacks the nuance to match it.

---

transcription) in Chambers, 'Louis Lachenal', 16–18. The Wheatstone sales ledgers themselves begin to include prices for instruments sold starting with ledger C1047, on 1 January 1851.

37 Cawdell, *A Short Account of the English Concertina: Its Uses and Capabilities, Facility of Acquirement, and other Advantages* (London: William Cawdell, 1865): 6 (available online at www.concertina.com/cawdell).

38 There is a copy of the catalogue, without signature, in HMWA. On the confusion surrounding the term 'unequal' temperament with reference to mean tone, see the articles by Mackenzie of Ord cited in note 33.

39 Helmholtz/Ellis, 6th ed., 446.

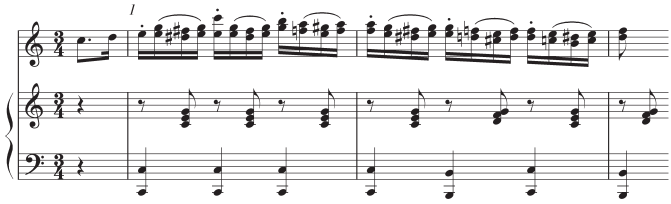
40 Ward, 'The English Concertina', 511; on Ward, who was organist and assistant director of the well-known Henry Leslie Choir, see Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography*, 432. We still find reference to 'inferior' concertinas 'being tuned on an obsolete system called *unequal* [surely mean-tone] temperament, whereby some of the chords are too smooth in tune, while the remainder are too rough to be endured by the correct ear' in the ninth edition of Joseph Warren's *Instructions for Concertina* (Wheatstone, 1905); Merris, 'Instruction Manuals', 99, dates the first edition from c. 1844; there is a facsimile of the ninth edition published by Hands on Music (Oxford, 1998).

41 On Pratten (1824–1868), who was best known in his own day as a flautist, see Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography*, 326; he also played concertina and published a method book for the instrument: *Complete Instruction for the Concertina*, Pt I (Campbell, Ranford, 1856). He was married to Catherina Josepha (née Pelzer), herself a first-rate guitarist and concertinist; see Frank Mott Harrison, *Reminiscences of Madame Sidney Pratten* (Bournemouth: Barnes and Mullins, 1899); Button, *The Guitar in England*, 113–17, 130–39; Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 1, n. 4, 57; we might note that Madame Pratten's father, the guitarist Ferdinand Pelzer (1801–1860), also wrote a tutor for the concertina, *A Practical Guide to the Concertina* – though seemingly lost, it is known through a citation in the 1860 Ewer *Catalogue*, Part II, § xxxvii, p. 237, No. 31841 (see note 2); on the Pratten and Pelzer tutors, see Merris, 'Instruction Manuals', 95–6.
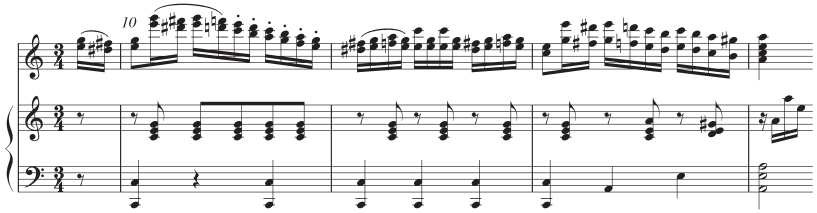
https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 5 Warren, *Introduction with Variations and Coda on The Last Rose of Summer*, variation 2
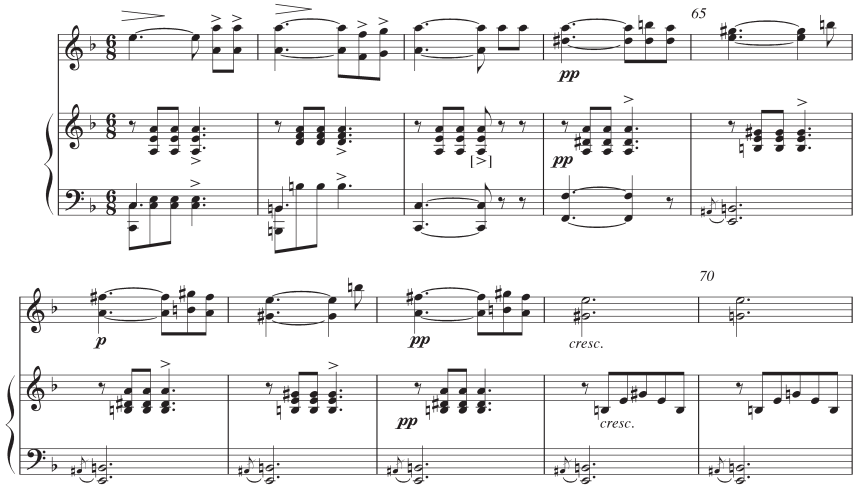
(a) Bars 1–3



