"Music is a New Art with Us"

A Brief History of Early American Music from 1760-1800

Eric J. Pierzchala

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Introduction

In 1759, George Handel, the composer of some of the most celebrated musical pieces of what is now known as the Baroque Era, and, perhaps, the most popular European composer of the English Colonies, passed away. Yet, at the time of Handel's death, a new, lasting era of music was already beginning to take shape in Europe. A four-year-old Austrian child prodigy named Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart was amazing his father by repeating, precisely, several parts of an orchestral piece after hearing them only twice. This child genius was to compose his own original pieces within the next year. Joseph Hayden was about to accept an appointment in the royal courts of Austria—a position that would elevate his music into the international mainstream for the next fifty years. The compositions of a German cantor named Johann Sebastian Bach were being judged by the music critics of the day as too complicated, and thus, would not come to be truly appreciated until the next century. With this combined emergence of some of the most influential musicians the world has ever known, a new era of musical awakening was dawning in Europe. Meanwhile, as these developments and transformations were taking place within the European musical world, a people, removed by an ocean from European culture, began to cast their very own musical legacy. [1]

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In 1760, it can be said, that American music was in its infancy. Most telling of its youth is that Colonial America had yet to produce a native composer on par with the great musical names of Europe. Not only had the Colonies not yet produced a great name, but hardly any original music had been produced in the Colonies at all. In 1763, Sally Franklin, the daughter of Benjamin

Franklin, was attempting to collect some native compositions to send abroad and found only "a few airs." She wrote of her limited findings to her father who in response explained to his daughter, "Music is a new Art with us." [2]

Further, and as to the state of music in the Colonies, it had been over forty years since a psalm book or an instructional book of how music was to be played or sung had been published by an American author. In the whole of the Colonies there were only a few professional musicians and those who were professional were generally recent emigrants trained on European soil and dependent entirely upon European composers for any new and original works. For those professional musicians who had the skill to play concert repertoires, they found only a modest concert life in the Colonies and that Colonial concerts were more centered on socializing than on the actual music or the musician.

These seeming deficiencies in music, as compared to Europe, seem to prove Benjamin Franklin correct when he stated that "Music was a new Art with us." But Franklin also realized that it was not yet time for art music to take its place in America when he wrote, "After the first cares of the necessaries of life are over, we shall come to think of the embellishments." [3]

The creation of high artistic music may not have been foremost in the minds of the people of the Colonies, but that is not to say that music was unimportant in the daily lives of the Colonial people, nor that, within these people there did not reside an abundance of musically directed energy.

One must remember that the great majority of the people who lived in the Colonies in 1760 were farmers, smiths, workers, laborers, servants, or slaves. These people, a large portion of whom were either first or second generation immigrants trying to survive in a new land, would have, in general, been little concerned or inclined to compose their own music, and while this new found land might have lacked a then great composer, the continent was most certainly not musically silent.

Around the hearth, grandparents taught children folk songs that they had brought with them from their Old World, bringing back emotions of love and conflict, belonging and security. Men sang raucous tavern ballads that they Americanized with their loosened tongues and drunken

words as they laughed and made merry into the hours of the night. Women and men played instruments to display their social graces during courting events. Little boys chased little sisters singing rhyming children's ditties that drove their poor siblings to tears. After a long hot day in the fields, slaves played instruments of African origin, and some even sang Christian hymns mixed with the musical intricacies of their traditional West African music. German Moravians transported their European way of life along with their European musically trained ears to their Pennsylvania settlement, where some of the most technically accomplished music on the continent was then being played. Native American Indians sang, sometimes with instrumental accompaniment, while participating in communal rituals. And although music may have been a new art in the Colonies—the beat, rhythm, melody and harmony of music most definitely pulsed strong and deep within the lives of the Colonial people.

I.

Religious Music

Before the Revolution, there was an impressive amount of secular musical activity taking place in America, but by far the most popular form of music amongst the people was church music. Music had been sung and played in American churches for well over a century, but beginning in the 1760s, and then continuing through The War for Independence, dynamic changes in church music began to take place.

To see how rapidly the music of the churches had progressed in the early 1760s and 1770s, imagine a small Connecticut church on a Sunday in 1761. A time traveler's ears would hear a deacon lining out a biblical psalm. This lined out psalm would be repeated by the congregation who sang the psalm, not only repeating the deacon's words, but also copying his exact tone and phrasing. But, if one were to return to this same church ten years later in 1771, the music one would find there would be very different. A pitch pipe might set the key for the recently formed church choir, a bass viol might be employed to lead the congregation, or, if the parish was well-to-do, an organ might even accompany the singers.

New musical strides towards a more sophisticated and entertaining church music had been taking place in England for several decades, and by the 1760s these changes began to widely influence the way that American congregations worshiped with song. Instrumental music and choral singing had previously been confined to the few Anglican churches which then existed in the Colonies. Puritan, Presbyterian, Congregationalists and others in dissenting religious traditions were extremely resistant to change. To them, the attention given to music with its potential for frivolity could only detract from the seriousness of their worship. Beginning in the

1760s however, changes in church music were beginning to be accepted by most of the religious denominations present in the Colonies. This change toward a more lighthearted music of worship was especially popular with the younger generations. This generation, as well as the one preceding it who had probably had their life's fill of the doleful lining out of psalms, was inspired by a new generation of religious thinkers who argued for a more cheerful celebration of God. For example, arguments justifying the new style of musical worship in the Congregational Church came in the way of sermons such as The Nature, Pleasure and Advantages of Church-Musick, in 1771, or, The Duty and Manner of Singing in Churches, given in 1772. These sermons were published and circulated among the churches giving parishioners credible grounds and also thoughtful backing for a change in their own congregation's way of singing worship. [4]

This change in musical worship did not always take place smoothly, or then necessarily, with the older generation's approval. In Worcester, Massachusetts, for example, after a congregation had voted to abandon the practice of lining-out in 1773, an aged deacon stood with tears in his eyes and tried to block the singing of the newly instituted choir by loudly lining-out the traditional psalms—an action for which he was censured and deprived of communion. [5]

As more joyful church music became more acceptable, congregations wished to add to their weekly worship with more elaborate songs. The songs of choice were biblically inspired hymns and anthems. These more complex songs appealed to many people because they were exciting to learn and often challenging to the individual. In order to learn and perfect them, many communities supported local singing schools which, in turn, became one of the most important social institutions within the community.

Singing schools had existed in the Colonies since the early eighteenth century to teach the art of psalmody, but this transformation of church music brought the singing school to a greater level of importance. Two types of singing schools emerged. The first was the independently sponsored

singing school which was taught by a singing schoolmaster who advertised his lessons in the local newspaper for all denominations. The second was the congregational singing school which was sponsored by a particular church for the betterment of its youth and the church service.

Although the singing school's stated intention was to train its people, especially the young, for devotional worship, the creation of well-trained singers was also of benefit to the greater community. The vocal skills learned in the singing school were displayed not only at church services, but also at singing school recitals which provided a major source of entertainment for the community. The students of the singing school would also sing at funerals, celebrations, festivals, ceremonies, and on election days, adding the sound of their learned and well-sung music to communal events for the whole community to enjoy.

As the singing school became more established, the school's more talented singers began to be separated into choirs that were able to perform increasingly complex musical selections. One can imagine that a most enjoyable and novel experience for the colonists came by way of first hearing the newly created choirs from the local singing school.

John Adams, writing of his own church's choir, commented that "in the compass of a few years past, [our choir has] carried vocal musick to a degree of perfection unknown in this part of the world till now." [6] Displays of musical progress such as this raised a yearning both within the singers and the listeners for even more music, a want, which produced a buying public ready to consume and financially support a market for more musical pieces.

When singing schools began to at first become widespread, the tunebooks most likely to be used were of English origin. But, with the new energy that the singing school brought to Colonial music, and then too, combining that with a more highly educated group of musical practitioners, songwriting became a popular pastime for many Colonial people. These amateur tunesmiths used their passionate talents to create a growing number of American tunes that would begin to appear in large, compiled volumes beginning in the early 1770s. [7]

Where up until 1770 only a few native tunebooks had existed, by 1800 that number had swelled to 111 tunebooks, 26 of which consisted of entirely American created music. As a strong part of the focus of these tunebooks was turned toward church music, one expert contends correctly, "… in a very real sense, here was the popular music of the people. The artisan hummed snatches of Read's Sherburne, or Edson's Lenox, or Billing's Jordan as he drank his drum or sawed his wood."

