

## Musical idealism: Dutch perceptions of the potpourri genre

In the early nineteenth century European musical life underwent a fundamental transformation in values, practices, repertoires and institutions. The expansion of musical life in that period brought about new musical, ideological and commercial developments that would gradually change the structures of the European musical industries. As William Weber has shown in his magnum opus *The transformation of musical taste*, music critics from all over Europe tried to structure this changing world with an enthusiastic musical idealism, creating a new hierarchy of musical genres. In this process a separation was made between the ‘new’ complex instrumental genres such as chamber music and symphonies and the ‘old-fashioned’ popular genres that originated in the tradition of songs and operas.<sup>1</sup> The potpourri, pieces that we would now call ‘medleys’ of popular melodies, ended up at the bottom of this musical ladder. While these pieces were meant to be programmed as a lighter intermezzo in between more ‘serious’ pieces, they were gradually marginalized during the nineteenth century as a part of the frivolous ‘popular’ concert series. In the ideological battles over the formation of a new, more homogeneous programming tradition, the musical tradition of the potpourri genre had lost.

In his volume *The Invention of Tradition*, the famous historian Eric Hobsbawm offers a theory of how traditions are confirmed and changed in a struggle between tradition and modernity.<sup>2</sup> This dialectic process is mediated by continuously changing perceptions of authenticity. As a reaction to the rapidly changing modern ‘civilization’ at the turn of the nineteenth century, authenticity became a central concept in the Romantic aesthetical discourse.<sup>3</sup> In this case-study I will trace the ideological backgrounds of the extinction of the potpourri genre in Romantic thought and analyse the perceptions of the genre that existed in Dutch musical criticism between 1844 and 1864. I will demonstrate that Dutch criticism of the potpourri was grounded in a concept of authenticity in which creativity and originality was more important than the continuation of a genre tradition. Interestingly enough, in practice, tradition was still controlling concert programming: the potpourri genre only disappeared from the programmes of serious concerts in the late 1870s.

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<sup>1</sup> William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste* (Cambridge 2008) 85.

<sup>2</sup> Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, (ed.) *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge 1983).

<sup>3</sup> Kerry Sinanan and Tim Milnes, ‘Introduction’ in: Tim Milnes and Kerry Sinanan (ed.), *Romanticism, Sincerity and Authenticity* (Basingstoke 2010) i-x, vi.

## Romanticism

Although musical values were more journalistic than philosophical in nature, links evolved between musical commentary and formal aesthetic thought. Musical idealism was born from new utopian images of creativity, authorship and the position of art in society that were rooted in Romantic thinking. What potential did Romanticism have for musical thought? First of all, the great late-eighteenth century German music philosophers such as Wackenroder, Tieck, Novalis and E.T.A. Hoffmann all agreed that the more abstract nature of untexted music represented the true essence of art, liberated from the strictures of mundane semantics. In their view purely instrumental music was hierarchically superior to music based in a 'textual' tradition such as song, drama and opera.<sup>4</sup>

Secondly, as Mark Evan Bonds has shown in his essay 'Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century', the new Romantic musical idealism broke with the eighteenth-century principle of mimesis – art as imitation of nature – as they sought to get music away from the nominalism inherent in that principle. Instead, they believed 'that the aesthetic effect of an artwork resides in its ability to reflect a higher ideal.' The listener of instrumental music ideally forgets all trivialities of the 'failed world of social and political life' in a high and abstract aesthetical experience.<sup>5</sup>

Idealist philosophers such as W.H. Wackenroder did not seek to change musical life, but from the 1810s the more learned members of the music public began to hear symphonies, and indeed pure instrumental music, in a fundamentally new manner. In his book, *Music as Thought. Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven*, Bond states that learned audiences 'no longer approached these works as a source of entertainment, but increasingly as source of truth.' The symphony became a vehicle for systematic musical knowledge and thereby became associated with a 'quest for truth' and the 'infinite sublime' in music criticism.<sup>6</sup>

As a consequence, those musics that were directly associated with entertainment, sociality and drama ended up at the bottom of the musical hierarchy. Potpourris were labelled as the textbook example of those lowly musical works for multiple reasons: not only were they part of the textual (non-abstract) traditions of songs and operas, they were not even meant to have a higher meaning. The main function of the pieces had always been to be recognisable for audiences, creating a feeling of shared experience. In other words, their social function was more important than their aesthetic value.