(b) Bars 9–12



Ex. 6 Robert Sidney Pratten, *'Francesca', Romance*, bars 61–70



In addition, there is a fairly substantial repertory for unaccompanied concertina. And here, of course, we have more freedom. Thus Richard Blagrove's set of four *Morceaux* for unaccompanied concertina (see Ex. 9 on p. 60) sounds spicy on a mean-tone instrument.[42] In the end, the mean-tone concertina makes for a

42 On Blagrove (?1827–1892), brother of the violinist Henry Gamble Blagrove and himself a first-rank violist – he played in the Philharmonic Society Orchestra and taught at the Royal Academy of Music – see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 54–6; Christina

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

wonderful 'conversation piece', especially when presented during the course of a lecture/recital.

Finally, there is another matter having to do with tuning, one that cuts across issues of temperament. The early to mid-1910s Wheatstone *Price List* cited above (note 21) announces the following: 'All Messrs. C. Wheatstone & Co. Concertinas and Æolas are Tuned Equal Temperament and English Concertina Pitch (C 540 vibrations) unless otherwise ordered' (p. 3);[43] that is, they tuned to 'Old Philharmonic' pitch of *c*'' = 540Hz, so that *a*' = 452.5Hz, the pitch to which the Philharmonic Society Orchestra customarily tuned in the middle of the century and to which Broadwood tuned its pianos from 1852 to 1874.[44] Yet with the greater part of the Victorian concertina repertory calling for piano accompaniment, there is little choice these days, upon finding a period instrument so tuned, but to have it modified to the present-day standard of *a*' = 440Hz.[45]

Structure of the Bellows

As we can see from Fig. 1, each of the three treble concertinas shown there has a different number of 'folds' (or ridges) along the outer rim of its bellows: the two Victorian trebles, Nos. 18090 and 6760, have four and five folds, respectively, while

---

Bashford, 'Blagrove', in *GMOL*; Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography*, 50–51. We might note that Henry Gamble Blagrove may also have played the concertina; at the very least he is recorded in HMWA, Wheatstone ledger C1048 (p. 68), as returning an instrument on 19 December 1853 (or was he simply running an errand for Richard?).

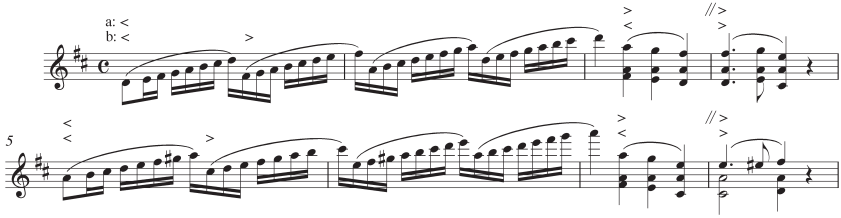
43 There is a further note at the bottom of the page: 'It is always best to let the Piano Tuner have one of our tested Forks, being preferable to taking the pitch from the Concertina', for which forks Wheatstone's charged 2*s*/6*d*. A 1929 *Price List* adds that Wheatstone's will also tune its instruments to 'New Philharmonic (Low) Pitch (C = 522Hz)'. The earliest notice that refers specifically to *a*' = 440Hz seems to appear in an American edition of a c. 1935 *Price List* (online at www.concertina.com/pricelists/Wheatstone-English).

44 Ellis, 'The History of Musical Pitch', *Journal of the Society of the Arts*, 28 (1880): 330, 335–6; reprinted in *Studies in the History of Musical Pitch: Monographs by Alexander J. Ellis and Arthur Mendel* (Buren: Fritz Knuf, 1968): 47, 52–3; see also Arthur Mendel, 'Pitch in Western Music since 1500: A Re-examination', *Acta musicologica*, 50 (1978): 87. Note that Ellis qualifies the *a*' = 452.5Hz by pointing out that it represents the 'mean' for the Philharmonic tuning.

