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ABSTRACT

Music and the Making of a Civilized Society:
Musical Life in Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, 1815–1867

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The years 1815 to 1867 marked the first protracted period of peace in Nova Scotia’s colonial history. While the immediate effects of peace were nearly disastrous, these years ultimately marked a formative period for the province. By the eve of Confederation, various social, cultural, political, economic, and technological developments had enabled Nova Scotia to become a mature province with a distinct identity. One of the manifestations of this era of community formation was the emergence of a cosmopolitan-oriented music culture.

Although Atlantic trade routes ensured that Nova Scotia was never isolated, the colonial progress of the pre-Confederation era reinforced and entrenched Nova Scotia’s membership within the Atlantic World. The same trade routes that brought imported goods to the province also introduced Nova Scotians to British and American culture. Immigration, importation, and developments to transportation and communication systems strengthened Nova Scotia’s connections to its cultural arbiters – and made possible the importation and naturalization of metropolitan music practices.

This dissertation examines the processes of cultural exchange operating between Nova Scotia and the rest of the Atlantic World, and the resultant musical life to which they gave rise.
The topic of music-making in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia has seldom been addressed, so one of the immediate aims of my research is to document an important but little-known aspect of the province’s cultural history. In doing so, I situate Nova Scotia’s musical life within a transatlantic context and provide a lens through which to view Nova Scotia’s connectivity to a vast network of culture and ideas. After establishing and contextualizing the musical practices introduced to Nova Scotia by a diverse group of musicians and entrepreneurs, I explore how this imported music culture was both a response to and an agent of the formative developments of the pre-Confederation era. I argue that, as Nova Scotia joined the Victorian march of progress, its musicians, music institutions, and music-making were among the many socio-cultural forces that helped to transform a colonial backwater into the civilized province that on 1 July 1867 joined the new nation of Canada.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

One of the objectives of my research has been to recognize the multitude of voices who contributed to nineteenth-century Nova Scotia’s musical life. This resulting document has been no less the product of many minds and hands, and I want to gratefully acknowledge the support of all those who have helped me along the way.

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I would also like to thank the staff at the University of Toronto Media Commons, the Canadiana Department of the North York Central Library, and the Vaughan Memorial Library of Acadia University for their assistance as I scrolled my way through stacks of microfilm reels. I
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It was ultimately by moving away from Nova Scotia that I became inspired to begin this project. Nonetheless, while living in Toronto enabled me to approach my subject with fresh eyes, being so far away from home has not been easy. These past six years have been immensely improved by the friendship of my fellow graduate students, and I recognize what a privilege it is to have been part of such a supportive group of peers. Colleen Renihan, Eva Branda, Keith Johnston, Mark Laver, and Mark Richards have been providing me with inspiration since I began my Masters degree in September 2005. I am especially grateful to Bettina Ryan and Alexa Woloshyn, who kept me smiling through the tough times, and never allowed me to give up on myself.

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PART 1:

IMPORTING AND ADAPTING
A TRANS ATLANTIC MUSIC CULTURE
CHAPTER 1:

MUSIC-MAKING IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY NOVA SCOTIA: THE FORGOTTEN TRADITION

“Ours is a music-loving culture that welcomes you to sing along, and we’re happy to teach you the words,” promises the opening vignette of the 2010 Nova Scotia *Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide*. A 200-plus page directory containing advertisements, descriptions of popular tourist sites, and contact information, the *Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide* is an annual publication produced by the Nova Scotia Department of Tourism, Culture and Heritage and is one of the principal marketing tools used to promote tourism to the province (see Figure 1.1). The guide begins with a series of eight “vignettes,” each of which features a full-page, glossy photograph. On the page opposite to each vignette is a smaller photograph with a brief caption, accompanied by a short text that explains the imagery’s significance to Nova Scotian tourism. Aside from the first (which offers a general welcome to the province), each vignette promotes a category of popular tourist activity that can be enjoyed in Nova Scotia: food and dining, performing arts, beach-going and coastal adventures, outdoor recreation, historic sites, local culture, and urban attractions. Together, these eight vignettes serve not only as an introduction to the ensuing guide, but as an introduction to Nova Scotia itself, distilling through strategically chosen images and text the “essence” of the Nova Scotian experience: a welcoming atmosphere, refreshing nature enhanced by ample exposure to the Atlantic Ocean, and, above all, a vibrant

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and distinctive culture that embraces and lives in perfect balance with its own history – a history “shaped by the sea” that, clearly, is steeped in musical traditions.²

The third vignette clarifies what kind of music it is specifically that Nova Scotia cherishes:

We love the fiery heat of Acadian fiddles and the soaring melodies of a Celtic ceilidh. We love our roots music that gave Canada great performers like The Rankins and Natalie MacMaster and whose heart still influences our red-hot alt rockers like Joel Plaskett and Wintersleep, and rising artists like The Tom Fun Orchestra, Jenn Grant and Mary Mays.³

Two youthful fiddlers and a bagpiper stand smiling across the page, ready to welcome you to join their ceilidh (see Figure 1.2). They, along with the fiddler and accordionist accompanying the Acadian dancers in vignette seven (see Figure 1.3) are the figureheads of Nova Scotian culture – Nova Scotia’s archetypical musicians.⁴

² “Shaped by the Sea” is a slogan frequently used in media published by Nova Scotia Tourism, including the 2010 Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide (it is printed in the bottom right of the front cover).

³ Ibid., 8 (my emphasis). A similar claim is made on the “Our Cultures” section of the Nova Scotia.com website: “Music and art are mirrors of a culture’s soul. ... From the sizzling fiddles of the Acadian nation to the haunting reels of the Celtic Highlands and through to stylings of today’s hottest alt rock performers, music courses through our hearts and souls like the saltwater that shapes our way of life.” See “Our Cultures,” Nova Scotia.com, last accessed June 2011, http://www.novascotia.com/en/home/discovernovascotia/ourculture/default.aspx.

⁴ The sixth vignette also features musicians: three drummers and a lone fifer clad in eighteenth-century French military costumes leading a procession out of Fortress Louisbourg. However, as the vignette’s text makes clear, their function is to alert tourists to Nova Scotia’s vivid history – one of the principal attractions tourists can experience – and to promote the province’s numerous historic sites, not to represent Nova Scotia’s musical heritage like the Acadian and Celtic fiddlers. Given that the text does not mention music, the sounds emanating from their instruments can be regarded simply as sonic cues, given to keep the historical re-enactment’s procession in line.
More than a century before the Department of Tourism developed the *Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide*, musical imagery was used in another guide book to promote Nova Scotian tourism and commerce. This book was *Rogers’ Photographic Advertising Album*, published in 1871 and currently available as part of the “Virtual Archives” on the website of Nova Scotia’s Provincial Archives. A compilation of photographs of Halifax’s leading businesses of the 1870s interspersed with newspaper-style advertisements, the album was intended for display in shops, hotels, and other public spaces. *Rogers’ Photographic Advertising Album* was, of course, a promotional medium for the businesses featured in the photographs and advertisements, but it also served the larger purpose of promoting the community of Halifax itself. Like in the *Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide*, the album’s images and advertisements reveal that music was an important part of life in Nova Scotia. Unlike today’s tourism guide, however, its archetypical models were not fiddlers or bagpipers, but piano makers and stores specializing in the sale of...
print music (see Figures 1.4 and 1.5). The images in Rogers’ Photographic Advertising Album were not accompanied by any text; if they had been, Rogers might have clarified that Nova Scotians enjoyed the fiery heat of a piano fantasia and the soaring melody of a Handel aria.

1.4 Photograph of J.P. Hagarty's Musical Warehouse, Rogers' Photographic Advertising Album, p. 66
1.5 Advertisement for Wm. Fraser & Sons, Rogers' Photographic Advertising Album, p. 77

In the twenty-first century, though, it is difficult to imagine a piano store – or a concert pianist, opera singer, brass band, symphony, or any other musician or group of musicians representing the Western “written” musical tradition – serving as an icon for Nova Scotia’s musical life. As exemplified by the 2010 Doers’ and Dreamers’ Guide, the widely shared belief is that Nova Scotia’s “authentic” music is folk music – or at least music that bears direct lineage to a roots tradition. This music comprises the aurally-disseminated repertoires of Acadian and Celtic fiddle reels, Gaelic songs, Highland bagpipe tunes, and sea shanties, performed for all to hear at kitchen parties, barn dances, outdoor gatherings, and impromptu jam sessions on the beach. It is music that is part of a centuries-old tradition that was able to be preserved as part of a vibrant living heritage because of Nova Scotia’s insularity, its closely-knit communities, and its resilience against the twin pressures of modernization and globalization.
Without question, “folk” music is an integral part of Nova Scotia’s history, and Nova Scotians living during the nineteenth century fiddled reels and sang folk ballads; however, as the subsequent chapters will reveal, the musical repertoire of Nova Scotia’s pre-Confederation era also included waltzes, fantasias, and opera melodies. In addition to fiddling and singing, Nova Scotians learned to play piano, trumpet, flute, and violin. They studied thoroughbass and harmony, formed choral societies, and joined marching bands. They enjoyed operettas, minstrel shows, and piano concerts. They paid willingly to hear foreign performers play the music that was then popular in London, and lamented the lengthy periods of time separating the arrivals of such performers. To satiate their desire for fashionable entertainment, they imported sheet music and pianos over the vast distances of the Atlantic Ocean, and set about making music for themselves.

The following study advocates for a new conceptualization of “Nova Scotian music” by presenting the history of the importation and performance of “written” music in Nova Scotia during the pre-Confederation period of 1815 to 1867. Over the ensuing chapters, I reconstruct a musical community of performers and audiences, teachers and students, and vendors and consumers that has long been overlooked. I describe how that musical community developed amid the historical conditions of Nova Scotia’s pre-Confederation era, and how the musical practices of that community reflected as well as contributed to Nova Scotia’s colonial progress. Also, by identifying the processes by which this community imported and adapted the musical practices that it valued, I situate nineteenth-century Nova Scotia within a transatlantic context. In doing so, I argue that, by examining the origins and implementation of Nova Scotia’s written musical practices we can recognize another Nova Scotia. This Nova Scotia was also “shaped by the sea,” but it was not the isolated haven from the outside world that we so often find depicted
in public history; rather, it was the home of cosmopolitan-oriented colonists who strove to be part of an international community that embraced, rather than resisted, modernity. 6

Musical Life in an Era of Progress, 1815–1867

The years 1815 to 1867 marked a formative period in Nova Scotian history. British efforts at colonizing the peninsula had only begun in 1749; by 1815, Nova Scotia was little more than a wild frontier — a backwater outpost of the British Empire with the rugged garrison at Halifax passing as a capital city for the tentative settlements scattered around the coastline. Throughout the eighteenth century, Nova Scotia’s role as a shipping depot during the wars between Britain and France, and subsequently the United States, had given the colony a raison d’être; but with the cessation of war in the North Atlantic in 1815, it became questionable whether or not the colonial project could continue in Nova Scotia.

In spite of hard times and grim predictions, Nova Scotia did survive and the project of transplanting British civilization overseas gradually turned tentative settlements into thriving towns. Margaret Conrad and Joseph Hiller describe 1815 to 1867 as a period of colonial maturation, when Nova Scotians began to “express confidence in themselves.” 7 This half century was accompanied by the growth of communities, the formation of institutions, the development of industry and travelways, and the emergence of a collective consciousness that,

6 By “public history,” I refer to the popularly shared system of ideas concerning Nova Scotia’s past and present that is disseminated by a variety of institutions and forms of media, including (but not limited to) published accounts of history, fictional literature, tourism media, cinematic productions, museums, public festivals, and heritage commemorations.

7 Margaret Conrad and Joseph Hiller, Atlantic Canada: A Concise History (Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press, 2006), 94. Conrad and Hiller title the chapter that deals with this era “Maturing Colonial Societies, 1815–60.”
according to historian D.C. Harvey, caused provincial residents to begin to “think as Nova Scotians.”

As these developments brought increasing stability to the lives of middle- and upper-class colonists living in Halifax and other towns, the spirit of progress sweeping through nineteenth-century Britain and North America gained momentum in Nova Scotia as well. Although the province was not as progressive or prosperous as its cultural leaders would have liked, the Nova Scotia that on 1 July 1867 joined the new country of Canada had significantly changed from the tenuous outpost it had been in 1815. As I will argue throughout this dissertation, these changes were accompanied by a burgeoning culture of music-making. Music, in turn, was one of the socio-cultural forces that gave rise to the progress of these formative years.

Ongoing developments to travel and communication enabled Nova Scotia, on the eve of Confederation, to be much better connected to the center of the British Empire as well as to trading partners in the neighbouring United States than it had been in 1749. Even in the earliest days of colonization, though, Nova Scotia was not isolated by its peripheral location in the North Atlantic. In recent decades, historians have begun to explore the idea of an “Atlantic World”: a concept recognizing that the histories of all nations bordering the Atlantic were intertwined by the trading systems that criss-crossed the ocean from the Old World to the New.

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Atlantic since [the mid-fifteenth century], the Atlantic World remains, in the twenty-first century, not only a scholarly entity but a social, political, economic, and intellectual system.”

Thus, the vast ocean that separated Nova Scotians from their fellow Britons overseas also made the province part of a large, international community. Throughout the period of 1815 to 1867 – what I term the “pre-Confederation era” – the ships that helped to form this transatlantic network carried not only goods but people and ideas to Nova Scotia. These trading systems and pathways of immigration ensured that Nova Scotia’s “progress” was always informed by the cultural forces at work throughout the Atlantic World.

The development of Nova Scotia’s musical life, like the settlement of the colony itself, is a story of migration. Just as Nova Scotia’s population by 1867 was comprised largely of people who had immigrated to the colony, or had descended from immigrants, the province’s written musical culture also came from elsewhere. At its most fundamental, this study presents the history of the importation of “written” music to Nova Scotia during the pre-Confederation era of community formation. Over the following chapters I situate Nova Scotia’s musical life within a global context and explore the processes of cultural transmission by which it was able to take form. Nova Scotia may have been only a small corner of the British Empire, but it was nonetheless a well-connected corner. Tracing the origins of imported musical practices, and comparing Nova Scotia’s musical life with that of Britain and the United States enables us to recognize Nova Scotia as a participant in an international culture, and provides us with a lens through which to view the systems and networks of exchange operating throughout the Atlantic World.

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10 Falola and Roberts, xii.
At the same time, Nova Scotia’s membership within this transatlantic community of Anglo people did not make the importation and adaptation of written musical practices a mere matter of course. Musical practices require practitioners: audiences must be willing to listen, and performers must be willing to play. The musical life that developed in Nova Scotia during the nineteenth century did so because Nova Scotians found inherent value in the music with which they engaged. The pleasurable sound of that music, and the enjoyment music-making provided was certainly an important purpose. Music, however, was also an agent of community formation, and as such, an agent of colonialism. Nova Scotia’s musical life was intertwined with various identities: self identities, familial identities, communal, provincial and national identities. Consequently, the story of Nova Scotia’s musical life is also the story of why this imported musical culture was important to those Nova Scotians who chose to participate.

Ultimately, this dissertation is a study of what Howard Becker terms an “art world.”\(^\text{11}\) In the introduction to the *Oxford History of Western Music* (itself a study of a very large art world’s development over a lengthy period of time) Richard Taruskin succinctly explains that an art world “is the ensemble of agents and social relations that it takes to produce works of art (or maintain artistic activity) in various media.” He goes on to describe the study of art worlds as the study of “processes of collective action and mediation,” a study which involves “institutions and their gatekeepers, ideologies, patterns of consumption and dissemination involving patrons, audiences, publishers and publicists, critics, chroniclers, commentators, and so on practically indefinitely until one chooses to draw the line.”\(^\text{12}\) Likewise, the Nova Scotian art world that is the subject of my research also comprises a wide swath of society. It includes teachers, students,


composers, performers, amateurs, professionals, audiences, patrons, politicians, governors, merchants, craftsmen, and other men and women who, amid the social, political, and economic conditions of the mid-nineteenth century, chose to participate in music-making. A few of these members were high-profile Nova Scotians who still retain a place on Nova Scotia’s historical register; however, many more of them were simply “ordinary” citizens, while others who were once considered public figures have faded into obscurity.

Sources

Unlike Taruskin’s art world, however, the art world of Nova Scotia’s musical life in the pre-Confederation era has seldom been attended to by musicologists, historians, archivists, curators, or other preservationists. For this reason, one of the aims of this dissertation is to delineate the parameters of Nova Scotia’s musical life and identify the participants who were involved in importing and naturalizing cosmopolitan music practices. Unfortunately, the tangible evidence of Nova Scotia’s written music tradition before 1867 is limited. Furthermore, since the subject of nineteenth-century Nova Scotian music has seldom been explored, a “resource list” of pertinent documents is currently lacking. Consequently, this project necessitated that a significant amount of time be spent rummaging in archives. Among the most exciting finds of my archival research are several valuable collections of Nova Scotian-owned sheet music; these surviving collections, consisting primarily of bound albums, held by the Nova Scotia Archives, the National Archives of Canada, and the Dalhousie University Archives provide considerable insight into the sale and consumption of music. They also enabled me to
identify twenty-seven works of Nova Scotian-published sheet music previously unknown.\textsuperscript{13} These collections, along with Nova Scotian-authored journals, diaries, letters, novels, and poems illuminate the world of Nova Scotia’s musical amateurs and their domestic sphere.

For music of the public sphere, newspapers are the most comprehensive source of information. In this respect, Nova Scotia is fortunate, because Halifax has had continuous newspaper coverage since 1752. By the nineteenth century, multiple presses were in operation in the city, reporting on both international and provincial news, and offering advertising space to local entrepreneurs. While some newspaper issues certainly have been lost, those issues that have been preserved cover most of the pre-Confederation period. One invaluable source for this project has been the newspaper database compiled by the late historian, Patrick O’Neill. As part of a long-term project documenting Halifax’s theatre history, O’Neill recorded theatre-related newspaper articles and advertisements from 1759 to 1900; these materials are currently available online through the Atlantic Canada Theatre Site.\textsuperscript{14} Although O’Neill’s focus was on theatrical performances, he also gathered information pertaining to other aspects of Nova Scotia’s leisure and entertainment history, including music. O’Neill’s database, along with my own newspaper research, creates a concert calendar for Halifax, and illuminates who the players were in Nova Scotia’s public musical life and what music they performed. Newspaper records also provide a register of persons involved in the music trade, and the types of merchandise they sold. Finally, although music journalism as we know it today was only developing in London, New York, and Boston during the nineteenth century and was not practised in Nova Scotia, newspaper reports


occasionally step across the boundary of description into criticism, providing insight into Nova Scotians’ musical tastes and values.

**Limitations**

While the communal networks and interpersonal linkages that constitute an art world can be both dense and expansive, covering large geographic areas and transcending communal or territorial boundaries, the history of an art world is not the same as the history of a region. My study of the art world of Nova Scotia’s written music is not intended to represent all Nova Scotians’ musical experiences. First of all, since this dissertation concerns the importation of commercial practices, it focuses on the major towns on the Nova Scotian mainland that were situated along the principal travel routes. Rural regions are not addressed, largely due to lack of evidence, but also because these regions were remote and seldom visited by the touring artists discussed in Chapters 2 and 3. Cape Breton, which today is the heartland of Nova Scotia’s internationally-acclaimed Celtic music tradition, only became part of the province of Nova Scotia in 1820. During the nineteenth century, the island was primarily rural, and largely isolated from the rest of the province. (The history of the musical life of Sydney, Cape Breton’s largest town, must remain a project for a later date.)

Of all the mainland communities, Halifax occupies the principal focus of this study. There are significantly more written records of Halifax’s cultural life than there are for other parts of the province, mainly because Halifax had more newspaper coverage than any other Nova Scotian community (both in terms of the number of newspapers, as well as the constancy and longevity of the presses operating within the city). Moreover, the comparative abundance of newspapers available to the modern-day researcher reflects the fact that, as the province’s largest and wealthiest centre and political capital, Halifax was also the primary venue for consumer-
oriented cultural activity, including music performance. Halifax had the greatest concentration of citizens with the financial means to partake in leisurely pursuits such as attending concerts or playing the piano. Halifax had more people willing and able to engage the services of professional musicians, so teachers wishing to pursue a career in Nova Scotia naturally were drawn to Halifax rather than to the outlying towns. Because of its port as well as its population, Halifax was also in a much better position to attract touring performers. Many of the artists introduced in Chapter 3 performed in Halifax simply as part of a stopover on their way to larger centres. Even those who had more time to spend in Nova Scotia, though, spent little time outside the capital. Given that even Halifax offered but limited prospects, it would be difficult for even the most optimistic performer to believe that a trip into the countryside would be worth the effort. Still, although public concerts were mainly a Halifax phenomenon, the art world of written music did extend to the hinterland. This dissertation is admittedly, and necessarily, Halifax-centric, but it will address the musical activities of towns and smaller centres as the available documentation has permitted.

Second, while the performers, teachers, and entrepreneurs linked together within this art world came from various financial and class backgrounds, the persons who functioned as audiences, patrons, and employers were primarily prosperous merchants, university-educated professionals, and political officials. Consequently, this dissertation mainly concerns the musical experiences of Nova Scotia’s élite and middle class – the classes who, as Harvey wrote, “gave tone to society and a stimulus to intellectual activity.”¹⁵ In adopting such a focus, I am perhaps reinforcing the longstanding historiographic tendency of privileging the “privileged,” and am perhaps working against the current trend of giving voice to history’s marginalized peoples.

¹⁵ Harvey, 113.
Nova Scotia’s poor and ethnic minorities, however, seldom had the means or opportunity to participate in commercial music practices, so a study of such an art world must necessarily focus upon the experiences of the people who could afford to indulge in the literate music tradition this dissertation describes.

Nonetheless, although written music may have been the provenance of a select group of Nova Scotians, it should not be dismissed as a minority culture, nor should its significance be underestimated. While the merchants and political élites who participated in such musical practices may have been a numerical minority within the cultural mosaic of Nova Scotia’s towns, their political predominance and control over the province’s capital gave them a symbolic hegemony, which existed, paradoxically, because they were a minority population. After all, the very essence of “éliteness” is a power imbalance marked by the inability of a larger group to fully emulate and participate in the lifestyles of a much smaller yet more powerful group. As part of the culture of the Nova Scotians who made political decisions, controlled print media, and dictated social norms, written music would have had a visibility that extended far beyond the confines of élite social circles.

**Scope**

The common thread uniting the members of this Nova Scotian art world is their engagement with “written” music. Again, I turn to Taruskin in the *Oxford History*, who identifies as the focal point of his art world “literate genres,” meaning “[musical] genres that have been disseminated primarily through the medium of writing.”¹⁶ In his history of music in Newfoundland Paul Woodford provides a slightly more expansive concept of written music,

¹⁶ Taruskin., xxii.
which he defines as “popular, patriotic, religious, and serious music” that “was written down in musical notation and required a certain degree of musical sophistication.” While I disagree with his use of “sophisticated” as a qualifier (from a performance perspective, orally-transmitted music can be equally as or even more sophisticated than that transmitted through notation), in all other respects this definition accurately summarizes the music that is my concern. Although not all of the individual members of this art world were necessarily musically literate themselves, the music they listened to was firmly based in print culture. It was exchanged primarily through the medium of the printed score and generally required some degree of literacy, as well as systematized musical training from its performers. In some cases it is high-art music, such as Handel oratorios or Rossini overtures, but in many cases it was the popular music churned out in mass quantities by British and American publishing houses. Still, whether “popular” or “high-art,” its migration across the Atlantic was facilitated by its existence in notated form. Its public performance generally took the form of a concert in a regulated performance space that catered to and was controlled by the more powerful members of society. Even in private settings, though, it required some degree of regulation, as codified knowledge was essential to realizing an auditory performance from its notated form. Lastly, and importantly, the music of this art world was rooted in commercialism. It was a commodity: a tangible score that could be purchased and sold, a performance that could be exchanged for the price of a ticket, a marketable skill that could be taught to paying consumers.

My focus throughout this dissertation will be on written music performed and/or used in secular contexts. This distinction does not mean that I am omitting sacred music from my

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coverage of Nova Scotia’s written-based musical practices; on the contrary, sacred music will feature prominently, as sacred genres, such as Biblical oratorios, were frequently performed in the secularized setting of public concerts, while sacred music’s agency in moral edification was a topic of public discussion. It does mean, however, that I will not be including written music that was performed in the sacred contexts of religious worship services.

In defining the focal point of my art world as written music, I am excluding the folk traditions widely regarded as Nova Scotia’s “essential” music. In doing so, I am not suggesting that folk and written music existed as binary opposites – completely separate art worlds that never overlapped. Nor am I proposing to dislodge or challenge the esteemed position folk music traditions hold within modern-day Nova Scotian culture. Acadian fiddling, Highland bagpiping, collector Helen Creighton’s beloved ballads, and other aurally-disseminated folk musics were unquestionably an integral part of many Nova Scotians’ lives throughout the nineteenth century. And, more than likely, many people who participated in written musical practices also engaged with various forms of aural music. What I do wish to challenge, however, is the prevailing concept that Nova Scotia’s only music is folk music. With this dissertation, I argue that Nova Scotia’s “music-loving culture” has historically comprised pianists, opera singers, brass bands, and other musicians versed in written, commercial music repertoires, as well as Acadian fiddlers and Celtic bagpipers.

In some cases, the differences between written and folk music are not always clear cut. Scottish “folk” songs, for example, were popular favourites on the concert stage, while some of the “traditional” songs Creighton collected may have first arrived in Nova Scotia along with other pieces of London-published sheet music. The distinction I make is performance context. While we may consider the song “Annie Laurie,” for example, to be “folk” or “traditional” today, in the nineteenth century it was also part of the commercialized musical world steeped in
print culture. Performed on the same stages as high-art music and advertised for sale as “London’s fashionable music,” in this context such music evidences Nova Scotia’s participation in an international art world and music culture.

Intentional or not, the contemporary emphasis placed on folk music has tended to conceptualize Nova Scotia both past and present as conservative and insular. For some inhabitants of Nova Scotia’s remote rural settlements, insularity did indeed characterize their way of life. The concept of Nova Scotia that folk music has been used to promote, however, fails to recognize the cosmopolitan-mindedness of other Nova Scotians, particularly those residing in the province’s urban areas. Viewing written music as part of Nova Scotia’s cultural history reasserts the province as a trading partner within the nineteenth century’s bustling transatlantic network.

So firmly entrenched is the association of Nova Scotia with folk music, though, that whenever I tell someone that I research music in Nova Scotia, the response I get is almost invariably either, “So you study Celtic music – how nice!” or, to a lesser extent, “Does this mean you’re working on Helen Creighton?” Because Nova Scotian music has been so persuasively, and pervasively, essentialized as “folk/roots,” it is helpful to consider briefly how this association was achieved. Although the main body of my dissertation is concerned strictly with events of the nineteenth century, and not with the historiography of how those events came to be represented (or more aptly, forgotten) in modern historical writing, an overview of cultural production and tourism practices in Nova Scotia will help explain why, as of 2011, the province for which history is a principal export knows so little about its own musical past.
From Progressive Province to Land of the Folk

Paradoxically, while today musical images are used to represent Nova Scotia as a haven of tradition, untouched by the ravages of time, in the nineteenth century Nova Scotia’s cultural producers used music to represent their province’s cosmopolitanism, development, and modern achievement. Galvanized by the spirit of boosterism sweeping through the Atlantic World, Nova Scotians at mid century had joined the Victorian march of progress. Cultural producers rallied behind the “progressive” features of their landscape and infrastructure, the signs that they were keeping pace with the developments occurring in Britain’s and North America’s largest centres – developments of which Nova Scotians were well aware. According to historians Ian McKay and Robin Bates, prior to World War I, Nova Scotians considered themselves “world beating Britons overseas, the most progressive people who ever lived.” Rogers’ Photographic Advertising Album is a product of this era, and exemplifies the conceptualization of Nova Scotia that cultural producers strove to create. The Halifax photographically depicted in this album was not intended to be conservative or folkish, nor a haven of tradition; rather, “Collectively, the images create the impression of a small provincial capital that was modern, progressive, perhaps even a touch cosmopolitan, and second-to-none in the advantages offered to its citizens and to

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prospective outside business interests.” Significantly, the advantages Haligonians and their visitors enjoyed included access to printed music and instruments.

After World War I, however, the conceptualization of Nova Scotia as a progressive province began to shift. Since the 1990s, McKay’s scholarship has examined the processes of cultural selection and representation that have contributed to Nova Scotia’s public history. McKay’s central thesis is that, under the leadership of a core group of cultural producers and in response to a larger movement within Western culture, Nova Scotia through the mid-twentieth century came to be represented as an “antimodern” society. As the Western world sought to escape from the “weightlessness, anonymity, uprootedness, and secularism of the twentieth century,” the idea of a rustic, folksy getaway, un tarnished by the corruption of modern society, offered therapeutic appeal. Recognizing the potential this phenomenon held for capital gain, McKay posits that Nova Scotia’s cultural producers (authors, artists, journalists, curators, politicians, etc.) sought to revitalize Nova Scotia’s tourism industry by marketing the province as a rural paradise where the fresh sea air and unspoiled nature would allow visitors to reconnect with the older and simpler way of life its inhabitants still practiced. As cultural producers astutely selected and promoted aspects of Nova Scotia’s history that supported the province’s romanticized designation, “Nova Scotians were told that their society was essentially innocent of

22 For example, Harold Connolly, Nova Scotia’s minister of industry and publicity, wrote a paper in the 1940s entitled “Let’s Cash In on Antiquity” in which he recommended that the province capitalize on the “English, Irish, German and even Scotch origin of our peoples.” See Ian McKay, “Tartanism Triumphant: The Construction of Scottishness in Nova Scotia, 1933–54,” Acadiensis 21/2 (1992): 7.
the complications and anxieties of 20th-century modernity.” This emergent historiography professed that the province’s isolation and insularity had enabled the traditions of its founding cultures to be preserved unaltered, thus making history part of a living experience.

According to McKay, it was during this era of re-imagining Nova Scotia that folk music came to be regarded as the province’s sonic emblem. In his 1994 book, The Quest of the Folk, he identifies folklorist (and quasi-ethnomusicologist) Helen Creighton as one of the key cultural producers who contributed profoundly to the twentieth-century definition of Nova Scotia as a “conservative, traditional, volkish island.” An aspiring author, Creighton recognized the commercial potential of stories based on Nova Scotian folklore, and spent much of her career collecting stories and songs from a select group of rural Nova Scotian fishermen. Her publications of ghost stories and folklore, along with her collected editions of folk songs became immensely popular, and her work achieved a wide following. Creighton became an expert on Nova Scotia’s “essence,” which she believed lived within the isolated rural communities along the province’s south-west coastline. This essence, she asserted, was embodied in the folk ballads she collected. Moreover, her romanticized tales of the province’s “rural folk” emphasized Nova Scotia’s burgeoning identity as a rustic world where the broom of modernity had not fully swept; likewise, the very existence of the folk ballads she collected provided evidence of the province’s antimodernism. By focusing her collecting primarily on music with direct lineage to the folk songs of the British Isles, she also helped to entrench the concept of Nova Scotia’s insularity: Nova Scotia’s settlers had preserved their distinctive traditions because they were sheltered from the outside world, living in a veritable sanctuary for folk music.

23 McKay, “Helen Creighton,” 1–2.
24 Ibid., 11 (McKay’s emphasis).
As McKay and Bates argue in their recent book, *In the Province of History*, the public history to which folk music contributed from the 1920s onward exaggerated, overemphasized, and decontextualized certain details, overlooking, ignoring, and even misconstruing others. Creighton’s collecting practices, for instance, exemplify the selectivity underlying cultural production: Creighton concentrated her collecting on a limited group of fishing communities within Lunenburg and Halifax counties, and out of the folk music she recorded, selected only those songs for publication which met her self-determined criteria. McKay and Bates also reveal, how, under the leadership of long-serving Liberal premier Angus L. Macdonald (1933–40 and 1945–54), Nova Scotia’s Gaelic-Scottish heritage was taken to represent the entire province, embellishing its “antimodernist essence” with tartan plaid. Although settlers from the Scottish Highlands were unquestionably an historically important immigrant group, McKay and Bates argue that, prior to the 1930s, “Scottishness” was only one of numerous Nova Scotian identities. “Scottishness” did not represent Nova Scotian identity any more than did “Englishness” or “Acadian-ness.” A minority population, in the nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries Nova Scotia’s descendents of Highland Scots were either represented as backward and uncivilized, or as simply one strain of a large group of progressive Nova Scotian Britons. By the mid-

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25 According to McKay, Creighton was primarily interested in ballads with discernable origins from the British Isles, and dismissed any songs that were bawdy or had connection to the trade union movement. See “Helen Creighton,” 9–13. Clary Croft, author of Creighton’s posthumous biography, acknowledges that Creighton perhaps did “[overplay] the rural aspect of folk culture”; Croft, however, points out that Creighton’s conceptualization of folk culture was not unique but shared by other eminent cultural authorities (including Marius Barbeau) working in early- to mid-twentieth Canada and the United States. See Clary Croft, *Helen Creighton: Canada’s First Lady of Folklore* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1999), 5.

26 While Nova Scotia’s Scottish population did significantly increase during the nineteenth century, by the mid-twentieth century their descendents still comprised only a minority. As of 1921, the number of Scottish Nova Scotians (148,000) was just over twenty-eight percent of the province’s total population — and that figure included descendents of Lowland Scots, not just the Highlanders whose culture now represents Nova Scotia. Furthermore, although Lowland Scots settled throughout the province, the Highland Scots mainly populated the province’s northern regions of Pictou and Antigonish counties and Cape Breton Island. See McKay, “Tartanism,” 6–8. The name “New Scotland” originates from a royal charter granted in 1621 to Sir William Alexander by England’s King (continued on next page)
twentieth century, however, the theme of “Old Scotland,” had great market potential. Riding the tide of a cultural phenomenon, Macdonald promoted his Scottish ancestry through establishing heritage sites, sponsoring institutions and festivals, installing a kilted bagpiper at the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick border, and even developing several of the symbols now considered to be irrefutable evidence of Nova Scotia’s Scottish essence, including the provincial flag and tartan. Heralded as the New World preserve of Scottish culture, Nova Scotia is now seen “as a romantic manifestation of a culture foreign to two-thirds of its actual residents.”

The triumph of “tartanism” has also enabled the kilted bagpiper and fiddler to usurp Creighton’s Sou’wester-clad balladeer as the quintessential Nova Scotian musician – an archetype that has become even more firmly entrenched since the 1980s because of the international acclaim achieved by several Celtic-roots artists originating from Cape Breton, including The Rankin Family, Ashley MacIsaac, and Natalie MacMaster.

Despite their inaccuracies, though, the tourism-generated “myths” of public history have been pervasive. As McKay remarks, “Indeed, what remains remarkable about the interwar period is the success with which the new definitions of essence were naturalized by Nova Scotians themselves.” The ideologies espoused in the 1920s and 1930s still contribute to twenty-first century Nova Scotian public history through a variety of channels, including public festival planning and promotion, heritage commemoration, and tourism media. As exemplified by the 2010 Doers’ and Dreamers’ guide – which emphasizes Nova Scotia’s natural beauty, relaxing atmosphere, and ample opportunities to experience historic folk culture – many of the
marketing strategies developed in the mid-twentieth century continue to influence Nova Scotia’s public history.

Given that McKay has called into question some of the essential beliefs many Nova Scotians cherish about their home province, and has also cast several respected public figures in a negative light, his work has provoked both criticism and controversy. My intention in this dissertation is neither to corroborate nor continue his line of inquiry into the politics of cultural selection surrounding Nova Scotia’s public history. His work, however, does offer insight into why Nova Scotia’s current music culture has been essentialized as the legacy of folk traditions, and more importantly for the purpose of this study, why written music has received so little attention within public history narratives. Furthermore, by acknowledging that history writing has been agenda-driven and, consequently, selective, McKay allows for the possibility of recognizing a much more complex version of Nova Scotia’s history—a version that includes not only folk music, but a diversity of musical practices and cultures.