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<sup>4</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, 'Idealism and the Aesthetics of Instrumental Music at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century' *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 50 (1997) 387-420, aldaar 387.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibidem*: 392, 397.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Evan Bonds, *Music as Thought. Listening to the Symphony in the Age of Beethoven* (Princeton 2006) 45.

## Authorship, commercialization and the public sphere

One starts to wonder how these pieces could ever have been accepted in ‘serious’ concerts. From the perspective of the twenty-first century it is almost impossible to reconstruct the musical experience of the pre-Romantic music lover, since our concepts of creativity and authenticity are considerably indebted to Romantic thought. Yet there are three important aspects of musical life that can give insight in the different musical world that existed in those days.

First, early nineteenth-century concerts were much more diverse than the concerts that we know today. The core concept of the hegemonic programming tradition that originated in the eighteenth century was the concept of ‘miscellany’. As William Weber aptly puts it: ‘In 1780 a typical program accommodated a variety of tastes through a patterned ‘miscellany’ of genres, held together by diplomatic musicians.’<sup>7</sup> In these programmes, potpourris had a completely different function than a symphony or a string quartet. As explained before, their function was more social than musical. When programmes became more homogenous during the nineteenth century the potpourri genre gradually lost its legitimacy in the new musical context.

Secondly, the performer played a much more central role in the musical experience. Many concerts were organised by the musicians themselves or programmed around a certain musical ‘star’. The programmes of these concerts encompassed many pieces written by the musician himself. Potpourris were a good example of such pieces in which a virtuoso soloist would show his tricks using fashionable themes that the audience would recognise from their visits to the opera.<sup>8</sup>

This also means that many different concepts of musical authorship existed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In his book *Bootlegging. Romanticism and copyright in the music industry*, Lee Marshall traces the concept of musical authorship through history, showing that in the eighteenth century copyright only existed by virtue of music publishers.<sup>9</sup> Many pieces were composed for a special occasion, never to be printed for public use. Through Romanticism, the concept of the composer as an ‘artist’ became idealised and hegemonic over the previously important ‘writing artisan musician’. Consequently, the potpourris, written by these artisan musicians, gradually went out of fashion.

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<sup>7</sup> Weber, *The Great Transformation*, 14.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*: 18-29.

<sup>9</sup> Lee Marshall, *Bootlegging. Romanticism and copyright in the music industry* (London 2005) 31.

These developments cannot be separated from a third larger development that affected all of the above-mentioned developments: the commercialization of the music industry. In the eighteenth century, concerts were mainly intimate events in a semi-private sphere. In this intimacy, it was quite common for amateurs to participate in the performance. For this reason certain pieces on the programme were well known and easy to play along for dilettantes. This practice would gradually decrease during the nineteenth century, since the commercialization of the music industry resulted in a professionalization of concert practice and higher standards came into being for performances and musical works alike. Commercialization also evoked an anti-capitalist reaction. Romanticism can be seen as an answer to the rapid expansion and popularity of concert life. Marshall points out that ‘the ‘Romantic movement’ involved the first attempts to make sense of art within capitalism.’<sup>10</sup>

### **The Dutch perception of the Potpourri genre**

In the Netherlands, the people who took up idealistic musical values were relatively small in number but knew how to make their opinions known. For that reason, their comments on a large amount of public concerts in the Netherlands in journals such as *Caecilia. Algemeen muzikaal tijdschrift van Nederland*, should not be approached as an indicator of the general musical taste. Rather, these critiques should be analysed as the norm they tried to set for the general public. A public that, in their opinion, was generally far behind when it came to the appreciation of ‘serious’ music.

In the context of the potpourri genre this inconsistency between the taste of the general public and the ‘norm’ set by critics is very clear. My analysis of the critiques in the *Caecilia* journal shows that in the period 1844-1864 the potpourri genre is discussed critically over and over again, while the genre was still very present on the programmes until the late 1870s.<sup>11</sup> This is where the dialectic between modern idealism and tradition becomes visible in reality. Critics from all over the country complained about the low amount of ‘sublime, classical’ music on the programmes (‘verhevene, klassieke Muzijk maakt slechts een zeer sober deel van het geheel uit’) and the enormous presence of lesser noble, lower and more popular works. (‘het is het minder edele, lagere, het populaire: Polka's, Walzen, Marschen, Potpourri's en al wat van dien aard is, die dé hoofdrol speelt’). According to a critic from Utrecht the programming was meant to attract audiences (‘om het publiek te lokken, te winnen’) In his opinion this commercialism was working against the actual matter, conflicting against the real practice of the Sublime Art

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<sup>10</sup> Marshall, *Bootlegging*, 3.