45 All four of the Victorian instruments on which I play have been retuned to *a*' = 440Hz, including the one that I have had tuned (by Wim Wakker) to the so-called 'well-temperament No. 1' of Thomas Young as described in his 'Outlines of Experiments and Inquiries Respecting Sound and Light', *Philosophical Transactions*, 90 (1800): 106–50; on Young's tuning, which has major thirds that become wider as they move symmetrically (sharpward and flatward) around the circle of fifths from C–E (narrowest at 392 cents) to F♯–A♯ (widest at 408 cents), see Jorgensen, *Tuning*, 251–65 and *passim*; J. Murray Barbour, *Tuning and Temperament: A Historical Survey* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1953): 12–13, 163, 181, 184 (and see below, note 61); Padgham, *The Well-Tuned Organ*, 88–91; Donahue, *A Guide to Musical Temperament*, 54. Audience reactions to the instrument with Young's tuning when played against an equal-tempered piano is that it 'sets off' the concertina and gives it an 'edge', and so 'prevents it from being absorbed into and overpowered by the piano'. Though it might seem easy enough to determine the precise pitch to which any individual period instrument was tuned, we should remember that, even if such an instrument retains its original reeds, it has, for obvious reasons, usually been retuned to equal temperament and *a*' = 440Hz at one point or another in its history. My own Wheatstone No. 6760 (see Fig. 1), which retains its original steel reeds, is an example of such an instrument.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 7 Richard Blagrove, *Morceaux*, No. 3, bars 1–8: suggestions for manipulating bellows with (a) five-fold bellows, (b) four-fold bellows; < = bellows going out, > = bellows going in, // = stop bellows and then continue in same direction; all such indications are my own



the modern instrument, No. 26507, has six. Now, the greater the number of folds, the more the bellows will expand, and – assuming the same amount of pressure – the longer the legato line that can be played without having to change the direction of the bellows.

Although there are period instruments with five-fold bellows (No. 6760 in Fig. 1a), four folds seem to have been the standard.[46] And while the difference in total extension between four- and five-fold bellows may be no more than about 4 cm (depending upon the suppleness of the bellows), playing on one or the other may well determine how one shapes a phrase. I can illustrate this with reference to the opening measures of Blagrove's *Morceaux*, No. 3 (Ex. 7). With five-fold bellows, I can easily manage the entire sweep of the two-octave, four-segment D-major scale with the bellows moving in one direction; I then complete the phrase with the bellows coming in on the chords, articulating the repeated chord either by lifting my fingers and striking the buttons again or by keeping the buttons depressed, stopping the bellows for just an instant in order to interrupt the sound, and then continuing in the same direction. With the four-fold bellows, on the other hand, I find that, depending upon tempo and dynamics, there may not be quite enough air to take all four segments of the scale with the bellows going in one direction only. Thus I may play the first segment – from *d*' to *d*'' – far more 'deliberately' than I do with the five-fold bellows, this in order to get the bellows fully extended, and then take the final three segments with the bellows going in.[47] I then play the first three chords with the bellows going out, and articulate the repeated chord by keeping the buttons depressed and changing direction of the bellows. In all, the less expansive four-fold bellows may cause two differences in the way I shape the phrase as a whole: greater deliberation and *detaché* on the opening segment of the scale, and a slightly more emphatic articulation between the repeated chords as we move from bar 3 to bar 4. Finally, what I do in bars 1–4 I repeat in bars 5–8.

In the end, most players will probably prefer the luxury of the greater expansiveness afforded by the five-fold bellows.[48]

46 Six-fold bellows were introduced only in the early twentieth century, and then mainly on models intended for professionals.

47 The three-to-one relationship using the same amount of air on each side of the 'equation' is possible for three reasons: I play the last three segments of the scale faster than the first, I play them legato (as opposed to the more detached opening segment), and the higher notes always use less air.

48 Some Victorian instruction manuals draw an analogy between the manipulation of the bellows and the use of the bow on a string instrument; see, for example, 'Signor'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Number of Buttons

From the beginning of production in the 1830s through the mid-1840s, the number of buttons on Wheatstone concertinas could vary dramatically from one instrument to another. Thus we find concertinas from that period with 15, 24, 32, 36, 38, 40, 44, 45, 46, 48 and 50 buttons (and with ranges that vary accordingly).[49] Gradually, though, and certainly by around 1847–48 (to judge from the two ledgers cited in note 49), a standard instrument emerged: the 48-button treble, with a range of *g* to *c‴″*. And though this would remain the standard – even today it is probably the most popular type of treble concertina in terms of number of buttons and range – we know that (1) Regondi played on a 56-button instrument at his Dresden recital of October 1846;[50] (2) Wheatstone displayed a bass concertina with 56 buttons at the Great Exhibition of 1851;[51] and (3) the firm began to turn out 56-button trebles with a range of *g*–*g‴″* as a fairly regular option no later than the spring of 1871.[52]