While overall I consider McKay’s arguments to be persuasive, I find his writing overly polemical. Also, because his work has centered on prominent individuals, it consequently can give the impression that these individuals were intentionally manipulative and deceptive, rather than simply agents of a larger cultural phenomenon. Clary Croft recognizes that McKay’s intent is not to defame Creighton, but does suggest that the historian’s “pro-socialist attitude” (“a philosophy that is the antithesis of much of Helen’s belief system and way of working”) and tendency to cast judgement based on “current moral and political values” led him to misrepresent Creighton’s interaction with the rural community members from whom she collected. Specifically, Croft argues against McKay’s suggestion that “Helen was condescending to her informants by offering them gifts in lieu of remuneration.” See Croft, 236. He also downplays McKay’s critique that Creighton practiced “cultural selectivity” by collecting only those songs and stories she determined to be of interest based on her own political and moral beliefs. What McKay frames as problematic, Croft presents as matter of fact; he writes, Creighton “had to be true to her own convictions and to those of many of her informants.” See Croft, 228–229 and 236. For a sample of other reactions to McKay’s work, see David Creelman, “Saying What You Mean: Form and Rhetoric in Ian McKay’s The Quest of the Folk,” Stephen Dutcher, “Reflections on Modernity and Antimodernism in Ian McKay’s The Quest of the Folk,” and Greg Marquis, “Commentary: The Quest of the Folk,” all part of the Forum in Acadiensis 35/1 (2005): 127–147. McKay writes, “Every year I get dozens of letters about the book, sometimes from students who want to undertake similar projects, and other times from readers who tell me they have hurled the book across the room, perhaps in the fond hope that some day they will be able to do the same to its author.” See McKay, “The Quest @ 2006,” Acadiensis 35/1 (2005): 152.
Early Research on Nova Scotia, a Canadian Musical “Seed”

Although written musical traditions have been primarily excluded from Nova Scotia’s public history, Nova Scotian music history has been the subject of a small body of musicological scholarship. That literate music was part of life in colonial Nova Scotia is clear from Helmut Kallmann’s landmark book, *A History of Music in Canada 1534–1914*, published in 1960. The first comprehensive English-language narrative of Canadian music history, Kallmann’s study is also one of the first published sources to offer a glimpse into Nova Scotian musical life outside the region’s folk traditions. This textbook presents a survey of musical life in Canada, covering nearly 400 years of a diverse nation’s music history in a single volume; consequently, Kallmann’s discussion of any single event, activity, or individual is necessarily brief. The information he provides on Nova Scotian music-making is primarily factual, highlighting key dates with little explanation of the social context surrounding these events.

Kallmann gives considerable coverage to Nova Scotian musicians and activities, and especially those in Halifax, in the book’s early chapters. One of the oldest substantial Anglophone settlements in British North America (and a military garrison at that), Halifax was one of the first cities in the geographic region that is now Canada to accumulate the population base and social infrastructure necessary to host public music concerts. Halifax was also the first community in British Canada to publish a newspaper (the *Halifax Gazette*, which began publication in 1752) and the records in it are some of the oldest documents of Canada’s public musical life. Kallmann writes of the sale of musical instruments in early Halifax, the installation

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of an organ at St. Paul’s, and the occurrence of public concerts, which often involved the garrison’s regimental band. He also draws attention to smaller Nova Scotian communities, noting the establishment of singing schools and harmonic societies in Liverpool, Lunenburg, Pictou and Antigonish as well as in Halifax in the early nineteenth century. References to the capital city and any other part of Nova Scotia, though, diminish as the narrative progresses.

Chapter 5, on urban musical life at mid century, focuses on central Canada and does not give any indication if the musical practices Kallmann describes occurred simultaneously in Nova Scotia or not. Nonetheless, the sections of his book that do encompass Nova Scotia reveal that some of the colony’s earliest settlers experienced public concerts featuring Western art music, that some residents were musically literate, and that professional musicians did visit, and occasionally settle in the colony.

Preparing this book posed Kallmann with a considerable challenge, because as of the 1950s little research had been done – let alone published – on Canadian music topics other than folk traditions. 31 Nine years after the initial publication of A History of Music in Canada, Timothy McGee commented upon the unfortunate lacuna of scholarship on music in the Canadian Maritimes that Kallmann had encountered. According to McGee, published research on Nova Scotia circa 1960 was “limited to a few general articles and some incidental references to music in works on such related subjects as theatre and culture.” 32 The few articles to which McGee refers were written by Phyllis Blakeley, an archivist at the Public Archives of Nova Scotia. Between 1949 and 1951 she prepared a series of three articles documenting Nova Scotia’s music history from 1605 to 1867 as part of her larger agenda to preserve and record


Nova Scotia’s cultural heritage. Together, these articles function like a narrated timeline, chronologically introducing the reader to highlights of Nova Scotia’s musical past. Blakeley documents musical activities, but does not interpret them; her discussion is strictly dedicated to the creation of an historical record, and does not delve into the social, political, or economic contexts surrounding these activities. Also, although Blakeley lists the names of numerous groups and individuals who contributed to Nova Scotian musical life, she seldom gives any indication of the types of music that they actually performed. Nonetheless, her articles have provided a solid starting point for future research, and her work is noteworthy considering that she addressed Western art music at a time when the popular preoccupation was with Helen Creighton’s folk music research, then in its heyday. Blakeley’s interest in the topic of Nova Scotian literate music is further significant, given that research on Canadian music topics in general was only in a state of infancy during the 1950s.

The Eighteenth Century

Since Blakeley’s expository research and Kallmann’s book, the subject of Nova Scotia’s written music has been broached by several other music scholars. In 1969, McGee prepared a study devoted to Nova Scotia’s capital in the eighteenth century entitled “Music in Halifax 1749–1799.” Although his main focus was on the musical activity at Halifax’s first churches

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34 McGee writes that he was responding to the lack of “initial groundwork on the beginning of music in the Maritimes” made evident in Kallmann’s book, and originally intended this publication to be the introduction to a (continued on next page)
(which Blakeley had not covered), he also provided further documentation of the public concerts Blakeley noted briefly in her articles, and found that, beginning as early as 1785, such events featured music by European composers, including Handel, Haydn, and Pleyel. McGee’s research was expanded upon in three articles by Frederick Hall, a musicologist whose work in the 1970s and 1980s concerned the cultural life of pre-World War II Canada, with a particular emphasis on the eighteenth century. Whereas McGee’s study primarily addressed church music, Hall’s first article focused on music in the secular sphere. Hall documented various musical entertainments at inns, taverns, and public venues, and by carefully scouring eighteenth-century newspapers, created a detailed chronology of performances of ballad operas that took place in Halifax from 1791 to 1798.

In 1987, Hall wrote “Musical Yankees and Tories in Maritime Settlements of Eighteenth-Century Canada,” which explores the role musicians migrating north from New England played in the early cultural life of Nova Scotia and the rest of the Canadian Maritimes, with an emphasis on the Loyalist immigration that followed the American Revolution. This article is particularly noteworthy as it is the first study on Nova Scotian musical life that attempts to explain the relationship between musical activities and socio-political events, rather than presenting a

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chronological survey of dates and names. Likewise, his third and final article dealing with Nova Scotia, “A Prince’s Sojourn in Eighteenth-Century Canada” (1989), explores cause and effect, but through a case study of an influential individual. By documenting the numerous concerts and other entertainments that were sponsored by Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, in Halifax as well as Quebec City, Hall ascertained that the prince’s tenure had a significant impact on the cultural life of both settlements. Hall was able to compile a list of over fifty musical events in Halifax alone known to have resulted from the Prince’s patronage.38

More recently, Nancy Vogan’s research on historical music education practices has resulted in several articles concerning eighteenth-century tunebooks used in Nova Scotia. In 1991, Vogan published a preliminary study of “Mary Miller Her Book,” a 1766 tunebook housed in the Colchester Historical Museum in Truro.39 The book’s original owner, Mary Miller, was the daughter of one of the New England Planters who migrated to Nova Scotia following the Acadian expulsion in 1756.40 The discovery of the “Robert Moor Tunebook” (another Nova Scotian tunebook that likely belonged to a Planter family) prompted Vogan to conduct a textual study comparing this book to Mary Miller’s as well as to other extant eighteenth-century American tunebooks.41 Together, Vogan’s two articles provide empirical evidence that the

39 Nancy Vogan, “The Musical Traditions of the Planters and ‘Mary Miller Her Book’,,” in Making Adjustments: Change and Continuity in Planter Nova Scotia 1759–1800, ed. Margaret Conrad, 247–252 (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991). This series, of which there are now four volumes, was the product of the Planter Studies Centre at Acadia University.
40 The “Planters” were land-seeking settlers recruited to relocate to Nova Scotia from New England following the expulsion of the Acadians. Between 1759 and 1767, nearly 8,000 Planters moved north to occupy the vacant Acadian lands. See Conrad and Hiller, 80.
American singing school movement came to Nova Scotia and retained ties with the singing schools that flourished in the United States.

Ultimately, the combined efforts of Blakely, McGee, Hall, and Vogan reveal that written musical practices have been part of Nova Scotia’s culture since its inception as a British colony. Halifax had not been a settlement for long before musical entrepreneurs made their way to the province and offered music as a commodity to both audiences in the public sphere and consumers in the home. The body of research on early Nova Scotian music is small, but effectively illustrates that the movement of people throughout the eighteenth century, as well as the commercial trade of goods throughout the Atlantic World to Nova Scotia was also accompanied by cultural exchange. How, and why, this exchange continued into the next century are the questions remaining to be answered.

The Forgotten Century

In the half-century and more since Blakeley’s writings on Nova Scotian music, research on Canadian music topics, both historical and current, has gained momentum, and the discipline of Canadian music studies has been – slowly – establishing itself within Canadian universities. Canada’s music history was revisited and expanded in three major publications after Kallmann’s 1960 monograph: Clifford Ford’s *Canada’s Music: An Historical Survey* (1982), Timothy McGee’s *The Music of Canada* (1985), and, most recently, Elaine Keillor’s *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity* (2006). From Kallmann to Keillor, the Canadian musical narrative has expanded both temporally and topically, adding nearly a century to Kallmann’s

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initial end date of 1914, and extending its scope of coverage from strictly Western Art music to include aboriginal, folk, ethnic, and popular musics. The representation of Nova Scotia within this narrative, however, has not proportionately expanded within Keillor’s book. Aside from a short section on twentieth-century popular music “rooted in folk traditions,” Keillor offers little new insight into Nova Scotia’s musical life from that presented in Kallmann’s, Ford’s, and McGee’s narratives. As in the other three books, Nova Scotia receives frequent mention in the early chapters that deal with eighteenth-century British Canada. Into the next century, though, Keillor’s focus shifts to the larger urban centres in Upper Canada and, once again, Nova Scotia disappears almost completely from the narrative by the mid-nineteenth century.

Nova Scotia’s diminishing presence in the Canadian music history narrative may reflect the “centralist bias” that several Atlantic Canadian scholars have identified in texts on general Canadian history. In a series of articles published in *Acadiensis* between 1975 and 1988, these scholars argued that, as chronology passes into the nineteenth century, authors of national narratives tend to shift their attention away from the East Coast and focus almost exclusively on the central provinces – feeding the national myth that events of historical

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43 Keillor, 284.
significance seldom happen in Atlantic Canada. Ultimately, though, a textbook can only be as comprehensive as the primary research that is available, and while the centralist approach to historiography certainly may have influenced Kallmann, Ford, McGee, and Keillor, it cannot be the only factor contributing to the limited coverage these authors grant to nineteenth-century Nova Scotia. Keillor’s 2006 book stands as evidence that the lacuna of scholarship on Nova Scotian music history McGee observed back in 1969 has yet to be filled.

Since Blakeley conducted her initial research, the only music scholars to address music-making in pre-Confederation nineteenth-century Nova Scotia have been Vogan and Paul Martell. Vogan’s 1987 article, “Music Instruction in Nova Scotia before 1914,” as well as her 1991 book co-authored with J. Paul Green, Music Education in Canada: A Historical Account, present a chronological survey of the music-educational experiences available to Nova Scotians in the eighteenth as well as nineteenth centuries, concentrating primarily on the singing schools and community bands that were active during this time period. More recently, she and Bertrum MacDonald co-authored “James Dawson of Pictou and The Harmonicon: Sacred Music for Victorian Maritimers” (2000), which concerns a printed tunebook that was prepared and published in Nova Scotia in the 1830s. Vogan and MacDonald present a documentary study, outlining Dawson’s working career and the stages of The Harmonicon’s development, and

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comparing that book with tunebooks published contemporaneously in Britain and the United States. As in Vogan’s other publications on tunebooks, this study initiates a move toward positioning Nova Scotia’s musical life in a global context.

In 1998, Paul Martell prepared *Music in Nova Scotia – The Written Tradition: 1752–1893* as a curator’s report for the Nova Scotia Museum, the scope and purpose of which distinguishes it from Blakeley’s, McGee’s, Hall’s, and Vogan’s publications.\(^4^8\) While this document is intended to serve as a general reference source, its purpose is also to recommend ways for the Museum to incorporate music in their exhibits and consequently its final chapter is a report that outlines potential opportunities for including music in museum sites, as well as topics for future research. The latter half of the document is essentially an anthology of primary sources on Nova Scotian music-making, excerpted from previously-published diaries and other sources, to aid exhibit planners and researchers. The first section of the document presents four short essays concerning aspects of the use of music in daily life, in order to highlight “music’s role as a social binding agent.”\(^4^9\)

The first essay outlines the significant role the military establishment played in Nova Scotia’s musical life: as a provider of performing ensembles, by way of military and militia bands; as a consumer of musical entertainment; and as an organization that created demand for the sale of print music and instruments. The second essay addresses the relationship between music and dance, and, like the first, uses Nova Scotian documents to illustrate the important social function dancing occupied in colonial society. The third essay describes a collection of 1830s music books held in the Nova Scotia Museum. Once the property of Elizabeth Francklin


\(^{4^9}\) Ibid., 6.
(a member of a wealthy, influential Nova Scotian family), these bound albums of sheet music, which contain “Classical” piano works and arrangements of opera arias, demonstrate how Nova Scotians could access fashionable European music in their homes. Finally, the fourth essay considers how singing schools offered Nova Scotians an opportunity to gain musical training, and how teachers of such establishments were a boon to a community’s musical life.

In the introduction to *Music in Nova Scotia*, Martell openly acknowledges that his document does not present a complete survey of Nova Scotia’s music history, and cautions his readers that it should not be regarded as such. He recognizes that there are numerous topics he could not cover within the constraints of a curator’s report, and declares at the outset that he will not address public concerts (or other musical entertainments featuring professional performers) nor the business of music. Instead, his focus throughout the document is primarily on the musical experiences of amateurs. Likewise, Vogan’s work on nineteenth-century Nova Scotia primarily concerns amateurs’ participatory experiences: both of her articles ultimately concern the means by which Nova Scotians could educate themselves musically, whether by hiring a teacher, joining a singing school, or using a musical “tutor” such as Dawson’s *Harmonicon*. Her research has not – as of yet – encompassed the public entertainments offered to Nova Scotian audiences by professional musicians (beyond singing school masters) who came to Nova Scotia. To this date, Blakeley is still the only researcher to have addressed the range of professional and amateur musical activities practiced in the nineteenth century, and the only one to have indicated the opportunities available to nineteenth-century Nova Scotians who were willing to pay to listen

50 Ibid., 7–8.
51 Martell’s decision to pursue this particular focus may stem from the fact that he tried to make reference to documents easily available to curators within the Nova Scotia Museum network, since one of his primary objectives was to make recommendations for future exhibits. Furthermore, the aspects of domestic and/or amateur music-making he discusses would lend themselves well for inclusion at the Nova Scotia Museum’s sites around the province, many of which are historic homes or properties that emphasize local community history.
to music. Her brief survey remains the only study of public concerts in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia, a topic which in its eighteenth-century context was explored by both McGee and Hall, and received substantial coverage in the four Canadian music history narratives.

In many ways, it may seem curious that eighteenth-century issues predominate in the small body of research on Nova Scotian music. After all, formal efforts to settle the colony only began in 1749. The remainder of that century witnessed Nova Scotia’s formative colonial establishment: these were years of clearing land and building shelter – hardly a period for the substantial development of music institutions. From the disciplinary perspective of Nova Scotian history, however, it is not surprising that music research has tended to target the eighteenth century rather than the more stable years of the nineteenth. In general, historians have been more occupied with Nova Scotia’s involvement in the major British-French-American wars leading up to 1815 and the major immigrations to the province than with nineteenth-century events. The New England Planters and Loyalists immigrations (1759–1767 and 1783) – both of which have factored into Hall’s and Vogan’s work – are each substantial subjects of historical research. Furthermore, Nova Scotia’s eighteenth century is significant from a national perspective because it represents the pinnacle of Anglo-Canadian musical activity at that time.

Aside from Halifax, Quebec was the only other settlement in what is now Canada substantial enough to possess the resources necessary to support professionally-mounted public concerts. In the nineteenth century, however, Toronto and Montreal surpassed Halifax’s size and resources. Their larger populations could sustain more musicians and foster more musical activity than smaller centres like Halifax. Thus, for Canadian researchers interested in aspects of professional music (compositional development, the founding of orchestras, etc.) Nova Scotia recedes from Canada’s cultural foreground in the nineteenth century.
New Directions in Music History: A Future for Nova Scotia’s Past

Another factor that may have contributed to the limited research on nineteenth-century Nova Scotia – and on Nova Scotian music in general – lies within the discipline of musicology itself. Until recently, historical studies in musicology have focused primarily on musical works, and historical narratives most often have been constructed as genealogies that trace the lineage of composers and their style. As Kallmann writes in the introduction to *A History of Music in Canada*, “customarily musical history relates the sequence of composers and changing styles of composition and endeavours to demonstrate the continuity and cohesion of musical effort throughout a defined period and locale whereby mature nations assume a distinct musical character and unity.”\(^{52}\) One addressed the history of a particular region only if that region had been home to a distinguished and renowned composer (i.e., a “great” composer), or had witnessed the development of a distinctive compositional style. The model Kallmann describes, however, holds little application for pre-twentieth century Canada – and certainly little for pre-Confederation Nova Scotia – where music-making has been primarily the domain of amateurs, not professional musicians, and where the absence of trained composers has necessitated the importation of musical works from abroad.

To develop a narrative of Canada’s music history, Kallmann consequently had to employ a different approach. Rather than a history of musical works and their creators, he wrote a history of people and their culture, describing the various musics that have been played across Canada over time and the meanings they have held within Canadians’ lives.\(^{53}\) Even so, echoes of

\(^{52}\) Kallmann, *History*, 3.

\(^{53}\) Beverley Diamond notes Kallmann’s “commitment to ‘social’ history” is progressive for its time, as such social-historical perspectives were not common in musical writing in the 1960s. See Diamond, “Narratives in Canadian Music History,” in *Canadian Music: Issues of Hegemony and Identity*, ed. Beverley Diamond and Robert Witmer (Toronto: Canadian Scholars’ Press, 1994), 142.
traditional musicology still faintly resound in his work. He metaphorically describes his narrative as “[dealing] with the planting of seeds rather than the harvesting of the fruits of a thousand years of civilization”; intentional or not, his choice of the value-laden terms “seeds,” “harvest,” and “fruits” implies that the primarily amateur-dominated Canadian musical activities he describes are lacking in maturity compared to the musical world of Europe. Like seeds, the true value of these activities lies not in their current state, but in their potential to ripen into something more substantial. This “organic” approach to writing music history explains why, as Beverley Diamond has observed, Kallmann, and later Ford and McGee, placed increasingly more emphasis on the professional music scene developing in Canada’s major urban centres (and consequently paid less and less attention to the musical activities occurring in smaller centres, and to amateur music-making in general) throughout the progressive chapters of their books.

With Kallmann’s metaphor in mind, it is also easy to understand why Nova Scotia’s literate music history, especially in its nineteenth-century context, rarely has been the subject of musicological inquiry. While some eighteenth-century Nova Scotian events are notable for their status as Canada’s first musical “seeds,” the small stalks these seeds yielded in the nineteenth century hardly constitute a musicologist’s harvest.

Nonetheless, although it does not equally represent the musical experiences of all Canadians, Kallmann’s narrative is still a significant achievement, especially considering that

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54 Kallmann, History, 3.
55 In her essay analyzing the historiographical approaches inherent in Kallmann’s, Ford’s, and McGee’s narratives, Beverley Diamond observes that their focus is progressively dominated by Canada’s largest urban centres (i.e., Toronto and Montreal) in the chapters dealing with the nineteenth century and later. Diamond’s analysis reveals that the narratives also shift focus topically, becoming increasingly more concerned with aspects of professional music (composers, institutions, etc.), and consequently increasingly less concerned with amateur music-making. The first focus-shift likely stems from the second; the priority these authors grant to professionalism would naturally require them to concentrate their discussion on urban regions that could financially support such a music scene, and thus cause them to turn their focus away from Nova Scotia and other smaller regions in Canada. See Diamond, 143–155.
Kallmann chose as his subject the history of a thinly-populated nation still in its pioneer settlement phase at a time when British scholars considered the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music cultures of their own “mature” nation (in the sense of the longevity of its civilization) to be a barren field. Nicholas Temperley recalls that, as a graduate student at King’s College, Cambridge in the 1950s, he was strongly discouraged from writing his dissertation on the topic of instrumental music in nineteenth-century England. Musicologists worldwide in the 1950s (and for decades to follow) widely accepted the sobriquet *Das Land ohne Musik*, and few British musicologists believed that their national music history post-Purcell and pre-Elgar deserved scholarly investigation. Similarly, Richard Crawford writes that his graduate student work on American music, roughly contemporaneous to Temperley’s on British music, was largely a solitary endeavour, as few other musicologists of the 1950s and 1960s pursued American studies. Those who did, like their British counterparts, could not base their research on an internationally-recognized canon of native-composed music, since composition – and musical life in general – in both nations was largely dominated by foreign musicians. Furthermore, anyone who pursued American studies, like Crawford, faced the additional challenge posed by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America’s status as a frontier nation: the necessarily limited development of professional music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries affords modern-day researchers few opportunities to investigate native composers and compositional practice at all. In Crawford’s words, most musicologists at that time regarded the

United States as a “land where tradition, history, and musical quality ran thin.” If such was true of American music, it is little wonder that Nova Scotia’s musical life has remained a subject largely ignored.

The prejudices that once discouraged musicologists from pursuing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British and American topics have faded, however, along with the supremacy of the “great composers and their works” model Kallmann describes, and both British and American music studies currently are growing scholarly fields. According to Crawford, the celebration of the national bicentennial in 1976 prompted a growing number of musicologists to turn their attention to American music, and by the 1980s a distinctive scholarly movement was underway. Proponents of this movement have since addressed aspects of both American vernacular music and music based on European models, and have investigated various facets of America’s music history, from the practice of singing and domestic music-making to the military’s impact on musical life and the rise of public concerts. Such research has proliferated because American scholars have recognized, as Kallmann did for Canadian music, that American music history cannot be approached from the same perspective as was long used for European music studies. Crawford credits Oscar Sonneck as being the first scholar to “recognize, define, and illustrate a real historiographical philosophy for music in the United States.” Crawford describes Sonneck’s achievement as follows:

For [Sonneck], the true history of American music was not to be found in the realm of composition and style development but rather in an investigation of the country’s musical topography and how it grew. ... By concentrating on a remote past, which he approached by using all available materials – newspapers, periodicals, letters, diaries, printed and manuscript music – he worked to

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58 Ibid., ix.
59 Ibid., ix.
60 Ibid., 24.
reconstruct the circumstances in which his subjects made their music, and hence he discovered a context in which their achievements could be appreciated.\textsuperscript{61}

Crawford also identifies Charles Hamm as another pathbreaker in American historiography, for Hamm recognized the important role mass-marketed music (a topic previously considered unworthy of scholarly study) has played in American musical life.\textsuperscript{62} Nicholas Tawa’s scholarship has likewise concerned commercial music, and over the past thirty-plus years his research has yielded new insight into the American music industry and its associated venue of consumption, the American home.\textsuperscript{63}

Crawford himself advocates for exploring the \textit{use} of, rather than the creation of musical works; such a model is achieved by addressing issues of performance and reception along with composition.\textsuperscript{64} These tenets provide the conceptual foundation for his book \textit{America’s Musical Life: A History} (2001), which “seeks at every point to portray the historical conditions in which music has been made” and recognizes the contribution of singers, players, conductors, teachers, entrepreneurs, writers, and overseas musicians, along with American composers.\textsuperscript{65} A similar historiographical approach underpins Tawa’s book, \textit{High-Minded and Low-Down: Music in the Lives of Americans 1800–1861} (2000), in which he uses an assortment of primary sources, similar to Sonneck, in order to explore the attitudes antebellum Americans held toward music – both literate and oral – and the place they afforded to music-making in their daily lives.\textsuperscript{66}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 25–26.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 31.
\textsuperscript{64} Crawford, \textit{American Musical Landscape}, 35.
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It has taken eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British music studies slightly longer to gain momentum comparable to that which has propelled the study of American music. Temperley edited two landmark publications at either end of the 1980s, *Music in Britain: The Romantic Age, 1800–1914* (1981) and *The Lost Chord: Essays on Victorian Music* (1989); both books were major advancements for British music studies, but in the introduction to *The Lost Chord* he acknowledges that American musicologists were producing more “progressive” research than Britons at that time. In particular, he cites “the study of music history as part of social history or the history of ideas” as one mode of inquiry that was finding more application in the United States than in Britain. Musicology’s “cultural turn,” however, arrived in Britain in the 1990s, and inspired by Nicholas Temperley, social-historian Cyril Ehrlich, music educator Bernarr Rainbow, and other advocates for British studies, a new generation of British scholars has begun to reclaim musical Britain’s lost centuries. In the preface to *Music and British Culture, 1785–1914*, published in 2000, editors Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley write,

A freshness and excitement is abroad in the study of music and culture in nineteenth-century Britain. ... What fascinates all of us, at root, is the sheer vitality of nineteenth-century musical culture, and the importance that music had in the lives of people who created, supported, or consumed it.

Much of the recent research on British music results from the recognition that, while eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britons may have relied heavily on foreign immigrant musicians (e.g., Handel) to compose and perform for them, an appreciation for music was nonetheless firmly

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68 Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman, for example, acknowledge that the “cultural turn” of musicology has brought new vitality to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British music studies. See their introduction to *Music in the British Provinces, 1600–1914*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 1. For a brief summary of the movement to unite musicology with cultural studies, see Jeffery H. Jackson and Stanley C. Pelkey, eds., *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2005), vii–xvii.

embedded in the national culture. Often employing interdisciplinary perspectives, such studies concern the use of commercial and art musics in concert venues, private homes, and community organizations, and explore the networks of people – professional musicians (both foreign and native), amateurs, and audiences – who created Britain’s musical life.

While much of this research not surprisingly focuses on London, an increasing number of scholars are now concerned with music-making in what even Nicholas Temperley once considered a “musical backwater”: Britain’s provincial towns. Peter Holman writes, “perhaps the most impressive feature of English musical life [during the eighteenth century] is that it was not confined to the capital, as it tended to be in autocratic and centralized France or Spain.”

Susan Wollenberg’s *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (2001), Roz Southey’s *Music-Making in North-East England During the Eighteenth Century* (2006), and Rachel Cowgill and Peter Holman’s *Music in the British Provinces, 1600–1914* (2007), along with several essays appearing in other British studies compendiums, support Holman’s claim. This new field of research explores the various musical experiences available to Britons living beyond London, and the conditions under which provincial musical life flourished.

Recent research has also begun to examine music-making in the British colonies, and its relationship to that of the metropole. Ian Woodfield’s *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Society* (2000) examines how British music culture was transported to and transplanted in an overseas colony. Through a study of one

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family’s unpublished letters, Woodfield reconstructs the musical life created in Calcutta by the British community stationed there, and demonstrates that the Anglo-Indians maintained and reaffirmed their British identity through their music-making. Kristina Guiguet’s *The Ideal World of Mrs. Widder’s Soirée Musicales: Social Identity and Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (2004) illustrates, using a detailed analysis of a concert programme, how music was used to define social relationships by an Anglo-Ontarian family. Both Woodfield’s and Guiguet’s research also concerns the roles music played in negotiating family relationships, and how gender in turn mediated domestic music-making.

These and other recent historical studies by musicologists and other researchers on London, provincial Britain, the United States, Canada, and other regions within the British Empire reveal that music was an important element of cultural life throughout the entire Anglo world (that is, the global network of Anglo people that had been forged as a result of Britain’s imperial expansion). While the Anglo musicians of the nineteenth century may not have been the innovators or leaders of Western musical style, they were avid consumers who purchased and listened to music regardless of whether they lived in urban centres or small towns. They were also active music-makers who performed both professionally and privately, and who participated in musical clubs, choral societies, and community bands. Modernization and the prosperity of industrialization endowed a growing number of people with sufficient leisure time to make

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music part of their lives. As economies expanded, as travelways improved, and as provincial and colonial towns matured, a burgeoning middle class created demand for new musical opportunities on both sides of the Atlantic. Thus, while Anglo musicians may not have risen to the forefront of the international stage, these years comprised an era that brought music into the public halls and homes of ordinary people, an era of music-making. By examining subscription lists, concert programmes, diaries, letters, newspapers and published fiction, as well as musical scores; by exploring the connections and pathways that enabled the exchange of cultural ideas and practices; and by considering the causalities and socio-cultural agents that prompted and informed musical practices, recent research has unearthed the richness and complexity of the music-making experienced by professional musicians, amateurs, and audiences throughout the Atlantic World.

The pre-Confederation period was also an era of music-making for the Nova Scotian people. Through their combined writings, Blakely, McGee, Hall, Vogan, and Martell reveal that a diverse group of personalities – amateurs and professionals, civilians and military men, governing class and ordinary citizens – were involved both actively and passively in Nova Scotia’s musical life during the eighteenth century. Following their example, and that of scholars of British and American music history, this dissertation documents the continuation of Nova Scotia’s art world, and interrogates its existence. What conditions enabled music-makers to practice their craft in colonial Nova Scotia? Perched on the edge of the Atlantic Ocean at the meeting point of two powerful nations, how did Nova Scotia’s geographic location and intermediary position between Britain and the rest of North America influence its inhabitants’ musical tastes and practices? Moreover, what value did music hold for the provincial residents of a “backwater” society during an age of community formation and colonial progress?
To address these questions, this dissertation is organized in two parts. The first part establishes the contours of Nova Scotia’s musical life: what Nova Scotia’s musical practices were, where they came from, and who was involved. Chapter 2 provides an overview of the pre-Confederation era, and considers how the social, economic, and technological developments of that era gave rise to a musical culture. Chapter 3 introduces the men and women, professionals and amateurs, foreigners and natives who formed Nova Scotia’s musical community, and by examining their activities, further delineates the various forms of music-making that constituted the nineteenth-century Nova Scotian experience. The musical repertoires with which musicians engaged are examined in Chapter 4, which like the previous two chapters, situates Nova Scotia’s musical life in a transatlantic context.

The second part addresses the role that the imported musical practices identified in Chapters 2 through 4 served in Nova Scotia’s colonial progress. As cosmopolitan-oriented Nova Scotians strove to make their province measure up to the standards of development of the civilized world, the concept of improvement increasingly became a public concern. Because music was perceived as a moral and rational influence, these imported practices offered a means by which to improve Nova Scotians’ individual and collective character. Chapter 5 examines how music, as an agent of socio-cultural formation, could serve to create the class of refined citizens necessary to advance agendas of progress. Finally, Chapter 6 considers how Nova Scotia’s musical life itself constituted a form of progress. As Nova Scotians became versed in the same musical practices as their British and American peers, their accomplishments fuelled the sense of pride burgeoning in Nova Scotia at mid century. The musical institutions that supported their native music-making provided Nova Scotians with proof of their potential and achievement, while the music that they produced served as a celebration of Nova Scotia’s emerging provincial identity.
CHAPTER 2:

THE DAWNING OF A “GOLDEN AGE”:
CONTEXT AND CONDITIONS OF NOVA SCOTIA’S MUSICAL LIFE

“I have every confidence that it will prove useful as a record of the varying events that have at length made Nova Scotia a happy, free, and intelligent province, progressive and prosperous, which may she ever be,” wrote Beamish Murdoch in 1865 in the preface to the first volume of A History of Nova-Scotia, or, Acadie.¹ A landmark work of Nova Scotian history, the series occupied Murdoch (a Nova Scotian lawyer and politician as well as historian) throughout much of the 1860s until the completion of the third and final volume in January 1867. Murdoch’s timing was coincidental, but impeccable all the same: just months after he penned the preface to the third volume, recording over three hundred years of history with keen detail, Nova Scotia’s colonial era came to an end, for on 1 July 1867 Nova Scotia joined with New Brunswick, Quebec, and Ontario to form the Dominion of Canada.

The extent to which Nova Scotia was “progressive and prosperous,” however, was open to debate. On 18 August 1845, the Hutchinson Family Singers of New Hampshire spent six hours in Halifax waiting for a steamer to take them to London for a concert tour. An entry written by one of the singers in the family journal clearly indicates that they did not regret the brevity of their visit: “Halifax is a poor gloomy town. I should judge that the military spirit has crushed the only lofty souls of the people and made them cowards. I pitied the poor haggard

¹ Beamish Murdoch, A History of Nova Scotia, or Acadie, vol. 1 (Halifax: James Barnes, 1865), iii.
looking creatures.”

2. English traveller Isabella Lucy Bird formed a similar impression during her journey through North America in 1854, which she described in her book, *An Englishwoman in America*. Chapter headings such as “An Inhospitable Reception” and “Disappointed Expectations” strongly hint at the opinion she formed during her two-day stay in Halifax and coach ride to Pictou in 1854. “The Nova Scotians appear to have expunged the word *progress* from their dictionary,” she concluded disparagingly.  

Nova Scotians themselves would disagree about their province’s progress, and about what precisely made it “happy, free, and intelligent.” Nova Scotia at 1867 had changed in many ways since the Hutchinsons’ brief experience twenty years earlier, but it still bore strong traces of its colonial origins, with its abundant poverty, limited industrial resources, and tentative economy. Nonetheless, Murdoch’s assertion that Nova Scotia had joined the Victorian march of progress was not simply the singular claim of a proud author, but a prevalent public opinion. Indeed, Nova Scotia’s social, political, economic, and cultural conditions had developed significantly from their state approximately fifty years previously in 1815, when the province passed another significant milestone: the first time since Britain had made a concerted effort to colonize Nova Scotia that the transplanted society did not live under the shadow of war. Although the immediate effects of the transition to peacetime in 1815 were nearly disastrous for Nova Scotia, overall the nineteenth century witnessed population growth, political and social reform, institutional development, and, ultimately, the coalescence of communities into a province with a discernable sense of collective identity. Nova Scotia’s transformation

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2. Dale Cockrell, ed. *Excelsior: Journals of the Hutchinson Family Singers 1842–1846* (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1989), 316. Which member of the family made that remark is not known, as the entry is not signed.

throughout this period was such that historians writing in the early twentieth century would classify the 1850s and 1860s as Nova Scotia’s “Golden Age”; historians have since cast that designation aside in favour of a more nuanced assessment of the pre-Confederation era, but the fact remains that, despite tribulations and limitations, the years between 1815 and 1867 constituted a significant period of development in Nova Scotian history.

Was the pre-Confederation era a “Golden Age” for music? Compared to London, or even Boston, the musical life supported in Halifax – let alone in provincial towns – was limited indeed. Just as Murdoch could look back in 1867, though, and express pride in Nova Scotia’s progress, so too could other Nova Scotians reflect on that same historical trajectory and recognize that significant development had been achieved by their province’s musicians and music institutions. Nova Scotia’s musical life, in many ways, reflected in microcosm the tumultuous years of the pre-Confederation era; there were failures, disappointments, and dashed expectations, but on the eve of the transition to new nationhood, Nova Scotia’s musical world was substantially different than what it had been in 1815. These developments, in turn, were instrumental in helping to transform Nova Scotia’s colonial culture into a culture that reflected the province’s aspirations to be a progressive civilization.

The following chapter outlines Nova Scotia’s transition from a frontier military outpost into a mature provincial society that warranted its own three-volume history. In doing so, it provides an introduction to the opportunities for music-making that this transition afforded.

With the beginnings of British colonization, Nova Scotia became a member of not only the British Empire but of a vast transatlantic network. As technology increasingly strengthened the connections between that network’s member regions, the civilized culture of the Atlantic World gradually took root in Nova Scotia and reinforced its membership within that network. By situating the province’s musical life within the historical context of the progress of the pre-
Confederation era, this chapter illustrates how music was part of that process of cultural transfer, and establishes a framework for recognizing music as one of the various forces that advanced the colonial project.4

Colonial History

Nova Scotia’s history as a British colony of settlement ultimately begins in the year 1749. The Atlantic peninsula, formerly a French possession, actually had become one of Britain’s overseas holdings with the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, although the British Empire took little interest in its new acquisition at the time. Nova Scotia remained a largely uninhabited space until the long-simmering tensions between France and Britain escalated and brought the contest over the Atlantic region into sharp focus at mid-century. As the two countries prepared for a war that would eventually bring all of the North American colonies under British reign, establishing a firm foothold on Nova Scotia’s colonial interior to protect “Acadia” (the term for the Atlantic mainland – see Figure 2.1) against the French military contingent stationed at Fortress Louisbourg (on what is now Cape Breton) became a British priority. On 8 June 1749 General Edward Cornwallis, the newly-appointed governor of Nova Scotia, landed on the Chebucto peninsula accompanied by a transport of military personnel plus 2,500 civilian settlers. Impressed by the large, protected harbour they discovered, Cornwallis’ party began laying the foundations for Halifax, Nova Scotia’s capital city (see Figure 2.2).