<sup>11</sup> *Caecilia; algemeen muzikaal tijdschrift van Nederland* 1-20, 1844-1864.

(‘strijdende tegen het ware belang, tegen de beoefening der Kunst op haar verheven standpunt’).<sup>12</sup> Still, ten years later, a critic from Groningen reported on the same problem: the ‘mediocre’ potpourri-works are very prominent. According to the journalist, these pieces did not have much to do with art, although they can be ‘witty’ sometimes when well played. Also in Groningen, these concerts were well attended. The critic reported that audiences generally did not attend out of musical interest, but rather to enjoy the nice weather and to meet their friends and acquaintances. (‘om de lucht te genieten, menschen te zien en te spreken.’)<sup>13</sup>

In the countless critiques of the potpourri genre, a distinction was made between two ‘types’ of music, praising the great ‘serious’, new, instrumental music and at the same time discarding other, ‘lesser’ genres. To anticipate an endless overview of examples, the linguistic typology of this distinction is summarised in table 1. These adjectives were almost always used in a comparison of these two ‘types’ of music. Note how the two ‘types’ of music have their own language, but the two lists cannot be listed side by side as antonyms. In other words: rather than semantic counterparts, they were part of a ‘different’ linguistic horizon.

While criticising the potpourri genre, critics were implicitly defining the characteristics of a good music. The terms in the left column of Table 1 can be seen as a linguistic map of this musical norm set by these critics. Moreover the image of the good composer was sketched in the critiques. Knowledge was essential for a composer, as well as discipline and zeal, as he was not only a craftsman. The composer stood out from normal craftsman with his earnestness, his artistic conscience and, most important, his taste. Remarkably, individuality, an important characteristic of the ‘Romantic artist’, played only a minor role in the definition of the composer by the critics. Rather it was present in the image of the ‘half-composer’, the ‘charlatan’ (‘kwakzalver’<sup>14</sup>) with his ‘fantasy-creations’ (‘fantasie-scheppingen’) resulting from their *so-called* individual taste. (‘voortkomende uit zijnen zoogenaamden individueelen smaak’).

More prominent in the critiques than individuality, was the Romantic concept of originality. The potpourri was criticised for its absolute lack of originality. It was described as a genre in which ‘freebooting has been made in to a law’ and ‘originality has been abandoned’. (‘dat in de potpourri vrijbuitelij tot wet verheven wordt en alle eigene gedachten daaruit

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<sup>12</sup> *Caecilia* 12, 1855, no 21, 01-11-1855.

<sup>13</sup> *Caecilia* 21, 1864, no 21, 01-11-1864.

<sup>14</sup> ‘In geene kunst wordt zoo veel kwakzalverij bedreven en tegen de vaste regelen der aesthetiek zoo menigvuldig gezondigd wordt als door Muzikale kunstenaars. Men denke slechts aan de ontelbare Potpourri’s, Variatiën, Études, die ook voor kunstwerken gelden willen.’ *Caecilia* 7, 1850, no 20, 15-10-1850.

verbannen zijn'<sup>15</sup>). Those copycats, states a critic in 1860, were at best craftsmen but not composers:

‘van hen komen de vele onbeteekenende muziekstukken, die dagelijks het licht zien, de duizenden van potpourri's (of zoo als het legio van compositiën heeten moge, die eenen winter maar overblijft, om in de volgende lente door eene nieuwe reeks te worden gevolgd) die genoegzaam getuigen, dat er ook in de kunst een groot aantal handwerkers zijn.’<sup>16</sup>

Of course, the unoriginality of the potpourri is inevitable since the genre is meant to be a repetition of known melodies. However, the critique is interesting as a mirror image of what ‘good’ music should be: original.