Though composers were quick to exploit the added notes, they often provided an alternate version – suitable for a 48-button instrument – for those passages that

---

[James] Alsepti's *The Modern English Concertina Method* (Lachenal, 1895), where, I think, the analogy is carried to a point somewhere between absurdity and downright charlatanry. I discuss the use of the bellows at some length in *Contemplating the Concertina: An Historically-Informed Tutor for the English Concertina* (Amherst, MA: The Button Box, 2003): 27–41. It is interesting – and somewhat dismaying – to contrast the lack of attention that modern concertina methods (and players in general) have given to the use of the bellows (I know of no detailed discussion other than my own) with the painstaking attention to the topic in manuals for – and histories of – the accordion: Lech Puchnowski, *Tongestaltung und Balgführung auf dem Akkordeon* (Trossingen: Verlag 'Der Volksmusiklehrer', 1966); Puchnowski and Armin Fett, *Balgführung und Tongestaltung: Der neue Weg zum Akkordeonspiel* (Vienna, Weltmusik Wien, 1968); Friedrich Lips, *The Art of Bayan Playing: Technique, Interpretation, and Performance of Playing the Accordion Artistically*, trans. W.A. Walshe, ed. Ulrich Schmülling (Kamen: Schmülling, 2000; originally published in Russian, 1985); Hans Luck, *Die Balgininstrumente: Ihre historische Entwicklung bis 1945.* Handbuch der Harmonika Instrumente, 5. *Schriften zur Akkordeonsistik*/2 (Kamen: Schmülling, 1997). The discrepancy underscores the difference in the present-day reception of the two instruments. Whereas the concertina is now identified almost entirely with various traditions of folk music and, to a large extent, with amateur music-making, the accordion – more specifically, the chromatic, concert, free-bass button accordion (or *bayan*) – has been at home in Continental conservatories since the 1930s, and has developed both a systematic approach to pedagogy and a large repertory of art music written by well-known composers for well-trained professional musicians. On the revival – small-scale, to be sure – of newly composed 'classical' music for the concertina beginning in the mid-1980s, see Atlas, 'The "Respectable" Concertina', *Music & Letters*, 80 (1999): 241–53, to which a number of new pieces can already be added; see my 'Concertinas 1998–1999: A (Brief) Review-Essay', *The Free-Reed Journal*, 2 (2000): 42–53.

49 Wayne, 'The Wheatstone English Concertina', 140. We know how many buttons most instruments from this period had because the number was generally recorded in the sales ledgers (HMWA, C1046 and C104*a*).
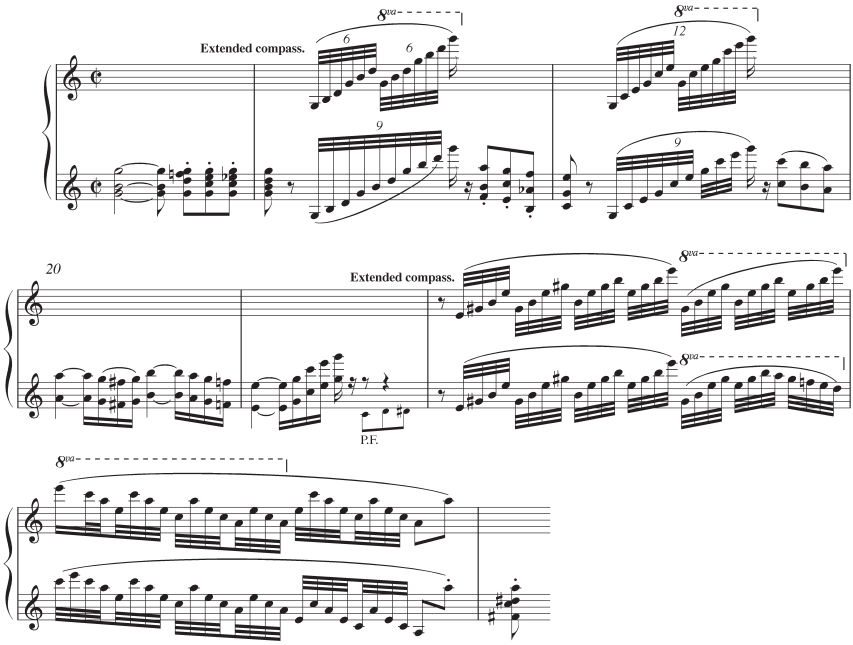
50 A notice about the concert, signed 'F.W.M.', in the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, xxvi/20 (8 March 1847): 80–81, describes Regondi's instrument as having a range of *g*–*g‴″*; the notice is printed in Jacobs, *Der junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi*, 245.