2.1 Map of Acadie, 1748 (Map Collection F/202-1748, Nova Scotia Archives)

2.2 “A View of Halifax Drawn from Ye Topmasthead [1750]” (Map Collection S.B. 4, Nova Scotia Archives)
The Effects of War

With the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Britain’s control over Nova Scotia was never again contested; however, the effects of war continued to shape Nova Scotia’s colonization throughout the formative years of the late eighteenth century. Between 1775 and 1815 Britain was involved in three major military conflicts in the North Atlantic: the American Revolution (1775 to 1783), the French Revolutionary/Napoleonic Wars (1793 to 1815), and the War of 1812 (1812 to 1815). Nova Scotia’s close proximity to the sites of conflict meant that each of these three wars had a profound impact on its development, especially in terms of its settlement patterns and economy.

Referring to the tumultuous years between 1749 and 1815, historian John Reid writes, “[the wars] had been destructive but had also reshaped Nova Scotia’s population base and provided a rationale of sorts for the colony’s existence.”\(^5\) Wartime had indeed brought anxiety, due to the disruption of shipping and fishing patterns and the looming threat of a French or American invasion. It, however, had also brought prosperity, and elevated Nova Scotia to a position of strategic importance within Britain’s North Atlantic military campaign. Since much of the military conflict from 1775 onward pitted Britain against the American colonies, British trade was suspended in Boston, New York, and other major ports, forcing Britain’s North Atlantic shipping trade to be rerouted to Halifax. Blockades in Europe forced Britain to look westward for essential supplies, such as timber. Halifax’s harbour served a pivotal role in Britain’s naval warfare, and became the headquarters for the Royal Navy’s North Atlantic

\(^5\) Reid, *Pocket History*, 96.
squadron. The size of the army stationed at the garrison was also increased. The large number of military men inhabiting the city required food and supplies, so Halifax’s merchants benefitted from the military contracts they received, as well as from a general increase in sales due to the city’s swelling population. Meanwhile, the dockyard provided labour opportunities for civilians, whose salaries went back in to supporting the local economy.

The height of wartime prosperity came in 1812 with the outbreak of the second war between Britain and the United States. Nova Scotians were spared from the hardships endured by their fellow British colonists in Upper Canada by an agreement sanctioning trade between Nova Scotia and the neutral New England states. The years between 1812 and 1815 thus constituted a brief, but consequential period of lucrative trading and economic expansion. An anonymous author for the *Acadian Recorder* remarked, “Happy state of Nova Scotia! Amongst all this tumult we have lived in peace and security; invaded only by a numerous host of American doubloons and dollars.” While Halifax profited the most from the economic boom, the benefits of war also filtered down to smaller towns and rural areas; according to David

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6 Two recent books by Julian Gwyn examine the Royal Navy’s operations in and out of Nova Scotia (both at sea and on land): *Frigates and Foremasts: The North American Squadron in Nova Scotia Waters, 1745-1815* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003) and *Ashore and Afloat: The British Navy and the Halifax Naval Yard Before 1820* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2004). Although naval battles did not occur in Nova Scotian waters after 1793, Gwyn demonstrates that Nova Scotia still played an integral part in Britain’s naval warfare. Halifax harbour was the anchoring point for British war vessels in between periods of active duty, and also where vessels received maintenance and repair for battle wounds or routine weather damage. For an overview of British naval operations in Nova Scotia specific to the War of 1812, see introduction and chapters 1 and 2 in John Boileau, *Half-Hearted Enemies: Nova Scotia, New England, and the War of 1812* (Halifax: Formac, 2005), 11–72. The most famous naval battle of the War of 1812 – the bloody but remarkably short battle between the HMS Shannon and USS Chesapeake on 1 June 1813 – exemplifies Halifax’s involvement in North Atlantic naval warfare: the Shannon’s crew was stationed in Halifax, where they trained prior to battle, and returned to Halifax for repairs. The Chesapeake was also brought into Halifax, where its cargo was taken, its crew imprisoned, and its commanding officer (who was killed in battle) was buried.

7 The New England states had refused to participate in the War of 1812, and thus provided a neutral buffer between Nova Scotia and the warring American states.

8 See Boileau, 1–28, for a discussion of Nova Scotia–New England relations during the War of 1812.

Sutherland, the extent of these benefits is difficult to ascertain, but the monetary abundance of the 1812 to 1815 period certainly did allow for more employment opportunities, higher wages, and unprecedented spending on public works.\textsuperscript{10} While it lasted, the wealth that accumulated during the War of 1812 helped to lay the foundations for Nova Scotia’s maturation as the colony transitioned into a new era of peace.\textsuperscript{11}

The economic boom, however, quickly came to an end with the arrival of peace in 1815. Summarizing the spirit of the times, Halifax merchant John Young wrote to his son that year, “The rejoicings of humanity are checked in my bosom by the whispers of self interest as I know not what new direction trade may take ... This peace has blasted all our prospects.”\textsuperscript{12} Young’s apprehensions proved to be well-founded: with war no longer imminent, transatlantic shipping was again rerouted to proceed directly from Britain to the United States, bypassing Halifax. Military spending was curtailed, as the soldiers and navy sailors who once patronized local businesses were reassigned to other locations. The province received a particularly crushing blow when the British naval dockyard was moved to Bermuda in 1819. Business prospects dried up, and as Sutherland writes, “local merchants who had once grown rich by acting as middlemen for the trade of the whole North Atlantic now had to scramble for profit in a depressed colonial backwater.”\textsuperscript{13} Somewhat paradoxically, Nova Scotia’s first protracted period of peace had also ushered in economic recession, instability, and in general, hard times.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., 240.
\textsuperscript{11} See Boileau, 145–165 for an overview of Nova Scotian institutions that benefited or were created from revenue gained during the War of 1812.
\textsuperscript{13} Sutherland, “1810–1820,” 247.
\end{flushleft}
Post-War Economy

Conditions gradually improved throughout the 1820s and 1830s, but as Julian Gwyn explains, pre-Confederation Nova Scotia’s economy was always characterized by a series of ebbs and falls that occasionally caused temporary prosperity, but never allowed for long-term stability or sustainability. The province’s limited natural resources confined large-scale agriculture to pocket regions of the hinterland. Nova Scotia’s ample access to the Atlantic made fishing, shipping, and eventually, shipbuilding important components of the colonial economy, but the province’s water-based industries always faced substantial competition from those in the United States. Furthermore, as a dependent colony, Nova Scotia’s finances were extremely susceptible to fluctuations in the North American and European economies, and to the ramifications resulting from Britain’s political negotiations, especially with the United States. While economic developments of the 1830s culminated to bring the decade to an end with a sense of “optimism and excitement,” crop failures in the 1840s put a halt to that period of prosperity. An even greater problem of the 1840s was Britain’s adoption of free trade policy, which terminated colonial protection from tariffs, and enabled Britain to purchase materials cheaply from the United States that the colonies had once supplied. Nova Scotia’s economy slumped back into decline, as skilled workers left the region in search of better opportunities elsewhere.

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15 T.W. Acheson writes of the 1830s, “The economy had moved in roller-coaster fashion, but there were more heights than depths and the ride had been exhilarating.” In contrast, Acheson classifies the 1840s as the “decade of tribulation.” See Acheson, “The 1840s: Decade of Tribulation,” in Buckner and Reid, The Atlantic Region, 307 and also 308–332.
Economic prospects improved in 1854 with the Reciprocity Treaty, which allowed duty-free trade between Nova Scotia and the United States. Access to the American market substituted for the British market that had been lost, and stimulated Nova Scotia’s shipping and shipbuilding industries. Prospects from these industries, combined with the economic boom caused by the American Civil War in the early 1860s, ushered in a new era of unprecedented prosperity, which led historians of the early twentieth century to designate the 1850s and 1860s Nova Scotia’s “Golden Age.”

Immigration and Population Growth

Despite Nova Scotia’s economic fluctuations throughout the pre-Confederation era, its population steadily grew, creating a different kind of turbulence as people of various religious and ethnic backgrounds all attempted to assert their vision of what Nova Scotia should be and could become. The provincial population at 1817 was just over 81,000. After 1820, the population grew by twenty-five percent within only eight years, reaching a total of 125,000 in 1828. By the time of the 1848 census, the population had grown to 275,000, and by the 1861 census it had reached 331,000. As of 1861, ninety percent of Nova Scotians had been born in the province – a sign, according to Conrad and Hiller, of stability and colonial maturity.

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18 All population figures from 1820 onward come from Reid, *Pocket History*, 96. On the province’s stability and maturity, see Conrad and Hiller, 95–96. Other signs of the population’s stability, according to Conrad and Hiller, were the facts that the ratio of men to women was nearly equal and more than half of the total inhabitants were under the age of eighteen.
Nova Scotia’s population was ethnically diverse, although the majority of inhabitants traced their origins to the British Isles. A significant number of Nova Scotians descended from the 19,000 United Empire Loyalists who had immigrated as refugees to the province following the American Revolutionary War.\(^{19}\) The Loyalists themselves were ethnically heterogeneous, with primarily British ancestry. They came from various regions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and New England to settle in western Nova Scotia from Annapolis County up to the isthmus of Chignecto into Cumberland County; in Yarmouth, Liverpool, and other townships along the south-western coast; and in Halifax. As Gwendolyn Davies writes, by coming to Nova Scotia from a much older colony of settlement, their task in their new home was “to re-establish in this ‘wilderness’ the educational and cultural institutions left behind in America.”\(^{20}\) The Loyalists had an impact on virtually every facet of Nova Scotia’s socio-cultural development, and their guiding influence continued well into the nineteenth century as they passed on their beliefs, knowledge, experiences, and tastes to their Nova Scotian-born descendants.

While the Loyalist migration constituted the largest influx of people to Nova Scotia within a concentrated time period, steady waves of immigration over the subsequent decades were what caused the significant population growth of the nineteenth century. By mid-century,\(^{19}\) Ann Gorman Condon, “1783–1800: Loyalist Arrival, Acadian Return, Imperial Reform,” in Buckner and Reid, *Atlantic Region*, 192.\(^{20}\) Gwendolyn Davies, *Studies in Maritime Literary History* (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991), 36. In “Architecture and Furniture: Defining Identity in Loyalist New Brunswick,” Darrell Butler emphasized the sense of loss most, if not all, Loyalists experienced upon their arrival in Nova Scotia and other parts of the Maritimes. Their evacuation forced them to abandon not only material possessions but entire communities. The harsh conditions and other realities of their new lives in Nova Scotia hardly alleviated this suffering. Butler’s paper was delivered as part of a panel on Loyalists entitled “The Migration of Culture: the Loyalists and the Maritimes” at the 2009 Atlantic Studies Conference at the University of Prince Edward Island. As part of the same panel, Bonnie Huskins, in “‘Shelburnian Manners’ or Something More?: Another Look at Loyalist Sociability in Port Roseway, Nova Scotia,” posited that one of the contributing factors to the town of Shelburne’s failure was the Loyalists’ desire to re-establish their pre-Revolutionary lifestyle. Instead of concentrating on survival, some of the Shelburne Loyalists who had come from privileged backgrounds channelled their energies into reconstructing luxury homes and hosting social entertainments.
Scottish descendants (Highland and Lowland) comprised the overall largest population group, with the Irish a close second, but ratios varied from region to region. Immigrants from the lowland regions of Scotland and their descendants were dispersed throughout numerous Nova Scotian communities. Their language and customs enabled them to assimilate easily, and some of the members of this group comprised a substantial proportion of the province’s successful merchants. Gaelic-speaking immigrants from Highland Scotland and their descendants resided primarily in Cape Breton and in the northern part of the mainland near the Northumberland Strait, in Pictou and Antigonish Counties. In Lunenburg County, many of the residents descended from the “Foreign Protestants” recruited to settle in Nova Scotia from Southern Germany by British agents shortly after the founding of Halifax. In the capital city, the Irish were the majority group by mid-century: census figures from 1871 show that the major ethnic origins of the city’s population were 38.9% Irish, 32.4% English, 16% Scottish, 4.9% German, 3.2% African, and 1.6% French.21

Many of Nova Scotia’s settlers arrived impoverished, coming to the colony in desperation to escape even worse conditions. A significant number of the Gaelic Scottish immigrants from the 1820s onward were evictees of the Highland Clearances that resulted from the collapse of Scotland’s kelp-farming industry. Such immigrants became steadily more destitute throughout the 1830s, and they were joined by the boatloads of starving Irish immigrants who arrived in Nova Scotia in the 1840s seeking relief from the Potato Famine.

21 Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, Halifax: The First 250 Years (Halifax: Formac, 1999), 68. See also Reid, Pocket History, 96.
They, along with the province’s equally impoverished Acadian, Black, and aboriginal Mi’kmaq populations were considered a drain on the province’s resources.\textsuperscript{22}

Other immigrants, though, came from more fortunate backgrounds, and arrived in Nova Scotia with the financial means to establish themselves comfortably. Wealthy immigrants were in the minority, but even during the worst periods of economic decline, Nova Scotia supported a small but politically powerful class of citizens who were able to thrive while the greater portion of the population struggled with poverty. These people were high-ranking government or military officials, descendants of family money, and/or successful entrepreneurs. According to Sutherland, “genteel leisure and conspicuous consumption constituted a large part of the routine” of members of Nova Scotia’s privileged class.\textsuperscript{23} Able to enjoy lives of comparative luxury, they built large estates, which they filled with goods imported from England. Their imported goods included pianos, from which their daughters learned to “elicit ‘mellow and languishing tones’.”\textsuperscript{24} Halifax’s privileged class prompted John MacGregor to remark in the 1820s,

The state of society is highly respectable; and in proportion to the population, a much greater number of well-dressed and respectable-looking persons are observed, than in a town of the same size in the United Kingdom. ... The officers of the civil government, and of the army and navy, mix very generally with the merchants, and gentlemen of the learned professions; and from this circumstance, the first class of society is doubtless more refined than what otherwise might be expected. The style of living, the hours of entertainment, and the fashions, are the same as in England.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{22} Judith Fingard writes that “the majority of both the poor and the casual labour force [in Halifax] came from ethnic backgrounds similar to the slums of other east coast nineteenth-century cities. They were generally Irish or Afro-Nova Scotian.” See Fingard, \textit{The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax} (Potters Lake, NS: Pottersfield Press, 1989), 19.


\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 18 August 1818; quoted in Ibid., 115.

MacGregor also commented upon the lively social life enjoyed by Halifax’s privileged classes, which included balls, dinners, musical soirées, and occasionally, concerts. Amid the poverty and instability that characterized Nova Scotia’s pre-Confederation era, these people sought to emulate the lifestyle of their British peers, and ensured that traces of cosmopolitan culture enlivened the uncertainty of colonial living.

Other immigrants came to Nova Scotia with little, but either they or their descendants were able to achieve some financial stability over time. By the mid-nineteenth century, Nova Scotia supported a small-but-growing middle class. Comprising shopkeepers, tradesmen, clerks, artisans, and professionals, the members of this class increasingly sought to assert their political and social leadership as they achieved economic stability. They also sought to emulate the lifestyle of Nova Scotia’s wealthier citizens, and in some cases, invested in music lessons or joined music societies to occupy their leisure. They too became concert attendees and piano owners, and joined with the province’s élite in importing the ideas and amenities of civilized culture to the colonial province.

As Nova Scotia’s population grew, and frontier settlements turned into established communities, immigrant musicians made their way to Nova Scotia. Of these immigrants, many were from London or other English towns, where the prevalence of foreign musicians caused British musicians to seek out opportunities in the colonies. Nova Scotia was hardly a thriving musical centre – a fact which undoubtedly prompted some musicians to leave shortly after they arrived. Musical immigrants were mostly transient, but nonetheless Halifax was seldom without

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at least one professional music teacher. By the end of the pre-Confederation era, the economic development of provincial towns such as Pictou and Yarmouth, as well as the music societies that formed there, drew immigrant musicians outside the city in search of employment.

Among Nova Scotia’s immigrants there were also successful entrepreneurs, including American bookseller E.G. Fuller, and skilled craftsmen, including German piano-builders Henry and John Philips, who invested in Nova Scotia’s music trade. Often these entrepreneurs had international business contacts that enabled them to import musical goods from British and American metropolitan centres. Some of Nova Scotia’s immigrant entrepreneurs, like silversmith Peter Nordbeck, not only supported the music trade but took leadership roles in establishing Nova Scotia’s musical institutions.

**Halifax and the “Hinterland”**

Halifax between 1815 and 1867 grew from a military garrison of approximately 10,000 inhabitants to a small city of slightly over 25,000. Although the physical structure of the Citadel and other fortifications underwent various phases of neglect and renewal throughout the nineteenth century, the military itself remained a prominent fixture in the city and an integral part of its social and economic infrastructure. The headquarters for Britain’s North American navy and a permanent army garrison, Halifax was the temporary home for numerous high-ranking naval and military officers. Halifax was also visited by a wide array of travellers – some of

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28 The figure for the population at 1815 comes from Reid, *Pocket History*, 91; the figure for the mid-nineteenth century population comes from Reid, *Six Crucial Decades: Times of Change in the History of the Maritimes* (Halifax: Nimbus, 1987), 96. The latter is based on the 1861 census.

whom were very well-known, including Charles Dickens – because its port was one of the primary entry points for British visitors to North America. In addition to bringing people into Nova Scotia’s capital, the dockyards provided the city with a vital source of money-making opportunities. As Halifax vied with the New Brunswick port city of Saint John to be the commercial entrepôt of the North Atlantic, shipping and shipbuilding both became major industries for the city. Many of these businesses’ customers came from the fashionable homes located in the South End, where most élite citizens resided, but these businesses also served the growing middle-class population living in the North End.

As Halifax grew, Judith Fingard writes, “the desire of many to enhance the quality of everyday life in the city, to emulate what was in fashion elsewhere, and to benefit from being part of something larger and more modern bore fruit in a number of ways.”30 Haligonians and visitors alike continued to complain about the city’s dull appearance, dusty/muddy streets, and unsavoury characters, lurking near the dockyards and garrison, but Halifax could nonetheless boast of progress. By the eve of Confederation, Halifax had gas lighting, local and transatlantic telegraph service, and transportation service by both railway and steamship; its cultural infrastructure included a skating rink, a public garden, a theatre, and a public building (Temperance Hall) with an auditorium that could double as a concert venue. Despite its small size and peripheral location, Nova Scotia’s capital city had a discernable cosmopolitan outlook. The development Halifax experienced over the pre-Confederation years was also accompanied by a blossoming culture that supported and encouraged the practice of music.

While Halifax remained Nova Scotia’s largest centre and principal port, the progress of the mid-nineteenth century transformed many other tentative settlements into well-established

30 Fingard et al., 82.
communities, and several towns grew into important commercial centres. Windsor, located on Nova Scotia’s Bay of Fundy coastline (see map in Figure 2.3) was settled by several wealthy Loyalist families in the late eighteenth century, who founded King’s College – the first Anglophone university in what is now Canada – in 1791. Over the course of the nineteenth century Windsor developed into an affluent town, and one of the seven leading ports within the Maritime provinces. Another important port town was Pictou, located in northern Nova Scotia on the Northumberland Strait coastline. Pictou, and also Antigonish, were the primary destinations for the earliest waves of Scottish immigration, which brought educated families and several successful merchants into the region. Pictou emerged early on as an important centre for commerce, as well as for education, print culture, and literacy. Along the province’s south-west Atlantic coast, shipping, and later, shipbuilding helped fuel the growth of “South Shore” towns, including Lunenburg and Liverpool. Yarmouth, on Nova Scotia’s southern-most end, was the fourth leading port town of the nineteenth century. As these and other towns grew, they began to establish the social infrastructure that was developing on a larger scale in Halifax, such as schools and civic offices, and also public buildings that could double as entertainment halls. Accumulating wealth, for example, enabled Yarmouth to build a 300-seat concert hall in 1848, and Bridgetown (in the Annapolis Valley region on the Fundy coast) to build Victoria Hall in 1853, both of which could host touring entertainment companies. None of these towns could support musical life that resembled even that of Halifax, but the developments of the pre-Confederation period enabled amateur music-making to become increasingly part of the “hinterland’s” sociability.

31 Ian Ross Robertson, “The 1850s: Maturity and Reform,” in Buckner and Reid, The Atlantic Region, 335. Four of the seven ports Robertson identifies were in Nova Scotia.
2.3 Map of Nova Scotia, 1829 (Map Collection, Nova Scotia Archives. Compiled for Haliburton’s An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia)
Developments to Transportation and Communication

Nova Scotia’s population growth and economic development were aided, in large part, by significant developments to provincial transportation systems. As of 1815, travel between Nova Scotia and other Atlantic destinations was slow and arduous. Interprovincial connections were also primitive, causing a sense of isolation and disconnect within provincial communities, and generally affirming Nova Scotia’s status as a colonial backwater. Between 1820 and 1840, though, road improvement received substantial funding, turning the crude paths carved out in the eighteenth century into a road system that connected Halifax to Pictou through Truro, and to the Annapolis Valley through Windsor.32 As a sign of the reciprocal relationship between the modernization of roadways and the increasing numbers of interprovincial travellers, a stage coach service was initiated in the 1830s. These developments facilitated access from the colonial interior to New Brunswick and the rest of the North American continent, and thus increased travel not only between provincial communities, but also to destinations outside of the province. The new roadways and stage coach service also encouraged visitors to Halifax, including professional entertainers, to extend the range of their travels to destinations beyond the city limits.

Interprovincial transportation was further improved by the introduction of railways. The first train to operate in Nova Scotia began running in 1839 in Pictou County, although its primary purpose was to transport coal. Construction on an interprovincial passenger line began in the early 1850s. The much-anticipated railway connecting Halifax to Windsor began service in 1858, and was followed by a line connecting Halifax to Truro. Nova Scotia’s railway sparked

32 Rosemary Ommer, “The 1830s: Adapting Their Institutions to Their Desires,” in Buckner and Reid, *The Atlantic Region*, 295. Roads were funded through a combination of public subscription, private capital and toll charges. Expenditures peaked in 1830, when spending on roads totalled £25,000.

The Industrial era also ushered in technological innovations that improved the speed of travel over water, which remained Nova Scotia’s most important mode of transportation and communication throughout the mid-nineteenth century. Ferry services carried both goods and passengers from Windsor, Annapolis Royal, and Digby over the Bay of Fundy to Saint John, New Brunswick, and from Pictou over the Northumberland Strait to Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. In the 1830s, steamships began to service these routes. Even more vital, though, were the shipping networks along the Atlantic coast. Packet services ran regularly out of Lunenburg, Liverpool, and Yarmouth, connecting these south-western communities to Halifax. Atlantic-traversing ships also provided the primary mode of transportation, communication, and commercial interchange to Boston and other American seaports, and functioned as the crucial link between Nova Scotia and Britain.\footnote{See J.S. Martell, “Intercolonial Communications, 1840–1867” in \textit{Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces}, ed. G.A. Rawlyk (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1967), 179–206, for a detailed survey of the various transportation and communication routes available to Nova Scotians.}

Travel between Nova Scotia and other Atlantic destinations – although always slow, subject to weather-induced disruptions, and somewhat risky – was revolutionized in 1840 by Haligonian Samuel Cunard’s steamer line, the first transatlantic steamship service. Cunard’s innovation significantly improved travel in the North Atlantic – and especially the North Atlantic
crossing – by making water travel both faster and more reliable.\textsuperscript{35} It had a particular impact on Halifax, because Halifax was one of the main ports for Cunard’s service.

\textbf{Transportation Revolutions and the Rise of the Touring Artist}

With the introduction of the Atlantic steamer line, Halifax benefitted from a phenomenon affecting other parts of North America, and the 1840s consequently saw a significant rise in the number of public concerts held in the city. According to Michael Broyles, the general improvements to communication and travel of the 1830s and 1840s made a dramatic impact on musical activity in the United States.\textsuperscript{36} In particular, the development of steam travel by water, and especially the opening of Cunard’s service, made possible the rise of the touring concert artist. As Richard Crawford writes, “In the mid-nineteenth century, American concert life was transformed when European impresarios recognized the United States as a market for concert performers.”\textsuperscript{37} Taking advantage of the improving travelways, these musicians toured along the Atlantic seaboard and into the North American interior, and also made their way further south to the West Indies and South America. The major cities – Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{36} Michael Broyles, \textit{“Music of the Highest Class”: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston} (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 20.
\item\textsuperscript{37} Richard Crawford, \textit{America’s Musical Life: A History} (New York: Norton, 2001), 281. Crawford continues, “Customers would be plentiful, these entrepreneurs realized, if musical artistry could be packaged and delivered as entertainment. Social changes and technology made that step possible, in the form of a touring circuit that served as a new musical marketplace. Networks of canals and railroad lines now connected distant cities. The telegraph, invented in the mid-1830s, simplified communication, allowing artists to change touring plans without forfeiting concert engagements.” For a study of the phenomena Crawford describes, with reference to several of the most famous of these touring concert artists (including Henri Herz and Sigismund Thalberg), see R. Allen Lott, \textit{From Paris to Peoria: How European Piano Virtuosos Brought Classical Music to the American Heartland} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
\end{itemize}
New Orleans – of course were the primary centres of interest, but concerts were also given in the hundreds of smaller cities and towns that fell along the routes of their touring circuits.

According to an article in the *Novascotian* on 19 September 1840, the Cunard steamship line’s effects on public entertainment in Halifax were almost immediate:

> Halifax, we may say, has not been long in the high road of tourists, yet it has already reaped a respectable share of visitors. The travellers for pleasure by dozens have found us out – and the travellers for profit, as a matter of course, follow their wake.\(^{38}\)

Earlier in August, the *Morning Herald* had reported after a concert tour by harpist P.F. White,

> we have here another proof of the advantage which the facilities of Steam Navigation afford to Halifax, and that, while listening with new pleasure to the display of Mr. White’s powers, we will feel that to the Honourable Samuel Cunard, we owe a thousand thanks for the visit of the former gentleman to Halifax.\(^{39}\)

By June 1841, an author for *The Times* observed, “Scarcely a week now elapses that a company of performers of one description or another, do not make their appearance in Halifax.”\(^{40}\) *The Times*’ author may have exaggerated the frequency of touring performers’ visits, but nonetheless, Halifax’s location within the Atlantic touring circuit meant that performers often passed through on their way to larger centres. The city was a junction point where passengers could catch steamers to Britain, the United States, or the West Indies. Touring artists making a circuit through the north-eastern seaboard states would often cross over the border into New Brunswick to perform in Saint John or Fredericton (or both), then travel east to Halifax. After performing in Halifax for several nights, they frequently caught a steamer to Boston, or to London, Liverpool or another English port. Some doubled back and returned to Saint John via Windsor and the Bay

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\(^{38}\) *Novascotian*, 19 September 1840.

\(^{39}\) *Morning Herald*, 7 August 1840.

\(^{40}\) *The Times*, 22 June 1841.
of Fundy. Less often, performers went from Halifax south to Bermuda. Later in the pre-Confederation period, it became more common for performers to arrive in Halifax and give a concert series before travelling north to Newfoundland. In such cases, it was also common for those performers to stop again in Halifax as they returned south, sometimes giving a second concert series.

The mid-century developments to interprovincial travel, in turn, helped to transport the touring artists who arrived in Halifax to other communities within the province. Since many touring artists came to Nova Scotia’s capital after first performing in New Brunswick, they had to travel through the province to get to Halifax. Sometimes, they gave performances when they stopped for the evening in a town located along a main travel route. In particular, Windsor was occasionally targeted as a secondary Nova Scotian concert destination because it was not only an affluent university town, but also the terminal point for the ferry to Saint John over the Bay of Fundy. Similarly, Pictou was the largest town on the route from Halifax to Prince Edward Island. The introduction of railway lines increased traffic through and to those locations, while the development of steam water travel had a similar effect on the towns located along the Atlantic coastline packet route, especially Liverpool and Yarmouth. As Nova Scotia’s towns grew, both in terms of population and affluence, it became more common for professional performers to make in-province tours; that is, instead of simply stopping at one town on the way in or out of the province, they would perform first in Halifax, then travel to multiple towns along either the Bay of Fundy or the South Shore before returning to Halifax for a final concert series.

Transatlantic Shipping and Nova Scotia’s Music Trade

As with transatlantic communication and passenger transportation, the process of material transfer between Britain and Nova Scotia benefitted greatly from the technological
improvements to oceanic travel. Even in Nova Scotia’s earliest years, though, ships plying the
Atlantic trade routes ensured that settlers had access to British manufactures. Staple items were
the priority cargo, but the wooden crates that arrived at Halifax and other Nova Scotian ports
also included luxury goods. Ann Gorman Condon writes that “ostrich feathers, pearl dentifrices,
exotic spices, pianofortes, and violet-scented hair powder” were some of the luxury items
imported from London to Halifax when Prince Edward, Duke of Kent was stationed at the
garrison during the 1790s. 41 Following his visit to Halifax, John MacGregor remarked,

Dress is fully as much attended to as in London; and many of the fashionable
sprigs who exhibit themselves in the streets of Halifax, and indeed in lesser towns
in America, might even in Bond Street, be said to have arrived at the ne plus ultra
of dandyism. 42

MacGregor’s remark indicates that British clothing made its way to Halifax for the city’s
privileged residents to purchase; indeed, other goods and manufactures, ranging from stationery
to furniture, arrived in increasing quantities and with increasing frequency to meet the needs of
the growing middle class as well as the élites at mid-century.

Phyllis Blakeley documents that musical instruments were first shipped to Halifax
merchants not long after the city was founded; such cargoes, however, were not sent in great
volume, and the availability of musical instruments was limited during Nova Scotia’s late
eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. 43 On 11 November 1816, for example, shortly after
arriving in Halifax to assume the position of Nova Scotia’s Lieutenant-Governor, Lord
Dalhousie remarked in his diary, “Among many acts of goodness, Sir John Louis left us a Piano

41 Condon, 207.
42 MacGregor, 145.
first evidence Blakeley found was an advertisement for John Smith, who sold guitars and violins along with other
English goods in 1752. According to Timothy J. McGee, “after 1761, an average of one advertisement per year
Forte, which was a thing not to be got here.”

Similarly, Susanna Weldon, daughter of renowned author Thomas Chandler Haliburton, wrote in her memoir of her mother that Louisa Haliburton’s Broadwood was the only piano in all of Windsor. Pianos and other keyboard instruments, after all, were – in addition to being expensive – large and heavy, and therefore difficult to ship.

Furthermore, although the piano trade was profitable (as evidenced by the volume of pianos shipped great distances throughout the British Empire), a merchant still risked shipping a piano to Nova Scotia at great expense only to find it unsellable, either due to its poor physical condition, or simply because of lack of willing buyers. Nonetheless, pianos, violins, clarinets, bugles, guitars, French horns, violoncellos, and other instruments, along with print

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44 Marjory Whitelaw, ed., The Dalhousie Journals, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1978), 22. Neither Dalhousie nor Whitelaw explain who Sir John Louis was, but he appears to have been Dalhousie’s travelling companion on the Atlantic voyage to Halifax. He may possibly have been an agent assigned to helping Dalhousie and his family establish themselves in their new station.

45 “Recollections of her early life told to me when a child & afterwards by my mother” [by Susanna Weldon with marginal notes by Augusta Haliburton and Robert Haliburton], Wilson Collection, Section 1, Series 3Ca, 13, Acadia University Archives; quoted in Richard A. Davies, Inventing Sam Slick: A Biography of Thomas Chandler Haliburton (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 23. Louisa Haliburton came to Nova Scotia as a young English bride in 1816. Most likely she brought her Broadwood piano when she immigrated to her new husband’s native home.

46 Ian Woodfield remarks on the risk and difficulty inherent in importing a piano over vast distances to a colonial society. See Woodfield, “The Calcutta Piano Trade in the Late Eighteenth Century,” in Music and British Culture, 1785–1914: Essays in Honour of Cyril Ehrlich, ed. Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 5. During the ocean voyage, pianos were vulnerable to damage as the ship thrashed over rough waters, or could be rendered unplayable by the humid environment of the ship’s cargo hold; once landed, pianos had to be transported by cart or wagon to a home with sufficient floor space to accommodate their ample frames. See also John MacGibbon, Piano in the Parlour: When the Piano Was New Zealand’s Home Entertainment Centre (Wellington: Ngaio Press, 2007), 12–14. MacGibbon notes that not all homes in a colonial settlement such as New Zealand were sufficiently equipped to house a piano. He also documents stories of settlers’ experiences in transporting their pianos, which illustrate the difficulty of relocating a piano using nineteenth-century moving technology (i.e., wagons, horses, and men). He includes several sad tales of pianos being severely damaged due to rough passages on ships and wagons, and even slipping overboard into the water.

47 It took one Halifax merchant, for example, over eighteen months to sell the three “very superior tone” pianos he imported in 1821 (Acadian Recorder, 6 January 1821). Woodfield’s discussion of the piano trade in Calcutta highlights some of the pitfalls of selling imported pianos – an enterprise which Woodfield finds was ultimately profitable, but also unpredictable. He writes, “a quick sale was essential because of the speed with which the product could be damaged by the climate and become unsaleable.” He also notes that some unscrupulous merchants would give their instruments “a change of identity,” for example, by placing Broadwood labels on inferior instruments. See Woodfield, “The Calcutta Piano Trade,” 6–8.
music scores, occasionally made the journey across the Atlantic to find use in Nova Scotian homes, and on Nova Scotian concert stages. Some of these “musical goods” were transported to the province by immigrant professional musicians, as well as by immigrant dilettantes; when individuals and families left the province, auctioneers sold their imported and also locally-purchased goods, thus circulating second-hand instruments and scores back into the music trade (see Figures 2.4 and 2.5).

As Nova Scotia gradually developed a population base that had both the interest and financial means to invest in music-making, imports of musical instruments – aided by the improvements to transatlantic shipping – gradually increased. Recognizing market demand, merchants acquired brass, woodwind, and particularly, keyboard instruments from international manufacturers to sell in Halifax shops, as well as crate loads of printed sheet music, songsters,
pedagogical books, and other types of music publications. Peter Nordbeck, for example, advertised in 1855 that he had for sale “a real Cremona violin,” “a Vienna made violoncello,” and “a B & C Paris manufactured 14 key patent clarinet”; a year later, Charles Cooke received a shipment of German goods that included 120 violins, plus cornopeans, flutes, clarionetts, and piccolos. As the advertisements for Cooke’s City Fancy Store in Halifax illustrate (see Figures 2.6 and 2.7), musical instruments shared store shelves with kitchenware, jewellery, fabric, and other amenity items. Larger instruments, such as pianos, organs, and melodeons, were typically sold by merchants who dealt in furniture, or at auctions (see Figure 2.8), while smaller musical instruments tended to be treated as fancy goods and sold along with other merchandise of that nature. Various types of merchants sold printed music as they could acquire it, but by the 1850s Halifax’s major supplier of sheet music and books were stationers, booksellers, and other merchants who specialized in print and/or paper products.

48 Morning Journal, 9 April 1855 and 2 July 1856. Charles Cooke used to be in service with Peter Nordbeck. Cooke purchased some of his stock from Nordbeck when the latter retired from business in December 1855 (notice was printed in the Morning Journal, 7 December 1855).
2.6 Advertisement for Cooke’s City Fancy Store, Halifax (Acadian Recorder, 8 November 1856)

CITY FANCY STORE.

THE Subscriber has just received per the “White Star,” from London, and “Wolfe” from Liverpool, and late arrivals from Boston—A full FALL supply of

FANCY GOODS,
Toys, Cutlery, Cabinet Ware, Musical Instruments, superior Tea & Coffee Pots, Common and Plated JEWELLERY, Oils, Soaps, &c. Gilt & Plated Fringes, Laces, Braid and Tassels, with a varied assortment of

MISCELLANEOUS GOODS,
Well adapted for small dealers, and country trade, Cheap for Cash.

CHAS. J. COOKE.

2.7 Advertisement for Cooke’s City Fancy Store, Halifax (Acadian Recorder, 3 October 1857)

CITY FANCY STORE.

—Hollis Street—

SPLENDID NEW GOODS.

THE Subscriber has just received per Steamer “General Williams” and Ship “Scotia” from Britain, a part of his FALL SUPPLY of

FANCY AND STAPLE GOODS.

—COMPRISING—

Flutinas, Accordians, Flutes, Pifes,—Clarionets, Flageolets, Violins and Bows, Harmonies, from 5 to 30 notes; WORK BOXES, Writing DESKS; Fancy Perfume Boxes, Ladies’ Leather, Plush and Carpet Bags, and Fancy Reticles; TOYS in all their variety; DOLLS in ditto; Beads, Bead Beads, Combs, Brushes, Portmoneys, Fans, Pins, SPECTACLES of all sorts, ages and colors; Eye Glasses, LOOKING GLASSES, Spirit Levels, Quadrants, Spy Glasses, Hair Oil, Soap, PERFUMERY, Jet & imitation BRACELETS, Gold, Plated, and Common BROOCHES, and RINGS in great variety, &c. &c.

