GENERAL EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Music is more than the food of love. It can also be the sustenance of patriotism and of ideology, the accompaniment of ceremony, conflict and acts of commitment. Throughout the world, those in authority and command have invariably revealed themselves to the sound of music. Political parties rouse their followers with musical invocations of the national sentiments and ideological nostrums to which they aspire. For music heightens the consciousness, often creating extremes of ecstasy or melancholy. It has the capacity to play upon the emotions and arouse its hearers to unaccustomed cheers or tears.

It is not surprising, therefore, that music should have played a major role in the life of a global ideological phenomenon like the British Empire. When the British were accused of being a people without music, the accusers invariably based their charge on the classical norms of continental Europe. As it happens, that accusation became more and more threadbare as the nineteenth century wore on, but in any case the British were exponents of many other forms of music that lay beyond those narrowly defined criteria. Jeffrey Richards explores these forms, and much else, in this refreshingly original book. It is full of material little known or understood hitherto.

It can truly be said that the sun never set on musical events in the Empire, in the characteristic contexts of the military, the Church, the theatre, the ceremony, the exhibition, the festival, and, as time wore on, the concert hall, the wireless and the cinema. Music and word settings carried complex layers of meaning, and these are thoroughly explored here. Music could convey the ideas and emotions that were supposed to bind the Empire together. Tours and other media carried such musical ideas to the further corners of the wider world. Imperialism disseminated western musical traditions as much as it did language, ideas, science, museums, sport and much more. But, as so often happened, it was modified in the process. Imperial sentiment was often counterpointed with developing national allegiances in the so-called white dominions, as the career of Peter Dawson neatly exemplifies. Sometimes it picked up the local colour of indigenous musical traditions, albeit converted for western ends. By the later nineteenth century, a world musicology (with some eighteenth-century antecedents) was beginning to develop which would be greatly extended in the course of the twentieth.

This is the first full-length study of the musical world of the British Empire. It stands for itself; but, as with so many pioneering works, it will also act as a remarkable quarry for future scholars. As it amply demonstrates, music has to be recognised as one of the central characteristics of the cultural imperialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

John M. MacKenzie