51 See *Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, 1851*, 469–70; Mactaggart and Mactaggart, *Musical Instruments in the 1851 Exhibition*, 60.
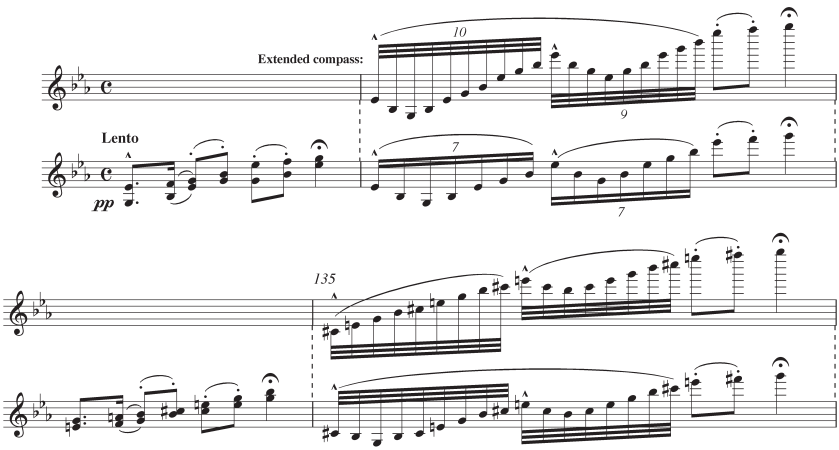
52 See the production book catalogued as C1054 (pp. 158–9) in HMWA, which records the production of instruments for April–June and October–December 1871.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 8a Roe, *Recollections of Scotland*, bars 17–24 (concertina part only)



Ex. 8b Blagrove, *Fantasia on National Airs*, bars 132–135 (concertina part only)



extended beyond *c*''''. We see this, for example, in both George Roe's *Recollections of Scotland: Fantasia Brilliante* (Wheatstone, 1875 – Ex. 8a)[53] and Blagrove's *Fantasia on National Airs* (Wheatstone, 1886 – Ex. 8b).

53 The title page includes the following notice: 'N.B. Orchestral accompaniments (M. S.) [manuscript] to the above solo (as performed by Mr. Henry Roe at the "World's Peace Jubilee," Boston, America; also at the Court–Gaiety–Globe Theatres, London; and Provincial Concerts &c) can be had by application to 20, Conduit Street, Regent Street, London, W.'

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

What led Wheatstone's (and other manufacturers) to turn out 56-button instruments on a regular basis? Though I can only speculate, I would suggest that the impetus may have come, at least in part, from the tendency of some concertinists to round out their recital repertories with music originally written for the violin. Thus we know that Regondi sometimes programmed his own adaptation of Charles-August de Bériot's Violin Concerto No. 1 in D, op. 16, the single movement of which goes beyond the c'''' of the 48-button instrument on four occasions.[54] In any event, the 56-button treble became the instrument of choice

(that is, Wheatstone's address); the Jubilee to which the notice refers was held in 1872; Henry Roe, George Roe's brother, was accompanied by the Grenadier Guards under the direction of Daniel Godfrey; on Godfrey, see E.D. Mackerness, 'Godfrey' §2, in *GMOL*; on the Boston Peace Jubilee, see Leonard Burkat, 'Boston', *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music*, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1986), 1: 265; on Henry Roe, see Ward, 'The English Concertina', 511.