Advances in religious music had brought the musical education of the Colonial people to a level never before seen in America. This introduction to a new, well-sung and ear-pleasing music brought to the people by way of the churches and the church related singing schools helped to promote a new American musical market—a market that would, as we will see, continue to encourage and support the creation of a uniquely homegrown, American music throughout the rest of the century. [8]

The Colonial Organist

One of the major changes that the churches of Colonial America underwent, along with the greater acceptance of vocal music, was the introduction of musical instruments into the church service. While we can assume that many different instruments may have at one time accompanied church singers, the organ became the instrument of choice in churches beginning in the early 1760s. Again, if we return to 1761, a visit to Christ Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts would provide witness to the new, finely built Snetzler organ which had just arrived from England. On that same day in Charleston, South Carolina, at St. Philip's Church, a parishioner would be led in song by Benjamin Yarnold, an organist who had emigrated from England over eight years before to lead the church's musical worship. While, at Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg, Virginia, the parishioners were enjoying the musical talents of their own highly regarded organist Peter Pelham.

The acceptance of organs into church services created a large church-driven demand for organs. This demand economically motivated native instrument makers who took up the task of building high quality organs here in America. In time, for about half the price of an imported European model, native organ makers could supply churches with a high quality organ. To see how much the organ market had grown, in 1760, where only a few imported organs had existed in the whole of the Colonies, and those again being mostly in the Anglican churches, by 1774 every Pennsylvania church except for the Quaker used an organ in its services. In America, the most accomplished organ builder in the early 1760s was Philadelphia's Phillip Fyring who had created organs for three Philadelphia churches including an immense organ for St. Peter's Church in 1763 that took up nearly half the gallery and made the seats under the gallery tremble. By the late 1760s David Tannenberg had taken over as the preeminent organ maker in America producing a series of organs for Pennsylvania and New York churches. By way of purchase, donation, or luck, churches found a way to fill their services with organ music. At least one church even profited an organ from British seizure, as was the case of King's Church in Providence. In 1771 British troops raided a Boston concert hall, and finding an organ there, sent the organ to King's Church so that the organ could be used, as one contemporary commentator remarked "not for promoting Festivity, Merriment, Effeminacy, Luxury or Midnight Revelings but rather in the worship of God." [9]

Although the expansion of organ production in America in the 1760s and 1770s is impressive, by far the most important result of the churches more widely using organs was that a person of musical skill was needed to play the instrument. The lack of trained homegrown organ players caused churches to advertise abroad for musicians who were capable of playing the congregation's new organ. This community need brought a crowd of trained European musicians who used the opportunity to settle in America and bring with them their European musical education. These organ players, who first began to arrive en masse about 1770, would be paid a small salary by the

community. The musicians, in order to make a more comfortable living, would then supplement their income by composing, teaching, and giving concerts. These auxiliary musical endeavors promoted music in America in three ways.

First, these musicians raised the music standards within the Colonies by bringing their knowledge of the latest fashions of European music to America. These organists introduced the most famous European composers, inviting and allowing American ears to hear pieces by some of the most talented musical masters in the world. Secondly, these musicians trained in Europe taught the European musical methods and style to American students—a learning which previously would have been available only to Americans who had been fortunate enough to be educated in Europe. Those students who were taught by the emigrant musicians might then take up teaching music themselves which further spread the methods to other students and brought the possession of European musical skills to a larger number of people. Third, European musicians began to give concerts in America creating a taste for high-culture European music within the Colonies—making it more fashionable to buy sheet music, instruments, and to attend more concerts.

One of the first of these emigrant organists was William Tuckey. Tuckey settled in New York around 1753 where he took up the position of organist and choirmaster of Trinity Church and taught music at the church affiliated free school. He also composed anthems, psalms, and odes which were printed in several American collections of the day. In 1760, Tuckey's Thanksgiving Anthem was performed before General Amherst on his return from conquering Canada. In 1770, Tuckey gave a private concert displaying his knowledge of Handel's Messiah. The momentous event was announced in the New York Journal on January 4th of 1770 which stated that Tuckey would present, "A Sacred Oratorio…being an extract from the late Mr. Handel's grand oratorio, called the Messiah, consisting of the overture, and sixteen other pieces…never performed in America." [10] That Tuckey was the first to bring Handel's popular composition to America was an accomplishment in itself, but what is even more impressive is that Tuckey's concert allowed Americans to hear Handel's Messiah at least a full year before it was even heard in Germany. [11]

How vast a contribution the emigrant organists had on the development of American music is immeasurable, but, one can begin to gain an insight into how important their impact was by looking at the increased number of concerts that were given in America from the years of 1760 to 1800. [12]

II.

Early American Concert Life

Newspapers from the Colonial days reveal that as early as the 1730s public concerts were taking place in Boston, Charleston, New York, and Philadelphia. These concerts were generally a combination of both instrumental and vocal music whose programs often presented an assortment of solo pieces, a selection of chamber music, and included numbers that "combined instrumental forces." [13] With a greater general prosperity, and with a growing number of trained musicians and singers, the number of concerts grew with each passing decade leading up to the Revolution.

Early American concerts were of two types, either a benefit concert or a subscription concert. Benefit concerts were single events that were arranged and played with the receipts going directly to some named person or cause. For instance, the Boston organist William Selby gave a concert three months after Cornwallis' surrendered that was advertised "for the Benefit of the Boston Poor." [14]

Subscription concerts were scheduled as a series of musical events with the concerts taking place on a regularly chosen day over a series of months. For this series of concerts a "subscription" fee was paid in advance. For instance we find in the Pennsylvania Packet of September 9th, 1784, not only a proposal for a subscription concert but also an apology for the poorly received showing of the previous year:

> *Mr. Bently once more submits his proposals to the public, for a Subscription Concert, to be continued during the six winter months. Having considerably enlarged his plan, in compliance with the general wish, and having obtained a reinforcement of vocal as well as instrumental performers, he flatters himself*

that he shall be able to furnish a more elegant and perfect entertainment than it was possible to procure during the last winter.

The proposal for this subscription concert included:

1st. *That there shall be a Concert once in two weeks commencing in October: each concert to conclude at half past nine in the evening, after which rooms will be opened to Dancing and Cards.*

2nd. *That every subscriber shall be entitled to tickets for two ladies, besides his own admittance.*

3rd. *That each subscriber pay two guineas and a half.*

The room last season, having been found cold, proper care will be taken to prevent it this season, by placing stoves in different parts, in which the first will be placed in the early part of the day. [15]

From this advertisement we see some of the problems that concert organizers faced in arranging a subscription concert. We also see in the proposal that after the concert was over, dancing and card playing would take place. These early American concerts might be more correctly called social gatherings followed by a dance. On more than one occasion both musicians and music lovers were irritated by an inattentive crowd that might have found it more interesting to socialize throughout the concert. One New Yorker complained in 1764 that "nothing is heard during the whole performance, but laughing and talking very loud, squawling, overturning benches—the result," he said, "of women trying to make themselves noticeable to men." One might surmise that this American concert crowd's behavior was a result of its cultural backwardness but in fact this was the standard behavior at concerts on the other side of the Atlantic as well. Eighteenth century concerts of Europe were noted to be, by more than one commentator, as "notoriously noisy." [16]

The most prominent area of pre-Revolutionary American music culture was found in Charleston, South Carolina. The cool coastal winds brought rich planters for a summer's stay in Charleston where their rich tastes and moneyed purses brought all that America had to offer in the way of

high art music to life. This seasonal retreat to Charleston culminated in the creation of the first musical society in America in 1762 called The St. Cecilia Society. The St. Cecilia Society would hire musicians for a concert season and planned for a series of fortnightly concerts followed by a ball. The Society's orchestra was made up of the Society's members as well as the hired professional musicians, for which, "the managers spared no expense in securing." Musicians were advertised for as far away as Boston, New York, and Philadelphia with some of these musicians, because of the relatively steady income, even able to make Charleston their stable home. [17]

During the Revolution, concert life slowed to a trickle. Only a few concerts were played over the duration of the war and those that were played were for the entertainment of British officers and their guests. After the war, concerts returned with a renewed fervor and American cities rushed to create their own musical societies. The Urania Society, founded in Philadelphia in 1784, was unique in its public-minded attempt to offer both instruction in vocal music and to form a local group large enough to perform pieces of music which required a trained chorus, orchestra, and soloists. The Society performed on May 4, 1786 for the benefit of the Pennsylvania Hospital. The performance included an overture, followed by choral music alternated with several concertos, and concluded with Handel's choral Allelujah. [18]

The Musical Society of Boston, headed by the organist William Selby, performed concerts that featured pieces by Handel and J.C. Bach, and also performed for George Washington's inaugural tour visit to Boston an entire oratorio, Jonah, by the English composer Samuel Felsted. New York formed a musical society in 1791 to "cultivate the science of music, and a good taste in its execution." [19] The Philharmonic Society of New York was founded in 1799 and offered its first concert in December of 1800. But musical societies were not limited to only the largest cities. It is know that Fredricksburgh, Virginia had a harmonic society by 1784 and that Newport, Rhode Island had its own St. Cecilia Society in the 1790s.

What Might Be Played at an Early American Concert

If one were to attend a concert in early America, they would be likely to find a standard concert form consisting of one or two acts with the concert typically lasting about three hours or sometimes even longer. [20]

For example, Josiah Flagg's 1771 concert in Boston offered "vocal and instrumental musick accompanied by French Horns, hautboys, etc." The program consisted of:

Act I.