The Remainder of Stock daily expected per “Braddocks” from Liverpool, consisting of CUTLERY, GLASSWARE, Tinware, Tea Trays, &c. &c.

The whole of the above he offers for sale at moderate rates, wholesale and retail for Cash.

CHARLES J. COOKE.
N. B.—All kinds of Fancy Goods and Musical Instruments, neatly and substantially REPAIRED.

2.8 Advertisement for Debois and Merkel auction, Halifax (British Colonist, 25 October 1856)

BY DEBLOIS & MERKEL,
At their Room, on THURSDAY next, at 11 o’clock:

1 ELEGANT new Rose Wood PIANO FORTE, by H. Tolkien,
1 do do Walnut do very superior Instruments unequalled in durability and delicacy of touch, more especially for their excellency in standing in tune in the various climates of our Colonies—sent out on consignment, and ordered for positive sale

ALSO—

16 rich Oil Paintings in rich frames,
20 pieces 4-4 Scotch Woollen Carpeting,
Damask Table Linen, Napkins, &c. £25.
The growing demand for music and instruments prompted Nova Scotian merchants to invest in the music trade, while improvements to transatlantic shipping made it possible for those merchants to acquire a larger supply; at the same time, the rapidly expanding American music industry also had a substantial impact on the availability of musical goods in Nova Scotia. Cargo ships continued to transport London-published music to Nova Scotia, of course, but newspaper advertisements as well as Nova Scotian-owned music albums reveal that, by mid-century, Nova Scotians were increasingly obtaining American-published music. By the 1850s, the coexistence of London- and American-published music helped to intensify the competition that itself was a natural result of the growing number of merchants investing in the sheet music trade. Most claimed to carry the newest, most fashionable music available, but while some merchants continued to deal strictly with British publishers, others traded exclusively in American products. For example, as the name implies, Graham’s London Bookstore (in Halifax) specialized in London imports, including British-published music as well as London-made pianos, while the rival American Bookstore, owned by E.G. Fuller, sold a similar range of products but with all items imported from American publishing houses and manufactories.

49 This observation is based on Nova Scotian-owned music albums belonging to the National Library and Archives of Canada, the Nova Scotia Archives, and the Ross-Thompson Collection of the Dalhousie University Archives. Most of these albums were assembled in the 1850s and 1860s. As was the practice at the time, the owners purchased scores of sheet music separately, and then, once a significant number of scores was amassed, had the sheets bound together into albums. These albums are significant as indicators of local taste in music and consumer-purchasing tendencies. All of the music contained in these albums was not necessarily purchased in Nova Scotia: the owners may have ordered it directly from publishers, purchased it while travelling, brought it to Nova Scotia from a former residence, or received it as a gift from British or American relatives or friends. While the largest percentage of this music does not indicate the location of purchase, a significant number do bear vendors’ markings (either embossing or stamps). Consequently, it is possible to determine that some of this music was indeed imported to and purchased in Nova Scotia, and as such these albums also serve as indicators of local merchant practices.

50 Fuller even travelled to the United States to select his stock: an author for the British Colonist, for example, noted on 9 October 1858, “Amongst the passengers on the steamship Niagara, from Boston, on Thursday night, was the enterprising proprietor of the American Bookstore, E.G. Fuller, Esq., who has recently visited the United States with the object of extending his business in this city, selecting an extensive fall stock, &c., &c.”
increasing demand for sheet music, they both advertised heavily; the rivalry of the sheet music trade is also evident in the advertisements they placed in Haligonian as well provincial newspapers, promising superior quality publications of the most eminent composers, at the most reasonable cost. Perhaps a reflection of the American music industry’s encroachment on territory formerly the domain of British publishers, the London Bookstore’s advertising was particularly persuasive, promising that better quality music could not be purchased in Halifax than what the Grahams imported (see Figures 2.9 and 2.10).  

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51 An advertisement Graham placed in the *British Colonist*, 23 January 1855, promised “a liberal discount to the Trade and Professors” (this advertisement is reprinted in Chapter 4 as Figure 4.15). According to Mark McKnight, it was common practice in the United States for teachers to purchase sheet music at the trade discount offered by vendors, and then resell it to their students at cover price. McKnight suggests that the resale of discount music contributed significantly to teachers’ incomes. See McKnight, “Morceaux de Salon, Elegant Polkas, and Grandes Variations Brillantes: Instrumental Forms in Nineteenth-Century American Sheet Music,” in *Music Publishing and Collecting: Essays in Honor of Donald W. Krummel*, ed. David Hunter (Urbana: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1994), 98. According to Russell Sanjek, music vendors’ chief customers were “the music teachers of America, who reportedly sold more than three fourths of all printed music, most of it reprinted foreign work, to their pupils after purchasing it from the music trade at a 50 percent discount.” See Sanjek, *American Popular Music and Its Business*, vol. 2, 1709–1890 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 49. Likely, this practice happened in Nova Scotia too, and I have found several examples of sheet music in extant albums with the names of teachers (e.g., Edwin Charles Saffery) written on them.
The American piano industry also had a substantial impact on Nova Scotia’s music trade. The regular packet services between Nova Scotian and New England ports facilitated the importation of American-built pianos; while transporting a piano never would have been easy, shipping a piano to Nova Scotia from Boston would have been more expeditious than sending one across the Atlantic from London. Nova Scotian merchants continued to import from Britain (see Figure 2.11), but increasingly American pianos joined those made by Broadwood, Collard & Collard, and other London makers on the Nova Scotian market. John Nash, for example, continued to import London-made pianos to Halifax during the 1850s, but also began to sell instruments he received from Boston (see Figures 2.12 through 2.15). Dealing in pianos from multiple sources most likely enabled merchants like Nash to keep a more steady supply of instruments on hand. Also a sign of the growing market in Nova Scotia for pianos, Boston instrument manufacturers and other merchants occasionally by-passed their Nova Scotian middlemen and advertised in local newspapers that their instruments were available to order.

52 In Figure 2.15, the phrase “Ex Arabia” means the contents listed in the advertisement were part of the cargo on the ship, Arabia.

53 For example, both Messrs. Bailey & Co. of Boston (“manufacturers of the celebrated Bourne Scale Piano Fortes”) and Oliver Ditson & Co. (carriers of “an extensive and varied stock of new and old piano fortes, melodeons and seraphines”) placed advertisements in the Liverpool Transcript in 1857, as did Russell & Fuller (“importers and dealers in music and musical instruments”) and Mason and Hamlin (manufacturers of melodeons and organ harmoniums) in 1858. Mason and Hamlin also advertised in the Yarmouth Herald in 1856; in 1867, Wm. R. Alden advertised in the Herald that he had received three pianos from Geo. M. Guild and Company of Boston.
2.11 Advertisement for Della Torre & Rayner, Halifax
(Acadian Recorder, 12 July 1856)

2.12 Advertisement for Boston-made pianos, sold by John Nash (British Colonist, 22 April 1856)

2.13 Advertisement for Boston-made pianos, sold by John Nash (British Colonist, 24 July 1856)

2.14 Advertisement for John Nash’s store, Halifax (British Colonist, 6 November 1856)

2.15 Advertisement for John Nash auction, Halifax (Acadian Recorder, 6 December 1856)
By the mid-nineteenth century, musical goods from British and American publishers and manufacturers were imported and sold regularly by numerous merchants living throughout Nova Scotia. Most engaged in the music trade only as a side business, but in the 1860s Joseph Hagarty—an Irish musician who had immigrated to Halifax in the 1840s—opened Hagarty’s Musical Warehouse, selling print music and pianos and other instruments. Halifax, as Nova Scotia’s commercial centre and main shipping destination, remained the hub of the music trade. The improving connections between the city and the provincial hinterland enabled that trade to expand, and musical goods increasingly became accessible to the residents of Nova Scotia’s larger towns. Halifax merchants helped to facilitate this exchange, supplying goods to town shopkeepers or shipping to customers directly, but the packet services connecting Atlantic coastal ports to New England allowed merchants in towns such as Yarmouth to conduct business with the American industries independently. Ultimately, the music trade was, in large part, a product of the technological developments that improved Nova Scotians’ access to the transatlantic network; at the same time, by enabling Nova Scotians to participate in the music culture also practiced in Britain and the United States, the music trade helped to strengthen and affirm Nova Scotia’s connection within the larger Atlantic World.

**Cultural Influences**

In many ways, the competition of the music trade at mid-century encapsulated Nova Scotia’s intermediary position between the powerful British and American nations. Britain, and in particular London, was and always remained the primary touchstone for Nova Scotia’s developing society. As the century passed, though, and especially as Britain changed its trading policies and moved toward loosening its North American colonies’ economic dependence, the
United States, and in particular Boston, exerted increasing influence on the colony. The American market posed stiff competition for Nova Scotia’s commercial development, but ultimately, despite distinct political differences, nearby New England and Nova Scotia were close trading partners. As the American manufacturing industry expanded, Nova Scotians more frequently turned to American sources for consumer goods and culture. Nonetheless, much of what was figuratively – and literally – imported to Nova Scotia from the south resembled that which came west across the Atlantic, since the American nation was also committed to recreating Old World culture and institutions in the New World.  

**The British Establishment**

Despite Britain’s evolving relationship with the North American colonies, and America’s growing trading presence, the British-Nova Scotian connection remained strong. Visiting the province in 1829, Captain William Moorsam remarked,

> There are many spots in this province, to which, if one of our countrymen were suddenly transported, he would not immediately perceive any dissimilarity to Great Britain, and more especially to parts of Ireland. ... In fact there cannot be any town out of Great Britain where this similarity is so complete as at Halifax; for at least one-half the circle of society consist of those who are not natives, and the other half are the immediate descendants of the same.

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54 See Nicholas Temperley, *Bound for America: Three British Composers* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 4–6. Temperley writes, “Once political independence was assured, Americans began to assess their position in the family of Western nations and to strive to equal or surpass them. In music, this could only be done in a musical language that enjoyed high standing in Europe. For, after all, Americans were nothing but transplanted Europeans; if they sought a higher level than their own culture, the only place to look for it was Europe” (Ibid., 4–5). Consequently, he explains, “middle- and upper-class Americans on the East Coast looked to Britain for cultural leadership” (Ibid., 6). On the British influence on American culture in general, see Elisa Tamarkin, *Anglophilia: Deferece, Devotion, and Antebellum America* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2008).

Even critical Isabella Bird, dissatisfied as she was with much of her Nova Scotian experience, commented approvingly on the loyalty to Britain she observed in Halifax. From the prevalent state of underdevelopment to the “savage” Mi’kmaq walking the city streets, travellers to the province encountered ample reminders that they were in the New World and not Britain, but signs of the colonial ties were still present and visible, particularly in Halifax. For example, the residence constructed for the Lieutenant-Governor in 1800 (Government House) was based on an English design. In 1819, another English-inspired government building, Province House, was erected to house the administrative assembly and supreme court. As John Reid writes, these buildings “symbolized both the growth of Halifax and the imperial connection the town’s élite held dear”; in the words of Graeme Wynn, Government and Province House were each “a monument to colonial achievement and a statement about what Nova Scotia might become.” The two imposing structures also represented the transfer of Old World culture that accompanied Nova Scotia’s development over the ensuing century – a process that was largely made possible by the people who passed through the very same buildings.

The Lieutenant-Governor and Nova Scotia’s other senior administrators personified the colony’s membership within the British Empire. They were also a class of cultured, and often, well-educated residents who had the knowledge, motivation, and financial means to assume leadership of Nova Scotia’s cultural development, especially in the immediate vicinity of Halifax.

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56 Bird, 25. She writes, “But they are a moral, hardy, and loyal people; none of our colonial fellow-subjects are more attached to the British crown, or more ready to take up arms in its defence.”
57 Jeffrey L. McNairn writes that the racial diversity encountered on Halifax’s streets was one of the conditions travellers most frequently identified as distinguishing Halifax from a British town. See McNairn, “‘Everything was new, yet familiar’: British Travellers, Halifax and the Ambiguities of Empire,” Acadiensis, 36/2 (2007): 40 and 43–52.
59 Reid, Pocket History, 92; Wynn, 210.
where they mostly lived. The garrison and its inhabitants were also a highly visible reminder of Nova Scotia’s colonial ties. The garrison’s officers, like the civic administrators, were primarily affluent men who could afford to be patrons of the arts, and who brought to Nova Scotia their knowledge of the culture – including music – of other regions where they had previously lived. All of these men and their families occupied Nova Scotia’s uppermost social strata. They helped to determine the course of their adopted society’s social life and entertainment, at the same time as they shared with their Nova Scotian neighbours their experiences of life abroad.

As Nova Scotia remained a loyal adherent of the British Empire, though, the province also began to develop its own unique identity. The processes of community formation experienced within individual townships were also at work throughout the colony-at-large. Inhabitants of the geopolitical entity were Britons, but were becoming increasingly cognizant that they were also Nova Scotians, and were part of a shared destiny with the other “Bluenosers” living along and between Nova Scotia’s Atlantic coastline.

**Intellectual Awakening**

In a seminal lecture given before the Nova Scotia Historical Society in 1933, historian and provincial archivist D.C. Harvey argued that the sense of “Nova Scotian-ness” that had begun to emerge by the 1840s was the culmination of a surge of creative and intellectual activity.

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61 “Bluenoser,” or “Bluenose,” is a colloquial term for a Nova Scotian. Its use dates back to the nineteenth century.
that had been gaining momentum for several decades.\textsuperscript{62} He termed this period Nova Scotia’s “Intellectual Awakening,” coining this now oft-cited term to explain how a colony that had been little more than a wild frontier in 1815 could evolve rapidly into a civilized society and had achieved a sense of collective consciousness in only a matter of decades. To Harvey, the ultimate proof that Nova Scotia was intellectually “awake” lay in the fact that the province had attained responsible government by 1848, and had, also by that year, produced two “great” men: politician Joseph Howe, and author Thomas Chandler Haliburton. (Howe was the leading figure of Nova Scotia’s movement to assume political control of its own provincial governmental institutions and reduce the power of foreign decision-makers. He was also the publisher who produced Haliburton’s 1836 book, \textit{The Clockmaker; Or, The Sayings and Doings of Samuel Slick, Of Slickville}, which became immensely popular in Britain and made Haliburton the first internationally famous Nova Scotian author.)

Surveying historical developments of the early nineteenth century, Harvey demonstrated that, for approximately thirty years prior to the political landmark of responsible government, various forces had been fostering the establishment of intellectual institutions and, ultimately, the emergence of a distinctly Nova Scotian identity. Howe and Haliburton, he concluded, were not anomalies, but merely the foremost representatives of an era of cultural achievement; they had not sprung “Minerva-like from the rocks,” but, as Alfred Bailey writes, Nova Scotia’s esteemed statesman and author “were merely the brightest stars in a numerous constellation.”\textsuperscript{63} Giving the milestone period of 1812 to 1815 as the approximate turning point when Nova Scotians “began

\textsuperscript{62} D.C. Harvey, “The Intellectual Awakening of Nova Scotia,” in Rawlyk, \textit{Historical Essays}, 99–121. This essay was first printed in the \textit{Dalhousie Review} 13 (1933).

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid., 99; Alfred G. Bailey, “Creative Moments in the Culture of the Maritime Provinces,” Rawlyk, \textit{Historical Essays on the Atlantic Provinces}, 236. Harvey notes that his lecture on the Intellectual Awakening grew out of a curiosity to determine “how far [Howe] may be regarded as having sprung Minerva-like from the rocks of the North-West arm, or how far he was the embodiment of the spirit of his age in Nova Scotia.”
rubbing the sleep out of their eyes,” Harvey argued that the tumult of Nova Scotia’s pre-
Confederation period had been accompanied by “poets, essayists, journalists, and politicians
[striving] with or against one another to lift Nova Scotians to the level of their fellow
countrymen overseas.” This “awakening” was achieved through the promotion of literacy; the
establishment of schools, libraries, and other education-oriented institutions; and the formation
of various social organizations. Harvey’s enthusiastic description of the period is itself
representative of another era within Nova Scotia’s historiography, when the concept of Nova
Scotia’s “Golden Age” was fully embraced. Nonetheless, while Harvey’s exuberant rhetoric has
been abandoned in current historiography, and replaced by more cautious descriptions of an era
that experienced tribulation as well as triumph, historians still support the concept of “intellectual
awakening” and acknowledge, as Harvey did, that this era was a formative period in Nova
Scotian history.65

Newspapers

In many ways, the sense of “Nova Scotian-ness” Harvey described as resulting from the
Intellectual Awakening is akin to Benedict Anderson’s influential concept of a nation as an
“imagined community.” According to Anderson’s theoretical framework, print media, and
especially newspapers play critical roles in the formation of communal consciousness.66

Building on Anderson’s theory to explain the emergence of British national identity in the

64 Harvey, “Intellectual Awakening,” 119–120.
65 On the “Golden Age” concept, as interpreted by modern historians, see Robertson, 333 and 359; Reid,
Six Decades, 93 and 97–98; and Philip A. Buckner, “The 1860s: An End and a Beginning,” in Buckner and Reid,
Atlantic Region, 386.
66 Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism, new
eighteenth century, Kathleen Wilson writes that newspapers were “central instruments in the social production of information” because they “[represented] and [verified] local experience and [refracted] world events into socially meaningful categories and hierarchies of importance.”\(^67\)

Writing fifty years before Anderson (and seventy before Wilson), Harvey recognized that newspapers were significant to Nova Scotia’s emerging collective identity, and argued that the province’s blossoming media culture was both a sign and an agent of the Intellectual Awakening.\(^68\)

Nova Scotia had established a provincial media early in its colonial history: the first newspaper to be published in British North America was the *Halifax Gazette*, which commenced in 1752 (and continued until about 1870 under various names, including *Royal Gazette* and *Nova Scotian Gazette*). The province’s second newspaper was the *Halifax Journal*, established by Loyalist immigrant John Howe. Howe’s famous son, Joseph, in turn, became the editor of one of the most successful newspapers, the *Novascotian*, in 1827.\(^69\) By the 1830s, thirteen newspapers were being published in Nova Scotia. The majority of these were printed in Halifax, but Yarmouth and Pictou also had two local newspapers each, and Lunenburg had one. By 1867, the total number of newspapers in circulation across Nova Scotia had increased from the thirteen that were available in the 1830s to thirty-four; another forty-seven had been founded after 1840 but,

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\(^67\) Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race: Englishness, Empire and Gender in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 33. Anderson’s theory, although widely cited, is recognized to have limitations; Wilson cautions her readers that the ‘imagined community’ created through print culture was limited to the white upper and middle classes. Women, Africans, and other marginal members of society were seldom included or represented in this community. See Wilson, 31–36.


\(^69\) According to D.C. Harvey, the *Novascotian* became the leading weekly paper in British North America and “was so popular under Howe’s management, so comprehensive in its reviews of local, colonial, American, and British news and opinions that one could almost compile a history of the English-speaking world from its pages between 1830 and 1848.” See Harvey, “Newspapers of Nova Scotia, 1840–1867,” *Canadian Historical Review* 26/3 (1945): 285.
for various reasons, had folded before 1867. Lunenburg had ceased to have a paper, but Amherst, Antigonish, Berwick/Kentville, Liverpool, Sydney, and Wolfville joined Halifax, Yarmouth, and Pictou as communities with a local press.\textsuperscript{70}

Most of Nova Scotia’s newspapers included a combination of local, provincial, colonial, and international news, although they tended to privilege foreign affairs over local stories, and political news over social or cultural items. The amount of attention devoted to international affairs varied from week to week according to the nature of political activity happening within Nova Scotia (a provincial election, for example, generally received substantial coverage and trumped all but the most pressing international issues). Availability, though, also determined the content of international columns; the arrival of a ship in harbour typically brought a flurry of news reports, but then weeks could pass before anything substantially new reached the presses.

As Julie Codell explains, by the nineteenth century international newspapers were circulated throughout the vast expanse of the British Empire, enabling “versions and revisions of accounts of imperial events [to be] obsessively reiterated and disseminated around the globe.”\textsuperscript{71} Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia fully participated in this media exchange, and the technological advancements to trans-oceanic travel in the 1840s helped to significantly accelerate the rate at which Nova Scotians received international news. Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Harvey wrote in 1848,

\begin{quote}
The circulation of English newspapers has increased an hundred fold since the Establishment of the line of steam packets, and all the leading British and Irish periodicals are looked for with as much eagerness, and received with as much
\end{quote}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{70} See Ibid., 279–301.
\end{flushright}
certainty as the London newspapers were in Scotland and Ireland a few years ago.\textsuperscript{72}

Copies of both foreign and local newspapers circulated between Nova Scotia’s various printing presses, such that it was common practice for editors to include excerpts from other papers in their own publications. As Gwendolyn Davies writes, Nova Scotia’s newspapers served as “both a social and literary resource – everyone’s political and cultural arbiter in a colonial society physically removed from the cosmopolitan mainstream of London, Edinburgh, and Boston, but increasingly conscious of its place in a wider social and cultural context.”\textsuperscript{73} Connecting Nova Scotia to the transatlantic network, newspapers also helped to consolidate the communities within Nova Scotia as they raised Nova Scotians’ awareness of their own culture as well as that of the larger Atlantic World.

Newspapers also played an integral role in Nova Scotia’s musical life. Although music was seldom headlining news, Nova Scotia’s papers occasionally included items pertaining to musical developments, both on the North American continent and overseas. The Halifax press reported on the concert activity in nearby Saint John, and informed the public when the artists performing there were expected to make their way to Nova Scotia. The press also excerpted news briefs, articles, and stories from the international papers. The \textit{British Colonist}, for example, included an article about famous conductor Louis Jullien from the \textit{New York Musical Review}; similarly, the \textit{Liverpool Transcript} copied a story from \textit{The Orchestra} about the origins of Beethoven’s “Moonlight” Sonata.\textsuperscript{74} Nova Scotians read news about Jenny Lind, and were informed of her travels. As illustrated above, newspapers advertised the availability of sheet

\textsuperscript{72} Quoted in Harvey, “Newspapers,” 282.
\textsuperscript{73} G. Davies, 48.
\textsuperscript{74} \textit{British Colonist}, 17 January 1854; \textit{Liverpool Transcript}, 19 October 1865.
music and musical instruments, as well as the availability of music teachers; they also advertised concerts, and other local musical events. Nova Scotian editors excerpted information about the touring artists who were to perform in Halifax from North American newspapers, and occasionally, published reviews of the concerts they attended. They printed notices about local music institutions and attempted to generate support for activities of various amateur musicians. The press not only reflected local opinion, but helped to shape it; as newspapers helped Nova Scotians to form a common identity they also helped readers to understand what roles music played, and could play in their colony’s progress.

Print and Literary culture

While the poems, general interest articles, and fictional stories included in Nova Scotia’s newspapers were frequently excerpted from foreign sources, Nova Scotian authors increasingly contributed to newspapers’ literary columns. Supported by local printers and publishers, Nova Scotian authors also began producing books, volumes of poetry, literary magazines, pamphlets, and other forms of fictional and non-fictional print media. Like Haliburton, who used his satirical sketches of “Sam Slick” to advocate for Nova Scotia’s social and economic improvement, many of the province’s literary figures were motivated to write by a desire to steer their fellow Nova Scotians on a path toward industry, moral reform, and general improvement – a path that would bring their province up to par with the rest of the civilized world.75

As Nova Scotians learned about their own society from the literary efforts of local authors, printers, and publishers, imported books and print exposed the Nova Scotian readership to the ideas and culture of the Atlantic World. An increasing number of crates containing books and periodicals were transported into Nova Scotian harbours throughout the nineteenth century, the sales of which were supported by a similarly growing number of merchants. Improvements to manufacturing practices, which made possible the production of greater quantities of cheaper books, enabled Nova Scotians to become increasingly familiar with a variety of international literature. Praising the “class of cheap publications” sold at Graham’s London Bookstore in 1855, the *British Colonist* acknowledged that “many British works formerly altogether beyond the reach of the majority of the people in the Colonies, [could] be purchased for a mere trifle.”

The developing American print industries also helped to give Nova Scotian readers access to a growing and diversifying selection of literature. By mid-century, Nova Scotian merchants were regularly importing such widely-read periodicals as *Blackwoods Magazine*, *Harper’s Magazine*, and *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, and were selling a wide range of literature that mirrored the urban tastes of London, Edinburgh, and Boston.

The imported print materials that contributed to Nova Scotia’s Intellectual Awakening also contributed in various ways to Nova Scotia’s musical culture. Serial publications, such as *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, sometimes included international music news, news about noted musicians, instructional or opinion-based articles about music, and in some cases, even printed scores (see Figure 2.16). *Godey’s Lady’s Book* also included stories and images that described or depicted musicians, and especially women amateurs. Such content not only helped to

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76 *British Colonist*, 8 March 1855.
delineate cosmopolitan music practices to its readers, but as Judy Eklund Koza argues, entrenched the era’s cultural norms governing music, gender, and identity. The novels and short stories of the nineteenth century also depicted musicians, and used musicality as a narrative device to develop character, establish context, and advance plot. Again, these fictional representations exposed Nova Scotians to foreign music culture, and indoctrinated readers in the ideologies that informed the social practice of music-making elsewhere.

2.16 Notice of sale of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*, excerpted from a list of publications sold by E.G. Fuller, Halifax (*British Colonist*, 19 April 1856)

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**Education**

The culture of literacy that emerged during Nova Scotia’s peacetime years was supported by, and reciprocated in a movement toward educating the Nova Scotian people. Nova Scotia did not have a public school system until the Free School Act of 1865, and consequently the majority of Nova Scotian children did not receive a formal education. There were, however, private schools, supported by various churches, societies, and legislative grants; only the Royal Acadian

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79 Fingard et al., 77.
School (Halifax), the National School (Halifax), Pictou Academy, and a few other schools were enduring, but such schools nonetheless increasingly helped to educate Nova Scotia’s privileged minority. Some private schools, including the Royal Acadian School and the National School, hired musicians to teach singing classes, and occasionally hosted public entertainments that featured performances by their musically-talented students. By mid-century, ladies’ seminaries were established in Amherst, Grand Pré, Liverpool, and other Nova Scotian communities as well as Halifax, offering piano and singing lessons as part of their course of instruction.

With the founding of Kings College in 1791, Nova Scotia established a facility for higher learning that contributed significantly to the Intellectual Awakening through the scientific and cultural education of its classes of privileged Anglican students. By 1867, a Baptist university, Acadia, had been established in Wolfville (founded 1838) and two Catholic universities, St. Mary’s (1841) and St. Francis Xavier (1853), had been established in Halifax and Antigonish. In 1818, Nova Scotia’s Lieutenant-Governor Lord Dalhousie had used war profits to charter a non-denominational institution in Halifax. Although Dalhousie College did not begin offering instruction until 1838 or granting degrees until 1866, the building (of which the cornerstone was laid in 1820) provided Halifax with a facility to host various educational classes, public lectures, and gatherings. For example, in 1845 Mr. Owen, a singing instructor, gave a course of three lectures on sacred vocal music; for a brief period in 1846 pianist Baron de Fleur used part of the college building as a music academy.

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80 For example, on 16 September 1851, the British Colonist advertised that Mr. Bennison’s singing classes were to give an exhibition at the Royal Acadian School. On 11 December 1858, that same paper advertised, “The National School will give two secular entertainments at the Deaf and Dumb Institution, consisting of recitations, popular melodies, national airs, dialogues, etc., interspersed by numerous pieces on the flute by one of the Boys.”

81 Thomas Chandler Haliburton is one example of the numerous influential graduates whose politics and cultural beliefs were shaped by their education at Kings.
Other institutions were established to educate adult Nova Scotians, in response to the quest for self-improvement that was pursued by an increasing component of the population and especially the province’s middle class. Lord Dalhousie also used leftover war monies to institute the garrison library in Halifax in 1817; Halifax established a library for civilians in 1824, and throughout the 1820s several other provincial towns began to form libraries and reading societies. In 1831, the recently formed Halifax Mechanics’ Institute established a second library in the city. Modelled after the mechanics institutes that first opened in Glasgow in 1823 and subsequently spread throughout Britain and America, Halifax’s society was dedicated to the educational improvement of its members. Historian David Sutherland suggests that it may have been “the most significant expression of Halifax’s swelling interest in literature, science, music, and art”; the Mechanics’ Institute, however, was only one of numerous volunteer societies that formed in Nova Scotia during the pre-Confederation era. Nova Scotians formed various Bible, debating, agricultural, philanthropic, and other types of voluntary societies, for the assorted purposes of promoting moral improvement, fostering literacy, and/or encouraging industry and scientific development. These societies helped to enrich the social life of the towns to which they belonged. In many cases, providing their members with wholesome amusement

82 Somewhat surprisingly, Nova Scotia’s first “public” libraries opened in 1821 in the towns of Newport and Amherst, rather than in Halifax, the commercial and cultural centre, or Windsor, the province’s first university town. See D.C. Harvey, “Early Public Libraries in Nova Scotia,” Dalhousie Review 14 (1934): 429–443. Harvey points out that all of these early libraries operated on a subscription basis, so they were not truly “public libraries” in the modern sense of the term. They were public, however, in the sense that membership was open to anyone willing and able to pay the fee (Ibid., 431). By the end of the decade Pictou, Halifax, Lunenburg, and Kentville also had libraries (opening in 1822, 1824, 1824, and 1826 respectively), and Yarmouth and Bridgetown had formed reading societies (1822 and 1826).


84 Fingard et al., 62. For a list of over fifty voluntary societies active in Halifax during the 1840s, see Sutherland, “Voluntary Societies,” 261–263.
was central to their existence. Consequently, voluntary societies fostered kinship as they advanced the march of progress by educating, enlightening, and entertaining their communities.

**Effects of the Intellectual Awakening**

Ultimately, as Rosemary Ommer writes, the developments of the post-war years into the mid-nineteenth century “created a sense of community and played formative roles in bonding people together to craft a new society in this comparatively new land.” The various manifestations of the Intellectual Awakening helped Nova Scotians make the transition from outpost pioneers into a civilized society by increasing their cognisance of their place within the larger Atlantic World, and stimulating concern for the future welfare of Nova Scotia.

The Intellectual Awakening also helped to give rise to a culture conducive to the development of a literate music-making tradition. The surging interest in art and literature that inspired Nova Scotians to purchase and write books, enrol in schools, and join voluntary societies also motivated colonial residents to attend concerts and invest in musical training. This interest was fuelled by the knowledge they gained of the cultural life beyond their immediate environment. Moreover, as Howe, Haliburton, and other cultural producers advocated for Nova Scotia’s improvement, cultural institutions – including those for music – became part of the various agendas Nova Scotians pursued in order to bring the Victorian march of progress to their home province.

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85 Ommer, 299.
Leisure and Entertainment

As Nova Scotia’s communities grew and settlers transitioned to life in the colony, the stability those settlers achieved permitted moments of leisure, amusement, and gaiety. Even in the earliest years of British settlement, Nova Scotians sought to enliven the dullness of colonial living with leisure and entertainment activities. Dinner parties, balls, and theatrical performances were among the various forms of social and spectator entertainment enjoyed by the province’s lieutenant-governors, administrative officials, military officers, and other upper-class citizens. Such entertainments provided not only a pleasant diversion from daily life, but functioned as an arena for negotiating social relationships and political power. They also helped to compensate for the disparities endured by those who came to Nova Scotia after once living in London or other cultural centres. Over time, the small but expanding middle class acquired the financial means to enjoy some of the leisure pursuits of Nova Scotia’s wealthier and more affluent citizens. As a small, developing colony with limited resources, Nova Scotia could not support opera houses, theatres, or other permanent professional institutes. It could, however, support occasional productions by visiting professional performers; in the meantime, Nova Scotia’s citizens—with the aid of the military establishment—became increasingly capable of

86 See Mark Francis, *Governors and Settlers: Images of Authority in the British Colonies, 1820–60* (Christchurch, New Zealand: Canterbury University Press, 1992), 30–70. Francis argues that ceremonies—such as laying cornerstone, or dinners and balls—were essential to British colonial administration because they were opportunities to establish relationships, to pacify discontent, and to display authority. As part of his discussion, Francis gives the example of Nova Scotia’s Lord Dalhousie, who hosted levees and balls despite his distaste for such occasions because he believed it was his duty as Lieutenant-Governor to sponsor ceremonies and ensure their proper conduct (see 36–38). Drawing from Francis’ research, Patrick O’Neill argues that the theatre could also function as an arena for “politicking.” See O’Neill, “Garrison Theatrical Tradition,” 160.

87 Regarding the importance of music for English colonists, and especially women, living in eighteenth-century India, Ian Woodfield writes, “Isolation, loneliness, and boredom were the lot of many women in India, and music could provide a valuable solace. ... Indeed, the remoter the station, the more necessary it was to ensure the provision of an instrument.” See Woodfield, “The Calcutta Piano Trade,” 14, and also *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
providing their own entertainment. Naturally, Halifax had the most active social calendar, and the occasional entertainments by professional performers were mostly limited to this city. The absence of professional performers, however, did not prevent the residents of Nova Scotia’s hinterland towns from amusing themselves by way of amateur theatricals, evening soirées, Sunday School picnics, or other community-based entertainments. Furthermore, non-Haligonians could, and did, travel to the capital, and experience professional entertainment during their stay.  

To date, no large-scale studies of leisure and entertainment in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia have been conducted; however, through their studies of primary documents concerning other topics, historians have tangentially gleaned a sense of how Nova Scotians passed their leisure time, and have confirmed that various forms of entertainment and communal recreation underscored Nova Scotia’s colonial maturation. Traveller’s accounts, for example, provide evidence of the social activities of Nova Scotia’s privileged classes. According to Jeffery McNairn, some travel accounts describe “an almost endless round of dinners and balls, amateur theatricals, regattas and races, and picnics,” all of which indicate that leisure activities popular in Britain were also part of Nova Scotia’s social life. Articles and advertisements in newspapers, along with diaries and other personal documents also provide evidence of the various forms of

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88 Deborah Trask, for example, notes that Edward Ross, a resident of rural Sherbrooke, occasionally made trips to Halifax to acquire goods for his store. While his business was his primary purpose for travelling to Halifax, Ross also took advantage of the city’s social life during each of his stays. He visited friends, attended lectures at the Mechanics Institute, and even once visited the theatre. See Trask, “The Edward Ross Diaries,” Royal Nova Scotia Historical Society Journal 9 (2006): 39.

89 Conrad and Hiller list numerous leisure activities practiced in mid-nineteenth century Atlantic Canada in their chapter on “Maturing Colonial Societies, 1815–1860.” See Conrad and Hiller, 108. The entries in “Patrick O’Neill’s Halifax Newspaper Archives” on the Atlantic Canada Theatre Site (http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/Theatre/) provide a good overview of the leisure activities practiced in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia. Although the theatre was the focus of O’Neill’s research, he also includes newspaper articles on various other forms of entertainment (including music).

90 McNairn, 36.
leisure and entertainment in which Nova Scotians participated. Newspaper advertisements show that merchants enabled the culture of entertainment by stocking their shelves with products ranging from pastel colours to skates – material goods that were the implements as well as the signifiers of leisure. Advertisements also bear witness to the various professionals who attempted to earn their living by selling their talent to Nova Scotian audiences: language instructors, visual artists, dancing masters, and other teachers helped upper- and middle-class Nova Scotians occupy their own leisure time, while visiting performers provided spectator entertainment. For those who could not afford the services of a private teacher, or evenings at the theatre, bazaars, bees, picnics, parades, regattas, ceremonies, organized sports, recreational clubs, and other forms of public recreation provided alternative types of entertainment.

The entertainments and social activities Nova Scotians enjoyed often created opportunity for hearing live music performances. Dancing in particular was a popular pastime in Nova Scotian communities, and one that required music. The formal balls hosted at Government House were attended by musicians – sometimes members of the garrison band, sometimes civilian professionals – who provided the accompaniments for waltzes, quadrilles, and other fashionable dances. Sarah Clinch, a young Bostonian socialite who lived with relatives in Halifax between 1853 and 1854, describes in her travel diary her attendance at a steady round of social gatherings at the homes of friends in Halifax, Windsor, and Cornwallis; she and her friends took turns performing at the piano, playing and singing for one another, and also

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accompanying others as they danced.\textsuperscript{92} Advertisements placed by musicians announcing their availability for private parties suggest that professional musicians also attended such gatherings.