54 He performed the Bériot concerto (with piano accompaniment) at, among other occasions, a concert in Ireland in 1842 and at his Dresden recital of 26 October 1846; see Lawrence, 'Giulio Regondi and the Concertina in Ireland', 23; Jacobs, *Die junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi*, 243–4. Regondi published his adaptation for concertina as *I^er Concerto, Op. 16, transcript pour la Concertina par Giulio Regondi et composé par C. de Bériot* (Wheatstone, 1868); for music examples that compare passages from Bériot's original and Regondi's adaptation, see Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, 70–71. Perhaps this is the same Bériot concerto that Blagrove performed at his Windsor Castle recital of 23 November 1868, a programme that also included the Adagio and Rondo of a Dussek Sonata in B♭ for violin and piano; the programme is reproduced in Atlas, *The Wheatstone English Concertina*, Pl. 11. Other pieces from the violin repertory that became part of the professional concertinists' repertory include the Beethoven Violin Sonata in C minor, op. 30, and Joseph Mayseder's Violin Sonata in A, op. 47; see Atlas, 'Signor Alsepti and "Regondi's Golden Exercise"', *Concertina World: Newsletter of the International Concertina Association*, supplement to No. 426 (2003) (also online at www.concertina.com/atlas); Jacobs, *Der junge Gitarren- und Concertinavirtuose Giulio Regondi*, 152). Finally, Regondi incorporated two movements from the Bach unaccompanied sonatas and partitas – the Double (I) from the Partita No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1002, and the Fuga from the Sonata No. 3 in C, BWV 1005 – in his first tutor, *Rudimenti del concertinista: A Complete Series of Elementary & Progressive Exercises for the Concertina* (Joseph Scates, 1844): 36, 40–45. I know of at least two pieces that were written to be played on either instrument: James Harcourt's Sonata for Violin (or Concertina) and Piano Forte, op. 2 (Addison, Hollier & Lucas, 1861), and Floyd Scholl's *Two Reveries for the Concertina or Violin with an accompaniment for the Piano-Forte* (Wheatstone, 1874); on Harcourt (1818–1883), who was organist of St Peter's Mancroft, Norwich, see Brown and Stratton, *British Musical Biography*, 182; that Harcourt himself played the concertina may be evidenced by the entries for 'Harcourt' on 27 June 1860 and 21 May 1863 (though both are without first name or even indication of gender) in the Wheatstone sales ledger C1052, pp. 25, 85 (in HMWA). Indeed, it was the ability of the concertina to appropriate some of the violin repertory (at least that portion of it that was not overly 'violinistic') – as well as that of the flute and oboe – that was one of the instrument's most consistently used selling points, both in the publicity material issued by manufacturers and in the many method books for the instrument. Thus Blagrove writes, in his *Instruction Book for the Study of the Concertina* (Cramer, Wood, 1864), 1, that the concertina 'is capable of producing many beautiful tones, harmonies and effects that are peculiar to it, besides possessing the quality of performing all music that has been composed for the Flute and Oboe and with the exception of a few of the upper notes all Violin music'. The 1910s Wheatstone *Price List* takes the sales pitch one step further: 'so simple is the arrangement of the keyboard, and so easy the fingering, that with but slight knowledge of music a beginner, who can devote no more than, say, half-an-hour a day, may become able to perform fairly well on the Æola in the course of a few weeks – an

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

among the small number of professional concertinists who kept the concertina alive on both recital and – more often – 'variety' stages on both sides of the Atlantic during the early twentieth century.[55]

3. Fingering

Since details about fingering are likely to be of interest only to those who play the concertina, I will limit the discussion to what is certainly the single most basic decision: do we play with four or three fingers of each hand?[56] If, from the vantage point of a centuries-long view, it seems safe to say that fingering on keyboard instruments has generally added fingers and become ever more flexible,[57] it is just as safe to say that fingering on the concertina moved in the opposite direction, and this just during the course of the final decades of the nineteenth century. There can be no doubt that most of the professional concertinists of the Victorian period played with four fingers of each hand, moving the little fingers (the pinkies) from the finger rests – where, together with the thumbs in the thumb straps, they help support the weight of the instrument – to the button board freely and often (see Fig. 2).[58] Gradually, though – to judge from the method books of the period – the little finger stopped jumping around and remained ever more firmly planted in the finger rest, thus leaving the player with only three fingers on each hand (index, middle, and ring, called 1, 2, and 3, respectively) with which to negotiate the button board. And there can be little doubt that most present-day players – myself included – use the three-finger method.

What effect does this have on the player's ability to perform music that was written with the four-finger technique in mind? A brief example – by no means extreme – from Blagrove's *Morceaux*, No. 3, illustrates the problem (Ex. 9). The trouble comes with the widely spaced, four-note chords[59] that straddle the barline

achievement utterly impossible with the violin, flute, etc.'; on the concertina manufacturers' use of this selling point to pitch the instrument to women in particular, see Atlas, 'Ladies in the Wheatstone Ledgers'.

55 The added buttons brought with them an increase in price; thus the 1910s Wheatstone *Price List* advertises the 48-button Æola at £18.0.0, while the 56-button model costs £22.0.0. We might note that Wheatstone's also lists a 60-button model that reaches up to *a*'''' (£24.0.0), as well as an instrument with 64 buttons that extends up to *c*''''♯ (£26.0.0). By the 1880s, Lachenal & Co. also turned out models with more than 60 buttons; see Chambers, 'Some Notes on Lachenal Concertina Production', 11.