Overture Ptolomy Handel
Song "from the East breaks the morn"
Concerto 1st Stanley
Symphony 3rd Bach

Act II.

Overture 1st Schwindl
Duet to "Turn fair Clora" (Harrington)
Organ Concerto
Periodical Symphony Stamitz

Act III.

Overture 1st Abel
Duetto "When Phoebus the tops of the hills"
Solo Violin
A new Hunting Song, set to music by Mr. Morgan
Periodical Symphony Pasquale Ricci

New York subscription concerts resumed slowly and unevenly after the war, needing the energy of the distinguished English pianist and composer Alexander Reinagle to revive the New York Subscription Concert series. The first concert of the 1789 season, held on September 22nd, had a program which included the following two acts:

Act 1st.

Overture of Giordani
Song by Mrs. Sewell
Concerto Violoncello Mr. Capron
Overture of Guglielmi

Act 2nd.

Overture of Stamitz
Song by Mrs. Sewell
Sonota Piano Forte Mr. Reinagle
Overture of Gossec

The advertisement further stated that, "after the first act will be performed a Chorus, to the words that were sung, as Gen. Washington passed the bridge at Trenton—the Music now composed by Mr. Reinagle." [21]

A benefit concert featuring mainly American created sacred tunes held in 1796 Newport, Rhode Island advertised this concert form:

Voluntary by Dr. Berkenhead
Holden's Dedicatory Anthem, accompanied by the organ and other instruments
Occasional Ode by Ladies
Billing's Easter Anthem
Ode, by Miss Amelia Dolliver
Cooper's Anthem
Solo by Miss Dolivar
"Ye sons of Men" by Reeves
Solo, by a lady
Voluntary, by Mr. Dolliver
A Hymn-Music by Dr. Berkenhead
The whole to conclude with the celebrated Hallelujah Chorus by Handel. [22]

III.

Family Music

Rather than a high art, most of the music sung, played, or heard in early America was connected with the social activity related to the family. Lacking access to professional musicians, the early American people turned to in-home music to quench a desire for entertainment, refinement, social grace, and cultivated tastes. [23]

Home music making was one of the most enjoyable parts of many people's lives. From personal accounts we often find families enjoying visits from relatives and friends at which, after a round of discussing the latest news or gossip, they might sing songs. From the account of Williamsburg's Anne Blair we get a picture of what these family visits were like.

> *Mrs. Dawson's Family stay'd the Evening with us, and the Coach was at the door to carry them Home by ten o'clock; but every one appearing in great spirits, it was proposed to set at the Step's and Sing a few Song's which was no sooner said then done; while we were thus employ'd, a Candle & Lanthorn was observed to be coming up Street; (except for Polly Clayton censuring their ill taste, for having a candle such a fine Night) no one took any notice of it-till we saw, who ever it was, stopt to listen to our enchanting Notes-each Warbler was immediately silenced; whereupon, the invader to our Melody, call'd out…Charming! Charming! Proceed for God's sake, or I go Home…* [24]

From the diary of Juliana Smith we catch a glimpse of a New England home alive with the festivities of a Thanksgiving Day.

> *Uncle Simon was in his best mood, and you know how good that is! He kept both Tables in a roar of laughter with his droll stories of the days when he was studying medicine in Edinbourgh, & afterwards he & Father & Uncle Paul joined in singing Hymns and Ballads. You know how fine their voices go together. Then we all sang a Hymn… We did not rise from the Table until it was quite dark, & then when the dishes had been cleared away we all got round the fire as close as we could, & cracked nuts, & sang songs & told stories…* [25]

We see from this warm household that not only were religious hymns being sung but also that ballads were providing after dinner entertainment. Church music added to the variety of songs that could be sung at home. But, just as important—if not more important—were the traditional folk songs that were passed down by the elder generations to the younger generations.

These traditional early American folk songs have, for the most part, been left only to our imaginations for a variety of reasons. Many of these songs were taken for granted as simple entertainment and were lost over the generations to general forgottenness. Also, many of the people that sang these folk songs were not generally a writing people, and with most of the writing public being either city dwellers or ministers, the songs which might be deemed less than respectable, or even better forgotten, were not written down. [26]

Whatever the reasons for these songs not being written down or perfectly remembered, these lost folk songs contained much of what was important to the people in their own culture and language. But, some of the traditional songs have survived. English and Scottish ballads have been relatively well-preserved. These ballads were brought to America with their traditional form easily remembered by the repeated four or five line structure that was easily adaptable to a number of different tunes. These ballads told of historical events, of the heroic actions of some forgotten individual, or of some mythical character with supernatural powers. Some ballads were humorous, some fairy tales, some told of lost love or lost loved ones, and some of murderous death. But along with the entertainment that these traditional ballads provided, their stories were often filled with moral instruction.

For instance, in this ballad which tells of an adultery, the punishment is swiftly dealt by the cuckolded husband who first kills her wife's lover and then:

He took his lady by the hair of the head,
And he drug her over the plain;
He drew his sword, and one mighty blow,
He spilt her head in twain, Oh,
He split her head in twain. [27]

One of the most popular ballads of early America was the centuries old Barbara Allen. Many versions of the song exist but all speak of a cold-hearted woman who has abandoned her lover as he lies dying of a broken heart. Because she has committed this transgression her fate is such:

Sweet William he died like it might be today,
And Barbara died tomorrow;
Sweet William he died out of pure, pure love,
And Barbara died for sorrow.
Sweet William he was buried in the new church yard,
And Barbara in another;
And out of his grave there grew a red rose,
From Barbara's grew a briar.

This ballad, a favorite of George Washington, was noted to "often draw tears from listeners especially those ladies of a genteel background." [28]

Family Instruments of Colonial America

Singing music was not the only musical entertainment of early American homes. Landon Carter of Sabine Hall noted in 1771 that "from every house a constant tuting may be listened to, from one instrument or another." [29] By 1760, the want and need for musical instruments in the Colonies was growing. Aside from the obvious entertainment that an instrument could provide for the family, the study of an instrument had become a popular outward sign of social grace

and refinement. By pursuing the study of an instrument themselves, or, by providing for their children's training on an instrument, people of early American society were able to show their refinement to their friends and neighbors.

By 1760 most of the modern instruments were in existence. The most popular instruments in colonial America were often those most easily obtained. The most popular instruments were the harpsichord or spinet (a smaller harpsichord), the guitar, which was primarily considered a women's instrument, and the flute. The flute was one of the most abundant instruments in the Colonies for it was easy to make—and thus inexpensive to buy—and too, relatively easy to learn. The violin was another instrument in demand because of its ability to provide dance music. Dancing was one of the most popular pastimes of early America as we see here from the accounts of New York's Mr. David Codwise:

After the supper came the dancing. There was no music save the fiddles of Castor and Pollux; but was that not enough? Have ever feet tripped more merrily than to the rockling scrape of some inspired old wool-thatched fiddler, swaying to his own strains, and calling out the figures in clear rich tones that harmonized with his wild dance measure as only he could do? [30]

The skill on an instrument might be taught by either local music knowledgeables, passed down from family member to family member, or even in some cases taught by a traveling itinerant music master. These music masters advertised in local newspapers often selling their teaching abilities to "young Gentlemen and Ladies" with the emphasis based upon their "European training and professionalism." Where the organist generally emigrated on the knowledge of some guaranteed musical employment, the itinerant music teacher would often have to travel from town-to-town advertising his skills. Of these early American music teachers, most were located in the South, where home entertainment, due to the greater distances that separated the farming people, was of greater importance, or, in the larger cities of the North where the marks of gentility were more highly sought after. For instance, a more prominent German master named John Stadler rode

through Virginia teaching the Carter, Custis, and Washington families; Ferdinand Grundzweig taught string and keyboard instruments in Charleston; and, in Philadelphia, one could take music lessons from James Bremner at a local coffeehouse. [31]

Music within the family is key to the discussion of the progress of early American music. The support of families who were hungry for music or for musical improvement created a climate that would be potentially beneficial for music masters and instrument makers to immigrate to America. The musical immigrants not only provided the people with the sheet music, the music instruction, and the musical instruments which filled American homes with music, but they also brought with them a knowledge of the finest examples of the best European music of the day—music to fuel the people's imaginations and even inspire some of the early Americans to begin in their attempts to compose their very own music.

IV.

Gentleman Musicians: The American Musical Forefathers

In October of 1760, the South Carolina Gazette carried an announcement for a concert to be given in the port city of Charleston. The organizers asked for "the assistance of the Gentlemen who are the best performers both in town and country." [32] Similar advertisements requesting the services of "gentleman" musicians appeared alongside similar announcements of concerts in newspapers throughout the Colonies. In the 1760s only a handful of professional musicians from Europe could be found in the Colonies, and thus to provide a full concert, a touring musician would have had to rely on the support of the local citizenry to fill the necessary instrumental seats called for in the program. Such calls might often bring the most famous members of colonial society. The letters and diaries of the founding fathers, preserved because of their historical significance, provide a glimpse at the musical talent of men like Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin who were two of the more well-known amateur musicians in early America.

