

THE GROVE DICTIONARIES

In the late 1870s, the great Victorian engineer, editor, and educator Sir George Grove undertook to prepare a comprehensive musical reference for the musical amateur. Grove's innovation and importance lay in part in the fact that he was himself an enthusiastic and informed amateur. "I wrote about the symphonies and concertos because I wished to try to make them clear to myself and to discover the secret of the things that charmed me so; and from that sprang a wish to make other amateurs see it the same way."²¹

Grove's first *Dictionary* was published in four volumes in 1879–80. After this ambitious and kindly beginning the *Grove's* continued to evolve, passing through four more editions (1904–10, 1927–28, 1940 and 1954) before the twenty-volume *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* was published in 1980. By that time it had become "the standard and the largest comprehensive music encyclopedia in English and the work to which all others are currently compared."²²

As has been mentioned, in 2001 a second edition of the *New Grove* was released in twenty-nine volumes, with a film music section completely rewritten by Mervyn Cooke. While this entry still shows traces of strictly musical allegiance, and of conventional film-musical notions taken as absolutes, Cooke generally demonstrates an unprecedented sympathy for film music conditions, an interest in film music practice, and an optimism about film music possibilities.²³ I will continue to refer on occasion to the *New Grove* 2nd edition, but the bulk of my attention, particularly in this chapter, concerns the findings and attitudes of the 1954 and 1980 editions.

Naturally over these one hundred years the tone of *Grove's* changed considerably, and one of the most significant shifts pertains to the audience being addressed. Although *New Grove* editor Stanley Sadie declared his own intent to continue speaking to the dictionary's traditional, partly amateur, public, it can be argued that with the passage of time, and with the increasing volume and sophistication of musical scholarship, the dictionary became in many ways a reference written for specialists, and by specialists.²⁴ "This [1980] edition clearly favors the interests of