For special events, such as St. George’s Day, Natal Day, or the laying of building cornerstones, the garrison bands paraded through Halifax’s streets. Bandsmen also accompanied civilian passengers on sleigh rides and moonlight boat excursions. They attended picnics (always with instruments in tow), and entertained the crowds gathered at regattas. In earlier years, military musicians typically fulfilled these functions, but as community bands formed, amateur instrumentalists also provided the sonic backdrop for communal celebrations. The Liverpool Brass Band, for example, became a staple at town events, providing entertainment for the bazaars hosted by churches of all denominations, and even performing for the opening of the local bowling alley; likewise, the Lunenburg Volunteer Band participated in a wide variety of public celebrations, and civic and political events.\textsuperscript{93}

Sleigh rides, picnics, dinners, and other events were often organized by voluntary societies. Such societies’ meetings also provided opportunities for hearing musical performances. The Halifax Volunteer Brass Band, for instance, entertained over six thousand Temperance society members from across the province at the Mammoth Temperance Picnic held in Kings County in September 1865; regular meetings, meanwhile, might be enlivened by performances by a couple of musicians or a choir.\textsuperscript{94} Beginning in 1832, Halifax’s Mechanics’


\textsuperscript{93} On 23 August 1866 the \textit{Liverpool Transcript} reported that the Liverpool Brass Band would be playing for the opening of their bandmaster, Mr. Walls’ bowling alley. On the Lunenburg Volunteer Band, see Charles Bruce Ferguson, ed., \textit{The Diary of Adolphus Gaetz} (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1965), passim, and Martell, 16–19.

\textsuperscript{94} \textit{Liverpool Transcript}, 28 September 1865. The \textit{Transcript} reported that an unfortunate incident befell the band at the picnic: “By breaking of a wagon axle, the members of the Halifax Volunteer Brass Band received some serious bodily injuries. They scarcely spoke of their own wounds, but regretted the accident most on account (continued on next page)
Institute began hosting a public lecture series, at which it was common for a military band or a professional musician to provide musical interludes between lectures. On a few notable occasions, the lectures were given by well-known musicians. Other societies hosted literary and musical entertainments for members as well as the paying public, which were intended to be edifying as well as entertaining, and featured speeches and recitations interspersed with musical performances.

**Theatre and Spectator Entertainments**

The theatre was one of Nova Scotia’s most popular forms of public entertainment, at least in Halifax, and is the aspect of Nova Scotia’s leisure and entertainment history that has received the most scholarly inquiry. According to theatre historians, the presence of the garrison enabled Halifax to experience theatrical performances as early as 1768. Amateur theatrical groups, comprised of both officers and enlisted men, entertained their own ranks within the private sphere of the mess hall, barracks, or officers’ quarters, but also occasionally mounted productions for civilian audiences. In 1789, the garrison’s amateur theatrical society built the New Grand Theatre on Argyle Street, which according to Yashdip Singh Bains, was British
North America’s first theatre. Furthermore, the presence of a large garrison in Halifax attracted professional theatrical performers, and sometimes even theatrical companies, who might otherwise have bypassed such a small city. Actors from London’s Royal Theatres – and later, at mid-century, American actors – travelled in pairs or trios throughout North America, recruiting local players from the towns they visited to perform the minor parts. Some came to Halifax to gain experience before moving on to larger audiences in Boston or New York, or because the limited competition of a smaller centre seemed a lucrative opportunity; others were recruited by the garrison or other amateur groups to perform in Halifax for a short season. Between 1856 and 1859, acclaimed actor E.A. Sothern (who later became the manager of London’s Haymarket Theatre) brought his American-based company to Halifax for a season every summer. According to Alan Andrews, Sothern’s company “performed an astonishing range of plays in over 200 evenings of entertainment in the four years of his management.” Their repertoire encompassed works by popular contemporary playwrights, including Sheridan, Goldsmith, and Boucicault, and also works by Shakespeare. Sothern and other touring professional actors, as Bains writes, kept Nova Scotia from being culturally isolated.

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98 Patrick B. O’Neill, “Theatre in Nova Scotia,” 389. For example, in 1797 the garrison recruited Charles Stuart Powell to manage the Royal Theatre (the new name for the former New Grand Theatre). Powell had begun his career as an actor at Covent Garden, and then worked as a manager in Boston at the Federal Street Theatre and the Haymarket Theatre before relocating to Halifax. He remained in Halifax until his death in 1810; although most of the productions during his time as manager were by amateurs, Powell also recruited various professional actors for short engagements at Theatre Royal to join himself, his wife, and two daughters in plays more ambitious than what the amateurs could mount. See Bains, “New Grand Theatre,” 1–21.
100 Andrews, 129 and 135.
theatrical endeavours of amateurs also enabled Nova Scotians who could afford tickets to experience some of the dramatic works performed contemporaneously at Covent Garden, Haymarket Theatre, and other major stages.

Theatrical entertainments also created opportunity for experiencing musical performances, and for hearing the musical works in fashion in London and other cultural capitals. As Julian Mates and Katherine Preston write, much of the theatrical repertoire performed by the troupes touring North America included scenes featuring or accompanied by music. 102 A typical evening’s entertainment generally consisted of two theatrical performances: “a full-length dramatic piece with added songs and dances (either interpolated into the action or performed between the acts)” and “an afterpiece (a farce, burletta, one-act opera, dance, pantomime, or masque).” 103 A musical overture typically opened the performance, and interludes of songs and dances frequently separated the two pieces (see Figure 2.17). Many of the era’s most popular theatre pieces were ballad operas, which interspersed songs with scenes of spoken dialogue. Also, by the 1820s theatre companies had begun to present Anglicized versions of Italian operas, which, as Preston explains, were adapted for the English stage by making them “closer in musical style to English comic operas” (see Figure 2.18). 104 Oftentimes, the garrison band provided the incidental music at Halifax performances, although local civilian musicians were also hired to occupy the pit at the theatre. In the winter of 1858, Sothern brought a theatre orchestra from New York to Halifax (see Figure 2.19). Sothern’s company almost

103 Preston, 1.
104 Ibid., 2. For example, a review of the Garrison Amateur Theatrical printed in the British Colonist on 21 January 1854 stated, “The singing in the Opera was remarkably good, and the whole entertainment gave much satisfaction.”
always included at least one or two singers; the season he brought the orchestra, however, he did not bring a singer, prompting a reviewer for the *Acadian Recorder* to remark,

The orchestra, under the able management of Mr. Van Olker, is a great addition to the attractions of the Lyceum, this season. It is to be regretted however, that there does not appear to be a singer, male or female, in the company. This want has proved rather a serious defect in the performance of some of the plays already brought out.¹⁰⁵

Many of the other professional theatrical performers who came to Halifax from British and American theatres were singers as well as actors, and sometimes performed short concerts in between the dramatic pieces.¹⁰⁶

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¹⁰⁵ *Acadian Recorder*, 23 January 1858.

¹⁰⁶ Mates, 44–48, emphasizes that the nature of theatre repertory forced actors to be versatile, and capable of performing musical roles.
Music was also an integral component of other forms of spectator entertainment brought to Nova Scotia by the touring troupes and companies that became more common post-1840 with the introduction of transatlantic steam travel. American minstrel troupes visited Nova Scotia regularly from 1845 onward, only two years after the first minstrel show was pioneered in Boston. Their entertainments were essentially musical-theatrical variety shows, combining

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skits, dances, and comic banter with songs and instrumental performances by minstrels in blackface costume. Other entertainments – including magic shows, acrobatic spectacles, and phrenology lectures – had musicians perform between acts or during intermissions, or even called in the garrison band to perform an overture or the national anthem. Circuses brought their own musicians and bands to accompany acts and entertain the crowds. Panoramas were another form of entertainment brought to Nova Scotia by touring companies. Popular throughout Britain and North America, these were precursors to modern cinema that featured large paintings mounted on a scrolling mechanism. Musicians often performed at panoramas, providing songs to enliven the displays of landscape imagery or scenes of war battles (see Figures 2.20 and 2.21). Moreover, the musicians that came to Nova Scotia as part of a touring troupe or show not only provided musical performances during their troupe’s entertainment, but for the duration of their tour they were an influential presence in Halifax and the other communities they visited. They interacted with Nova Scotia’s resident musicians, and occasionally, independent of their touring entertainment, gave concerts.


109 As another example, the following announcement appeared in the *Sun* on 22 December 1854: “The Panorama of Uncle Tom’s Cabin will be open for the last time this evening, affording an opportunity of inspecting a most creditable work of art, the Exhibition of which has delighted thousands of our fellow Citizens. In connection with the Panoramas, will be given a Grand Concert consisting of a large programme of popular songs and ballads, by Mr. Packard aided by the City Quadrille Band.” Packard returned to Halifax in 1855 as the narrator for the Russian War Panorama of Figure 2.20, and was accompanied by a ballad singer named Mr. Chandler (see *British North American*, 10 and 15 August 1855). On the evening of 10 August the 76th Regiment Band also performed at the Russian War Panorama.
Concerts

As with the theatre, Halifax began supporting public concerts early on during its colonial history. The first concert record that both Phyllis Blakeley and Timothy McGee found was for a public concert at the Golden Ball (a coffee house) on 22 February 1785, when Halifax was a city of approximately 5,000 residents. Concerts, although not daily or weekly occurrences, were held with significant frequency in local coffee houses and taverns during the decade of the

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\(^{110}\) Blakeley, 96; McGee, 383.
Again, the garrison played an important role in enabling Haligonians to experience this form of entertainment. Members of the garrison bands provided the music, while officers along with other colonial administrators were the audiences and patrons who made the hosting of these concerts possible. Halifax’s concert life was particularly active between 1794 and 1800 when Prince Edward, Duke of Kent, was placed in command of the garrison. An avid patron of the arts, Edward recruited musicians from Germany and from other British regiments stationed in North America to play in a band for the balls, theatrical performances, and concerts he sponsored.

The nineteenth century witnessed the rise in popularity of public concerts throughout the Atlantic World, as well as the proliferation of musicians participating in and promoting such entertainment. In major urban centres, concert life became increasingly diverse, both in terms of the types of concerts that audiences could attend, and the members of society who comprised those audiences. Halifax naturally could not support the same intensity of concert activity as London, Boston, or other large cities; nonetheless, the concert structure of Nova Scotia’s capital ultimately underwent substantial growth during the pre-Confederation period.

In the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, the concert life Halifax supported appears to have been less active than it had been in the 1790s. Following his visit to the city in 1829 Captain Moorsam remarked, “The exquisite powers of musical concert ... are here almost unknown, and, except in two or three solitary instances, hardly attempted.”\textsuperscript{114} The graph in Figure 2.22, which is based on advertisements and reviews from “Patrick O’Neill’s

\textsuperscript{114} Moorsam, 97.
Halifax Newspaper Archives” and approximately represents the number of public music entertainments held in Halifax during each decade between 1815 and 1859, corroborates Moorsam’s observation. Various factors may have contributed to this decline. The influence of Prince Edward demonstrates that one individual can make a significant impact on a community’s musical life; Halifax between 1815 and 1829 may have lacked such a cultural leader.

Meanwhile, the theatre was active during this period, so Haligonians may have chosen instead to sponsor events that combined musical performance with spoken drama, rather than strictly musical concerts. Most likely, the depressed economy caused by the post-war recession also kept concert activity to a minimum. As Figure 2.22 shows, though, Halifax’s concert life became significantly more active during the 1840s, and especially during the prosperous 1850s. This increase can largely be attributed to the touring artists that began to visit Nova Scotia regularly once Cunard’s steamship service commenced and facilitated the rise of the Atlantic touring circuit. Such itinerant musicians, however, were not the only contributing factor. Touring artists primarily visited Nova Scotia during the summer and fall months (see Figure 2.23); in their absence during the winter, the city’s resident musicians – amateur as well as professional – increasingly began to give public concerts (see Figure 2.24).  

115 In Figures 2.23 and 2.24, each coloured band represents the total number of concerts given during the decade by that particular class of musicians. The height of an individual band at any given point indicates the number of concerts performed during that month for the entire decade. When the bands are combined, the peaks and valleys that they form represent the months of the most and least concert activity for those musicians throughout the period of 1815 to 1859.
2.23 Concerts performed in Halifax by touring artists, per month and decade

2.24 Concerts performed by residents of Halifax, per month and decade
Through the combined efforts of resident and foreign musicians, both professional and amateur, concert-going Haligonians experienced a variety of musical performances, ranging from band concerts to minstrel shows, and on a few special occasions, concerts by the era’s leading performers. It is doubtful, though, that the statistics represented in Figures 2.22 through 2.24 – which summarize only concerts that were advertised and/or reviewed by the Halifax press – represent all the live music performances that Haligonians attended. Throughout the nineteenth century, private concerts held in family homes were as much a part of the musical life experienced by upper- and middle-class Anglo people as were public concerts. On 6 March 1820, the Halifax Journal printed a letter written by an English gentleman visiting Halifax, which suggests that private salon concerts were likewise popular in Nova Scotia:

[Music] is more fashionable at the present, I am told, than at any former period, – it is so, in consequence of the higher Circles having evinced a disposition to encourage this rational and innocent amusement, by getting up Concerts, where some Professionals, but chiefly Amateurs, perform on different Instruments. From my being a stranger, I of course could not expect to be present at any of these Concerts, and therefore cannot give you particulars from my own observation, but I am informed by a young gentleman, of whose judgement I think favourably, that considering all circumstances they go off very well indeed ... Musick being so much thought of and noticed in these high Circles, has given it great eclat – and in consequence many other private musical parties are on foot.

Outside Halifax, public concert opportunities were less frequent, but as improving travel conditions accommodated the growing number of touring artists visiting Nova Scotia, professional performers occasionally left the city and sought audiences in the larger provincial

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117 *Halifax Journal*, 6 March 1820. The fact that the author was excluded from these concerts gives reason to suggest that Halifax’s musical life may have been more active than Moorsam – also a “stranger” – observes in his travel account.
towns. Meanwhile, amateur musicians increasingly responded to their communities’ demand for entertainment, exhibiting their talents at Temperance society gatherings, church bazaars, and concerts held in community halls. In short, Nova Scotia’s musical life may have been limited, but concerts as well as other forms of music-making nonetheless helped to bridge the distance between Nova Scotia and the rest of the Atlantic World. The stability Nova Scotia achieved as its colonial era drew to a close permitted provincial residents not only to become more cognisant of the music culture of metropolitan centres, but to begin to experience that culture for themselves.

A Golden Age?

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nova Scotia’s colonial future seemed bleak. Its communities were small, scattered, and disconnected; many, if not most, of their inhabitants were poor and struggling to survive. The climate was harsh; the landscape, with its many rocks and tangled forests, showed few signs of the improving hand of civilization. Technological, agricultural, and industrial development were still many years away. Even Halifax, the colony’s capital, was little more than a frontier town, often plagued by disorder and violence.

Nova Scotia, however, was not “doomed” as some colonial administrators had feared. Life in the fledgling province remained tenuous, and Nova Scotia’s development continued to lag behind that of other more prosperous regions within the Atlantic arena; nonetheless, the wilderness was transformed steadily, as British-directed civilization took root in its place. Nova

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118 Sutherland, “1810–1820,” 236. Sutherland notes that Britain’s rather passive defence policy of Atlantic Canada stemmed from the belief that the colonies were doomed to fail anyway.
Scotia’s administrators, merchants, garrison families, and countless other immigrants and transient visitors forged the transatlantic connections that gradually gave rise to a Nova Scotian culture. By 1867, Nova Scotia had developed from the colonial outpost it had been early in the century into a mature province. While that transition may not have constituted a “Golden Age,” the post-War to the pre-Confederation period was still an era of significant progress and growth.

Throughout the fifty years of this pinnacle era, music accompanied the colonial project. At the outset of 1815, Nova Scotia had already established a tradition of cosmopolitan-oriented music-making; the province’s musical life was, of course, limited, but even then resources had been established that would help effectuate musical development over the half century before Confederation. As Nova Scotia progressed from a colonial backwater into, in Beamish’s words, a “happy, free, and intelligent province,” the province’s musical institutions also developed, and various cultural arbiters helped to bring transatlantic music culture to Nova Scotia. The subsequent chapters explore the role of music-making in this developmental process, and the musicians and music who were instrumental in Nova Scotia’s age of progress.
CHAPTER 3:

PIANO GIRLS AND MARCHING MEN:
NOVA SCOTIA’S PROFESSIONAL AND AMATEUR MUSICIANS

On 11 February 1761, the young city of Halifax finally received news about the proclamation of Britain’s new king, George III. To spread the news, and to celebrate, a party of civil and military officers paraded through the town, accompanied by a band of music.¹ In May of that same year, Jacob Althus advertised in the Halifax Gazette that he was available to teach “German flute, violin, French horn, Hautboy, Basson [sic.], or any other instrument of the like kind.”² On 26 May 1789, the Royal Gazette remarked on a performance of the “Final Chorus of the Messiah and the Coronation Anthem by Handel” during a service at St. Paul’s Anglican Church. The Handelian choruses were performed by several gentlemen and the garrison bands, and were accompanied by the church organ. The following year, on 28 September 1790, the garrison bands participated in a public concert at the Halifax Coffee House. They shared the program with Mrs. Mechtler, a singer and actress who had come to Halifax for a short engagement with the theatre and who had previously performed in various American cities.³

These various events show that – before steamships plied the Atlantic waters; before an “intellectual awakening” had “rubbed the sleep” from Nova Scotian towns; before wartime profits had filled (then drained, and then filled again) provincial coffers – musicians passed

¹ Beamish Murdoch, A History of Nova Scotia, or Acadia, vol. 2 (Halifax: James Barnes, 1866), 399.
through and dwelled among the settlements scattered across the Nova Scotian peninsula. As tentative settlements grew into full-fledged communities, musicians were also among those who witnessed – and helped – Nova Scotia gradually transform from a colonial outpost into a mature provincial society. On 21 September 1844, an author for the *Morning Post* wrote,

In this Garrison, from time to time, are stationed the most efficient Bands of Music in the British Army, and we have enjoyed this inestimable advantage for so long a period that we can scarcely appreciate the privilege; and although there is musical talent among us of no mean order (witness the Harmonic Society and the lesser societies that in the various places of Worship in the city, chant the praises of the King of Heaven and Earth), yet until very lately scarcely an effort had been made towards improvement. The praise worthy efforts of some of [our] leading musicians (who as a natural consequence of practising their Heaven born art), are strongly tinctured with Philanthropy; have lately given a vast impetus to the love of Music in this community.

As the anonymous author describes, Nova Scotia’s musical community at mid-century included military musicians, permanent residents, and professionals. At this time, Nova Scotia’s musical life was also just beginning to experience the effects of the technological developments that facilitated travel throughout the Atlantic, and that made the province an occasional destination on the North American touring circuit. From the 1840s onward, “touring artists” – that is, career musicians who travelled from one community to the next to give concerts – regularly sought the patronage of Nova Scotia’s growing audiences. In their wake came other professional musicians, who settled into the community for longer-term employment and joined the military musicians already stationed in the province. Inspired by these musicians, and by their own desire for entertainment, Nova Scotia’s settlers pursued music as an amateur hobby.

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5 *Morning Post*, 21 September 1844. On the Harmonic Society, see pp. 158ff below.
Altogether, the musicians of pre-Confederation Nova Scotia formed a diverse group, encompassing various backgrounds and experiences, and perpetuating a varied range of musical practices. The following chapter provides an overview of Nova Scotia’s musical community, and identifies the individual musicians who were particularly influential in the development of the province’s musical life. Military musicians and touring artists were the most active in the public sphere, and it was largely due to their presence that Nova Scotians were able to experience public concerts, and thus participate in one of the major musical phenomena of the nineteenth-century Atlantic World. Nova Scotia also took part in another musical phenomenon – that of domestic music-making – once the growing stability enabled more settlers to attempt the musical practices introduced to them by bands and solo performers. As they gained musical talents, they increasingly performed outside their homes and joined professional musicians in introducing their peers to cosmopolitan music culture. Amateurs were supported by, and learned their skills from “resident professionals” – entrepreneurial musicians who immigrated to and settled in Nova Scotian communities. Like amateurs, resident professionals straddled the border between the public and private sphere, and helped to provide the music for both Nova Scotian stages and homes. Through examining each of these groups, this chapter identifies the types of musical performances to which Nova Scotian audiences were exposed, and the types of musical activities in which Nova Scotians themselves engaged. It also reveals the interaction between the members of Nova Scotia’s musical community, professional and amateur, native and foreign. Finally, by exploring the ways these individuals and ensembles contributed to Nova Scotia’s musical life, this chapter shows how, regardless of skill, each musician served as a cultural arbiter, and helped to immerse Nova Scotia in the musical culture of the Atlantic World.
Military Musicians

While there were many forces in Nova Scotia working against the development of its musical life, one advantage the province did possess was the garrison in Halifax. Beginning in the eighteenth century, bands were attached to the military units stationed in the garrison, allowing the Halifax community to benefit from the steady presence of at least one ensemble of trained musicians. Also, some of the navy ships docked in Halifax harbour maintained bands, which occasionally came ashore to participate in civilian affairs. The size and quality of these military ensembles, however, could vary from one unit to the next.

In the early nineteenth century, a military unit’s officers were responsible for funding the unit’s band, and so the size and instrumentation of each military band was at the discretion of the officers and the bandmasters they hired (who were typically civilians, and often foreigners). James Moss documents that regimental bands as of 1823 were permitted to have fourteen members plus the band sergeant, although these regulations could be circumvented by “hiring civilian musicians or enlisting regular soldiers as ‘acting Bandsmen’.” Bands generally included a range of brass and woodwind instruments. Some officers, though, may have hired string players, or wind players who could double on string instruments. The size of military bands grew throughout the nineteenth century, but the instrumentation remained unstandardized.

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6 For example, the British Colonist reported on 25 November 1858 that the band of the HMS Indus was going to attend the bazaar being held for the Deaf and Dumb Institute.


8 Moss, 22.

9 For example, the Morning Journal reported on 25 April 1855 that the string band of the 76th Regiment would be attending the Metropolitan Quadrille Party that evening, indicating that there were indeed string players stationed in Halifax at that time.
Consequently, not all garrison bands would necessarily have been as “efficient” as the “two splendid bands” of the garrison that the *Morning Post* author quoted above enjoyed.\(^\text{10}\) That being said, contemporary accounts indicate that some of the bands stationed in Halifax were well-trained, accomplished ensembles, and included skilled directors and instrumentalists among their ranks. One of the bands the *Morning Post* author was referring to when he commented on Halifax’s “inestimable advantage” was the Rifle Brigade Band, which according to *The Times*, had been a “favourite of Windsor Castle” and had a director (Henry Schallehn) who was “a musician of no mean celebrity.”\(^\text{11}\) Several years later, Alexander MacDonald arrived in Halifax in July 1851 to direct the 42\(^{\text{nd}}\) Regiment Band. The *Novascotian* reported that MacDonald had previously been the premiere clarinettist of Louis Jullien’s celebrated orchestra, and according to the *Chronicle*, the band made “marked improvement” by September.\(^\text{12}\) Even the “non-celebrity” band members, though, were probably some of the better musicians Haligonians encountered. More importantly, regardless of proficiency, the regimental bands afforded the city with regular opportunities to hear musical performances.

**The Band in Concert**

In addition to providing the music for military functions, state and civic ceremonies, parades, and other celebrations, the bands stationed at the Halifax garrison also gave regular public concerts. Unfortunately, these events are difficult to track with precision. Whereas public concerts organized by touring artists or other civilian musicians were singular events and non-

\(^\text{10}\) *Morning Post*, 21 September 1844.
\(^\text{11}\) *The Times*, 13 December 1842. For further information on Schallehn, see n. 21 below.
\(^\text{12}\) *Novascotian*, 14 July 1851; *Chronicle*, 9 September 1851.
routine, military bands tended to perform publicly on a regular basis. Likely for this reason—and also perhaps because their popularity meant that no communication was necessary beyond word-of-mouth—military bands seldom advertised their public performances. Occasionally, when space permitted, newspapers would print notices to remind readers of the bands’ performance schedule, or remark upon the large audience that had enjoyed hearing the band “discourse sweet music” on a particularly fine afternoon. Military band concerts were held during the warm-weather months on either one of Province House’s lawns or on the military parade. These summer performances were much-anticipated events, so much so that when the bands did not begin performing in June 1842 as expected, readers of the Morning Post began asking when regular band concerts would resume. In July 1842, an author for the Post wrote,

A Correspondent enquires why the community (Ladies in particular), are not favoured with Military Music in the area of the Province Building, as in former years. He appeals to the gallantry of the Officers; – invokes the superb band of the 64th to set the example, and only asks them to take a turn about with the 69th and 76th, so that, twice a week, all might hear “Sweet and enchanting strains of music – whose wooing sounds would win the tender hearts of some of the prettiest women in the world.” If we could add a single word of persuasion to that, we would cheerfully do so, but as we cannot, we merely hint that as the grass plots north and south of the Province Building have recently been mowed, no better time than the present can be chosen, for the convenience of the Band.

In 1854, the garrison bands began to play weekly summer concerts on the grounds of Halifax’s Horticultural Gardens.

The return of cold weather ended the military bands’ outdoor performances. Bands occasionally performed indoors, giving Halifax audiences opportunity to attend band concerts during the winter as well. These were seemingly one-off events, but it is possible that some of

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13 Consequently, band concerts are not included in the statistics illustrated by the graphs in Chapter 2.

14 Morning Post, 23 July 1842. Apparently the correspondent’s desire for band music was heeded, because three days later the Morning Post printed yet another notice thanking the Band Master of the 69th Regiment Band for playing a favourite air during an outdoor performance.
the garrison’s bands continued to hold regular, non-advertised performances even after the encroaching cold forced them to relocate indoors. For example, in April 1853, the *Novascotian* printed the following notice, confirming that that the 97th Regiment band had been participating in an ongoing indoor concert series:

> It may not be generally known that through the kindness of Col. Lockyer, K.H., the fine Band of the 97th has, since the Regiment has been in this Garrison, every alternative Thursday, from 2 to 4 o'clock p.m. given a Musical entertainment at the Hotel. The élite of the city, including Lady LeMarchant, have participated in these Soirées, and all have been delighted with the charming performances of Signor Olivieri, the talented leader of the Band. In anticipation of the speedy departure of this gallant corps, last Thursday was probably the last of the series.  

Whether or not other bands from the garrison participated in similar salon-type entertainments is not known. If they did, such events may not have been public concerts, but as the above notice implies, private gatherings available to a select audience only.

During the winter and early spring of 1857, the 62nd Regiment Band held a series of indoor concerts at Temperance Hall to fundraise for the Athenaeum Reading Room, which they billed as “promenade concerts.” In doing so, they introduced Halifax audiences to a comparatively new type of concert that had become extremely popular in England. Originating in France, promenade concerts were initiated in London in 1838 and became a highly popular form of entertainment under the virtuosic showman-conductor Louis Jullien. These combined visual spectacle and other non-musical elements with an orchestral performance. Jullien’s tour of the United States between 1853 and 1854 helped to popularize this concert genre in North America, but even before his arrival international newspaper reports helped to familiarize North American audiences with the concept of Jullien’s promenade concerts. For example, six years

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15 *Novascotian*, 4 April 1853.

before Jullien crossed the Atlantic, the 20th Regiment band under the direction of Mr. Oliver advertised that they would give, on 20 August 1847, their second concert “à la Julian [sic.].” In what ways the 20th or the 62nd bands’ concerts imitated the promenade concerts of London is not known, but newspaper advertisements for the latter did indicate that the entertainment would be novel. The 62nd Regiment Band began another series of promenade concerts in the following winter, and on 8 February 1858, the Novascotian noted that the garrison bands intended to hold promenade concerts every Tuesday afternoon at Masonic Hall.

Garrison bands also participated in the concerts given by civilian professional musicians, as well as those by touring artists visiting Halifax. When they made such guest appearances, newspaper advertisements typically indicate that their participation in the concert was at the permission of the commanding officer, suggesting that a strategy commonly employed by touring artists (or by their managers or agents) was to secure support from the garrison upon their arrival in Halifax. Some advertisements indicate whether the full band or just select members would be attending, although this information was not always communicated clearly. In the absence of printed programmes it is difficult to assess the nature of the military bands’ participation in all public concerts, but the available programmes, along with some newspaper reviews, indicate that bands typically performed an overture at the beginning of each half of the concert, and sometimes provided accompaniment for one or more of the soloists. Occasionally, a talented band member might perform a solo number. Military bands, or their individual

17 Sun, 25 August 1847.
18 Carse, 48–49. Carse describes the Irish Echoes as a comic quadrille “in which a feature was made of the wonderful natural echo on the lake of Killarney.”
members, were also frequently called upon to support amateur concerts. In some cases they were an additional attraction to the programme, as they were in the independent professionals’ concerts, and received separate billing, while in other cases they served simply as reinforcements for the amateurs’ ensembles, filling in unoccupied parts or boosting weak sections.

By all accounts, the garrison bands were popular ensembles and highly esteemed by the community. It is probably for this reason that touring artists sought the bands’ services at their concerts; although this strategy did not always work, it was not uncommon for newspapers to report a better crowd in attendance on garrison nights than on others. Often, when a military band did participate in a touring artist’s concert, this guest appearance took place near the end of a concert series. This timing may simply be the result of logistics (i.e., the performer or agent could not ascertain the band’s participation until they had arrived in the city), but it does suggest that including a military band was considered a method for creating the hook necessary to entice audiences for a second or third hearing, or for creating the special atmosphere befitting the finale of a concert tour. Likely, having garrison musicians on stage prompted not only band-loving members of the general public to attend, but officers and other members of the garrison community as well. An author for the *Novascotian* declared that the presence of the 38th Regiment Band in the orchestra on the night of 22 November 1849 made the Theatre worth double the cost of admission; the *Chronicle* suggested a similar effect at Ordway’s Aeolian Vocalists’ 9 September 1851 concert, only in that case the 42nd Regiment Band *tripled* the admission value.\(^{19}\)

There were many potential reasons why garrison bands held such audience appeal: first of all, a wind band is capable of a far greater range of dynamic and timbral variation than an

\(^{19}\) *Novascotian*, 22 November 1849; *Chronicle*, 9 September 1851 (emphasis added).
individual soloist or small ensemble. Consequently, a band concert offered an opportunity to hear music performed in a manner that could not be replicated by amateurs at home. Furthermore, the players were familiar members of the community; the audience they drew likely included friends, but also social climbers and merchants, interested in making favourable impressions or returning the patronage military officers had bestowed upon their establishments. Moreover, the garrison bands were trained and rehearsed ensembles. Some military musicians may well have been more highly skilled than the touring artists who peddled their talents in Halifax; if not, they at least promised a calibre of performance beyond the skills of most amateurs.

Enthusiasm for the garrison bands remained high throughout the entirety of the pre-Confederation period, and based on reviews, concerts that involved the bands earned the patronage of some of the city’s most élite citizens. In this respect, Halifax shows its status as a small city. According to Michael Broyles, between 1830 and 1845 the wind band began to slip in status in Boston, as Bostonians considered it inferior to the symphony orchestra. In pre-Confederation Halifax, however, where there was no orchestra, concerts by the garrison bands remained prestigious. Because the garrison bands were the only form of large ensemble available to Nova Scotian audiences – and also, perhaps, because they were the representatives of Britain’s imperial order – they were popular with both élite and common audiences.

Bandmasters and Other Military Men

The participation of bandmasters, as well as individual rank-and-file bandsmen in local music activities beyond the terms of their military engagement probably also contributed to the military bands’ popularity. Presumably all bandmasters were trained musicians, but some were skilled instrumentalists willing to perform solos at public concerts. Henry Schallehn, for example, had previously been the conductor of the orchestra for Her Majesty’s Balls at Buckingham Palace. He was stationed in Halifax with the Rifle Brigade Band from 1842 to 1846, and during that time performed as a violin soloist for at least six public concerts, collaborating with both touring artists and civilian professional musicians. Signor Olivieri, bandmaster of the 97th Regiment (in Halifax from 1848 to 1853) occasionally performed as a flute soloist during theatre performances and, according to the notice in the Novascotian quoted above, his band hosted musical soirées at the Halifax Hotel during which his “charming performances” delighted audiences. Olivieri also played flute solos during at least two public concerts organized by resident professionals, and at the concert given by the Heron Family on 8 September 1852. Moreover, some bandmasters (and potentially some rank-and-file musicians) assumed leadership of Halifax’s amateur music-making, helping to train native Nova Scotian musicians and organize local music institutions. Shortly after being stationed in Halifax, Schallehn advertised that he was available to teach singing and music lessons, and even sold

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21 After leaving Halifax, Schallehn’s regiment was stationed in Toronto, where he was likewise active as a performer and a conductor at Toronto concerts. He also taught private music lessons, and in 1850 was the singing master at Upper Canada College. Upon his return to England he became the director of the Crystal Palace Band in 1854. See Helmut Kallmann, “Schallehn, Henry,” in The Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, 2nd ed., ed. Kallman, Potvin, and Winters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 1189. Schallehn was also one of the musicians instrumental in founding Britain’s Royal Military School of Music at Kneller Hall, and became the school’s first director from 1857. According to Farmer, though, he was not successful and was dismissed in 1859. See Farmer, 118–119, 133, and 147.

22 Novascotian, 4 April 1853.
print music. For a brief period in 1843 he was the director of Halifax’s amateur Harmonic Society. Similarly, J. Holt, bandmaster of the 17th Regiment Band, which served in Halifax in the early 1860s, became the director of the Halifax Choral Society.

The leadership musicians like Schallehn, Olivieri, and Holt provided to the community was for a limited time, since each military band was stationed in Nova Scotia for only a few years before being transferred to a new location within the Empire. Occasionally, though, military bands left behind retirees who remained in Nova Scotia as civilians and continued to participate in the province’s musical life. For example, after retiring from the 43rd Regiment, former bandmaster Charles Kaestner was hired by Antigonish’s musical society in 1846 to instruct an amateur band. When his engagement there ended, he was hired for a similar purpose in the town of Guysborough. Similarly, when Mr. Walls retired from the Royal Newfoundland Company Band, he settled in Halifax where he taught instrumental lessons to young men and formed an amateur band. In 1862 he temporarily relocated to Yarmouth to direct the town’s brass band. He moved to Liverpool later that year to direct that town’s band, as well as the band of nearby Milton, and remained there until at least 1866.

William Ackhurst came to Halifax from Kent, England, in 1833 at the age of twenty-one as a member of the bugle corps of the 60th Rifle Brigade. He remained in Halifax as a merchant and auctioneer, and eventually rose up Halifax’s civic ranks to become an alderman, Justice of the Peace, and Chairman of the School Board. Until his death in 1887, Ackhurst was one of the

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23 Morning Post, 13 September 1842.
24 Novascotian, 6 April and 25 May 1846.
25 Halifax Morning Sun, 14 March 1859.
26 Likely unable to live off his band salary alone, Walls opened a bowling alley. According to the Liverpool Transcript, his bands performed a promenade concert for the alley’s grand opening on 23 August 1866.
most prominent figures in Halifax’s musical life, and a key advocate for choral societies. He served as president of the Harmonic Society, as well as other amateur music institutions. When the first society folded in 1846 (see below), the *Novascotian* recommended that Ackhurst be made the leader of a new society to cultivate musical taste. He was also the choir director of Halifax’s First Baptist Church, and frequently played cornopean solos at concerts given by resident professional musicians and other public music entertainments.

Finally, beyond paying for the passage of musicians like Schallehn and Ackhurst from England to Halifax, the garrison officers themselves could potentially contribute to Halifax’s musical life. Men of leisure, officers typically had the financial means to pursue musical hobbies. Their tenure in the comparatively dull garrison at Halifax may have given them reason to put to use any instrumental training they had previously received. Officers were part of Halifax’s élite social life, and undoubtedly were among the dilettantes who played and sang at private salon concerts and other gatherings during which music was part of the sociability. As Patrick O’Neill’s research has shown, garrison officers did participate in public theatre performances. An advertisement for a concert held on 20 May 1829 shows that, on at least one occasion, officers performed in public musical entertainments as well. Billed as “an Amateur Concert,” this performance featured several officers and rank-and-file men as instrumentalists sharing the stage with Miss George and Mrs. Gill, two English singers in Halifax for an

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27 A notice of Ackhurst’s death in the *Novascotian*, 2 July 1887, described him as an “auctioneer, alderman, and enthusiastic musician.”
28 *Novascotian*, 16 December 1846.
29 Promoting an upcoming concert by Ackhurst’s Salem Chapel Choir, an author for the *Sun*, 8 March 1847, wrote “No man has been more successful in concerts than Mr. Ackhurst and we are sure a generous public will appreciate the effort.” “Success” in this case may refer to Ackhurst’s performance capabilities or his talent as a director, or perhaps to his ability to draw an audience.
engagement with the theatre. The advertisement is remarkable because it provides the programme plus the names and instruments of all the performers, even the rank-and-file men (see Figure 3.1). Not only does this advertisement reveal the participation of garrison officers in public concerts, but it demonstrates that string players as well as wind instrumentalists sometimes came to Halifax with the military. Garrison officers may well have been the instrumentalists who comprised the “orchestra” or performed as amateurs at other public concerts.