Thomas Jefferson was the prototypical music patron during the early American period. Jefferson was known to play the violin and, as a young man, often joined "two or three other amateurs" in weekly performances at the Governor's residence in Williamsburg, Virginia. Jefferson's skill on the violin was later described by a British captain who was held as a prisoner of war during the Revolution. While the officer was imprisoned he had the opportunity to play duets with Jefferson and stated that he was the "finest unprofessional player" he had ever heard. [33] Jefferson hungered for the musical climate of France and longed to create his own musical world at Monticello. In a letter to a professor at the College of William and Mary, Jefferson wished that he could "find

a gardener, a weaver, a cabinet maker, and a stone cutter who also had enough knowledge of instruments such as the French Horn, hautboy, basson that he could hire without enlarging their domestic expenses." [34] From his journal entries we find that Jefferson did attempt to enrich the musical life at his home. At Monticello, Jefferson gathered the largest private collection of music in early America, often hosted evenings of chamber music, and added a clavichord and a finely built pianoforte to his instrument collection of three fiddles, a spinet, and a guitar. Were it not for his constant problems with debt, Jefferson surely would have become an even greater financial supporter of American music. His letters and writings remind us that in the Colonies there existed a set of musically cultured people who held an insatiable passion for music.

Benjamin Franklin was another famous patriot who was also known for an appreciation of music. Franklin was known to play the guitar and harp, was fond of singing songs, and liked to set his own verses to well-known tunes. Writing from Paris in 1785, Jefferson told fellow music lover Francis Hopkinson that "The Doctr. [Franklin] carries with him a pretty little instrument. It is the sticcado, with glass bars instead of wooden ones." The instrument was a sticcado-pastorle, a sort of glass dulcimer, that Franklin carried around Paris while he served as the American minister to the court of the king of France. [35] Benjamin Franklin, famous for so many things, was also an accomplished musician who applied his legendary inventiveness to the development of musical instruments. His most lasting American musical legacy exists in his improvement of an instrument called the "glassy-chord" which is now known as the armonica. The playing of musical glasses had been popular in Europe for at least one hundred years when Franklin first heard the glasses played at a London concert in the 1760s. An affected Franklin described his experience and the invention that followed in a 1762 letter. "Being charmed by the sweetness of its tones, and the music produced from it, I wished only to see the glasses disposed in a more convenient form, and brought together, so as to admit a greater number of tones, and all within reach of hand to a person sitting before the instrument." [36] The improved instrument was a contained set of different sized musical glasses placed on a horizontal rod which was rotated by a foot pedal. The player

wetted a finger or sponge and ran it over the spinning rims of the glasses to produce a melodic warbling effect. The poet Nathaniel Evans, inspired by hearing Franklin play his instrument, described the sound in verse:

> *Hark! The soft Warblings, sounding smooth and clear, Strike with celestial ravishment the ear, Conveying inward, as they sweetly roll, A tide of melting music to the soul.* [37]

Over the next few decades the music of the glassy-chord was heard in concert both in America and in Europe and its hypnotic tones inspired the likes of Mozart and Beethoven, as well as many other of the period's best known composers, to create pieces that made use of the instrument's unique and ethereal sound.

Among Franklin's correspondences, there appears a letter to Mary Stevenson of Philadelphia which proclaims the ascent of a new American musical age. He wrote that, "Already some of our young geniuses begin to lisp attempts at painting, poetry and music." Two of these young musical geniuses who Franklin might have had in mind were Francis Hopkinson and James Lyon. [38]

The First American Composers

At least by early American cultural historians, Francis Hopkinson is remembered as much for his musical compositions as for his involvement in the creation of the American government. A lawyer by profession, Hopkinson served as a delegate of the Continental Congress, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and took an active part in the Constitutional Convention. Throughout his adult life, Hopkinson's love of music provided him a passionate hobby—a hobby which gave Hopkinson the often cited distinction as America's first composer.

While Hopkinson was still a teenager at the College of Philadelphia, he was known as an amateur composer and performer on the harpsichord and organ. He composed music while at the college, and is generally considered the unnamed author of musical pieces for at least one college production and for the college's commencement of 1760. [39]

In his leisure hours, a young Hopiknson copied the music of celebrated European composers which he collected into a volume of over two hundred pages. Among these songs were six pieces initialed F.H., and it is upon the basis of a song entitled My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free, dated 1759, that Hopkinson is considered to be America's first composer. [40] Hopkinson's interest in music continued throughout his life, and in 1788 he dedicated Seven Songs for the Harpsichord or Organ to George Washington. In the book's dedication he proclaimed, "I cannot, I believe, be refused the credit of being the first native of the United States who has produced a musical composition." [41] Hopkinson is also remembered as the composer of the Temple of Minerva, a song written to celebrate the French and American alliance during the Revolutionary War. To complete the incredible span of his musical influence on America, Hopkinson is also given credit for the popular Washington's March that was played during the revolution by military bands and that was still enthusiastically embraced by audiences throughout the term of Washington's presidency. [42]

Another of these native musical geniuses to which Franklin may have been referring to was James Lyon. Lyon was a native of Newark, New Jersey who displayed his musical dedication while at the College of New Jersey (later Princeton University) where the commencement program for 1759 included an ode, "set to music by Mr. James Lyon, one of the Students." [43] By 1761, Lyon had published an extensive work entitled Urania which he dedicated to "the Clergy of every Denomination in America." In 1764, Lyon was ordained a Presbyterian minister and assigned to Nova Scotia. In 1771, Lyon returned to the Colonies and settled as a pastor in Maine where he remained for most of his life.

Lyon's 1761 Urania was the first native American songbook published in forty years and instituted in print the changes that had occurred in English and Colonial psalmody for the last half century. [44] Although the collection contains a wide range of popular hymns, music historians have determined from notes in his index that Lyon himself must have composed a significant number of songs for the book. Lyon would continue to compose music and remained well- respected on musical matters by his peers throughout his life.

Since Lyon petitioned for the publication of Urania as early as 1760, it can be assumed that some of his works may have been written in or before 1759. Thus, there exists a debate over whether James Lyon, and not Francis Hopkinson, may have been America's first composer. Of course, whether one chooses to recognize Hopkinson or Lyon may be merely a symbolic choice, for it is more than likely that there were other "amateur" composers in the Colonies with compositions that pre-dated both Hopkinson and Lyon. For example, there is some evidence, as music historian Gilbert Chase suggests, that Rev. John Tufts of Boston may have composed his own psalm tunes early in the 18th century. [45] However, and more importantly, that Hopkinson and Lyon were being recognized as America's "first" composers is a significant indication that more attention was being paid by the colonists in the 1760s and 1770s as to what was culturally and uniquely theirs as Americans. To name a "first" in native musical composition was a sure sign that a sense of an American identity was beginning to take shape.

Emigrant Musicians

As instrumental music became more acceptable in the churches of America, individual congregations throughout the Colonies found it necessary to buy or gain an organ. With new organs, parishioners wished to have the best possible organist leading their singing worship. The singing schools continued to be an important social gathering place for the community and a major source of community entertainment. At the same time, elements of American society began to appreciate

and yearn for the latest European musical fashions. It was thus for the improvement of worship, for local pride, for a show of prosperity, for entertainment, and for the training of themselves and their children, that more and more communities were willing to pay for well-trained European musicians to play at their parish organs, to teach their singing schools, and to give local concerts. In their newspapers, towns and cities began to advertise for the talents of musicians from abroad. For those European musicians who responded, the prospects looked bright enough to cross the Atlantic for a new and unknown life.