A third Romantic concept that came to the foreground is anti-commercialism. According to a music critic, the ‘half-composer’ of the potpourris had put his soul on sale to the masses. Instead of elevating the audience, he lowered himself towards them. (‘In plaats van pal te staan voor de goede zaak, maken velen zich tot dienaars van de ligt te bewegen menigte. In plaats van die tot zich op te heffen, dalen zij tot haar af.’<sup>17</sup>) In an anonymous letter a music lover confirmed that many said that music should become more popular (‘De Toonkunst moet populair worden,' zegt men algemeen; fiat, doch moet zij daarom ook triviaal worden?’<sup>18</sup>). He asked the reader: ‘but should it become trivial as well?’ ‘No wonder critics are complaining about the weakness and illness of music.’ (‘niet te verwonderen dat men zoo dikwijls over flauwten en kwalijkheid klaagt’<sup>19</sup>)

The editor reacted in accord. ‘Anybody thinks he can write a potpourri’, he writes (‘ieder acht zich bevoegd om zulke potpourri's aaneen te lappen.’). ‘They don’t care about the sublime art, and why should they! The spirit of speculation has quenched the fire of artistry; craftsmanship and artistry have become equals.’

‘Aan het verhevene in de kunst wordt niet gedacht; wat kan het ook die mannen schelen! de geest van speculatie heeft bij hen de laatste vonk van kunstgevoel uitgedoofd; handwerk en kunst staan bij hen gelijk, en zoo als een Nederlandsch schrijver zich onlangs bij eene dergelijke gelegenheid, uitdrukte: “Zulke kunstenaars, die alleen arbeiden om geld te

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<sup>15</sup> *Caecilia* 22, 1865, no 24, 15-12-1865.

<sup>16</sup> *Caecilia* 17, 1860, no 22, 15-11-1860.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> *Caecilia* 10, 1853, no 18, 15-09-1853.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*.

verdienen en daardoor hunne reputatie op het spel zetten , verdienen den naam van kunstenaars niet; zij beroepen zich vergeefs op den eeretitel van priesters der Muzen; zij zijn slechts valsche priesters, die ouheilich vuur op hel altaar brengen.”<sup>20</sup>

Interestingly, the critiques demonstrate that this was not only a battle for artistic norms and values, but also a social struggle between different groups. The two ‘types’ of music corresponded with two ‘types’ of music lovers. On the one side there was the mass of ‘superficial’ (‘zeer oppervlakkig Muziekliedhebbers’<sup>21</sup>) music lovers with a faulty sense of art, bad taste; the conceited ladies and gentleman of the soirées (‘soirée-dames en heeren’<sup>22</sup>) who do not have any sincere interest in music. On the other, there was a small group of diligent and disciplined connoisseurs, who had the resources to buy scores and take music lessons. The latter concentrated on getting to know new quartets, symphonies and sonata’s, whereas the former enjoyed the familiar melodies, waltzes and elegies, in fresh potpourri versions. One critic even states that those who ‘only know of Variations, Fantasies, Potpourris and Elegies look down on quartets out of ignorance and conceit.’

‘zij, die de quartetmuziek vurig beminnen en met aardsche middelen zijn gezegend, zich doorgaans toeleggen, om de beste werken in dit genre, zelfs in partituur te verzamelen, en zich dus den weg banen, om zulke voortreffelijke muziek nog meer van nabij te kunnen leeien kennen en waarderen, zich hierdoor tot Kunstenaars en dilettanten te vormen, wier kennis en oordeel in de kunst bij den waren kenner hooger staan aangeschreven , dan derzulken, die van niets dan Variaticn en Fantasiën van Potpourri’s en Elegiën weten, en uit onkunde en verwaardheid met eene soort van verachting op de heerlijke en solide quartetmuziek nederzien.’

In the period of 1844-1864 the gap between these two groups still seemed impossible to bridge. Although those who write and read the *Caecilia* journal agreed on what the musical future should look like, the general public did not applaud their ideas. There was still a long road ahead for the transformation of concert life they wanted to achieve. The critics were well aware of this. A critic writes in 1861 that the intended transformation would still take much time. Out of 1300 members of his music society, 1200 members would chose a potpourri over a

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<sup>20</sup> *Caecilia* 10, 1853, no 22, 15-11-1853.

<sup>21</sup> *Caecilia* 13, 1856, no 22, 15-11-1856.

<sup>22</sup> *Caecilia* 18, 1861, no 21, 01-11-1861.