56 I discuss matters of fingering at some length throughout *Contemplating the Concertina.*

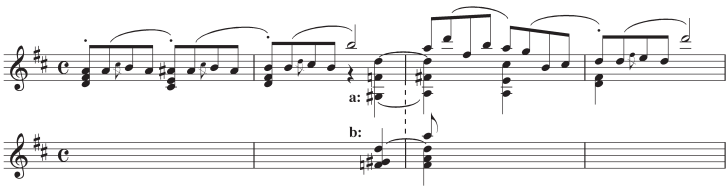
57 See Mark Lindley and Glyn Jenkins, 'Fingering: §I/1–2. Keyboard Fingering', in *GMOL*.

58 They were able to do so because they generally played standing, supporting the weight of the instrument by letting it dangle from a strap, much like a saxophone player holds that instrument today; see Atlas, *Contemplating the Concertina*, 5–10.

59 These pale in comparison to the many five- and six-note chords called for in such pieces as Regondi's *Remembrance* (Wheatstone, 1872) or Case's *Serenade*, op. 8 (Wheatstone, 1859), for unaccompanied baritone and treble, respectively, not to mention the chords of up to ten notes in Regondi's *Rudimenti del concertinista*. The Regondi and Case compositions have recently been reprinted by Concertina Connection (see note 1); examples from both works and the Regondi instruction manual appear in Atlas, *Contemplating the Concertina*, 52–3; there is a recording of *Remembrance* on the CD titled *The Great Regondi*, vol. ii (cited in note 18).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 9 Blagrove, *Morceaux*, No. 3, bars 13–16 (repeated at bars 29–32): (a) as written; (b) a possible alteration for three-finger technique



at bars 14–15 (repeated at bars 30–31): these will tie the fingers of the three-fingered player in knots.

Thus the present-day player must decide: adopt – in a historical sense 'return to' – the four-finger tradition used by the Victorians or resign oneself to omitting an occasional note, revoicing chords (and, as in Ex. 9b, altering the inversion and voice leading), or simply leaving a piece out of one's repertory altogether (I am guilty of all three).
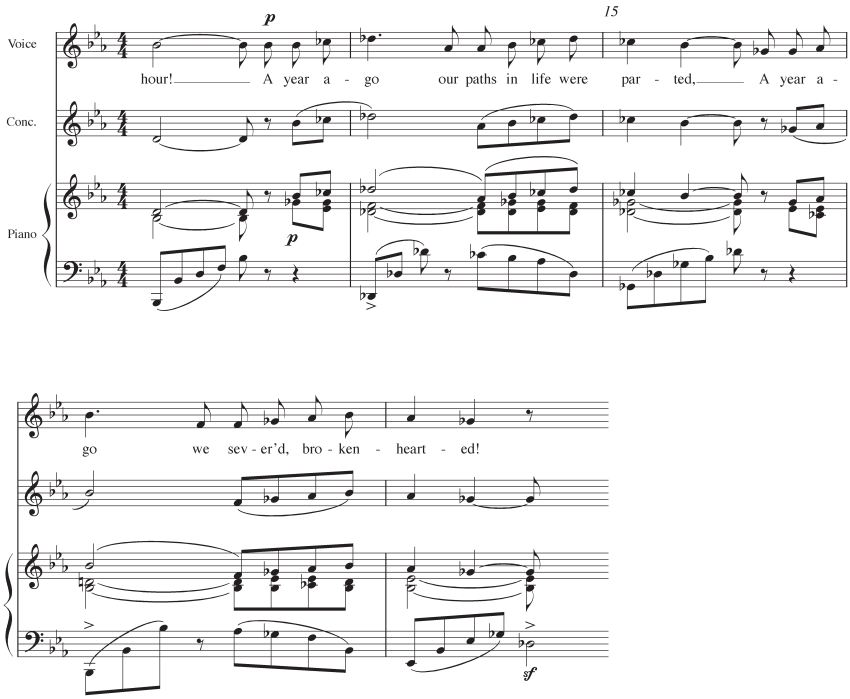
4. Concluding Note