The emigrant musician could carve out a good existence in America, but he had to be resourceful in order to survive. Despite the professional opportunity provided by the community, the town or city generally could not furnish the transplanted talent with a full-time salary so that even the best trained musicians could not earn a living on music alone. Most would have to have a more prosperous and steady trade to support themselves, however, based on the number of emigrants who came to the Colonies throughout the 1760s and 70s, the possibilities clearly outweighed the potential negatives for many musicians. [46]

One of the first and most prominent of these musical emigrants was William Selby. Selby had been the organist of London's musically distinguished Holy Sepulcher Church but in 1771 he left for Boston. From 1771 to 1775 he gave several concerts in Boston and Newport that not only featured his own compositions, but also the works of the Colonies' favorite composer, Handel. When the war began, Selby, unable to support himself on music alone, and thus typical of the American émigré musicians of the time, was forced to keep a grocery store while he occasionally served as the organist at Boston's King Chapel. When the fighting shifted to the South, Selby had more opportunities to perform. Three months after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, Selby played a selection of European and American songs done for the benefit of the Boston poor. After the war Selby was able to return to concert giving as a means of support. In early 1786, Selby attempted his most elaborate and celebrated concert when he brought the musical ambiance of London to Boston by producing a performance based on the well-reported and extravagant

Westminster Abbey "Commemoration of Handel" held in 1784. Selby presided at the organ for the occasion along with over 70 performers who played before an audience of 2000. Reported in the New York and Philadelphia newspapers, Selby's concert set a new standard for American musicians of the following decades. [47]

During the post-war period, Alexander Reinagle arrived in America. Reinagle was perhaps the best-known of the European musicians to emigrate to the new Republic. Reinagle, a distinguished pianist and composer, was a celebrity of the London music scene, yet, in 1786, he left his home of Portsmouth, England to take up residence in New York. Shortly after his arrival, he gave a successful concert in New York. Reinagle intended to support himself by giving the locals music lessons, but was disappointed to find that the demand did not yet exist in the American commercial center. Reinagle then moved to Philadelphia where he produced city concerts in which he included himself as a featured performer. [48] Through these performances Reinagle introduced American audiences, for the first time, to the works of Joseph Haydn and it was Reinagle who was directly responsible for their publication in America in 1789.

Reinagle not only continued to perform in America but also to compose. In 1792, he was appointed musical manager of a new theatrical company in Philadelphia, a position from which he "earned a living and exerted a wide influence." [49] Much of his music for the theater has been lost, but from existing programs we can see that he kept busy composing pieces for historical tragedies, comic operas, operas, and plays "interspersed with songs." While in Philadelphia Reinagle composed four individualistic piano sonatas which marked the height of his development as a composer.

Native Tunesmiths

In between the more leisured gentleman amateur musician and the professional European musician there fell the unpaved and undefined position of the native American tunesmith. These early American musicians were generally self-trained with little in the way of formal musical

schooling. They commonly did not fill the paid music positions, which were taken by recently emigrated professionals, yet they filled a necessary place in the early American music scene because of their close interaction and intimate knowledge of the musical tastes of the "common" people. Gilbert Chase writes, "they knew what the farmers, and artisans, and tradesman of America wanted. Being of the people they made music for the people." With this intimate knowledge, native tunesmiths were able to make a name for themselves as musicians and take music, despite the lack of a long tradition, and begin to make it America's own. The most highly regarded of the early American tunesmiths was William Billings. [50]

William Billings was born a Bostonian in 1746 and was apprenticed as a tanner while in his youth. He reportedly received some music lessons from the local choirmaster and seems to have studied Tans'ur's Musical Grammar, a popular English Tunebook, but received no formal schooling after the age of 14. Armed with this small bit of musical education, he relied mostly on a natural talent and combined this with a hard working enthusiasm to compose and publish his first tunebook at the age of 24. The book was entitled The New England Psalm Singer or American Chorister. The significance of the Billing's 1770 publication was that, not only had he produced the first tunebook assembled by a single American composer, but also, that he had completed the first collection of entirely American composed music. [51]

Billings continued to devote all of his energy towards music, taking no other trade, and concentrated only on teaching, composing, conducting, and performing. He would produce five more volumes of music in his lifetime with his best work generally thought to be the 1778 publication The Singing Master's Assistant. His tunebooks were filled with hymns, anthems, fuging tunes, concert choir pieces, and secular selections. All together Billings produced over two hundred and fifty hymn tunes and fifty anthems. [52]

His most popular tune remains "Chester," a song from the New England Psalm Singer, which, at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Billings refreshed with patriotic words fitting of the patriot cause.

Let Tyrants shake their Iron rod
And slav'ry Clank her galling Chains
we fear them not we trust in god
New englands god forever reigns

The song became a rallying cry for Washington's troops throughout the remainder of the war and, in part, made Billings the most well-known native composer of early America. [53]

A contemporary of Billing's was Daniel Read. Read was already composing music in his teens and later joined the Continental Army for a brief period of service. Read eventually settled in New Haven, Connecticut where he took up the business of a bookseller and publisher. He continued to compose music and compiled his first songbook which was patriotically titled, The American Singing Book, in 1785. The edition was so popular that he would publish a supplement to The American Singing Book as well as two more songbooks by 1790. Read also began to publish the first musical monthly periodical called The American Music Magazine which according to Read, "intended to contain a great variety of approved music and carefully selected works of the best American and European masters." [54]

Possibly the most lasting song from the early American tunesmiths was Read's fuging tune Sherburne. The popular song was reprinted more than fifty times before 1810, was sung in the North until the time of the Civil War, and continued to be sung in the South deep into the 20th century. [55]

As important as Read's compilations and compositions were, perhaps his most important contribution to the exploration and study of early American music are the letters and journal entries that he meticulously kept which display the intricacies and details of the early American music business. In over half of his approximately nine hundred journal entries there exists some mention of the publishing or selling of music. There are also letters that attempt to solve particular problems faced by the music composers and compilers of the day, and further, a number of letters

addressed to various singing masters, composers, or compilers of greater or lesser renown. From Read's letters we gain an insight into the lives, the methods, the struggles, and the rewards of the early American tunesmiths. [56]

A rival of the popular Billings was Andrew Law, the grandson of the legendary Governor Law of Connecticut. Law received his degree from Brown University, studied divinity privately, and was ordained a minister in 1787. More compiler than composer, Law wished to raise the standards of American music through a combination of introducing good European music to Americans and by attacking those, such as the popular Billings, whom he considered detrimental to native musical improvement. [57] Law also intended through his selections to refocus the use of music for devotional purpose rather than for the "ear tickling" that the compositions of Billings and his students had made popular. [58]

Law's Select Number of Plain Tunes was his first publication in 1777. In his tunebook he attempted to emphasize "progressive improvement" from the "crude" religious songs of the self-made tunesmiths. [59] Law was just as interested in the teaching of music and while in New York attempted to subsidize a singing school that would be, if not free, then nearly free. [60] Law's second publication was The Select Harmony, which would become one of the most popular songbooks of the 18th century. The Select Harmony focused on musical education and was advertised to give "in a plain and concise manner, the rules of singing." In 1793, Law introduced The Musical Primer, a book which attempted to make popular the use of shape notes rather than the standard staff lines in hope of simplifying musical notation so that music could be more easily taught. Law was adapting a system previously created in Europe that used diamonds, squares, triangles, and round shapes to express pitch and time. Law also took the business of music seriously and, in an area where Billings had failed, became, in 1781, one of the first citizens of the new Republic to gain a protective copyright for one of his songbooks. Although not a composer, Law led a movement in American music that strove towards professionalism, consistency, and a seriousness that would last into the 19th century.

V.

The Music of War

If one were to study the Colonial newspapers from the Revolutionary War, they would find a sudden lack of advertisements for both private and public concerts. The low number of concert and musical productions, of course, reveals that to a people at war such cultural events were considered to be less important undertakings. But, where one might assume that the conflict stunted the general growth of music in America, the historical records of the Revolutionary Period instead display the re-direction of a musical energy that had been growing up until the first shots were fired at Lexington and Concord, and, the continued appreciation, importance, and necessity of music within the hearts and minds of the wartime people in early America.

The Songs of the Revolution

As the reality of rebellion overtook the minds of the colonists, much of their creative energy was bound to reflect the serious human issues related to the war. A number of colonial people were inspired by the conflict to produce folksongs and ballads which expressed the emotional struggles of not only the soldier but also of the civilian at home. The songs and ballads motivated by the Revolution served many purposes, to include, of course, providing feelings of comfort in a time of un-comfort, but these songs and ballads of the Revolution perhaps served no greater purpose than to give a sense of rationale and reason to a suddenly disordered society.

A large number of these songs intended to positively affect the wartime moral of the soldier. These songs composed by both soldiers and civilians were often learned and sung around campfires, on marches, in celebration of victory, or to revive spirits after defeat. The importance of these

wartime songs was touched upon by the poet Joel Barlow who upon entering Colonial service wrote, "I have great faith in the influence of songs; and shall continue, while fulfilling the duties of my appointment, to write one now and then…One good song is worth a dozen addresses." [61]

One such ballad that emphasized the courage of the Colonial volunteer is the folk ballad Volunteer Boys whose verses glorify the common Colonial who had chosen to fight for his idea of a new country and potential freedom.

Here's to the squire who goes to parade
Here's to the citizen soldier;
Here's to the merchant who fights for his trade,
Whom danger increasing makes bolder,
Let mirth appear,
Union is here,
The toast that I give is the brave volunteer. [62]

A song penned by Benjamin Franklin and titled The King's Own Regulars; And Their Triumphs over the Irregulars attempts to instill confidence and increased morale by humorously listing, in a British voice, memorable battles at which the "invincible" British regulars were defeated. Along with the defeats at the hands of Scottish Highlanders, the French, and the Native Americans is listed the first victory for the Colonies at Lexington.