The Military influence

Ultimately, while all of the garrisons’ musicians and bands played an important role in Halifax’s musical life, not all regimental bands contributed equally. As Schallehn, Olivieri, and Holt demonstrate, the presence of a bandmaster who had a particular interest in concertizing could be a significant boon to public concerts. By permitting or encouraging his officers and men to participate in community events, a publicly-minded military commander with a fondness for musical entertainment could also be beneficial to concert life. Furthermore, although these musicians were members of the garrison’s distinct social order, their musical endeavours bridged the military and civilian communities. Their musical talents made them sought-after performers, drawing them out of the confines of the garrison and away from the military’s auspices to collaborate with their civilian colleagues, and occasionally, to offer leadership to Nova Scotia’s native musicians.
A GRAND AMATEUR CONCERT

TOMORROW EVENING, the 20th inst. will be held at MASON HALL.
Under the immediate Patronage of
His Excellency Sir PEREGRINE and Lady SARAH MAITLAND
AN AMATEUR CONCERT,

Leader of the Band — Mr. WALLACE, 52d. Regt.
Grand Piano — Mr. LOCKETT.
Principal Vocal Performers,
Miss GEORGE & MRS. GILL.
Principal Amateurs,
Lieut. ABBOTT, 96th Regt. — Flute
Major COBBE, R.A. — Violoncello
Lieut. NORCOTT, Rifle Brigade — Flute
Capt. CARY, 96th Regt. — Violoncello
Mr. RICHARDSON — Violin

Violins — Mr. R. Wallace, 52d Regt.; Mr. H. Wallace, 52d Regt.; Mr. Leamon, 52d Regt.
Tenor — Mr. Reeves, 52d Regt.
Clarionettes — Mr. Pye, 96th Regt.; Mr. McAlpin, Rifles,
Horns — Mr. Arms, 96th Regt.; Mr. Didham,
Bassoons — Mr. Blakely, 52d Regt.; Mr. Allen, 96th Regt.;
Trombones — Mr. Checkers, Rifles.; Mr. Butcher, 52d Regt.
Bass Drum — Mr. Allen, 52d Regt.

ACT I

Overture to “Il Turco in Italia” — Full Orchestra, Rossini.
Song “Echo Cavatina” — Miss George, flute accomp. Lieut. Abbott., Glee.
“The Day Beam” — Miss George, Mrs. Gill and Lieut. Norcott.
Song “Hours of Sorrow” — Miss George, with Accompt., Rossini.
Song “The Merry Flageolet” — Mrs Gill, Barnet.
Haydn’s “Grand Symphony Surprise” — Full Orchestra.

ACT II

Overture to “La Gazza Ladra” — Full Orchestra, Rossini.
Song “Lo! The Gentle Lark” — Miss George, Bishop.
Celebrate Bass Song “The Wolf” — Mr. Locket, Shield.
Song “Even as the Sun” — Miss George, flute accomp.
Horne “Quintetto,” Violoncello obligato, Major Cobbe MSS.
Song “The Mocking Bird” — Mrs. Gill, Bishop
Song “The Soldier Tired” — Miss George with accompts., Arne
Overture to “Prometheus” — Full Orchestra, Beethoven
FINALE “GOD SAVE THE KING.”
Touring Artists

By providing Halifax with teachers, soloists, and skilled ensembles, the garrison bands were, without question, an integral institution within Nova Scotia’s musical life. The significant increase post-1840 in concert activity documented in Chapter 2, however, resulted not from the military bands’ concertizing actions, but principally from the touring artist phenomenon that had a significant impact on concert structures throughout North America. Perhaps enticed by the presence of the significant British governmental establishment in Halifax (including the garrison), touring artists visited the city regularly in the summer months once Samuel Cunard established the city’s port as a centre on the transatlantic steamship route. Some – primarily the theatre singers described below – were recruited to perform in the province by a manager, impresario, or institution/organization that was planning a public concert. Others came to Nova Scotia as part of a circuit tour of the North Atlantic region. Usually their intention to perform was publicized in advance of their arrival in Halifax. Many followed the common practice of forwarding testimonials – or, “puffs” (i.e., flattering reviews) – from American or British colonial newspapers to the Halifax press shortly before the scheduled commencement of their concert series. It was also common for the Halifax press to print notices indicating that a touring artist was currently performing before audiences in Saint John or Fredericton, and was scheduled to soon arrive in Halifax. Prior to 1840, the majority of these touring artists came from London or other parts of Great Britain. Post-1840, Britons continued to occupy a large percentage within the group of touring artists that visited Nova Scotia, but increasingly touring artists came from the United States, and to a lesser extent, from Germany or other parts of the European continent.
Vocalists

Throughout the pre-Confederation period, and especially prior to 1840, the majority of the artists who visited and performed concerts in Nova Scotia were vocalists. In the first few decades of this period, many of these singers were affiliated with the theatre and had previously performed at one or more of London’s theatres, or at theatres in New York, Boston or other American cities. Some, such as Miss George (1828) and Mrs. Gibbs (1839), were hired to come to Halifax to act for a summer season in productions at Nova Scotia’s Theatre Royal. After eliciting an enthusiastic reception during their theatrical performances, which showcased their musical talents, these singers gave benefit concerts during their stay in Halifax. Other singers who bore theatre credentials came to Halifax specifically to perform concerts. Occasionally such singers subsequently took on starring roles in local theatrical productions; others stuck to performing non-dramatic concerts, but drew from the repertoire of theatrical music they had previously performed on British or American stages in their Halifax programmes.

As Italian opera became increasingly popular with North American audiences (and, in general, middle-class audiences throughout the Atlantic World), Halifax experienced a comparative influx of prima donnas – female vocalists who specialized in operatic repertoire – beginning in the 1850s, and increasing into the 1860s. Female singers performed in Halifax concerts throughout the pre-Confederation period, but the prima donnas can be distinguished from the earlier theatre singers (like Miss George and Mrs. Gibbs) by the emphasis they placed on popular Italian arias in their concert programming. Prima donnas usually bore the title “Madame,” “Mademoiselle,” or “Signora,” suggesting a performer perhaps more exotic and

worldly than the “Miss” and “Mrs.” singers who specialized in songs from English ballad operas and other English songs (although the prima donnas frequently performed English songs as well). In some cases the prima donnas came from Italy or another region of continental Europe, whereas the theatre singers were British or (later in the period) American. These women carried extensive performing credentials and often claimed to be *prima donna assoluta* of one or more European opera houses. Several of the prima donnas who travelled to and performed in Halifax toured extensively on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the 1840s onward, Halifax was also visited by several singers who were not affiliated with the theatre or opera, but made their careers by touring to give concerts or participate in other public spectator entertainments. Most of these “non-dramatic” singers tended to specialize in singing ballads, national airs, minstrel songs, or other “lighter” fare. Some of these performers arrived in Halifax on concert tours; others came as part of a minstrel troupe, panorama, or other travelling company and gave a concert after first performing in a different public entertainment, usually in combination with other touring artists from their own or another troupe.

Most of the solo singers who performed in Halifax travelled with or as part of an entourage. Sometimes, the members of the entourage were billed as equal attractions in the concert advertisements, but often one singer was clearly the star who received top billing while the rest of his/her entourage were supporting musicians. Prima donna Madame Biscaccianta, who came to Halifax in 1859, for example, was the main concert attraction and the top-billed artist of her entourage, which included her husband, a cellist, as well as Mr. W.H. Dennet, an

32 Some of these performers may have been theatre/opera singers at an earlier point in their careers, but their publicity does not indicate that they were actively involved in dramatic performances.
American bass from the Florence grand opera, and Mr. G.T. Evans, the piano accompanist. Dennet performed several songs in between Biscaccianta’s numbers, and Signor Biscaccianta also performed in a solo capacity, as well as accompanying his wife for her rendition of Schubert’s *Serenade*. Occasionally some touring singers relied on the pool of musicians residing in Halifax, hiring an accompanist and/or other supporting musicians once they arrived in the city, but most travelled in the company of a pianist and at least one other singer. A few of these supporting musicians made multiple visits to Halifax, each time appearing as part of another soloist’s entourage. Pianist Count Sigismund Wolowski, for example, came first to Halifax as Gustave and Madame Krollman’s accompanist in 1852, then returned in 1853 with prima donna Signora Eliza Valentina. Similarly, Mr. C.R. Adams, a tenor, performed in Halifax in 1857 with violinist Charles Elliott, and again in 1861 with prima donna Madame Fabbri. The “mix-and-match” nature of these entourages illustrates that the touring artists who came to Halifax were part of a large network of musicians that connected smaller centres as well as major cities in eastern North America and beyond.33

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33 We get a further sense of the extensiveness of this network by recognizing that some of the performers, although they did not travel to or perform in Halifax together, were collaborators at another time and place. For example, theatre singers Mr. Horn and Miss Hughes appear to have performed in concert with Madame Anna Bishop in London previous to their respective tours to Halifax in 1832 and 1860. In his biography of Anna Bishop, Richard Davis includes a reproduction of a concert flier from an 1831 performance at Theatre Royal, Covent Garden that lists all three musicians. See Davis, *Anna Bishop: The Adventures of an Intrepid Prima Donna* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1997), 14. In their case, those musicians encountered one another independently of their visits to Halifax. In some cases, though, Halifax may have been the location where musicians first made one another’s acquaintance. Louis Casseres, for example, performed in a concert in Boston in 1859 with Mrs. Long, one of the singers who performed in Halifax with Charles Elliott in 1857 (when Casseres was residing in the city) during his final concert series there; see *Dwight’s Journal of Music* 15/2 (9 April 1859): 15. Mr. C.R. Adams was scheduled to perform in this concert, but on the day was replaced by another tenor. Also, Casseres performed a concert in Worcester, Massachusetts in 1859 with Lizzie Chapman, who was the singer for the Panorama of the Indian Mutiny that exhibited in Halifax in 1858. Again, Casseres was still living in Halifax at that time, and may well have made her acquaintance.
Instrumentalists

Although the majority of top-billed touring artists at Halifax concerts were singers, instrumentalists also performed in the city throughout the pre-Confederation period. Instrumentalists were more commonly supporting musicians within a singer’s entourage, but a few of those who performed in Halifax were top-billed soloists who toured either alone or with supporting musicians of their own. Even when they were supporting musicians within an entourage, though, instrumentalists often performed a solo number or two during a concert programme. Consequently, Haligonians heard a variety of instruments between 1815 and 1867, ranging from the Irish bagpipes to the French flutina; those most frequently featured in a soloist capacity were violinists, flautists, and cornopeanists (although the cornopean players were primarily either musicians from the garrison or members of the Halifax community, and not touring artists). Violinists were the predominant type of top-billed instrumental soloists at Halifax’s public concerts: the violinists to visit Halifax included Master St. Luke (1842), Gustav Krollman (1851 and 1852), Signor Ferdinando Moretti (1852) and Charles Elliott (1857).

Surprisingly (in light of the number of piano virtuosi touring throughout the United States during the mid-nineteenth century, and the piano’s popularity in general), pianists were seldom featured in public concerts as the top-billed performers. Baron de Fleur, who arrived in Halifax in September of 1846, was the only touring artist/pianist known to have performed in the capacity of a principal soloist, rather than as a supporting member of an entourage (all other Halifax concerts at which a pianist was the top-billed performer were given by resident

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34 “Cornopean” was an early name for the cornet. A “French flutina” was a type of accordion. In this case, “Irish bagpipes” referred to the Irish union pipe, a bellows-blown variety of bagpipe which the performer plays while seated and with the drones lying across the knees. See Stanley Sadie, ed., *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments* (London: Macmillan, 1984), 102, 503, 788.
professionals, not touring artists).\textsuperscript{35} One possible reason for the rarity of piano soloists is that Halifax did not have a public facility equipped with a good piano. Only in 1858 did the Temperance Hall permanently acquire a grand piano, which had been built especially for the hall by local piano craftsman John Philips.\textsuperscript{36} Prior to 1858, when a concert did feature or include a pianist, a piano had to be brought in especially for the occasion. Advertisements for such concerts often indicate that the instrument was on loan from a local merchant or manufactory. These borrowed instruments may have been only small pianos, intended for domestic use rather than concert performance; a reviewer for the \textit{Sun}, for example, declared it a wonder that the brilliant Count Wolowski had “accomplished so much with an instrument that did not appear exactly appropriate to the occasion.”\textsuperscript{37} The lack of a concert hall with a suitable piano would not have posed the same problem to de Fleur as other pianists because he brought his own piano to Halifax. Essentially a product spokesperson, de Fleur was accompanied to Halifax by an agent for Lemuel Gilbert (a Boston piano maker) and his concerts served as demonstrations for Gilbert’s new model of piano, which audience members could purchase through the agent. Nonetheless, Haligonians still had numerous opportunities to hear solo piano repertoire, as many of the accompanists that came to Halifax as part of entourages performed solos during the course of concert programmes.

\textsuperscript{35} These concerts still followed the “vocal and instrumental” format, with performances by singers or other instrumentalists interspersed between the solo pianist’s performances. Pre-Confederation Halifax’s public concerts did not adopt the format of the solo piano recital that had become popular in Europe (although it is possible that piano recitals were given in private settings before a select audience).

\textsuperscript{36} Chapter 6 presents a more detailed discussion of John Philips and this piano.

\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Sun}, 10 June 1853.
Troupes

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the touring artists who visited Halifax were primarily soloists. While they may have travelled in entourages, and performed duets or ensemble numbers with their travelling companions, they seldom had a “group identity.” From the 1840s onward, though, touring troupes became more common, and throughout the mid-century Halifax was visited by various musical troupes, including family singers, bell-ringers, and minstrels.38

Between 1841 and 1867, several troupes of family singers toured to Halifax. As Dale Cockrell writes, “singing families had become a rage in the United States beginning in the early 1840s.”39 The popularity of such groups was ignited by the Rainer Family, a family singing ensemble from the Tyrolean Mountains between Switzerland and Austria who began concertizing in Europe in 1824. Wearing costumes of their native Tyrol, they primarily sang Tyrolean folksongs and simple glees set in four-part harmony. The Rainers’ concerts were highly successful in both German-speaking lands and England, although after a decade of touring their popularity began to wane. Hoping to emulate their family’s European success in the New World, two male and two female relatives took the name “Rainer Family” and toured throughout North America between 1839 and 1843. The new Rainer family became as popular in the United States as the first had been in Europe, and their success prompted other musical families to imitate their musical and performance style. Cockrell notes that the Hughes Family – who

38 In her discussion of public concerts in the Lake Ontario region during the nineteenth century, Marilynn Smiley observes that the touring artists who performed in the region came in three waves. The first were ballad singers and the third were prima donnas. Family singers occupied the second wave. The same observation holds true for Nova Scotia. See Smiley, 152–153.
performed in Halifax in July 1842 – had begun giving Tyrolean-style concerts in Boston as early as 1841.40  The Rainers also inspired other troupes, such as the French Mountaineer Singers who came to Halifax in June 1859, to dress in “national” costume and sing the traditional music of other European regions. The most successful group modelled after the Rainers, though, were the Hutchinson Family Singers (1842–1851) of New Hampshire, who became popular artists in their own right, surpassing even the Rainers’ fame throughout North America. The Hutchinsions did not emulate the Rainers’ “Tyrolean” act, but their general musical performance style – simple, accessible glee sung a cappella in four-part harmony – was similar and helped to further popularize family singing groups.41

Although the Hutchinsions did pass through Halifax on their way to Europe, they never performed in the city.42  Their rivals, the Alleghanians, however, did perform during their stopover in Halifax on their way to London in September 1865.43  The Rainer family also came to Nova Scotia, and in fact remained in the province longer than they initially intended. Travelling east from Saint John, three Rainers arrived in Halifax in July 1841 and performed at least five public concerts before moving on to Prince Edward Island, passing through Pictou along the way. They came back to Halifax at the end of August to give several more concerts as they waited for the arrival of two more family members coming by steamer from England (one of whom was Fritz Rainer, a member of the original family). The relatives’ steamer was

42 See Chapter 2.
43 Gac identifies the rivalry between the Hutchinson Family Singers and the Alleghanians. See Gac, 233.
delayed, so Haligonians received an extended concert series, and when the relatives finally did arrive, they were the first North Americans to hear the five-voice ensemble perform.

Not all of the families and family groups that performed in Halifax between 1815 and 1867, though, followed in the performance style of the Rainers or Hutchinsons. The St. Luke family, for example, were a father, daughter, and son trio who performed across eastern Canada and the United States during the late 1830s and early 1840s, and came to Halifax in 1842.\(^{44}\)

Before moving with his children to North America, John St. Luke was a dancing master in London who claimed to have trained at the Paris Opera House. His daughter Susannah was a singer and pianist, and Master St. Luke was a violinist. Although reviews suggest that John St. Luke – also a violinist – was not particularly outstanding, they do suggest that his children were unusually talented, perhaps even prodigies (and, in fact, more accomplished musicians than he was). Susannah’s repertoire included English songs, Italian arias, and arias from Messiah, The Creation, and other popular oratorios. Master St. Luke was referred to as the “youthful Paganini” in some newspaper reviews and announcements. Likewise the Heron Family, who visited Halifax several times between 1852 and 1855, programmed complex repertoire.

Increasingly, as the two most accomplished daughters, Fanny and Agnes, gained further training and maturity, Italian opera music became the highlight of their concert programmes. Whereas family troupes like the Rainers and Hutchinsons marketed themselves through an aesthetic of simplicity (reflected in both the repertoire they sang and its subject matter, and in the “naturalness” of their a cappella harmonies), these families aligned themselves more closely with the virtuoso schools of musical performance. Promising that by attending their concerts audiences would have opportunity to hear a rising star of the international music world – the next

\(^{44}\) Smiley notes that the St. Luke Family performed in the Lake Ontario region in 1839. See Smiley, 152.
generation’s Paganini, Thalberg, or prima donna – these families seem less like “family” acts than parents seeking fame and fortune through the musical talent of one or more of their children. Nonetheless, their decision to tour as a family may have been inspired by the success of families like the Rainers and Hutchinsons, and likely they did take advantage of the fact that the sight of a family making music together was a spectacle proven marketable.

Handbell ringers were another type of troupe that became popular with audiences throughout the Atlantic World in the mid-nineteenth century. Handbell ringing was a popular pastime in the Manchester region of northern England – and especially in Yorkshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire – in the early nineteenth century, and beginning in the late 1820s, handbell concerts as well as competitions were common. Attempting to capitalize on the rage for Swiss or “Tyrolese” entertainments the Rainer Family had kindled, P.T. Barnum engaged a group of bell ringers from Lancashire to tour in the United States, renaming them the “Swiss Bell Ringers” and costuming them in Swiss peasant garb. Around the same time, the Peak Family of “Lancashire bell ringers” began touring throughout the United States (the advertisement in Figure 3.2 depicts their costumes). Together, they and the Swiss Bell Ringers popularized handbell concerts in North America and prompted the formation of other troupes. Several

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45 See John Camp, *Bell Ringing: Chimes – Carillons – Handbells: The World of the Bell and the Ringer* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1974), 124. Barnum’s own account of the origins of the “Swiss” bell ringers, recalled in his autobiography, is worth repeating: “Having heard, while in London in 1844, of a company of ‘Campanalogians, or Lancashire Bell Ringers,’ performing in Ireland, I induced them to meet me in Liverpool, and there engaged them for an American tour. One of my stipulations was, that they should suffer their moustaches to grow, assume a picturesque dress, and be known as the ‘Swiss Bell Ringers.’ They at first objected, in the broad and almost unintelligible dialect of Lancashire, because, as they said, they spoke only the English language, and could not pass muster as Swiss people; but the objection was withdrawn when I assured them, that if they continued to speak in America as they had just spoken to me, they might safely claim to be Swiss, or anything else, and no one would be the wiser.” See Barnum’s autobiography, *The Life of P.T. Barnum* (New York: Redfield, 1855), 345. According to Barnum, they drew audiences in various parts of the United States, Canada, and Cuba.

46 The popularity of handbells also prompted other musical troupes to incorporate bell-ringing into their entertainments. The Virginia Serenaders, for example, were accompanied by the Virginia Bell-Ringers to Halifax in 1851.
troupes of handbell ringers performed in Halifax during the 1840s through 1860s, including the Peak Family, who performed in Halifax in September 1858. It is also possible that Barnum’s bell ringers performed in Halifax, because a six-member group identified by that name gave a series of three concerts in July 1847; however, advertisements do not indicate if they were affiliated with Barnum.\footnote{The group Barnum engaged had seven performers (men), but it is possible that one of them had left the group by the time the Swiss Bell Ringers performed in Halifax.}

3.2 Concert advertisement for the Peak Family, Halifax
(British Colonist, 23 September 1858)
Finally, the post-1840 period also witnessed the influx of professional blackface performers, or “minstrel” troupes, to Halifax and other parts of Nova Scotia. Blackface performance had become common on American stages during the 1820s.\textsuperscript{48} The minstrel show genre was originated in Boston in 1843 by four blackface entertainers who dubbed themselves the “Virginia Minstrels.” Their success gave rise to a cultural phenomenon now considered to be the first distinctly American form of public spectator entertainment. Richard Crawford writes, “By the mid-1840s minstrelsy was sweeping the nation”; indeed, within two years of the Virginia Minstrels’ debut performance minstrelsy had swept north past international borders to become an important component of Halifax’s concert life.\textsuperscript{49} On 28 April 1845 an American troupe called the “Harmoneon Family” (later known as the “Harmoneons”) gave what was the first full-fledged minstrel show to be performed in Halifax.\textsuperscript{50} Following the Harmoneons’ successful engagement in Halifax, nearly every summer (or early fall) from 1845 onward was marked by the visit of a professional “Ethiopian” troupe to the city. (The Harmoneons themselves made at least seven visits to Halifax between 1845 and 1859.) Some of these minstrel troupes extended their tours to towns either along the western part of the province, or the southwest Atlantic coastline. The popularity of these American troupes prompted Nova Scotian amateurs to present their own minstrel shows.

\textsuperscript{48} For a history of pre-minstrel show blackface performance, see Dale Cockrell, \textit{Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).


\textsuperscript{50} That Haligonians had witnessed blackface performance prior to the Harmoneons’ minstrel show is evident from a comment printed in the \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 15 October 1842. In the course of attempting to promote one of the St. Luke Family’s concerts, the author noted that Halifax had lately been “inundated” with “musical exhibitions” of the “Jim Crow school.” The Harmoneon Family began their appearances in Halifax by giving regular concerts – perhaps “testing the waters” – before they gave their first “Ethiopian Concert” on 29 April 1845 (see \textit{Morning Post}, 29 April 1845).
As Chapter 2 explained, minstrel shows were not strictly music concerts but variety entertainments that combined musical and non-musical elements. Following the basic template established by Boston’s Virginia Minstrels, minstrel shows typically included skits, dances and comic banter along with musical performances, but as Crawford emphasizes, the scope, style, and content of the entertainment varied from troupe to troupe.\(^{51}\) Minstrelsy was often satirical or parodic, and was considered by many to be low entertainment. Minstrel shows occupied an ambiguous, if not controversial space in public opinion, and as Chapter 5 will consider, some Nova Scotians objected to the performances given by touring minstrel troupes. Nonetheless, the role that minstrel shows and their performers played in Nova Scotia’s musical life should not be underestimated. The musical resources of minstrel shows were diverse and far-reaching, encompassing not only “negro melodies” but other varieties of popular music and even “art” genres. William Mahar lists cross-dressed imitations of Jenny Lind and fiddle performances comically mimicking the leading virtuoso violinists, Ole Bull and Henri Vieuxtemps, as part of the wide spectrum of musical performances minstrels presented to their audiences.\(^{52}\) As Cockrell explains, the first of the three sections of some minstrel shows began with earnest performances of “songs of gentility, of domesticity, family, pets, loved ones – a ‘concert’ obviously designed to delight middle class audiences.”\(^{53}\) Minstrel troupes thus exposed Nova Scotian audiences to a broad palette of musical styles and genres.


Reception and Renown

Undoubtedly, many of the touring artists who passed through the province were simply average representatives of a growing profession: the career musician who scraped together a living by travelling from one North American town to the next. The opening of the Cunard steamship line, although enabling more talented professionals to pass through Halifax, did not act as a filter for the mediocre and poor ones, but rather facilitated their travels as well. An author for the *Morning Herald* wrote in August 1841,

Unfortunately in this world, the good is ever counteracted by the evil, and one bad effect of steam navigation is that while we must occasionally meet with importations of real talent, we are too frequently apt to have the dross passed off upon us as sterling ore.\(^{54}\)

The names of most of the musicians who visited Nova Scotia lapsed into obscurity shortly after their departure from the concert stage. Some, as the *Herald*’s author implies, were probably only marginally more skilled than amateurs, while others may well have been exceptional musicians who simply never stumbled upon the right set of conditions to achieve fame, fortune, or lasting renown.

Nova Scotian audiences, however, on a few occasions did have opportunities to experience concerts given by world-class performers, who either were or would become some of the most popular concert artists in North America (and even beyond). The Rainer Family, for example, performed not one but several concerts in Halifax because the steamship service necessitated that they come to the city. Other successful touring artists and troupes also performed in Halifax. Theatre singer Charles Horn, who travelled in the company of his pupil

\(^{54}\) *Morning Herald*, 16 August 1841.
Miss Hughes, was already a popular performer by the time of his 1832 concert tour to Halifax.\textsuperscript{55} In 1847 he settled in Boston and became the director of the Handel and Haydn Society; according to Nicholas Temperley, he was “the first composer with a substantial reputation in the Old World” to take up residency in the United States.\textsuperscript{56} The Heron Family was well known, and three of the daughters became successful performers in their own right. They came to Halifax early on in their careers, likely using the small city as a starting point to build an international reputation. Matilda Heron, the eldest of the sisters, became a famous actress during the late 1850s.\textsuperscript{57} The next eldest of the Heron daughters, Fanny and Agnes, were known primarily for their singing, and pursued the concert and opera stage rather than the dramatic one. After training with an Italian singing master, the sisters earned critical acclaim singing in opera productions in the West Indies, Mexico, and South America, and performed at the Academy of Music in Philadelphia in 1859.\textsuperscript{58} Austrian-born Madame Fabbri also launched her successful career in South America, where she completed an eighteen-month tour in 1859, and performed a

\textsuperscript{57} Matilda was best known for her starring role in the popular tragedy \textit{Camille}, which she performed at Halifax’s Theatre Royal during a short engagement in the summer of 1859. See Amelia Howe Kritzer, “Heron, Matilda” in \textit{The Oxford Encyclopedia of Theatre and Performance}, Vol. 1, ed. Dennis Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 585, and William C. Young, \textit{Famous Actors and Actresses of the American Stage: Documents of American Theater History}, Vol. 1 (New York and London: R.R. Bowker Company, 1975), 512–515. Nova Scotian newspaper advertisements do not mention her first name, but do refer to “Miss Heron”. Given her age at the time, and her ranking as the eldest daughter, it is likely “Miss Heron” would have been Matilda. Furthermore, the advertisements for their final concert series of 1853 indicate that it was Nova Scotians’ last chance to see Miss Heron perform. This is around the time that Matilda was becoming a sought-after actress.
\textsuperscript{58} Fanny and Agnes were also known as Fanny and Agnes “Natali,” after their Italian teacher. John W. Moore included them in \textit{A Dictionary of Musical Information, Containing also a Vocabulary of Musical Terms and a List of Modern Musical Works Published in the United States, from 1640 to 1875} (New York: Burt Franklin, 1876; reprinted 1971), 103. An author for the \textit{Morning Sun} wrote of Fanny and Agnes’ Philadelphia debut on 5 December 1859, “They were several times encored, and at the close they were called out before the curtain, when the whole audience stood up and hailed them in the most respectful and tempestuous manner. The Misses Heron are natives of the city of Dublin – they gave a number of pleasing entertainments at Temperance Hall, in this city, a few years since, and there are many amongst us who will be pleased to hear of the laurels they are winning.”
private concert for the Brazilian Emperor, Don Pedro II. She, however, had already established herself as one of the leading *prima donnai assoluti* of the day before her tour to Halifax in 1861, and had performed at Philadelphia’s as well as New York’s and Boston’s Academies of Music. Fabbri’s career spanned much of the Western Hemisphere and the leading opera cities of Europe, during which time she performed over forty operatic roles.59

The most famous and most successful touring artists to visit Nova Scotia, though, were Henry Russell and Anna Bishop. Henry Russell, according to Andrew Lamb, was “arguably the leading popular singer on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1840s.”60 An English composer, singer, and pianist, Russell trained in Italy with Rossini and Bellini. He toured throughout North America between 1837 and 1841, and again between 1843 and 1844, singing his popular compositions as he accompanied himself on the piano. Even after he stopped touring in 1845 and settled permanently in London his compositions ranked among North America’s favourites. His songs were widely published and frequently performed by other musicians.61 Russell performed at least four concerts in the city in December 1840 and also stopped in Windsor on his

59 See John A. Emerson, “Madame Inez Fabbri, Prima Donna Assoluta, and the Performance of Opera in San Francisco during the 1870s,” in *Music in Performance and Society: Essays in Honor of Roland Jackson*, ed. Malcolm Cole and John Koegel (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 1997), 325–354. Apparently Fabbri had an accident during her first Halifax concert that forced her to postpone her subsequent performances. On 22 June 1861, the *Acadian Recorder* printed a note from Fabbri thanking her large audience for the kindness they displayed “during the moment of the accident that prevented [her] from singing.” The advertisement for her 1 July 1861 concert again thanked the public, this time for understanding why she had to postpone her previously scheduled engagement, and elaborating, “It is the opinion of my physician, Dr. Parker, that by singing so soon after the violent indisposition under which I have been suffering, I should expose my health. It is in consequence that I address once more the indulgent public of this city, asking of them, for the last time, to grant me these few days more for my total recovery.”


61 Among the musicians who performed Russell’s music at Halifax concerts was Russell’s nephew, George Henry Russell, who toured to Halifax in 1857 and gave a concert on 6 May. A review printed in the *Morning Journal*, 8 April 1857, indicated that “The Ship on Fire,” “The Gambler’s Wife,” and “The Newfoundland Dog” were among the audience’s favourites.
way to New Brunswick, where he was entertained by Nova Scotia’s own celebrity personality, Thomas Chandler Haliburton.62

Anna Bishop came to Halifax twenty years after Russell, performing at concerts in Temperance Hall as well as at grand outdoor promenade concerts in Horticultural Gardens in both 1861 and 1863.63 A student of London’s Royal Academy of Music, Bishop (née Riviere) began her concert appearances in 1831 as a singer of sacred music and English songs, but in 1839 switched to performing “dramatic concerts” at which she sang opera selections. For the rest of her long career Bishop – now “Madame Bishop” – specialized as a prima donna. Richard Davis contends that she was the most widely-travelled singer of that era; until her retirement in 1883 she travelled almost continuously, giving concerts and performing in operas throughout North and South America, Australia, Southeast Asia, India, and South Africa, as well as most of the major European cities.64 According to Nicholas Temperley, she had a powerful voice and brilliant technique, and although not quite as skilled as either Jenny Lind or Clara Novello, she was nonetheless one of the most popular singers of her lifetime.65

Russell and Bishop were certainly the brightest stars of Halifax’s pre-Confederation concert history, and even the lesser-known Horn, Heron sisters, and Fabbri were a minority among the musicians who performed Nova Scotia in terms of their international success. Nevertheless, while the majority of the touring artists who came to Nova Scotia led unextraordinary careers, many – allowing, of course, for the presence of some “dross” – may still

62 Morning Post, 19 December 1840.
63 The first was held on 1 August 1861, with the assistance of the 62nd Regiment Band. The second was held on 22 June 1863, in honour of Halifax’s anniversary. The 17th Regiment Band joined Bishop for that performance, and the evening concluded with fireworks.
64 Davis, xi.
have been competent and accomplished musicians, capable of delivering a solid performance of challenging repertoire. Some did come bearing distinguished credentials. Charles Elliott, for example, claimed that he had been the solo violinist for the King of Portugal.66 The *British North American* printed a short news piece stating that Mr. Krollman had “played in opposition to Ole Bull.”67 According to the *Sun*, Count Wolowski had been a professor at the Paris Conservatory of Music and had performed concerts throughout France, Germany, and England, as well as in Spain, where he was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honour by the Queen of Spain.68 More importantly, Nova Scotia’s touring artists, for the most part, were widely travelled musicians, who brought knowledge of other places to Nova Scotia, and presented before Nova Scotian audiences the music they had heard, learned, and performed in large cities as well as smaller centres throughout the Atlantic World.

**Amateurs and Other Nova Scotian Musicians**

Public concerts created a virtual bridge between Nova Scotia and the rest of the Atlantic World, enabling Nova Scotians to engage in a cultural experience shared by Anglo people living on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. Moreover, concerts by professional touring artists and military musicians allowed audiences living in the pre-recording age to experience the execution of musical performances in a manner they had not realized possible. Following the August 1832

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68 *Sun*, 23 July 1852.
concert given in Halifax by flautist Mr. Hanna and pianist Mrs. Ostinelli, for instance, a reviewer for the *Acadian Recorder* enthused,

> The exquisite tones which Mr. Hanna drew from the flute delighted as much as they surprised us; they far, very far excelled anything we believed the flute to be capable of producing. ... But if the execution on the flute, by MR. HANNA, was splendid, when MRS. OSTINELLI displayed her powers in addition to his, the effect was brilliant; she swept her fairy fingers along the keys, and at her magic touch, the spirit of music seemed startled into an exertion beyond its ordinary power. One continuous flow of melody pealed along, accompanied by the clear sweet sound of the timid flute, till the soul became entranced, and almost dissolved in an ecstasy of delight.”

This anonymous author’s experience of both surprise and rapture upon hearing the sound of two commonplace instruments performed by virtuoso musicians was not an isolated incident, brought about by the ignorance that resulted from life in a backwater colony; in Britain and the United States, too, the growing availability of public concerts introduced audiences to a world of sound that, until recently, had been the exclusive domain of the aristocratic élite. Performances by highly skilled musicians at concerts exposed audiences to the potential power and beauty that could, with proper training, be coaxed out of the keys, strings, and valves attached to inanimate forms of wood and brass, or even out of the human body itself. Michael Broyles writes that the opportunity to hear virtuoso violinists “advanced materially the cause of classical instrumental music in Boston by providing Bostonians with a first-hand demonstration of the potential of the violin.” More generally, David Golby argues that “the spread of good-quality, affordable live performance” helped to encourage the appreciation of music, a phenomenon increasingly

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69 *Acadian Recorder*, 17 August 1832.
70 Broyles, 297. Similarly, Nicholas Tawa writes that New Englanders rushed to concert halls to hear Ole Bull perform in order “to receive instruction on what they thought was the best in music played by one of the finest violinists of the time.” See Tawa, *From Psalm to Symphony: A History of Music in New England* (Boston: Northeastern University, 2001), 73.
prevalent among the rising middle class.\textsuperscript{71} One manifestation of this burgeoning appreciation was the proliferation of domestic music-making, and the pursuit of training to gain musical proficiency by amateurs.

Throughout the Atlantic World, the nineteenth century witnessed the increase of personal leisure time as well as disposable income. These interrelated phenomena, combined with the Victorian desire for self-improvement and the newfound appreciation for music inspired by professional performance, enabled a growing number of people to seek out musical instruction. From the mid-nineteenth century onward, class-based as well as private music lessons increasingly became a common experience shared by middle-class Anglo people around the world, particularly children, and especially daughters.\textsuperscript{72} In pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, where leisure time and disposable income were hardly a universal reality, the cost of musical education (lessons, instruments, books, etc.) necessitated that music remain a luxury available to only the comparatively privileged. Since records documenting the activities within the private sphere of the domestic home and describing the details of Nova Scotian daily life are scarce, the exact number of Nova Scotians who were able to participate in this worldwide phenomenon is impossible to determine. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that music-making was part of Nova Scotia’s domestic culture, and an activity pursued by provincial residents. In 1844 an author for \textit{The Times} asserted that each Haligonian family had “pianists among its fair members”; by 1858, an \textit{Acadian Recorder} author could claim that “piano playing is the form of music most cultivated


in Halifax.”

Even in 1820, according to a letter that a British gentleman visiting Halifax wrote to his niece, salon concerts were the rage amongst the city’s fashionable society. Professional musicians did attend these concerts, but the majority of the performers were the élite socialites themselves, although not all were particularly proficient musicians:

But O! my dear Charlotte, could you but hear the sounds that have assaulted my ears from flutes, fiddles, pianofortes, and human voices, within the last six months, you would suppose the arts taught by Orpheus were long since forgotten, and that not a chord but discord remained of all the seven strings he gave to the lute.

Deficiencies aside, the visitor claimed that Halifax was inhabited by a host of amateur musicians and dilettantes. Increasingly throughout the nineteenth century, Nova Scotians were able to gain musical training, and as they did, they assumed more active roles in their community’s musical life outside the confines of the private home.

