



# **Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong, Volume 2: Reverberations, 1850-1856**

*Vera Brodsky Lawrence*

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In this second volume of *Strong on Music*, Vera Brodsky Lawrence carries into the 1850s her landmark account of the nineteenth-century New York music scene. Using music entries from George Templeton Strong's famous journals—most published here for the first time—as a point of departure, Lawrence provides a vivid portrait of a vibrant musical culture.

Each chapter presents one year in the musical life of New York City, with Lawrence's extensive commentary enriched both by excerpts from Strong's diaries and a lavish selection of little-known music criticism and comment from the period. The reviews, written by an often truculent, sometimes venal tribe of music journalists, cover the entire world of music—from opera to barrel organ, salon to saloon.

In this New York, operas performed by renowned artists are parodied by blackface minstrels; performances of the Philharmonic Society are drowned by the raucous chatter of flirtatious adolescents, who turn concerts into a noisy singles' hangout; and irate critics trash the first performances of Verdi operas, calling the plots indecent and the scores noisy and unmelodic. In this volatile atmosphere, a native musical culture is born; its whose first faltering efforts are dubiously received, and the first American composers begin to emerge.



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