Our General with his council of war did advise,
How at Lexington we might the Yankees surprise.
We march'd-and we march'd-all surprize'd at being beat;
And so our wise General's plan of surprise was complete.
O the Soldiers of the King, and the King's own Regulars.

The Colonial Army also received from war inspired songs an ultimate view of what they were warring for. The ballad Columbia, written by army chaplain Timothy Dwight, affirmed for the soldiers their aspirations for their revolutionary cause, and, in a prophetic voice, foresaw the eventual triumph of the Colonials bringing to existence a new paradise of freedom.

Thus, as down a lone valley, with cedars o'erspread,
From war's dread confusion I pensively strayed—
The gloom from the face of fair heaven retired,
The winds ceased to murmur, the thunders expired;
Perfumes as of Eden, flowed sweetly along,
And a voice, as of angels, enchantingly sung,—
Columbia, Columbia, to glory arise,
The queen of the World, and the child of the skies. [63]

Ballads were also used as propaganda to gain support of the Colonial cause before the war, and some songs continued to be used throughout the conflict to gain the backing of the Colonial citizenry. One such song which was written in 1776 is entitled Independence.

Freemen! if you pant for glory,
If you sigh to live in story,
If you burn with patriot zeal,
Seize this bright auspicious hour;
Chase those venal tools of power,
Who subvert the public weal. [64]

Often, wartime ballads attempted to make use of the heroic acts of individual war heroes who exemplified a fervor for the revolution, putting forth in song an example of inspiration which might win over the sympathy of a citizen to the revolutionary cause. One such song was the ballad titled Nathan Hale which tells of Hale's adventures as a spy and of his bravery in the face of execution.

No mother was there, nor friend who could cheer,
In that little stone cell; in that little stone cell.
But he trusted in love, from his father above
In his heart all was well; in his heart, all was well…
The faith of a martyr, the tragedy shew'd
As he trod the last stage; as he trod the last stage.
And the Britons will shudder at the gallant Hale's blood,
As his words do presage, as his words do presage. [65]

The wartime ballads were also often used as a transmitter of wartime news. These songs might tell citizens and the soldiers of the outcome of battles and, depending on for which side the song was intended, perhaps of the ineptitude of the enemy. The defeat of Burgoyne by sharpshooters at Bennington made the eventual surrender of the British at Saratoga probable, and the victory was broadcast through the ballad The Rifleman of Bennington.

Why come ye hither Redcoats, your mind what madness fills?
In our valleys there is danger and there's danger on our hills;
O hear ye not the singing of the bugle wild and free?
For soon you'll know the ringing of the rifle from the tree.

When the surrender at Yorktown did come to pass this type of "singing newspaper" helped disseminate the events of the surrender of Cornwallis. To further add to the British humiliation, this particular musical broadside was set to the British revered military marching tune The British Grenadiers.

Come all you brave Americans,
The truth to you I'll tell,
'Tis of sad misfortune,
To Britain late befell;
'Twas all in the heights of Yorktown,
Where cannons loud did roar,
They summoned Lord Cornwallis,
To fight or else give o'er. [66]

Loyalist Ballads

With approximately ⅓rd of the colonial people in favor of British rule, the Loyalist faction in America drew equal inspiration from the events of the war, and so too, expressed through their created songs the worthiness of their side and beliefs. The Loyalist ballads filled the same role and

function as the Colonials' songs—to increase the morale of those supporting the loyalist cause, to recruit through proclaiming the virtues of British soldiers and their leaders, and to express the emotions of what it meant to be a true loyalist.

Although the existing Loyalist songs are considerably less in number due to their un-American appeal, a good number of these songs have remained preserved which express the sentiments, and also the arguments, of the loyalist in Revolutionary War America.

One such song the loyalist balladeers used to persuade undecided Colonials to their way of thinking, and also to reinforce their belief and argument that the rebels were dishonorable, was this popular song amongst the Loyalists called Burrowing Yankees.

Ye Yankees who, mole-like, still throw up the earth,
And like them, to your follies are blind from your birth;
Attempt not to hold British troops at defiance,
True Britons, with whom you pretend an alliance.

Another such song which reinforces the rightness of being loyal as late as 1780, and which through its words also hopes to prey upon Colonial fears by attacking both the leaders of the Colonial Congress as well as the Catholic French, is the ballad An Appeal.

The old English cause knocks at every man's door,
And bids him stand up for religion and right;
It addresses the rich as well as the poor;
And fair liberty, bids them, like Englishmen fight.
And suffer no wrong,
From a rebel throng,
Who, if they're not quelled, will enslave us ere long;
And if we are conquered we receive the pope's yoke;
But despising the counsels of Adams and Lee,
As Loyal Americans, we'll die or be free.

Although relatively fewer of the Loyalist ballads have survived, these ballads attempted to serve the same purposes as the patriot ballads, appealing to those of loyalist inclination and mindset in a form familiar to hearts and ears. [67]

A Cultural Result

One might not expect that war could cultivate an appreciation in music, but with music being the most prevalent wartime cultural entertainment for the soldiers, the taste for good music grew throughout the conflict. More intricate instrumental music—music that had usually been confined to the cities or to the richer classes—found its way into the ears of soldiers in the camp or on the battlefield. General Washington, speaking on the importance of music to the Continental Army wrote, "nothing is more agreeable, and ornamental than good music; every officer, for the credit of his corps, should take care to provide it." [68] This wartime music encouraged by Gen. Washington was provided by two ensembles—either the fife and drums, connected to the actual army, or by the military bands.

For the Continentals the fife and drums were considered so important that, upon the reordering of the Continental Army based upon the European model, Baron Lafayette issued a general order which stated the music of the army to be "in general very bad" and expected the Majors of the Fife and Drum Corps to "improve it or be reduced." [69] One can see the fife and drum corps' importance to Lafayette in their practical use, as this branch of musicians signaled activities in the camp and gave cadence to the march. [70] These bands were also used for recruitment as well as entertainment in the camp. Over the course of the war the music repertoire and ability of the army bands improved through both measures and circumstance. Commanders, hearing the poor quality of their band, might order specifications on how long fife and drummers were to

practice. Army musicians often received promises of extra pay for their giving music instruction. One Continental fifer reported that his band's ability had improved "from hearing the British play tunes in the distance." [71]

The second important musical group connected with the war was the military band. These well-trained musicians were generally connected to either British regiments, Hessian mercenaries, or to the French allies and were generally employed at the expense of the officers of the regiment. The British bands had first appeared on the American scene at the end of the French and Indian War giving performances in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. During the Revolutionary War, more fashionable Hessian and French bands brought the latest style in European music to the continent and together with the British bands provided an example for the American military to emulate. Despite the lack of native musicians and of a musical military tradition, at least seven well-documented military bands were created during the war. These military bands played at holiday celebrations, college commencements, assemblies, and hangings, and were also used to lift morale, to recruit, and to play at officer's dinners.

By war's end, as a result of the practical need for both a fife and drum corps as well as military bands, a new set of trained musicians were unleashed upon the new Republic. Also, some of the German, French, and British musicians who had stayed behind in the Colonies after the war would train a new generation of American musicians while at the same time displaying their talents to a new and enlarged audience through a suddenly plentiful number of public concerts. As Silverman writes, "when peace returned to America, there quite suddenly appeared more concerts and more musicians in more places than ever before." [72] As a result of the war, a new, larger group of the musically trained, populated the former colonies, and these musicians, along with the increased number of musically appreciative people, would help lead American music to continued and further progress. [73]

A Tune of Surrender

As the British marched out of their fortifications at Yorktown, their military band was reportedly ordered to play the British marching tune The World Turned Upside Down. The tune's popularity with both the British and the Americans had endowed many songwriters throughout the Revolution with a melody to which they could express their own thoughts to music. As a result, by war's end, many versions of the song existed. Of course, as with most of the popular songs of the day, one or two versions were commonly more popular than the others, giving rise to the set of words that may have been traveling through the heads of the defeated British on that October day. Two versions of the song have generally been accepted by American historians for both their humor and their appropriateness in the British humiliation of defeat. One version begins with the nonsensical:

If buttercups buzzed after the bee,
If boats were on land, churches on sea,
If ponies rode men and grass ate the cows,
And cats should be chased to holes by the mouse,
If the mammas sold their babies to gypsies for half a crown;
Summer were spring and the t'other way round,
Then all the world would be upside down.

Another possible version whose words would also fit with the British surrender to the upstart Colonials would be this version which first appeared in print in The Gentleman's Magazine of 1766. The version begins and ends with the following verses:

Goody Bull and her daughter together fell out.
Both squabbled, and wrangled, and made a damned rout,
But the cause of the quarrel remains to be told.
Then lend both your ears, and the tale I'll unfold.
Unwillingly awkward, the mother knelt down,
While the absolute farmer went on with a frown,

"Come kiss the poor child, there come, kiss and be friends!
There, kiss your poor daughter, and make her amends."
"No thanks to you, Mother," the daughter replied;
"But thanks to my friend here, I've humbled your pride." [74]

No matter which version, one can see that the choice of The World Turned Upside Down allowed the British a bit of humor, and perhaps one last barb of insult, in the midst of the humiliation of surrender.