Musical Women

According to the British gentleman, at the time of his visit to Halifax in 1820, music formed the principal part of female education. Other evidence also suggests that music lessons were part of the experience of nineteenth-century Halifax’s fashionable young ladies. David Sutherland, for example, notes that an 1818 editorial in the Acadian Recorder, criticizing Halifax’s élite for enjoying lives of luxury amid the impoverished times, satirized the élites’ daughters as young women who had forgotten “regular and sober habits,” in favour of eliciting

73 The Times, 23 July 1844; Acadian Recorder, 27 March 1858.

74 Halifax Journal, 15 May 1820. “Philemon” also used a rather amusing Orphean reference to describe the ineptitude of Halifax’s gentlemen flute players: “Among the latter class [i.e., gentlemen flautists], I have seen faces that would have astonished you – such as would have frightened Orpheus back to the regime from which he allured the enchanted shade of his beloved Eurydice.”
“mellow and languishing tones” from their pianos. Such descriptions reveal that nineteenth-century Nova Scotians embraced the gender-based ideology of music as an ideal feminine accomplishment that was prevalent throughout the Atlantic World. As the domestic home began its ascent as a viable marketplace in the eighteenth century, music-making was encoded as an appropriate, and indeed, desirable mode of feminine behaviour. With the rise of the middle class, the circle of women for whom amateur musicianship was prescribed as an essential skill broadened to encompass the daughters of middle-class families as well as those of the most élite. According to Richard Leppert, music “helped produce an ideologically correct species of woman”; as Mary Burgan writes, musical proficiency, and especially the ability to play the piano, functioned as a “gauge of a woman’s training in the required accomplishments of genteel society.” A young lady’s musical skills were a cogent agent of both her and her family’s identity: her perfunctory talent as a pianist or singer (or harpist or guitarist) were a mark of her refined character and proper upbringing, which also reflected back on her family. Training in

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77 Tick argues that a significant ideological shift concerning female music-making occurred between 1830 and 1870. Many of the basic tenets (i.e., that women’s musical talents should be strictly amateur, and should be channelled through appropriate outlets and venues) remained the same, but musical accomplishment began to be conceptualized as a facet of “true womanhood,” rather than as an ideal pastime for the young lady of fashion. See Tick, 21.
78 Leppert, 29; Burgan, 42.
music was regarded as an essential component of both the upper- and middle-class Victorian lady’s education, because a musical daughter could not only entertain the family, but help provide the family and their home with the aura of domesticity that was essential to nineteenth-century concepts of gentility.

Thus, when Thomas Chandler Haliburton brought his young English bride, Louisa Neville, to his home in Windsor in 1816, Louisa’s ability to sing and play her Broadwood piano helped reassure his family and friends that the unfamiliar woman he had chosen as his wife was indeed of good upbringing.\(^8^0\) Forty years later, Halifax author Mary Herbert used musical accomplishments to characterize as model women the heroines of her two novels, *Belinda Dalton, or Scenes in the Life of a Halifax Belle* (1859) and *Woman as She Should Be; or, Agnes Wiltshire* (1861).\(^8^1\) Meanwhile, in her non-fictional account of Halifax in that same era, Boston socialite and diarist Sarah Clinch reveals that many of her female Halifax relatives and friends could read music, sing, and play piano.\(^8^2\) Echoing the words of domestic advocates throughout Britain and North America, an author for the *Christian Messenger* in the 1860s proclaimed, “Let her NEVER call herself educated nor accomplished, till she can, unaided and alone, thread all the intricate mazes of domestic life and be alike at home in drawing-rooms or in the kitchen – at the piano or the spinning wheel.”\(^8^3\) Heeding such advice, Nova Scotian women – as their


\(^{8^1}\) Mary E. Herbert, *Belinda Dalton, or Scenes in the Life of a Halifax Belle* (Halifax: Mary E. Herbert, 1859) and *Woman as She Should Be; or, Agnes Wiltshire* (Halifax: Mary E. Herbert, 1861). Both Belinda and Agnes are pianists. In both of these novels, Herbert writes a scene during which the heroine plays the piano and sings at a social gathering – but only upon request.


circumstances permitted – acquired pianos in their parlours and learned how to entertain their families and friends.

To acquire socially-desirable musical training, Nova Scotian women could pursue private lessons from a local music teacher or enrol in a singing school or class. Some young ladies were sent to women’s seminaries outside the province, where they often took music lessons as part of the curriculum; for instance, Jewel Smith documents that Nova Scotian girls were among the enrolled pupils at Music Vale, or Salem Normal School (a music conservatory in Salem, Connecticut), and that a Maud C. Brown from Halifax entered the Moravian Young Ladies’ Seminary in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in 1867. An amusing anecdote printed in the *Acadian Recorder* in 1859, complaining about young ladies displaying talents they acquired at school on a train car, confirms that music was one of the accomplishments Nova Scotian women acquired at school:

The talk is, a trip on an excursion train is a pleasant enough thing to most persons, but, as a general rule, when one wants to see play acting one would prefer going to the theatre at once; and when young ladies make choice of a crowded railway car as a stage upon which to exhibit their musical talents a-la-Guinea-Pig and their elocutionary attainments, after the style of a miller, they are certain to be set down by all the listeners in a class to which young ladies should never belong – that of intolerable bores. Further talk is Model Schools do not always turn out model scholars.

In the 1850s and 1860s, a growing number of women’s seminaries were established in Nova Scotian communities, including, of course, Halifax, and also Amherst, Berwick, Liverpool, Truro, and Yarmouth. Most of these schools offered either piano lessons or singing classes, or a combination of both. These lessons were usually offered in addition to the basic curriculum, and

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84 Smith, 25. Smith provided the information about Maude C. Brown in an e-mail message to the author, 22 March 2011. See also Tick, 33–56, on the inclusion of music education as part of the curriculum at female seminaries.

85 *Acadian Recorder*, 6 August 1859.
at an extra charge, so it is unlikely that all students who enrolled in seminaries were able to study music as part of their education. At the Amherst Female Seminary in 1856, for example, piano or Spanish guitar lessons added an additional £2 per quarter to the cost of tuition (nearly double the cost of drawing, French or Italian lessons), and young ladies who boarded at the school had to pay an extra five shillings per quarter in order to practice on one of the school’s six pianos.  

Similarly, young ladies attending Alice Shaw’s school for young ladies in Berwick in 1860 paid $5 for one quarter’s tuition, and an additional $7 for music lessons. Nonetheless, the fact that more and more ladies’ schools offered music as part of the curriculum indicates that parents were indeed willing to pay the extra money for their daughters to learn to play piano and sing.

For some Nova Scotian women, the musical training they gained from seminaries or other sources not only helped them become domestically accomplished, genteel women, but offered one of the few acceptable means by which they could earn money. Music teachers, let alone female music teachers, were not abundant in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, but still a small but growing number of women became wage earners by teaching music. For example, in

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86 An advertisement for the Amherst Seminary was placed in the Acadian Recorder, 17 May 1856. General tuition cost £30 per year, and included instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, grammar and rhetoric, natural philosophy, astronomy, botany, English composition, and embroidery, along with boarding and washing. Students could receive five lessons per week in drawing or French, for £1 10s per quarter, or three lessons per week in Italian for the same charge. Piano or Spanish Guitar lessons were also given tri-weekly. Singing lessons, however, although still an extra charge, were only 10s extra, for five lessons per week. Young ladies attending Rev. John Miller’s Seminary for Young Ladies in Halifax that same year doubled the cost of their tuition if they enrolled in music lessons (an advertisement for Miller’s school was placed in the British Colonist, 15 April 1856). At Miller’s school, which was a day school (the Amherst Seminary was a boarding school), the base cost of tuition in English was £1 10s for students under the age of ten, and £2 for students over the age of ten. French and Italian were an addition £1 each. Drawing lessons in pencil and black crayon were £1 5s each, and drawing lessons in watercolours were £1 10s. At £2 per quarter, drawing lessons in coloured crayons were the only other “extracurricular” lessons that were as expensive as music.

87 Alice Shaw, notebook, 1857–1860, Chipman Family Fonds, 1923.001/1/5, Acadia University Archives. Shaw kept a record of her students’ practice schedule, as well as accounts in this notebook. It appears that at least twelve of her students took music lessons.

88 Davison, 63, notes that one of the reasons Shaw relocated her school from Berwick to Wolfville in January 1861 was so that she would have a facility with a more suitable space for her students to practice.
Liverpool in 1854, Miss Catherine Tomkins, the daughter of Anglican minister and schoolmaster Rev. Frederick Tomkins, taught lessons in organ and piano, as well as in French and German.\textsuperscript{89}\textsuperscript{89} 

*Hutchinson’s Nova Scotia Directory* for 1864–65 lists three women living in the Canning-Cornwallis area who taught music as well as languages.\textsuperscript{90} In 1867, a Miss Rosenberger advertised that she was a “teacher of music” in the *Yarmouth Herald*.\textsuperscript{91} Although some seminaries hired professional male musicians to teach the young pianists and singers, others – including the Amherst and Berwick seminaries – hired female instructors, presumably themselves recipients of a seminary music education. Teaching music provided unmarried Nova Scotian women with a short-term career path, and was a means by which widows or other women in unfortunate circumstances could support themselves.

Musical accomplishment was especially important for Jane Bolman, a singer and pianist born in Lunenburg.\textsuperscript{92} A blind orphan, Bolman was sent to Boston’s Asylum for the Blind by her church parish after her parents’ death in order, as Rev. James C. Cochran wrote, “that she might be taught to read the Word of God, and so be instructed in other things, as, in place of being a burden to herself and others, to be useful in her day and generation.”\textsuperscript{93} Bolman’s musical talents were noticed, and she was given instruction in both vocal and instrumental music. Following her school training she became a music teacher and a chorister in Lowell, Massachusetts. She

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{89} *Liverpool Transcript*, 7 June 1854.
\item \textsuperscript{90} *Hutchinson's Nova Scotia Directory for 1864–65: Containing Alphabetical Directories of each Place in the Province, with a Post Office Directory and an Appendix Containing much Useful Information* (Halifax: Thomas Hutchinson, 1864–1865), 382.
\item \textsuperscript{91} *Yarmouth Herald*, 4 April 1867.
\item \textsuperscript{92} See Charles Bruce Ferguson, ed., *The Diary of Adolphus Gaetz* (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1965), 20. According to Ferguson, Jane Bolman was the daughter of John Daniel Bolman (1751–1833), a German surgeon who had served in a Hessian Regiment during the American Revolutionary War and subsequently immigrated to Lunenburg. He married Jane Knaut, née Brimmer, the widow of Philip Knaut.
\item \textsuperscript{93} Petition of Rev. James B. Cochran, Lunenburg, to the Nova Scotia House of Assembly, RG 5, series P, vol. 76, no. 25, Nova Scotia Archives. For more on Jane Bolman, see p. 164 below.
\end{itemize}
subsequently returned to Nova Scotia to continue to pursue her musical career, according to Cochran, “thus qualified to earn her bread for the future.” Bolman’s musicianship helped alleviate her dependency on public charity, and endowed her with the means to be a productive and self-sustaining member of the Nova Scotian community.

Musical Men

After remarking on women’s musical education, the British gentleman who visited Halifax in 1820 noted that music was less attended to by Halifax’s fashionable men. With this observation, he reflects another ideology prevalent in the Atlantic World in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Richard Leppert argues that music was considered an effeminate art and therefore valued less as a male than a female accomplishment. That this ideology was espoused by Nova Scotians is suggested by the fact that advertisements for the sale of music were commonly addressed to women. The Morning Journal, for example, printed an advertisement “to inform the ladies” that English musician J. G. Haddock was available to copy music, and also had several new pieces for sale. Ian Woodfield, however, argues that while this ideology may have been prevalent and influential as a cultural ideal, in actual daily practice men may have been more enthusiastic musicians than public documents and discourse – such as the conduct books and portraiture that served as the basis of Leppert’s research – acknowledged

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95 Morning Journal, 17 September 1855.
or represented.\textsuperscript{96} Indeed, after stating that Haligonian men pursued music less than women, the British visitor proceeded to described the amateur flautists, violinists, and cellists (all male) he encountered during his stay in the city.

There is assorted evidence to suggest that numerous Nova Scotian men acquired musical training over the course of the pre-Confederation period and were active as domestic music-makers. Another British visitor came to Halifax in 1822 and submitted a letter to a local newspaper describing his experiences in the city.\textsuperscript{97} His attention was captured by the city’s Amateur Quartette club, which he claimed could play quartets by Haydn and Pleyel with precision and dexterity equal to any of the musical ensembles from North America’s leading cities. In the fashionable fictional world depicted in Halifax author Mary Herbert’s novels, male musicians contributed to the merriment of social gatherings; likewise, in the real world of Halifax documented in Sarah Clinch’s diary, men also took turns at the piano and sang heartily at salon parties. On 21 February 1854, Clinch wrote, “Someone at Mr. Almon’s the other night said, while Mr. R. Haliburton was singing, ‘A lady will never remain at the piano without entreaty, a gentleman, once seated, will never leave it.’”\textsuperscript{98} Some, if not most, of the male musicians Clinch encountered probably received training as children. The Royal Acadian and National Schools in Halifax, for example, offered music lessons. An entertainment given by the National School’s pupils on 15 December 1858 to raise money for Halifax’s Deaf and Dumb Institute included singing and one of the boys performed numerous solos on the flute. In the announcement for the event, an Acadian Recorder author remarked, “From the attention given in


\textsuperscript{97} Acadian Recorder, 10 August 1822.

\textsuperscript{98} Hallett, 79. “Mr. R. Haliburton” refers to Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s second youngest son, Robert.
the National School to exercises in Music and Elocution, we have no doubt that the juvenile performers will acquit themselves most creditably.” Adolphus Gaetz, a German immigrant who became a merchant in Lunenburg, sent his sons as well as his daughter to singing classes. He himself was a clarinettist, and his diary references in passing several other members of the Lunenburg community, both male and female, who either sang or played instruments. A few Nova Scotian men even pursued musical training at formal institutions. The *Liverpool Transcript* noted in 1863 that Mr. C.E. Gates of Wilmot, Nova Scotia, graduated at the head of his class of eleven at the Boston Musical Academy. Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s eldest son, Tom, was, by all accounts, a talented pianist and promising composer, and despite his family’s concerns, was sent to Koblenz, Germany, in 1837 at the age of sixteen to study music.

One of the few Nova Scotians to pursue a professional career in music was Jacob Sparling Cunnabell. Born in Halifax in 1802, Cunnabell apprenticed as a printer with the *Acadian Recorder* before moving to Pictou to establish his own newspaper. After two years in Pictou, Cunnabell left Nova Scotia for Boston where he taught music for nine years. He

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99 *Acadian Recorder*, 11 December 1858. See also the *British Colonist* of the same date.

100 Ferguson, 33.

101 *Liverpool Transcript*, 6 August 1863.

102 See Davies, 61 and 120–121. Davies notes that friends of the Haliburton family recalled that Tom was sent to study music because he was exceptionally talented in that department, but untalented otherwise. In 1836, the year before Tom left for Germany, Joseph Howe wrote to his wife Susan Ann, “I have asked them [the Haliburtons] to let Tom come down, and spend a week with us to hear the Bands, and see Crozier [bandmaster of the 34th regiment] – he is a most extraordinary boy – he is now at work composing a march, to be called “Howe’s March” and played at my Election – he talks about music, and the nature and manufacture of it like an Old Composer of fifty.” See M.G. Parks, ed., *My Dear Susan Ann: Letters of Joseph Howe to his Wife, 1829–1836* (St. John’s: Jesperson Press, 1985), 185. Sadly, Tom suffered from mental illness and died in an insane asylum in Massachusetts in 1847 at the age of twenty-six.

103 *Morning Herald*, 15 August 1884. An article called “Nova Scotians at Home” included an interview with Cunnabell. See also pp. 163–164 above.
returned to Halifax in 1844 at which point he resumed his career as a printer, but also taught singing classes. Newspaper notices from around that time indicate that Cunnabell was providing the music for various public meetings. Cunnabell was also an advocate for the incorporation of music in schools. In 1857 he prepared a serial publication called “The Youth’s Musical Instructor,” which was designed for private instruction, or for use in schools. Although the fact that Cunnabell returned to printing suggests that he was unable to subsist on his musical talents, he nonetheless remained an active and influential musician within the Halifax community.

Bands and Music Societies

One of the main outlets for Nova Scotian men’s music-making was amateur bands. As Trevor Herbert and other scholars have documented, amateur civilian wind bands became highly popular in Britain, especially in northern England, beginning in the mid-nineteenth century; although the American band movement took a slightly different form than that of Britain, amateur wind and marching bands were a fixture of nineteenth-century American musical life.

104 A notice in the Olive Branch, 16 August 1844, states, “J.S. Cunnabell has been employed teaching music in the United States for the past eight years, has returned to his native city and is helping Mr. Owen with his Singing Class at the Harmonic Hall.” Cunnabell’s brother William was also a printer in Halifax, and Jacob worked with William upon his return to Nova Scotia.

105 Sun, 1 May 1847; Novascotian, 31 May 1847.

According to Raoul Camus, amateur wind bands were flourishing in the United States by the 1850s; by 1878, one observer remarked, “A town without its brass band is as much in need of sympathy as a church without a choir. The spirit of a place is recognized in its band.” The origins of amateur wind bands trace to the military bands stationed in communities; Halifax, with its large garrison, was thus well positioned to inherit this tradition (although one author for the *Acadian Recorder* suggested that the presence of the garrison bands in Halifax inhibited the development of amateur bands). Halifax supported various amateur bands (most of the early ones short-lived) throughout the pre-Confederation period, including the one established by Matthew Walls. By the 1850s, the towns of Truro, Pictou, Albion Mines, and Yarmouth had amateur bands. The band in the small town of Milton, which Walls came to direct in the 1860s, was established in 1855; inspired by the neighbouring town’s success, Liverpool’s band was founded three years later. The militia movement of the late 1850s and 1860s gave further impetus for amateur bands to form. Halifax’s Volunteer Battalion, for example, was established in 1860, and by the following year they had raised enough money to acquire the instruments and uniforms necessary to start a band. Lunenburg’s Volunteer Rifle Company similarly established a band, although it took them approximately two years to raise sufficient funds; forming a band was clearly important to the town, as the townspeople undertook several
fundraising activities, which Adolphus Gaetz described in his diary.\textsuperscript{110} Unfortunately, few records have been preserved to document who belonged to these bands, or what they played.\textsuperscript{111} A programme printed in the \textit{Novascotian} states that the Antigonish band directed by Charles Kaestner in 1846 had a total of eighteen musicians, two flautists, one clarinetist, one French horn player, three cornopeanists, four violinists, five cellists, and two trombone players. Other towns’ amateur bands, though, are referred to as brass bands, and probably consisted of wind instruments only.\textsuperscript{112}

Nova Scotia’s male as well as female amateurs also participated in various singing societies. Gaetz, for example, was a member of the Lunenburg Harmonic Society (later, the St. John’s Singing Society) which formed for the purpose of training its members to sing in order to improve the quality of church music, and was active between 1828 and 1832.\textsuperscript{113} Amateur Glee Clubs were operational in Halifax during the late 1830s and late 1840s.\textsuperscript{114} There is little documentation of either club, but according to an 1837 article in the \textit{Novascotian} the members of the first glee club were young tradesmen and mechanics.\textsuperscript{115} Various music societies were also organized by churches in Halifax, and although they were affiliated with a particular church congregation, some participated in the city’s musical life in a capacity beyond that of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[\textsuperscript{110}] Ferguson, 72, 73, 76 and 77.
\item[\textsuperscript{111}] Photographs of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century bands are fairly common, but I have yet to find a photograph of a pre-Confederation band.
\item[\textsuperscript{112}] Herbert explains that the term “brass band” was used loosely in the nineteenth century, and often ensembles that were referred to as “brass bands” actually comprised a combination of both brass and woodwind instruments. See Herbert, 3. Unfortunately, limited evidence makes it difficult to determine if Nova Scotia’s bands were all-brass bands or mixed winds.
\item[\textsuperscript{113}] See Ferguson, 11–12, and also Minutes of the Lunenburg Harmonic Society, MG20 Vol. 916, No. 4, Nova Scotia Archives.
\item[\textsuperscript{114}] There may have been other clubs as well, that did not advertise. An article in the \textit{Morning Post}, 26 November 1840 indicated that the Glee Club’s activities had ceased at that time, but another club may well have started after that notice was published.
\item[\textsuperscript{115}] \textit{Novascotian}, 23 May 1837.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
congregational worship. Some, such as the Salem Chapel Choir of the mid-1840s, which William Ackhurst directed, were led by community members, while other societies, including Lunenburg’s Harmonic Society, hired musicians to instruct and direct their members.  

Most likely inspired by Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society, and England’s various oratorio societies, Halifax formed its own Harmonic Society in 1842. The impetus also came from the arrival of the St. Luke family in the city: John St. Luke, after giving several concerts with his two children that were not particularly successful, gave an oratorio concert on 13 October 1842, featuring excerpts from Handel’s *Messiah* and Haydn’s *Creation*. He, Susannah, and Master St. Luke were the principal soloists, while the chorus comprised several amateur ladies and gentlemen. This concert was well received, and John St. Luke who, according to *The Times*, was soon to leave Halifax, was persuaded to stay and instruct an amateur choir. The Harmonic Society the amateurs formed was officially established on 26 October 1842. By 1843 they had thirty-eight male members, with merchants John Slayter as president and Peter Nordbeck as vice-president. They were also supported by twenty-one patrons, who were not singing members of the choir but were permitted to attend rehearsals as well as performances. Women could not be official members, but they were allowed – and in fact encouraged – to sing in the choir and the committee was responsible for inviting capable ladies to assist the male

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116 As of 1829, a Mr. John Burk was hired by the society for forty shillings. On Friday, 5 December 1829 the secretary recorded in society’s minutes, “Resolved unanimously (on motion of Dr. Jacobs) that the salary of Mr. John Burk for his services for the ensuing year be reduced to the sum of Forty shillings but should his conduct prove satisfactory to the President and to the several members of this Society an additional sum of twenty shillings shall be allowed to him. Resolved (on motion of John Heckman, Esq.) that Mr. John Burk in consequence of improper conduct the past year he brought up before this Society the ensuing Friday evening for the purpose of being reprimanded for the same” (Minutes, MG20 Vol. 916, No. 4).

117 *Acadian Recorder*, 8 October 1842; *The Times*, 11 October 1842. On 11 June 1842 the *Morning Post* printed a notice indicated that the St. Luke family had performed an oratorio in Saint John.

118 *The Times*, 25 October 1842. Laudatory reviews of this concert were also published in the *Morning Post*, 20 October 1842, and the *Novascotian*, 20 October 1842.
society members each season. Prospective members needed to have previous knowledge of music, and had to be nominated and accepted by vote in order to join the society.\textsuperscript{119}

St. Luke was succeeded as director by Henry Schallehn in October 1843. Subsequent directors were Mr. Garcia in 1844, and Mr. J. George Jones in 1845. According to an article in the \textit{Morning Post}, the Harmonic Society as of 1844 had about sixty performing members and approximately another seventy patrons.\textsuperscript{120} Around that time, the society proposed that it should have its own hall, which was procured by March 1845. All newspaper reports suggest that the Harmonic Society was an active and popular institution. After Jones left Halifax for England in March of 1846, however, the society began to report financial difficulties, and by December of that year it had been disbanded.

The Harmonic Society was revived in January 1858, with similar rules and regulations, and began with thirty-one members. William Ackhurst became president, with William Cogswell as vice-president and H. M. Creighton as secretary and treasurer. They gave their first performance on 9 February 1858, under the direction of resident professional Mr. Jeans. The \textit{Morning Journal} reported in October that the Society comprised about forty ladies and gentlemen, now directed by bandmaster Mr. Carey of the 62\textsuperscript{nd} Regiment Band.\textsuperscript{121} Again, newspaper reports bespoke their success but they disbanded sometime after 3 January 1860.\textsuperscript{122} On 23 January 1865 the \textit{Acadian Recorder} reported that the Halifax Choral Society had recently


\textsuperscript{120} \textit{Morning Post}, 4 May 1844. The author of this article states that the society had increased to upwards of one hundred and thirty members, about sixty of whom were performers. I presume that the “non-performers” would have been patrons.

\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Morning Journal}, 15 October 1858.

\textsuperscript{122} The last reference to the Harmonic Society in Patrick O’Neill’s database is to a concert they gave on 3 January 1860 at the Lunatic Asylum (\textit{Acadian Recorder}, 7 January 1860).
formed, with bandmaster J. Holt as their director. Unlike the previous societies, though, which sang primarily oratorio choruses and other sacred choral works, this one also performed opera excerpts.

**Nova Scotia Musicians in Concert**

As Nova Scotian amateurs gained musical training, they began to display their talents in public more frequently; and increasingly, participated as performers in concerts. The graph shown in Figure 3.3 approximately represents the increase in Nova Scotian musicians’ participation in Halifax’s concert life and public music entertainment. One significant outlet for Nova Scotian performance was the literary and musical soirées hosted by various voluntary societies. As the voluntary society movement gained a foothold in Halifax, Nova Scotian amateurs became the entertainers for the sociable evenings they hosted, performing songs, glees, and instrumental selections for their peers.

Although Halifax’s concert structure remained dominated by foreigners throughout the pre-Confederation period, Nova Scotian amateurs increasingly contributed to the benefit concerts held by professional musicians. Since diversity was considered fundamental to concert programming practices in the nineteenth century, Nova Scotian performers were recruited to add variety to the evening by performing solos or glees or other ensembles in between the numbers performed by the professional who was the concert’s featured star. Only on rare occasions were Nova Scotians invited to perform with touring artists, but it became increasingly common for native musicians to join resident professionals on their concert programmes. In this respect,

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123 Like the graphs in Chapter 2, this one is based on “Patrick O’Neill’s Halifax Newspaper Archives,” on the Atlantic Canada Theatre Site (http://www.lib.unb.ca/Texts/Theatre/Calendars/search.html), and consequently does not include statistics from the 1860s.
Halifax’s concert life differed from that of large metropolitan centres: William Weber writes that amateurs’ participation in London’s benefit concerts decreased, making this concert form the almost-exclusive domain of professional musicians after the 1840s. Amateurs, who had once joined professionals on the stage as “support” musicians at benefit concerts, moved into the ranks of the audience, and the private salon concert became the designated venue for amateur solo performance. \footnote{William Weber, \textit{Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848}, 2nd ed. (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 43–44, 69. According to Derek Scott, amateur participation in concerts by way of choral societies and church choirs did increase throughout the nineteenth century. See Scott, \textit{Sounds of the Metropolis: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris and Vienna} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 18.} Nova Scotian amateurs, however, increasingly took their talents outside their homes to perform at public events. This difference can likely be attributed to the limited number of professionals residing in the province.

\subsection*{3.3 Graph representing the increased participation of Nova Scotian musicians in public entertainments}
Undoubtedly, the instruction and experience gained through singing schools, choral societies, and bands also helped to encourage more amateurs to debut their talents before an audience of their peers. The distinction between a professional musician and an amateur, though, remained clear. The following excerpt from a review of Louis Casseres’ 5 March 1857 benefit concert printed in the *Halifax Daily Sun* illustrates how amateur performers were typically acknowledged:

Mr. Jeans on the violoncelli [*sic.*] called forth bursts of well-merited applause. In his duette [*sic.*] with Señor Casseres and Miss Jeans several splendid passages were most artistically given. The duetts [*sic.*] by Miss Jeans and Miss Bolman were sweetly rendered. The latter lady is known to us and we hope to have the pleasure of hearing her again. Miss Jeans made her first appearance, and will prove an acquisition to musical circles. The gentlemen amateurs were *au fait* and performed their parts with honour and credit to themselves, each being deservedly encored.  

The advertisement for that same concert, depicted in Figure 3.4, shows that audiences would have known beforehand that amateurs would be participating in the event alongside professional musicians. Advertisements, such as this one, that listed an amateur performance as part of the concert’s attraction, began appearing with increasing frequency, although abiding by the rules of propriety, the amateurs remained anonymous in the both the advertisement and the subsequent reviews.  

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125 *Halifax Daily Sun*, 7 March 1857.  
126 In a few cases, the names of non-professional musicians, such as Mr. Ackhurst and Mr. Mignowitz, were listed in reviews. These men, however, were public figures whose names often appeared in the newspaper, and so publicizing their names in concerts reviews may have been regarded as less of a breach of propriety in their case than for other amateurs.
One Nova Scotian musician who was exceptional within Halifax’s, and indeed Nova Scotia’s concert life was J.S. Cunnabell, who according to the *Novascotian*, presented on 28 June 1847 the first concert to feature a Nova Scotia musician as the top-billed performer supported by an all-native company of supporting musicians.\(^{127}\) He organized and performed at least six other vocal and instrumental concerts for the Halifax public, choosing dates that coincided with civic or national holidays or other festive events (see, for example, Figure 3.5).\(^{128}\) At all of these concerts Cunnabell was assisted by several amateur ladies and gentlemen, as well as by his stepdaughter Miss Ives, a pianist well known within the city.

\(^{127}\) *Novascotian*, 5 July 1847. See also pp. 154–155 above.

\(^{128}\) The dates of those concerts were 1 May 1848; 2 and 16 May 1855; 9 June 1856; 16 April 1857; and 8 June 1857. According to *The Times*, 29 June 1847, Cunnabell’s first concert was the “conclusion to our national holidays,” which probably referred to the anniversary of Halifax’s founding (the city – and, by extension, the rest of British Nova Scotia – was founded in June of 1749). Likewise, his 1856 and 1857 June concerts were held in honour of Nova Scotia’s anniversary. His May concerts were advertised as May-Day events, and his April 1857 concert was part of the Easter festivities.
Another Nova Scotian exceptional for her role as concertizer was Jane Bolman. She performed her first benefit concert in Halifax on 4 November 1852, with the assistance of one of Halifax’s resident professionals, and under the patronage of Lady LeMarchant, wife of the current Lieutenant-Governor. The purpose of the concert was to raise funds so Bolman could continue her training at the Boston Asylum to become a music teacher. Between 1855 and 1867 she gave concerts in communities throughout Nova Scotia, including Yarmouth, Liverpool, and Milton and also participated as a supporting musician in several concerts by Halifax resident professionals. She performed at least twice in her home town of Lunenburg: her 1 January 1856 concert was organized by several Lunenburg amateurs, including Gaetz, to raise money for her training. (The only other native Nova Scotians known to give benefit concerts were the Misses Maxner of Windsor, who will be introduced in Chapter 6.)

Concert opportunities were also created by the various singing classes and amateur choirs of Halifax. Some of these were held in church buildings, but were advertised as concerts. Both of Halifax’s Amateur Glee Clubs performed concerts, accompanied by professional pianist
Arthur Lockett in the 1830s, and Miss Ives in the 1840s. Cunnabell’s singing class performed a concert at the Brunswick Street Chapel on 8 July 1846, and Ackhurst’s Salem Chapel Choir gave a concert at Mason’s Hall on 8 December 1846. (The Salem Choir repeated their concert in the neighbouring town of Dartmouth the following evening.)

The Harmonic Society in particular, made a significant contribution to Halifax’s concert life. When functioning, the society held between three and five concerts a season, which typically began in the fall and ended in the spring. Their concerts included solo performances as well as the choral works the choir rehearsed. In the 1840s, Susannah St. Luke – who remained in Halifax after her father and brother left – was frequently the principal soloist, but advertisements and reviews from the late 1850s suggest that the soloists at that time were primarily amateur members of the choir. Also, the choir was accompanied by an “orchestra,” which in the 1840s was comprised solely of musicians from the garrison band, and in the 1850s was comprised almost entirely of Nova Scotian instrumentalists.

Finally, from the late 1840s onward, amateur bands assumed an increasingly prominent role in Nova Scotia’s concert life. Halifax’s amateur bands were overshadowed by those of the garrison, as well as by other professional musicians, but the amateur bands of smaller towns became the principal providers of their respective communities’ musical entertainment. Milton’s and Liverpool’s brass bands, for example, not only performed at communal social functions, such as bazaars and parades, but organized their own concerts as well. They also occasionally travelled to neighbouring communities, including Lunenburg, and in 1860 they were invited to attend ...

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129 This pattern is a generalization, but typically the society held one concert before Christmas, and one once a month beginning in January and ending in either March or April.

130 A notice in the Morning Journal, 15 October 1858, indicates that the amateur orchestra was assisted by four or five members of the 62nd Regiment Band.
Halifax to participate in the celebration for the Prince of Wales’s visit. Since touring artists seldom visited Nova Scotian communities outside Halifax, amateur musicians were primarily responsible for providing themselves and their peers with musical entertainment. Amateur bands thus became a significant force in Nova Scotia, from the perspective of both their members and their audiences. An amateur band provided its members with an opportunity to develop their musical skills as they participated in a social activity. At the same time, whether by marching in parades or performing stationary concerts, those members gave their communities opportunity to experience transatlantic music culture. Furthermore, as the example of the Liverpool and Milton bands illustrates, an amateur band could not only boost – or indeed, create – concert life for its immediate community, but as improvements to road and water travel allowed, impact the musical experiences of a larger area.

**Resident Professionals**

While touring artists may have helped to inspire domestic music-makers, the increase in the number of musically proficient Nova Scotians would not have been possible had there not been professional musicians living in the province to teach and train aspiring amateurs. Military musicians contributed in this regard to some extent, but another group of musicians who had an immeasurable impact on Nova Scotia’s musical life were resident professionals – civilian professional musicians who came to the province in search of entrepreneurial opportunities. Blakeley, McGee, and Hall report that Halifax was serviced by a few professional music teachers in the late eighteenth century; similarly, Liverpool resident Simeon Perkins’ diary reveals that a
singing master came to this town in 1777. As Nova Scotia’s population grew, and colonial living became more stable, Halifax developed a small but discernable community of civilian professionals, and career musicians also ventured out into other towns.

Where They Came From and Why They Came

Newspaper records remain the primary source for tracing the arrival and activities of professional musicians. To make their presence known in their new communities, some placed advertisements in one or more local newspapers. Often such advertisements indicated the location from which they had come to Nova Scotia – most likely because being a musician with training or work experience from a foreign city, and especially a large city, held prestige. Nova Scotia’s resident professionals had diverse origins, but many came from London or another region in the British Isles. Harmonic Society directors Mr. Garcia, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Jeans, for instance, were all English musicians who had trained in London. Jones was a graduate of London’s Royal Academy of Music, as was Henry Haycraft – who came to Halifax in December 1853 (see Figure 3.6) – and W. Hunt Stevens, who arrived in January 1855.

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132 At no point during the pre-Confederation period did musicians constitute a large class of working professionals, but as Deborah Rohr acknowledges, music teachers were not common even in provincial Britain until the middle of the nineteenth century. See Rohr, The Careers of British Musicians, 1750–1850: A Profession of Artisans (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 30 and 71.
133 British Colonist, 13 December 1853; Morning Journal, 10 January 1855.
Some professional musicians may have come to Halifax on tour and subsequently decided to stay; others seemingly immigrated to the city with the intention of establishing themselves in the community as resident teachers. If they became involved in the city’s concert life, their involvement began only after they had been in the community for some time. After arriving in Halifax from London, pianist Edwin Charles Saffery began publicizing his availability to teach music and tune pianos in September 1851; his first concert appearance did not occur until three months later, when the Krollmans hired him as the accompanist for their first Halifax concert series.\textsuperscript{134} Haycraft and Stevens similarly appear to have immigrated to Halifax to teach; there is no evidence that either one participated in public concerts. It would appear that even the itinerant John St. Luke – who also lived in London before coming to North America – had the intention of staying in Halifax for an extended period of time (or at least, longer than the average concert tour), since he advertised that he taught French-style dancing lessons in the \textit{Morning Post} a week before he and his children arrived in Halifax.\textsuperscript{135} Jones and

\textsuperscript{134} \textit{British Colonist}, 16 September 1851; \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 6 December 1851.

\textsuperscript{135} The St. Luke Family arrived in Halifax on 28 May 1842; the advertisement was placed in the \textit{Morning Post} on 21 May. On 11 June 1842 the \textit{Morning Post} printed a notice calling for Haligonians to patronize the (continued on next page)
Garcia, however, both came to Halifax as the accompanist of a touring troupe: Jones arrived in 1844 with Messrs. Kendall and Company, and Garcia arrived shortly after with the Hughes Family. Their respective travelling companions left Halifax after their concert series had ended, but both Garcia and Jones lived in the city for approximately two years. Señor Louis Casseres, a West Indian pianist, came to Halifax in 1852 in the company of violinist Signor Moretti. Moretti left after several months, but Casseres established himself in the Halifax community for nearly six years.