Mendelssohn symphony. In order to change this, musical performance would have to be improved, the audience would have to become silent in the concerts, members would have to be educated. Only then could serious music be properly appreciated. ('Wanneer men bedenkt dat de Harmonie circa 1300 leden telt, en dat daarvan 1200 liever eene waltz dan eene Mendelssohnsche symphonie hooren, dan zal men begrijpen dat hierin op eenmaal eene omkeering te willen bewerken, eerst betere uitvoering, dan als gevolg daarvan grootere stilte in de zaal, en eindelijk betere keuze van muziek en meerdere muzikale ontwikkeling bij de leden.<sup>23</sup>)

<p>Een zeer oppervlakkig Muzikliefhebber (geen beoefenaar) wilde in een Muzikaal gezelschap toch ook eens medepraten, en zeide: » Ik beken mijne Heeren weinig of niet in de gelegenheid geweest te zijn om de eerste meesterstukken van vroeger en later tijd te kunnen hooren. Dubbel welkom was mij dus de heerlijke <i>Blumenkorb</i>, <i>Potpourri</i> voor vol Orchest, van Fahrbach, welke ik onlangs hoorde. Dit geniaal Muzijkstuk geeft in zeer korte trekken een geheel overzicht van alle de Componisten. B. v. stukken van Beethoven zijn op de geestigste wijze aan het <i>patertje langs de kant</i> verbonden, enz. Ik hoop dat dit door vele Componisten mag opgevolgd worden; het zal stellig de algemeene kennis en den goeden smaak bevorderen, en zoo doende ons in korten tijd op de ware hoogte brengen. »</p>	<p><i>A very superficial Music lover (not a practitioner) wanted to have a say among musicians, and said: "I confess that I was not in the position to hear the masterpieces of earlier and later time. So I was delighted to hear 'Blumenkorb', Potpourri for full orchestra, by Fahrbach, recently. In a short timespan, this ingenious piece gives an overview of all Composers. For example, pieces by Beethoven are connected to [a popular song] in the wittiest way etc. I hope this example will be followed by many Composers; it will certainly promote the general knowledge and good taste, and thereby shortly elevate us "</i></p>
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This anonymous story in the *Caecilia* journal, is an example of the disdain readers showed for potpourri lovers.<sup>24</sup>

### Dutch music idealism and the paradox of Romantic authenticity

This analysis has shown that Dutch criticism of the potpourri genre was, in the first place, an ideological struggle of connoisseurs fighting with their new musical idealism against the traditionalism of the general public. In conclusion, I will relate this fascinating Dutch musical idealism to the historical framework of Romanticism and the general framework of authenticity. How does this Dutch criticism relate to Romantic thought? And can we reconstruct the conception of authenticity, as present in this idealistic discourse?

In the first section of this article, the three main aspects of Romantic thought were set forth, which transformed musical aesthetics at the turn of the nineteenth century: the abstract value of instrumental music (absolute music); the abandonment of mimesis and imitation and the quest for truth and the sublime in the musical experience. Moreover, individual perceptions of the authenticity of music transformed, when the social context of performance changed. In the second section I outlined that concert became less inclusive (musically as well as socially);

<sup>23</sup> *Caecilia* 18, 1861, no 18, 15-09-1861.

<sup>24</sup> *Caecilia* 13, 1856, no 22, 15-11-1856.



the composer became more important as an artist of great creativity and originality; and that musical idealism became increasingly anti-commercialist.

Notably, all of these aspects can be identified in the idealistic discourse that is analysed in the third section. Criticism of the potpourri genre was deeply anti-commercialist. The composer of potpourris, who was supposed to be a creative and integer genius, had put his soul on sale to the masses. Moreover, the music critics stressed the individual, sublime experience of instrumental music, written by sincere and original artist for an earnest and disciplined audience. One can rightfully conclude that Dutch musical idealism was rooted in romantic thought. But how does this music criticism relate to romantic notions of authenticity?

To be clear about what constitutes the romantic conception of authenticity, one has to make a distinction between individual authenticity and collective authenticity.<sup>25</sup> The former privileges inner essences without relating them to an outer world and other people. The Romantics' quest for authenticity was a quest for 'essential identity,' a longing for knowledge of true inner being. Artists, in particular, were understood to be individuals possessed of powerfully unique inner realities, uncorrupted and undiminished by social conventions. The latter is more concerned with the *relationship* between the object and its context. From the romantic period onward, folklorists and anthropologists assumed that groups of people could be characterized by unique cultural, historical, religious, linguistic or otherwise traditional features that set them apart from all other groups. Objects could be claimed 'authentic' within this context of unique characterizations.