A Song of Victory

As the American and French Armies ceremonially formed the corridor for the surrendering British soldiers to march through at Yorktown, the Continental Army was under orders to remain respectfully silent. Although it can be assumed that both the French and Americans may have jeered at their defeated enemy, the British chose only to look in the direction of the taunting French so that, with the direction of their heads, they were able to snub the victorious Continental Army. As this discourtesy was noticed by both French and American officers, an order was given to the American band. The fife and drums came to life—breaking the silence—shattering the British show of indignity with a blast that startled the British troops and forced them to turn their eyes in the direction of the Americans. The tune chosen by the American band to awaken the British as to their presence was Yankee Doodle. [75]

The foremost historians of this American tune contend that the origin of Yankee Doodle remains as mysterious as ever. Clouding any study on the origin of Yankee Doodle as an American song is that no two of the earliest versions are exactly alike. The tune was often used with words that celebrated such things as local festivals, election days, sexual escapades, and frolics, and was often sung at drinking parties and dances for the humorous merriment of those in attendance.

We know that the song had been in existence in America at least since 1767 from when the earliest known reference to the song titled Yankee Doodle appeared. From a Philadelphia advertisement for an upcoming satire ballad-opera, we see reference to the tune Yankee Doodle which promotes the tune as "A Popular Song" which would lead to the belief that Yankee Doodle was known, and, being a song of northern origin, was known throughout at least the northern and middle Colonies by that time. The version that has come through history to us as the true Yankee Doodle is based upon a visit to a military camp and most probably was either written by a British officer, or, by an American with a penchant for self-humor, as the American troops gathered with the British to attack Fort Ticonderoga in 1758. The song took popular hold in the Colonies, and, on what was to be the first day of revolution in April of 1775 the British marched out of Boston playing the tune Yankee Doodle. As the British marched ready for a decisive fight, they sang such verses as:

Yankee doodle went to town
For to buy a firelock.
We will tar and feather him,
And so will John Hancock.
As for their king, that John Hancock,
And Adams, if they're taken,
Their heads for signs shall hang up high
Upon that hill called Beacon.

As the march progressed, and the singing of Yankee Doodle continued, the soldiers made up their own verses to the melody.

Dolly Bushel let a fart,
Jenny Jones she found it,
Ambrose carried it to the mill,
Where Doctor Warren ground it.
Mistress Hancock dreamed a dream;

She dreamed she wanted something.
She dreamed she wanted a Yankee King
To crown him with a pumpkin.

Although the British had left Boston singing Yankee Doodle to make fun of the Colonials, those who survived the long day's retreat back to Boston had heard enough of the song by that afternoon. As the British were mowed down from two sides of the road by hidden Massachusetts militiamen, fifes were heard along the road playing the "Yankee Song." The music was not coming from the ranks of the retreating British but rather being marched to by a militia company. The tune was picked up and whistled by companies of militiamen on both sides of the road as they marched to fire on the British from behind hedges, stone walls, and under the cover of the woods. [76] After the day was lost, it was reported that one British officer asked another what he thought of the "Yankee Song" now. He fittingly replied that he never hoped to hear that song again for "the Yankees made us dance to it 'till we were tired." [77]

We know that the Americans used Yankee Doodle as one of their rallying songs throughout the remainder of the Revolution, but despite its popularity the story of Yankee Doodle took a strange hiatus from print on the American side of the Atlantic at least until 1794. It is speculated that both the immense popularity of the song and the tendency of Yankee Doodle to be associated with bawdy verses are what may have kept the words that we know today from being published until a decade after the Revolution. [78] The spirit of the song has carried Yankee Doodle to become what most consider to be the American anthem of the Revolution, and too, perhaps the most lasting, memorable song of the early American era.

VI.

The Music of African Slaves

In his Notes on Virginia Thomas Jefferson took the time to recognize the musical ability of Virginia slaves stating "they are extremely gifted, with accurate ears for tune and time and quickness in catching a tune." Although Jefferson's comment may seem modernly paternalistic, he was one of the first public figures that took note of the slaves' musical ability. Jefferson would not only have gained this impression on musical ability from the fields or from his own slave quarters but also from his societal affairs.

Before we speak on the music of slaves in early America it must be remembered that the situation and opportunities of slaves differed throughout the Colonies. Remember that slavery was not only prevalent in the South but was also upheld in the North where the agrarian economy still supported slavery. Also, remember that a slave's opportunity to learn an instrument depended upon the economic means and temperament of their owners. Therefore, some slaves had a greater range of opportunities to learn an instrument or some other musical skill.

With a large majority of the slaves newly transplanted in the Colonies, it can be assumed that one of the only things they brought with them was the music that had previously been a fundamental part of their daily lives in Africa. In West African tradition there are songs for nearly every communal occasion. Traditional songs exist for marriage, war, work, funerals, religious practice, and celebrations, and all express a particular feeling of the community. When the Africans first arrived in America, they were to find that music would remain one of their few comforts in this new way of life and one of their only remaining connections to their previous homeland. Slaves in America would generally find no bar to continuing in this traditional communal singing from

either an overseer or the plantation owner because the slaves singing while at work was widely accepted. It was generally thought that this singing might keep the slaves more submissive and may even increase the productivity of their labor.

Most of the Colonial slaves were in their first or second generation in America and thus many still held onto the religious traditions of their homeland. American slavery's most lasting musical form, the Negro Spiritual, first began to take shape just around the time of the Revolutionary War when Christian missionaries began to capitalize on the slaves general love and practical use of music to convert Blacks to Christianity. The call and response system of psalmody, prevalent in the early American church, perfectly suited the musical religious traditions of the African slaves. These early spiritual songs were often created from the response of some inspired member of the congregation, who in his or her own words, rephrased the religious message that was just preached. If that spontaneous song was good, it might be remembered and sung again at a later gathering.

In the same fashion, the work songs of the slaves—whether it be of the fieldhands, the urban workers, or the servants—were created to relieve the boredom of their work with a song, perhaps spontaneously created out of the tedium of their labor. During their leisure time, with movement restricted and with few entertainments, music served as the slave's main form of entertainment, and one can imagine that slave owners were often, and perhaps unpleasantly, surprised by the re-invigoration of energy that was heard in the music of the slave quarters. Although many of these songs have been lost because they were generally kept only in the slave quarters, some of the best remain passed down by tradition.

With much of their life's pleasure at work, in leisure, and in religious ritual coming from music, it is not surprising that Thomas Jefferson might make such a complimentary remark about the musical ability of slaves. But one can assume that Jefferson may also have been speaking of slaves who were a part of Virginia's high society through their ability to play European instruments.

The Instrumental Ability of Slaves

From the newspapers of early America we find that some of the most telling information about the musical abilities of slaves is found in the slave advertisements of local newspapers. Three types of advertisements reveal the musical ability of slaves. If a slave was for sale, training on an instrument would have commanded a better price. Also, an owner might wish to hire out their slaves by day, month, or year to teach an instrument, or, profit from the musical ability of a slave, which, in these times of little entertainment, would have been a highly sought house commodity. A third type of advertisement would have been those for the return of runaway slaves. By the listing of particular details about the runaway, the owner would hope for a quick return of his property. One can see from these runaway advertisements that musical ability was not that uncommon and that both Southern and Northern slaves sometimes had the opportunity to learn European instruments.

From the Virginia Gazette of August 18, 1768 we learn:

> *Run away from the subscriber in Amelia, in the year of 1766, a black Virginian born Negro fellow named Sambo, about 6 ft high, about 32 years old. He makes fiddles, and can play upon the fiddle, and work at the carpenter's trade.*

From The Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle dated July 10, 1790 we hear of:

> *Ran away on the Monday the 7th of June, a likely mulatto man named Francis… He is about 25 years old…He can write pretty good hand: plays the fife extremely well, and is an incomparable good house servant. I do suppose that he intends to ship himself to Europe or elsewhere.*

From the Poughkeepsie Journal dated January 6, 1796 an advertisement ran that stated:

Run Away – a Negro man, named Zack, about 20 years of age, 5 feet 7 or 8 inches high, born in Connecticut, speaks good English, plays on the fife and German flute; had a fife with him…

And from the City Gazette and Daily Advertiser of July 30, 1799 we see:

Five dollar Reward – Absented himself from the subscriber about the 10th of April, a likely young Negro fellow named Carolina he has always been accustomed to wait in the house; he was seen in the city about ten days ago, dressed in a sailor jacket and trowsers. Carolina plays remarkably well on the violin.

From these chilling advertisements we can see that these runaway slaves with musical ability came from different sections of the country carrying with them their musical ability learned while under the burden of bondage.