Clearly, there is no single instrument that stands as *the* period concertina; rather, Victorian instruments can differ in terms of reeds (metal, length, shape and how they are attached to their frame), tuning (mean tone with fourteen notes to the octave and equal tempered), structure of the bellows, and number of buttons (and therefore range). And in the end, the choice of instrument – if in fact the player has a choice[60] – will depend on two things: the music being played and the nature (or purpose) of the performance. Two examples will illustrate the point: (1) Although I always play five of the six pieces in Molique's *Six Characteristic Pieces* on an instrument with steel reeds, I prefer to play the mournful 'Prayer', No. 5, on an instrument whose brass reeds permit me to 'whisper', as it were. The problem is this: my only concertina with brass reeds happens to be in mean tone, which, since the 'Prayer' is in E major and thus loaded with G♯s and D♯s, causes more than a few 'twangs' with the equal-tempered piano. Yet given my customary *lecture*-recital format (I can tell the audience in advance just what they are in for and why) and that such 'twangs' were no doubt what audiences heard – and seem to have taken in their stride – during Regondi's tour of the Continent in the 1840s (see p. 50 and note 34), it is on the mean-tone instrument that I perform it. (2) Although I accompany Julia Grella O'Connell (in performances with the New York Victorian Consort) by taking the obbligato in Gaetano Braga's F-major *La serenata* (see Ex. 2) on an instrument with riveted reeds (for its flute/angel-like tone – see p. 46 and note 24) tuned to Thomas Young's 'well' temperament No. 1 (for its tonal 'distance'

60 Obviously, the period instruments that one might own are governed to some extent by the marketplace. One of the sad things in today's concertina culture is the tendency for collectors to purchase such instruments and then simply display them on a shelf (often driving up prices in the process). Another is the tendency to modernize period instruments in order to make them more suitable for repertories of 'traditional' or other music for which they were never intended. Thus one has to admire the policy of Wim Wakker's Concertina Connection not to 'modernize' any concertina manufactured prior to about 1850.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ex. 10 Angelo Mascheroni, *For all Eternity*, bars 13–17 (repeated at bars 47–51)



– see note 45), I usually switch to an equal-tempered instrument with clamp-and-screw reeds – and thus a rather less 'angelic' tone – for both *The Confession of Devorgilla*[61] and Angelo Mascheroni's *For all Eternity.* I do so for a different reason in connection with each piece: the four-fold bellows of the former instrument sometimes come up just a little short for the long, often-sustained drone-like accompaniment in *Devorgilla*, while its well temperament – Young No. 1, with its 408-cent major third of G♭–B♭ – rubs a bit in the G♭-major passages of *Eternity*, where voice, piano and obbligato are all in unison (Ex. 10).[62] In the end, one makes choices; one also compromises!

61 *The Confession*, which begins with the words 'Oh! Shrive me, father – haste, haste, and shrive me' (first published in Edward Fitzsimons, *Irish Minstrelsy* [Dublin: Goulding, 1814]), seems to be the earliest known text to be associated with the well-known tune *Londonderry Air*, even better known as *Danny Boy* since Fred Weatherly published it with those words in 1913; see Brian Audley, 'The Provenance of the *Londonderry Air*', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 125 (2000): 235–42; Julia and I perform the piece in an arrangement by Mr Benjamin Bierman for voice and treble concertina; the arrangement is published as a music supplement to *Papers of the International Concertina Association*, 2 (2005).

62 However, when we (the New York Victorian Consort) performed *Devorgilla* and *Eternity* at the 71st Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society, 28 October 2005, I used the instrument with four-fold bellows and Young's No. 1 for both pieces; we compensated for the four-fold bellows in *Devorgilla* by picking up the tempo ever so slightly, while Young No. 1 elicited no post-performance complaints that we were out of tune in *Eternity*.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Is there an 'ideal' period concertina? Probably not, though were I to be stuck with only one on that proverbial desert island, I would probably choose an instrument from the late 1860s or 1870s with amboyna ends (they look nice), riveted reeds (they sound nice), five-fold bellows (they breathe more), and equal temperament (for the almost ever-present piano, proverbial desert island notwithstanding).

Postscript

It is not every day that a rank-and-file faculty member has the opportunity – much less the desire – to dedicate an essay to the recently retired president of the institution at which he or she teaches. But Dr Frances Degen Horowitz is very special, both as a person and as an administrator. During her fourteen years at the helm of The Graduate Center, The City University of New York, she made that institution a model of civility and tolerance. I thank her for her exuberant support of the arts and music in general and of The Center for the Study of Free-Reed Instruments and my own obsessive – even nutty! (and growing worse) – need to play the concertina in particular.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409800000598 Published online by Cambridge University Press