These two main romantic perceptions of authenticity show a striking paradox. While individual authenticity favours creativity over imitation and traditionalism, collective authenticity seeks the opposite: continuity and sameness is labelled as 'authentic' whereas new and modern creative inventions are abandoned.<sup>26</sup>

It is clear that the perception of authenticity of Dutch music critics was purely individual. Although their idealism was constructed in a social context, their judgement was based on their personal relationship to the discussed works. The fact that the potpourris were part of a long and popular musical tradition of songs and operas, was meaningless to them. If critics had been more folklorist, the potpourri would now still be part of the classical repertoire, just like the folk music by Bartok and others. However, they were unable to take a step back and see the cultural value of these joyful little treasures for they were much too busy squabbling over 'serious' music.

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<sup>25</sup> R. Handler, 'Anthropology of Authenticity' in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* (2001) 963-967.

<sup>26</sup> Sara Lodge, 'By Its Own Hand. Periodicals and the Paradox of Romantic Authenticity' in: Tim Milnes and Kerry Sinanan (ed.), *Romanticism, Sincerity and Authenticity*, (Basingstoke 2010) 185-200.

**Kwartetmuziek,  
symfonieën,  
sonates, etc.**

**Potpourri,  
fantasie,  
variatie, etc.**

buitengewoon	exceedingly	middelmatig	mediocre
edel	noble	bombastisch	bombastic
eenvoudig	simple	dansant	dansant
eigen	personal	dramatisch	dramatic
ernstig	earnestly	flauw	weak
fantasievol	imaginatively	geesteloos	spiritless
heerlijk	lovely	geestig	witty
ideaal	ideally	laag	low
klassiek	classical	onbevallig	ungracious
louterend	cathartic	onlogisch	illogical
ontwikkeld	developed	overbekend	well known
rein	pure	populair	popular
schoon	beautiful	ruw	rough
smaakvol	tasteful	smakeloos	tasteless
solide	solid	giftig	poisonous
verfijnd	refined	vervelend	tedious
verheven	sublime	verwaarloosd	derelict
volmaakt	perfect	verwijfd	effeminate
vormelijk	formal	vormeloos	amorphous
waarachtig	veritable	vrijbuitelij	freebooting

Table 1: Frequently occurring adjectives in the discussion about the opposition between the potpourri genre and more ‘serious’ genres such as quartets, symphonies and sonatas.<sup>27</sup>

*Synonimen:* kinderpraat en Romancezang; — gezonde taal en fraaije liederen; (wie denkt hier niet aan Mendelssohn). — Ernst, verheffing en Sonaten en Symphonien; — groote bombast of ook wel groote dramatische schoonheden en Opera’s; — niets beteekenende kunstenmakerij of veel beteekenende kunstzin en obligeaatspel; — op eene glansrijke wijze niets te zeggen en Italiaansche bravourzang; — de gewijde geschiedenis in het leven terug roepen en Oratorios. — Veel geschreeuw, weinig wol en eenige Zangersfeesten; waarachtige kunstzin en eenige Zangfeesten; — waarachtige kunstzin en eenvoudigheid; — Zangers en stoute beoordeelaars; — Instrumentalisten en Muzikanten; — drukke Muzijkhandel en veel danslust; — solide werken en weinig uitvoerders; — spoedig oogenederf en de goedkoope tegen-drink; — de eeuwigdurende zweving en een Piano-stemer, enz., enz., enz.

*Synonyms:* childish talk and Romance singing; - adequate language and beautiful songs; (who does think of Mendelssohn). - severe elevation and Sonatas and Symphonies; - big bombast and great dramatic beauties and Operas; - meaningless craftsmanship and obligato playing; - brilliantly saying nothing and Italian vocal bravour; - revive sacred history and oratorios. - Lots of screaming and certain vocal celebrations; true artistic sense and other vocal festivals; - true artistic sense and simplicity; - singers and bold critics; - Instrumentalists and Musicians; - busy music trade and delightful dancing; - solid works and little performers; - quick decay and cheap counter pressure; - eternal temperament and the Piano tuner, etc., etc., etc...

Fragment of a readers letter in the *Caecilia* journal. Signed ‘Uw onderdaanige dienaar O! O!’, ‘Yours sincerely O! O!’ This reader summarizes his perception of the oppositions in the musical discourse.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Caecilia* 1-20 1844-1864.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem:* 10, 1853, no 18, 15-09-1853.

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