African-American Musicians of Renown

We see from the last advertisement that the slave Carolina, who was a house servant, played "remarkably well on the fiddle." The Negro fiddler was a common figure to the land-owning gentry who often had their house servants trained on the violin to add to the house's pleasure and to their own personal prestige. From the reminisces of Samuel Mordecai we hear of two slaves who had attained local celebrity. A servant named Sy Gilliat played so well that he became the official fiddler at the state balls in Williamsburg. Another slave musician in Richmond who went by the name of London Brigs was said to be, "equally skillful on the flute and the clarinet," and, when the capital moved to Richmond, he became Sy Gilliat's assistant. Mordecai remembers, "all sorts of capers were cut to the music of Sy Gilliat's fiddle, and the flute or clarinet of his blacker comrade, London Briggs." It can be assumed that at many social gatherings in both the North and the South that a Black musician would be present to provide entertainment.

A unique story of early American music is the tale of Newport Gardner. Gardner was brought from Africa at about fourteen years of age and sold into slavery where he took a place as a servant in the house of a prominent Newport merchant. There he taught himself the rudiments of music and with the help of Mrs. Gardner furthered his ambition joining the classes of the early American singing master Andrew Law. He soon became Law's equal being able to both read and write music and his voice being "remarkably strong and clear." He concentrated on sacred music and was soon able to teach people who had received even a better musical education. From his students we hear that although Gardner was a good instructor his students had to accept his strict approach to teaching as one of his pupils related, "He carried a cane with an ivory head. I have often seen him rap some of his pupils over the head with it when they broke the rules of the school." Newport continued to teach at the singing school while he looked for a way to return to Africa. In 1791, he and nine other slaves bought a lottery ticket and won two thousand dollars. Although helping him, this amount did not allow him to buy the freedom of his whole family. His owner, moved by overhearing the family's prayer for freedom, granted manumission to Newport and his family.

Staying on in Rhode Island, Newport opened his music studio later that year in 1791, perhaps becoming the first African singing schoolmaster in America. He developed a regional reputation as both a religious singer and as a musician. A music collection published in Boston in 1803 includes a song titled Crooked Shanks that is attributed to Gardner. Gardner stayed in America until old age not setting sail for Liberia until a few months before his death in December of 1825. [79]

Instruments of African Origin

Although slaves sometimes learned European instruments, some slaves remained in practice or learned to be adept at the instruments of their African tradition. These instruments were sometimes brought to America on the slave ships to calm the captives but were more often made of materials that were found in America.

The banjar is probably the most lasting American instrument derived from the African musical tradition. The banjar, a four-stringed instrument with a belly resembling a drum, combined tuned strings with percussion to produce a unique sound. The instrument was later given a fifth string, which expanded the instrument's sound capabilities, and its named changed over time to "banjo"—with its sound still important today within American folk music. [80]

Another African instrument, a type of xylophone called the balafo, is described here in 1793:

> *Musicians arrived with an African Balafo, an instrument composed of pieces of hard wood of different diameters, laid in a row over a sort of bo; they beat on one or the other so as to strike out a musical tune.* [81]

Another instrument of African origin was the song bow. The bow consisted of a string stretched tight from one end to the other of a long flexible board or bow and made music by way of the performer breathing upon the string in a way to cause musical vibration—perhaps at the same time singing. [82]

Other instruments of African tradition that were to be heard in early America included quills, a set of five or more reeds that were played by blowing over the top, drums, although these were sometimes discouraged by slave owners who feared insurrection but whose percussive sounds could be substituted for by tubs or tin kettles, and rattles, which might be made of any materials that the slaves could find. [83]

VII.

The Music of Native American Indians

It is difficult to give a general overview of Native American music in early America for a number of reasons. First, the enormous diversity and the large number of tribes living in America at that time could each lead to its own interesting independent study. Second, large amounts of traditional Native American music are forever lost to antiquity. Thirdly, hardly any of the early European-Americans were musically proficient enough to make a musical study comparing Native American music to European music, nor, was there yet an academic interest to make such a study of Native American music. It is thus the later day studies of Native American music which allow us to make some basic generalizations about the music that the Native Americans might have been singing and playing in Early America.

Native Americans used music mainly for functional or ritualistic purposes. Music was used during dance, religious rites, tribal ceremonies, and games. Songs were not generally composed, rather, the tribe's songs had been the property of the tribe for as long as anyone knew. Songs that came about during a Native American's lifetime were generally created for a particular ritual and were said to have been inspired by a dream. The purpose of the singing or playing of music was meant to invoke, or set in motion, the magic of the particular tribe's religion.

Native American music was primarily vocal and sung mostly by a single voice or by groups in unison. Some musical accompaniment may be present in the way of drums, sticks, beads, rattles, whistles, or a wooden notched flute blown into from the end of the instrument, but independent instrumental pieces would have been extremely rare. The singing itself is made up of brief melodic phrases that are repeated over and over again until another section of ritual begins.

Although we know relatively little about the wealth of Native American music from this time period, it seems as though the characteristics that are present in the Native American music of today held true during the early American period. [84]

VIII.

Into the 19th Century

The 1790s saw America continue its progress in music. Musicians continued to arrive in greater numbers from Europe attracted by the possibilities of the arts in "this young country." Some of the more influential immigrants included Peter Albrecht Van Hagen. Van Hagen, who had been the organist and director of the city concerts of Rotterdam, had immigrated to South Carolina, moved from South Carolina to New York, and then on to Boston, all the time teaching the "violin, harpsichord, tenor viola, violoncello, German flute, clarinet, bassoon, and singing." Van Hagen and his son, a child prodigy on the piano, were said to have covered with their instruction not only Boston but also the neighboring towns of Salem, Dedham, Dorchester, Newton, Cambridge, and Waltham.

Another talented European émigré was James Hewitt. Hewitt was an English violinist and composer and he took his place within the New York music scene to perform, organize subscription concerts, and compose and arrange for the theater group The Old American Company. Hewitt composed two operas that appeared in New York in 1794 but is perhaps most remembered for a musical piece called The Battle of Trenton. The romantic sonata, composed for the pianoforte, musically depicted the events of the Battle of Trenton in scores titled the "Army in Motion," "The Flight of the Hessians," and "The Trumpets of Victory."

One of the most successful composers in America during the 1790s was Benjamin Carr. Carr arrived in New York from London in 1793. He made his American debut as a singer, and made important contributions as a composer, organist, and pianist, but it was his music publishing at the time that did the most for the progress of American music. Carr's most lasting fame comes from

his being considered the first to publish the American Revolutionary War tune Yankee Doodle which appeared in his 1794 composition of the Federal Overture. Carr, along with his brother and father, set up music stores in Philadelphia and Baltimore as well as in New York and imported the best and latest European music. Carr also acknowledged local musical talent in his musical publications including The Gentleman's Amusement, Carr's Musical Miscellany in Occasional Numbers, and launched his weekly Musical Journal in 1800. One of his greatest discoveries of American compositions was that of The President's March by Philip Phile. Americans may well-remember this discovery because it was the tune of The President's March that was later used for the still patriotic Hail Columbia. [85]

American composers of the 1790s, although not yet contributing significantly to the European music scene, did continue to make their marks in religious music. Oliver Holden, remembered most for his tune Coronation, published two works in the 1790s, the second of which contained over 300 pages. Holden's vast collection was said by one contemporary to be "the first American manual to espouse modern European principles." Holden also edited what was one of the most used tunebooks in Early America, The Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony.

Americans also made notable strides in the publishing instruction manuals for the learning of music. Samuel Holyoke published in 1800 The Instrumentalist's Assistant, "the first comprehensive instruction manual for band instruments published in America." How to teach music successfully to those who had little or no musical education had been a question of musical educators throughout the 18th century. Although the idea of using shape notes to accomplish this purpose was not a new idea in America (remember that Andrew Law had published his Musical Primer in 1793), William Little and William Smith attempted to answer the question for American music educators with their shape note publication called The Easy Instructor. The 1798 version of The Easy Instructor was a tunebook that again used a system of shape notes rather than standard musical notation to teach music. By using a different shaped note-head, notes could be instantly recognized, a

benefit that standard musical notation with its need for continual mental computations does not instantly allow. For instance, Little and Smith used a triangle to represent "fa," a round note-head to represent "sol," a square to denote "la," and a diamond shape to represent "mi."

After learning the shape note system one could sing new pieces notated with the shapes almost on sight. The system called by detractors "dunce notes," came to be seen by urbanites as the musical notation of the country people and not up to the standards of European music. The shape note system in America gradually fell out of use in the North but remained in use in the South for years to come. [86]

And so, as America moved into the new century as an independent nation, and continued in feeling, sentiment, and artistic creation to forge its own cultural identity—one separate from Europe—music, too, continued to progress from being what, in the 1760s Benjamin Franklin had called "a new art with us," to, in many ways by 1800, becoming an art that was more uniquely, and distinctly, American.

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