Various reasons may have prompted professionals like Haycraft, Stevens and Saffery to try their luck in small Halifax (rather than proceeding directly to Boston, New York, or other larger cities), and accompanists like Garcia, Jones, and Casseres to abandon their tours. Perhaps the accompanists believed a career in Halifax could be more lucrative than travelling under the employ of another musician, or perhaps they simply wanted longer term stability than touring around the North American circuit offered. A letter Casseres wrote to a patron in Massachusetts (where he eventually settled after leaving Halifax) gives some insight into why musicians may have chosen Halifax. Asking that patron for a letter of reference, Casseres explained that he was planning to establish his teaching practice in the town of Springfield; there was no pianist of his calibre in Springfield, so he believed his chances of obtaining work there were good.\(^{136}\) A similar rationale likely prompted him, and other professional musicians, to pursue residency in Halifax. While there were fewer patrons and fewer opportunities for performing concerts in Halifax than in London, Boston, or New York, the limited number of competitors vying for Nova Scotia’s music market promised that a musician could potentially monopolize those concerts of the talented family that “[has] come to Halifax to reside as teachers and to make it their home.” Whether the St. Lukes made the decision to become residents before or after their arrival, though, is not clear.

opportunities, and establish a professional reputation that would have been difficult to achieve in a larger metropolitan centre. This strategy appears to have worked for Casseres, who was appointed pianist to the Earl of Mulgrave’s family when Mulgrave took command of Nova Scotia as Lietuenant-Governor in 1858.\footnote{An announcement of Casseres’ appointment to the position of “Pianist to the Earl and Countess of Mulgrave” was printed in the \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 19 June 1858.}

The majority of Nova Scotia’s resident professionals were male, but perhaps for reasons similar to Casseres’, several female musicians also immigrated to Halifax and found work as teachers and concertizers. Susannah St. Luke, for example, taught music at the academy her father temporarily opened in Halifax, and remained an active participant in the Harmonic Society for at least four years after the rest of her family had moved on to a new location. She married James Tidmarsh, a Harmonic Society member, on 14 July 1846.\footnote{A notice in \textit{The Times}, 14 July 1846, stated that Susannah St. Luke married James Tidmarsh at St. George’s Round Church. James Tidmarsh is listed as a member in the Harmonic Society’s Rules and Regulations booklet for 1843. The only other surviving Harmonic Society booklet is from 1858 (“Rules of the Harmonic Society, Names of Members, &c., (Halifax: Compton & Bowden, 1858), Documents of the Halifax Harmonic Society, Akins Collection, AK F90 H22 1858, Nova Scotia Archives), and Tidmarsh was no longer a member.}

There is no evidence of a Mrs. Tidmarsh performing in Halifax after 1846, but – assuming the couple remained in Halifax – Susannah may have continued to perform as a ‘nameless’ lady amateur, and if not, contributed to Nova Scotia’s musical life through the influence of her musical taste and connoisseurship.\footnote{Halifax County Death Records for 1895 indicate that Susan Tidmarsh, a widow, died in Halifax on 19 August 1895. The register indicates that she was a native of England, so this woman is probably Susannah St. Luke-Tidmarsh. The family may have remained in Halifax, although it is possible that they left the city and later returned. The register indicates that Susan/Susannah was an organist.}

Emma Saffery Brent, who was likely Edwin Charles Saffery’s niece, immigrated to Halifax in 1852 to work as a French teacher and dance instructor.\footnote{I assume that E.C. Saffery and Emma Saffery Brent are related because of their common name. Also, once Brent arrived in Halifax, she and Saffery almost always performed on the same concert programmes.} A pianist and singer, she performed at several concerts, as well as at other public entertainments. She was also a published composer,
and at least one of her own works was performed in concert by a garrison band.\textsuperscript{141} In 1855, a “Professor of Music” named Miss Hill moved to Halifax from Quebec to be the pianist for the St. Patrick’s Church Choir.\textsuperscript{142} Like Jane Bolman, she was blind, and was supported by other Halifax professionals – including Casseres – in a benefit concert on 4 July 1855.\textsuperscript{143}

Whether or not either Brent or Hill remained in Halifax, or in another part of the province, is not known (given her marriage to a Haligonian, Susanna St. Luke-Tidmarsh’s permanent citizenship is more likely). In general, many of the professional musicians who attempted to pursue careers in Nova Scotia remained in the province for only a limited term. Living in Halifax from 1852 to 1858, Casseres had a comparatively lengthy tenure: some, like Garcia and Jones stayed only two or three years; some like Haycraft, who left in 1854, only a year.\textsuperscript{144} The pursuit of more lucrative opportunities was likely what prompted them to leave, although the arrival of a new musician in the town also could have inspired some residents to leave for a new location with even less competition. Financial difficulties also may have prompted a few departures: according to notices in \textit{The Times} and the \textit{Sun}, pianist Baron de Fleur (who ended up teaching in Halifax between 1846 and 1848) attempted to escape to Prince

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{141} See Chapter 6 for a brief discussion of this composition.
\item \textsuperscript{142} \textit{British Colonist}, 15 October 1853.
\item \textsuperscript{143} The advertisement for this concert was printed in the \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 30 June 1855. A review was printed in the \textit{Journal} on 6 July 1855, which stated, “Miss Hill plays the piano with excellent effect, and Señor Casseres handles the instrument with a master hand – none in this city can equal him.” Similarly, a reviewer for the \textit{British North American} (6 July 1855) also remarked on Casseres’ performance at the concert: “Señor Casseres played the finest solo we have ever heard, and deserves the highest credit for his management of the Concert.”
\item \textsuperscript{144} Advertisements show that Casseres frequently switched residences during his Halifax career, living in various lodging houses and apartments. The non-permanency of his dwellings could simply be a result of circumstances (e.g. properties changing landlords), or it could be a sign of either his financial insecurity or his uncertainty regarding how long he would stay.
\end{itemize}
Edward Island after falling in debt with both those newspapers for his advertising bills.\footnote{According to The Times, 27 October 1848, de Fleur was found “luxuriating among the gay damsels of Prince Edward Island”; they “dispatched a writ after him and got [their] money.” The Sun, 17 January 1848, reported that they also sued de Fleur for the 36s he owed them, and were awarded £11!}

Nonetheless, while life in Nova Scotia proved unsatisfactory or unfeasible for some professional musicians, others who immigrated to Nova Scotia during the pre-Confederation period did establish themselves in the province on a long-term basis. Abdiel Kirk, who was teaching in Halifax as of 1815 purchased property for himself and his family, and at the time of the 1838 census, was still living in the city.\footnote{A transcription of the 1838 census is made available through the Nova Scotia Gen Web Project, “Census Data: 1838 Nova Scotia Census,” accessed June 2011, http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~canns/.

Saffery died at age sixty-four on 20 April 1875. His death was recorded in Halifax County.}

Arthur Lockett also lived in Halifax for over twenty years, and Saffery remained in Nova Scotia until his death in 1875.\footnote{Saffery died at age sixty-four on 20 April 1875. His death was recorded in Halifax County.}

Organist, singer, composer, and entrepreneur Joseph P. Hagarty immigrated to Halifax from Dublin as a young man in 1840; in 1859 he was still playing organ at St. Mary’s Basilica, and in 1874 his son Thomas left Halifax to study music at the Conservatory of Music in Brussels.\footnote{An advertisement in the Morning Journal, 11 February 1859, stated Hagarty was a Professor of Music and the organist at St. Mary’s Basilica. Thomas Hagarty’s departure for Brussels was announced in the Acadian Recorder, 2 December 1874.}

**What They Did**

Seldom able to live by one entrepreneurial endeavour alone, Nova Scotia’s resident professionals typically pursued multiple forms of employment to support themselves and their families during their time in the province. Church jobs provided one means by which to earn a small but steady salary: like Hill and Hagarty, Casseres and Stevens (and probably others) took
on organists’ positions at Halifax churches. Some found occasional work playing for the theatre, or providing music at parties, dances, and other private social functions.

Several of Halifax’s resident professionals were composers, and attempted to capitalize on the market demand for sheet music. Compositions published by local merchant-publishers will be discussed in Chapter 6, but some musicians also had their works published in the United States at the same time as they were living in Halifax. Table 3.1 presents a list of compositions by Nova Scotian residents that were published by American firms. Nova Scotian merchants helped to support this enterprise by carrying Nova Scotian composers’ compositions along with the other sheet music they carried in their stores. Nova Scotia newspaper printers also played a role in its promotion, by drawing specific attention to the availability of these works in merchants’ shops (see, for example, Figure 3.7).

3.7 Notice in British Colonist, 16 September 1854

3.8 Advertisement for Mr. Boris (British Colonist, 8 November 1857)

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149 As stated in n. 139, Susannah St. Luke-Tidmarsh probably was an organist as well.
150 R.G. Haliburton, who wrote the text of Casseres’ “Exile’s Home,” was the son of Thomas Chandler Haliburton – and the same Haliburton who, according to Sarah Clinch, had to be coaxed away from the piano!
Table 3.1 Compositions by Nova Scotian resident professionals published by American firms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Compositions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brent, Emma Saffery</td>
<td>• “The Adelaide Mazurka” (Newington Butts: T. J. Molyneux) piano solo, copyright circa 1856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Casseres, Louis     | • “The Elvira Polka” (Boston: Oliver Ditson) piano solo, copyright 1854  
                        • “The Operatic Gems: a set of quadrilles” (Boston: Oliver Ditson) piano solo, copyright 1854  
                        • “Exile’s Home” – text by R.G. Haliburton (Boston: Oliver Ditson) vocal duet with piano, copyright circa 1850s |
| Hagarty, Joseph P.  | • “I Love the Sweet Vale” – text by Rev. R. B. O’Brien (Boston: C.H. Keith) solo voice with piano, copyright 1844 |
| Jones, J. George    | • “Coolidge Quadrilles” (Boston: C.H. Keith) piano solo, copyright 1844  
                        • “The Coryton Quadrilles” (Boston: C.H. Keith) piano solo, copyright 1844  
                        • “Galop Atlanta” (Boston: C.H. Keith) piano solo, copyright 1844  
                        • “The Philharmonic Waltzes” (Boston: C.H. Keith) piano solo, copyright 1844 |
| Saffery, E.C.       | • “The Glendon Quadrilles” (Boston: Oliver Ditson) piano solo, copyright circa 1850s  
                        • “The Rail-Road Quick Step” (Boston: Oliver Ditson) piano solo with violin *ad. lib.*, copyright circa mid-1850s  
                        • “The Acadia Volunteers” (Boston: Russell & Tolman) vocal solo with piano, copyright circa 1858–1863 |
| Stevens, W. Hunt    | • “In That Dear Little Cot” (Boston: Oliver Ditson) vocal solo with piano, copyright 1857 (first published 1856) |
Resident professionals also found work within the music field that involved their specialized musicians’ knowledge, but did not relate directly to performing. Piano tuning and repair was one enterprise musicians pursued, especially once Nova Scotia’s piano trade expanded. Tuners could find employment in the city, and could also pick up work as they travelled from town to town throughout the province.\textsuperscript{151} Several musicians entered the music trade, selling print music and/or instruments, including Hagarty, who opened Halifax’s first official music store in the 1860s. These musician-merchants may have ventured into sales because it complemented their other activities as musicians: the purchase of music or an instrument may have prompted customers to sign up with the seller for music lessons, or tuning services, or vice versa. Finally, some professional musicians pursued careers unrelated to music.

Mr. Boris, for example, who lived in Halifax in the mid 1850s taught French lessons as well as piano lessons, in addition to tuning pianos (see Figure 3.8).

Many of Halifax’s resident professionals were also concertizers, and made significant contributions to the city’s concert life. Some, like Lockett, accompanied amateur ensembles, or like Garcia, Jones, and Jeans, were involved in their direction. Occasionally, some resident professionals were recruited by visiting artists to accompany and/or perform as a supporting musician at their concerts. Saffery, for example, performed in Gustav and Madame Krollman’s concert on 5 December 1851, and Casseres performed in several of the concerts Charles Elliott gave in the fall of 1857. As public concerts became increasingly common occurrences, a few resident professionals also organized their own benefit concerts, with all performances given by local musicians, both professional and amateur. In the summer of 1855, Casseres, accompanied

\textsuperscript{151} For example, in 1863, Saffery gave a concert in Liverpool with Jane Bolman and also advertised that, while he was in town, he would be available to tune pianos (\textit{Liverpool Transcript}, 25 June 1863).
by Saffery, made what was likely the first provincial concert tour given by a resident of Nova Scotia. They gave concerts in Chester, Lunenburg, Liverpool, and Yarmouth (and possibly other towns along the South Shore), during which Casseres played piano and Saffery served as a supporting musician on violin. A particularly active period in Halifax’s concert life occurred in the winter of 1857 and 1858, when Casseres and several of his peers organized a series of benefit concerts for one another. The first of the series, on 5 March 1857, featured Casseres as the principal soloist (and presumably, the principal beneficiary of ticket sales) with his colleagues and several amateur musicians joining him on the programme. Benefit concerts were subsequently held for the other participating professionals. Table 3.2 lists the dates and performers in the 1857 series. The collaboration of these musicians at this concert series reveals that, by the 1850s, Halifax did indeed support a professional community of musicians, the members of which worked with one another to create opportunities for the display of their craft, and for music-making in general.

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152 The advertisement shown above in Figure 3.4 is for the first of these concerts.
153 One resident professional conspicuously absent from the concert series was Saffery. A dispute erupted between Saffery and Casseres during their South Shore tour, when the former accused the latter of plagiarizing a lecture he gave in Liverpool. See *Liverpool Transcript*, 16 August; 6 and 13 September; and 15 November 1855. Saffery, in fact, did not complete the final leg of the tour to Yarmouth; Casseres instead performed with Jane Bolman. Given this history, it is likely not coincidental that Saffery did not participate in Casseres’ concert series!
Table 3.2 Performers at the 1857 Benefit Concert Series, Halifax

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Beneficiary/Featured Performer</th>
<th>Support Musicians</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>05/03/57</td>
<td>Senor Casseres</td>
<td>Mr. Jeans (cellist), Miss Jeans (singer), Miss Bolman (pianist and singer), Mr. Boris (flautist), a lady amateur (singer), four gentlemen amateurs (singers, including Mr. Herman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/03/57</td>
<td>Mr. Jeans</td>
<td>Senor Casseres (pianist), Miss Jeans (singer), Miss Bolman (pianist and singer), a lady amateur (singer), three gentlemen amateurs (singers, including Mr. Herman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/04/57</td>
<td>Miss Bolman</td>
<td>Senor Casseres (pianist), Mr. Jeans (cellist), Miss Jeans (singer), several gentlemen amateurs, including Mr. Ackhurst (cornopeanist), Mr. Mignowitz (unknown) and at least 6 singers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/05/57</td>
<td>Mr. Boris</td>
<td>Senor Casseres (pianist), Mr. Jeans (cellist), Miss Jeans (singer), the Misses Cahill (singers), Francis Exkorn (piano), Mr. Robinson (violinist), Mr. Larkin (cornopeanist), and an unnamed performer (violinist)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While concertizing may have been what brought some professional musicians to Nova Scotia, giving concerts likely constituted a very small portion of how they earned their living. As both William Weber and Simon McVeigh write regarding musicians living in nineteenth-century Europe, concertizing was seldom the focal point of a musician’s career, or a primary method of earning wages; rather, public performance most often functioned as a means to other employment, providing an opportunity to demonstrate one’s abilities and to establish one’s reputation as a musical expert, which in turn could help to attract pupils, gain employment as a
performer at private functions, or promote the sale of published compositions. Not surprisingly, given the piano’s popularity in the nineteenth century, many of the teachers who advertised in newspapers offered piano lessons – although conversely, that fact may have contributed to why the piano, in the 1850s, was Halifax’s “most cultivated” instrument. Violin and flute lessons were the other most common instrumental offerings. Most of Nova Scotia’s music teachers who advertised for private lessons, though, indicated that they were willing and able to teach multiple instruments (some of which had little relation to one another in terms of playing technique). According to Golby, although music teachers in London usually offered lessons on only one, maybe two instruments, it was quite typical of teachers living in provincial towns to offer a range of instrumental instruction. It stands to reason that this strategy would have been employed in Nova Scotia: the more choice a teacher could offer to a small population, the better chance he/she stood of acquiring students.

Teaching private lessons was one of the most feasible options available to resident professionals. Singing classes – which had a long tradition in Nova Scotia – were also

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155 Golby, 93, further notes that teachers who tried to cover as many pedagogical options as possible were not always competent in the instruments they offered to teach. On this point Rohr writes, “One of the common abuses [in Britain] was for musicians to teach instruments they did not play, but for which lessons were more in demand – usually the most popular ones for young ladies – piano, voice, and harp.” See Rohr, 135. Whether Nova Scotia’s music teachers were competent in all they professed to teach now remains a matter for speculation only, but the possibility seems likely that some teachers – in the interest of economic survival – may have extended themselves beyond their capabilities. The fact, though, that some teachers performed in public (and some went on to successfully give concerts at larger metropolitan centres) suggests that they were indeed skilled musicians, and that some of Nova Scotia’s budding music students did receive competent instruction. In some cases, teachers who advertised lessons for multiple instruments may well have been capable of performing on what they claimed they could teach. E.C. Saffery, for example, performed in public on both the piano and violin. Louis Casseres likewise played the piano, and also performed vocal and flute solos at Halifax concerts.

156 Rohr, 135. She observes that even in Britain, where there would have been a greater supply of institutional positions, the largest number of music teachers taught privately.
initiated by some music teachers, and from the 1840s onwards singing classes were fairly common in Halifax, and not uncommon outside the city. Some musicians found work teaching music classes at schools or ladies’ seminaries: W. Hunt Stevens, for example, taught music at Mrs. Williamson’s school in Halifax in 1855, and Casseres taught classes in harmony, thoroughbass, composition, and vocal music at Miss Kirkland’s school for young ladies. On a few occasions, several ambitious musicians attempted to found music academies that offered various classes and types of instruction. Both John St. Luke and Mr. Garcia ran short-lived academies in the early 1840s. In 1846, Baron de Fleur started an academy using the vacant rooms of Dalhousie College to teach piano, organ, violin, cello, harp, and singing. Casseres made two attempts to start an academy, first in 1854 in collaboration with Jeans, and then on his own in 1857 (see Figure 3.9). None of these business ventures, however, appears to have

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157 As part of his research on the eighteenth century, Frederick Hall documented that itinerant singing masters from New England occasionally travelled north to Nova Scotian towns, where they taught in singing schools. See Hall, “Musical Yankees and Tories in Maritime Canada,” American Music 5/4 (1987): 393–394. Similarly, Nancy Vogan has found evidence that American immigrants to Nova Scotia in the eighteenth century brought with them the American singing school tradition. See Vogan, “The Musical Traditions of the Planters and Mary Miller Her Book,” in Making Adjustments: Change and Continuity in Planter Nova Scotia 1759–1800, ed. Margaret Conrad (Fredericton: Acadiensis Press, 1991), 247–252. Singing classes continued to be both a social and an educational activity practised in Nova Scotian towns throughout the nineteenth century. An author for the Liverpool Transcript, for example, wrote on 2 August 1855, “Our locality now and then is duped by some Yankee quack in Sacred Music, who promises to make all the people musicians in a few lessons by means of some new-fangled catch penny scheme. One calmly proposes to change the system of notation and have figures, and after figuring away for a short time leaves his dupes more ignorant and perplexed than he found them.”

158 Advertisements for Williamson’s and Kirkland’s schools ran in the British Colonist, 7 August 1855 and 11 November 1856 respectively. The St. Lukes’ academy offered piano, singing, guitar, and violin lessons, as well as dancing. Garcia’s academy also offered piano and singing (both sacred and secular, as well as in the English, French, Italian and Spanish languages), plus lessons in organ and harp.

159 On 18 November 1846, the Royal Gazette reported, “we are happy to see that The Baron has a constant succession of classes during six hours of the day, and that they are attended by the first families of Halifax.” At what point de Fleur officially closed his academy is not known, but it could not have lasted longer than two years, because de Fleur was reported to be in Bermuda as of January 1848 (see Halifax Sun, 17 January 1848).

160 The advertisement for Casseres and Jeans’ academy was printed in the British Colonist, 17 October 1854. They offered classes for piano solos, piano duos, piano duets, violin, clarinet, cello, flute, cornopean, guitar, (continued on next page)
been successful; whether the academies failed because the teachers left Nova Scotia, or the
teachers left because the academies failed, is a matter for speculation. 162

3.9 Advertisement for Casseres’ Musical Academy, Halifax
(Acadian Recorder, 20 June 1857)

Lastly, professional musicians also found employment directing music societies and
bands of Nova Scotia’s amateurs. In some cases, these institutions hired musicians who were
already living in the community. Such hiring practices were most likely to occur in Halifax,
where professionals primarily resided. Without a pool of experienced musicians at their
disposal, the Milton band hired an American teacher named Mr. Jacobus, a cornet player from

and Italian vocal music. The advertisement for Casseres’ second academy was printed in the Acadian Recorder, 20 June 1857 (see Figure 3.9).

162 It would be another twenty years before Halifax would have a successful academy; in 1887 the Halifax Conservatory of Music was established, which is still functioning today as the Maritime Conservatory of Performing Arts.
the Boston Theatre Orchestra, to provide them with instruction when they first formed in 1855 until the players were sufficiently capable to perform as an ensemble. Three years later, the Liverpool Band hired Jacobus for the same purpose.

The amateur band movement also helped to draw musicians out of the city and into provincial towns, such as Matthew Walls, who left Halifax for Yarmouth. Similarly, Francis Exkorn, a piano teacher and freelance performer, left Halifax in 1857 to start a musical academy in Yarmouth and to direct the town’s band. In general, as some of the larger provincial towns grew into flourishing communities at mid-century, professional musicians began to disperse throughout the province in greater numbers. One of those musicians was Saffery, who relocated to Wolfville in the 1860s to teach music at Horton Academy (the precursor of Acadia University). He, and other teachers, singing masters, band leaders, and entrepreneurs both inspired and responded to the demand for domestic and public music that, by the eve of Confederation, had been firmly established as part of the culture of colonial Nova Scotia.

**Cultural Arbiters**

The nexus of musicians that supported Nova Scotia’s musical life formed a diverse ensemble. They sang and played keyboard, string, and wind instruments of various kinds. They

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163 *Liverpool Transcript*, 31 July 1855. The *Transcript* printed a brief “biography” of Jacobus on 9 October 1858, excerpted from the *Salem Gazette*. Jacobus was the former leader of Salem’s Bay State Band, and prior to accepting his contract in Nova Scotia, a cornet player with the Boston Theatre Orchestra.

164 *Liverpool Transcript*, 7 July 1858. Milton’s band was still operational at the time, but Jacobus was no longer under their employ. Most likely the band could not afford Jacobus’ services full time, so he was hired on a term contract to help the band members gain basic proficiency on their instruments.

165 The advertisement for Exkorn’s musical academy was printed in the *Yarmouth Herald*, 6 August 1857.

166 For example, the 1864/65 *Hutchinson’s Nova Scotia Directory* lists musicians living in the towns of New Glasgow, Truro, Lawrencetown, Canning–Cornwallis, Wolfville, Bridgewater, and Yarmouth. We can only speculate about how many other musicians were not listed in the directory, or were listed under other professions.
performed (as the next chapter will consider in more detail) opera excerpts, oratorio choruses, and any other genre of music available on the commercial market. They marched and gave concerts, or performed in the privacy of domestic parlours. Some were widely travelled, and had experienced music in the world’s cultural capitals; others never travelled more than a few miles from where they had been born. Some were talented, some were not; a few were world-class performers. All – whether they were aware of it or not – were part of a much larger, borderless community of concertizers and domestic music-makers that spanned both sides of the Atlantic and beyond.

This nexus of professionals and amateurs, civilians and military men, concertizers and teachers, choristers and soloists also formed its own community within the young colony of Nova Scotia. As the frequent comings and goings of various musicians demonstrate, it was not a particularly stable community. It was subject to numerous external forces, and consequently, was in a constant state of flux; nonetheless, it had a continual presence in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, and sometimes its fluctuations brought new opportunities, for its musicians as well as for the audiences, merchants, and other persons who supported its existence. Above all, it was a community characterized by interaction and collaboration, the activities of each category of musicians helping to sustain the presence of the others. Touring artists had the least permanency in terms of their physical presence, but the legacy they left behind influenced the military musicians, resident professionals, and amateurs living in Nova Scotian towns as they developed a provincial tradition of music-making. Through their interaction and collaboration, Nova Scotia’s musicians established institutions that would inspire others to participate in music-making, and through their performing, teaching, and learning they forged the connections that made Nova Scotia part of the transatlantic network of ideas and culture.
The movement of ships, and later stage coaches and railway cars, in and out of Nova Scotia brought people, food staples, tools and equipment, and luxury consumer goods. It also brought music. In some cases, ships quite literally brought music, carrying crates of sheet music and books imported from London or Boston publishers into Nova Scotian harbours. People also transported music to the province, bringing a treasured collection with them as they settled in their new home. Professional musicians likewise brought music with them, to use in their teaching or even to sell to their students, and also to perform at their various concerts. While touring artists likely did not leave their physical scores behind, during their short stays in the province they introduced the public – and especially the resident musicians who collaborated with them on stage – to a wide variety of music, some of which had been recently composed and debuted in the world’s cultural capitals. Merchants, in turn, could import copies or arrangements of that music to sell to the consumer public. The music of the concert stage thus found its way into the domestic sphere for amateur singers, pianists, and other instrumentalists to perform at home as they practiced their musical skills or entertained family and friends. Occasionally, the direction of transfer could be reversed, when amateur musicians ventured from their homes to perform in public.

This chapter concerns the scope of the musical repertoire performed and experienced by Nova Scotians in both public and private contexts during the pre-Confederation period. As the previous chapter illustrated, a wide range of singers, instrumentalists, and multi-talented musicians lived in and toured to Nova Scotia, especially once international travel conditions
facilitated the movements of touring artists, and socio-economic developments permitted more Nova Scotians to pursue musical training. The music that this diverse community performed, and introduced to Nova Scotian audiences, was similarly wide-ranging, encompassing a variety of genres and performance styles. From the traditional music of the British Isles to music of the Italian opera stage – all of which was produced in great quantities by British and American publishing houses – the repertoires of Nova Scotia’s concert stages and domestic homes represented diverse traditions and had varied origins, but all were part of the cosmopolitan, commercial culture of the nineteenth-century Atlantic World.

Concert Repertoires

Of the historians who charted eighteenth-century Nova Scotia’s musical life, Frederick Hall developed the most detailed account of the concerts held in Halifax – and of the repertoire performed at those concerts. Within Halifax’s extant eighteenth-century newspapers, Hall found programmes for ten public concerts performed between 1790 and 1800. Those concerts included orchestral works (symphonies, overtures, and concertos) interspersed with vocal selections and chamber music. According to Hall, “Halifax musicians managed to present in just ten concerts during this decade of musical activity no less than seventeen different overtures, ten concertos,

1 Frederick A. Hall, “Musical Life in Eighteenth-Century Halifax,” Canadian University Music Review 4 (1983): 288–295. While it is doubtful that a full orchestra was stationed in Halifax, as Hall points out, most of the orchestral works listed on concert programmes would have been scored for eight instrumental lines: four for strings (violins one and two, viola, and cello) and four for woodwinds. He writes, “the fact that Halifax dealers had sold many wind and string instruments to the community and that instruction was available for at least flute, violin, French horn, oboe, and bassoon, indicates that a suitable variety of instrumentalists was resident in Halifax. If the regiments stationed at the garrison had a minimal complement of musicians, they, along with the town musicians, could have performed the words listed in concert notices” (Ibid., 294).
sixteen symphonies, and fifteen miscellaneous chamber works (quartets, trios, etc.).”\(^2\) Figure 4.1 illustrates the concert programme presented on 28 September 1790 by touring artist Mrs. Mechtler and an ensemble of Halifax musicians.\(^3\) The varied repertoire that Haligonian audiences heard during this active period included compositions by Joseph Haydn, Ignaz Pleyel, Johann Christian Bach, and other composers who were contemporaneously popular in major European cities, as well as in Philadelphia, New York, and Boston. Some of those compositions were performed in Halifax only a few years after their European debut. As Hall writes, the repertoire of those concerts “matched in interest anything offered in the British territories.”\(^4\) A similar observation can be made of concerts held in Nova Scotia during the nineteenth century. The repertoires utilized in concert programming changed over the span of 1790 to 1867, but like the concerts Hall documented, those of the next century allowed Nova Scotians to experience music that was contemporaneously popular in the cultural capitals of both Europe and North America.

Unfortunately, however tantalizingly brief and vague the records of Nova Scotia’s concert performers are, the records of what those musicians performed are just as much so, as few concert programmes from this period are currently available. During the late eighteenth century through to the 1830s, Halifax’s newspapers often printed programmes (i.e., repertoire lists) for upcoming concerts; this practice, though, became increasingly less common after the mid-1840s. Space was limited, so most advertisements only contained details about the performer and ticket prices, and seldom gave more information about what was to be performed.

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\(^2\) Ibid., 291. Other concerts may have been performed during this time, but their programmes may not have been advertised or the newspapers that they were printed in may be lost.


\(^4\) Ibid., 290.
other than “a selection of songs, duets, quartettes, and operatic gems” (or a similarly vague statement). Most simply advise potential audience members curious to know the evening’s musical content to see the programmes or the small bills – ephemeral items which, sadly, have not been preserved. Particularly difficult to assess in terms of programming are the garrison bands’ outdoor concerts, for which printed advertisements are rare, let alone concert programmes. Even when programmes do exist, the details they provide tend to be somewhat cryptic, such as “Overture by Rossini” or “A Favourite Irish Air and Rondo.” Composers’ names are rarely given. Still, those programmes that newspapers did print, along with reviews (which occasionally make reference to specific work titles) help illuminate the musical repertories that were performed during Nova Scotia’s public concerts.
4.1 Reproduction of concert programme given by Mrs. Mechtler and Band, Halifax, 29 September 1790
(*Royal Gazette and Nova Scotia Advertiser, 28 September 1790*)

By Permission of His Excellency the Governor
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To-Morrow Evening,
The 29th Instant.
Will be performed, at the Coffee-House,

A CONCERT
Of
Vocal and Instrumental Music
In Three Acts

Act 1st.
OVERTURE, composed by TOESCHI.
QUARTETTO, ditto DAVAUX.
A SONG OF DIBDIN – *Was I a Shepherd's Main to keep*,
by Mrs. MECHTLER.
OVERTURE, composed by BACH.
*end of the 1st Act*
A SONG, out of the much admired Opera of ROSINA, by
Mrs. MECHTLER

Act 2d.
OVERTURE, composed by MEBES
GIORDANI's *Rondo of Heart Beating* – Mrs. MECHTLER
QUARTETTO, of AVISON's
*end of Act 2d.*

Act 3d.
OVERTURE by ABEL
A SONG, by Mrs. MECHTLER
QUARTETTO, by VANHALL
A favourite SONG out of ROSINA – by Mrs. MECHTLER
The Concert to conclude with an OVERTURE of BACH'S

**Heterogeneity on the Nineteenth-Century Concert Stage**

What might be striking to a modern audience about the concert programmes Hall found
(aside from the fact that Haydn symphonies were performed in 1790s Halifax) is the diverse
range of music presented during an evening’s entertainment. As the programme shown in Figure
4.1 above demonstrates, a single concert could entail performances by both ensembles and
soloists, and feature a varied selection of music, including symphonic works, excerpts from ballad operas, and quartets. While the military ensemble that performed and accompanied these selections may have been smaller and/or comprised of different instrumentation than the ensembles performing contemporaneously at London public concerts, the heterogeneity of Halifax’s concerts otherwise reflected the programming practices prevalent in London and other metropolitan centres. These practices persisted – in European and American cities, as well as Halifax – well into the next century. Derek Carew describes the public concerts of the nineteenth century as having catholic programmes, noting that “singers, solo pianists, orchestral items, sacred extracts, improvisations, concertos, chamber pieces, folk troupes, and ‘novelty turns’ (such as playing the violin upside-down) could be found sharing the limelight with a Beethoven or Haydn symphony or two.”

Similarly, William Weber writes that the underlying principle of public concert programming in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries was miscellany, resulting in an intermingling of musical styles and genres that aimed to satisfy the individual taste of each audience member at some point during the evening.

The majority of concerts given in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia were billed as “vocal and instrumental” concerts. These were essentially a continuation of the concert format established in London in the eighteenth century (and utilized in Halifax during the 1790s). As the name implies, such a concert typically comprised performances by both singers and instrumentalists. The combinatorial possibilities were numerous, but an example of a typical concert could feature a band and an ensemble of amateur singers on the same programme as a

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professional singer. The singer’s accompanist likely would play a solo number or two on the piano. In turn, the repertoire that they would perform – like the programmes Hall found – would comprise a variety of genres, unified by the fact that all were fashionable works of music by the era’s standards.

According to Weber, however, the mid-nineteenth century was a turning point for the public concert phenomenon, when miscellany began to give way to homogeneity as the predominant concert programming aesthetic. Dovetailing with the proliferation of chamber music and orchestral societies, concert programming in Europe’s major cities became more monothematic in terms of the variety of both performers and genres that shared a common stage. Michael Broyles’ research on the rise of musical “classics” in Boston shows that in that city, too, the mid-nineteenth century was the axial moment when the idea of a homogeneous concert programme devoted to one performing body (e.g., one soloist, one string quartet, one orchestra) playing one genre of music (i.e., “classical” music) began to emerge.

Nonetheless, while heterogeneity ceased to be the only concert aesthetic, heterogeneous programming continued throughout much of the nineteenth century, even as homogeneous programming became the more prevalent practice. Concerts with catholic programmes such as Carew describes were still common in London and Boston on the eve of Nova Scotia’s Confederation, even once audiences had the choice of attending orchestra or chamber music only concerts. Heterogeneous programming was an especially practical approach for concerts in a small city or town where the audience for one particular genre may not have been large enough

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to sustain a concert series dedicated to a single type of music, or to maintain a permanent ensemble (e.g., an orchestra) that could perform such a concert series. Consequently, miscellaneous concerts remained the norm in pre-Confederation Halifax. Halifax, in this respect, differed from London and Boston, but this difference should be regarded as a symptom of the city’s size, and not of cultural isolation.

“Popular” or “Classical”?

Within the catholicity of musical repertoire, what is often termed “popular music” today flourished on the Halifax concert stage. Indeed, “Performer X will sing a variety of the most popular songs” was a common tag-line in newspaper advertisements. The use of the word “popular” as a qualifier, though, had different connotations in the first half of the nineteenth century than it came to imply later on, and consequently warrants a brief discussion. Carew cautions against attempting to apply to music of the mid-nineteenth century the “careful present-day compartmentalisation” that today separates music into the categories of “Classical (or art), popular, pop, folk, light Classical” and so on. While the nineteenth century was also when notions of an aesthetically superior “classical” music began to emerge, the boundaries of “classical” and “popular” nonetheless remained nebulous and fluid for some time. Although by mid-century some orchestral societies might no longer have chosen to perform one of Henry Russell’s parlour ballads on their programmes, in a “vocal and instrumental” concert works by Russell, Rossini, or Beethoven could still co-exist without any sense of “categorical” disjuncture. Consequently, Derek Scott suggests that Richard Middleton’s oft-cited definition of “popular” music, which equates “popular” with “lower class,” does not apply to the mid-nineteenth century.

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9 Carew, 240.
century. Scott argues that, prior to approximately the 1880s, the word “popular” held a different meaning for music, referring literally to a work’s popularity, and not to its provenance of low social status. A popular song was simply one that was well-liked and widely-known.  

Listeners regarded a popular song as being different from, for example, an opera aria, and might also have regarded it as being easier to perform, but from the perspective of concert programming, these distinctions did not create the same boundaries that are present within modern-day concert structures. Carew writes, “Contrasts there certainly were, and awareness of those contrasts, but they were viewed as complements, not as oppositions or as mutually exclusive.”

Notions of musical hierarchies certainly were surfacing in Halifax just as they were in London, but the “classical versus popular” dichotomy that underscores modern concert life seldom influenced the programming choices at the majority of Nova Scotia’s public concerts.

The musical distinctions between “popular” and “classical” also are not always clear cut. As Derek Scott and Nicholas Tawa demonstrate, many “popular” songs share stylistic affinity

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10 Derek B. Scott, *Sounds of the Metropolis: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Music Revolution in London, New York, Paris and Vienna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 9–10. To illustrate the point that “popular” music of the mid-nineteenth century was not associated with any particular social class, Scott gives the example of Queen Victoria – the epitome of social elite – loving Bishop’s “Home, Sweet Home.” See also Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of a Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988). In this seminal work, Levine posits that the concept of a cultural hierarchy, so fundamental to twentieth-century American society and culture, did not begin to emerge until the last three decades of the nineteenth century. Some scholars, however, disagree with Levine’s dating, and argue that ideas of a musical hierarchy began to surface much earlier. See, for example, Michael Broyles, “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44/3 (1991): 451–493, and Paul Charosh, “‘Popular’ and ‘Classical’ in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,” *American Music* 10/2 (1992): 117–135. Nonetheless, Broyles and Charosh recognize that, even as these concepts were emerging, the enjoyment of “classical” and “popular” music forms was not considered mutually exclusive and that audiences did indeed overlap. Charosh writes, “We would be mistaken to assume this division between types of music reflects a simple division between two different sets of listeners, one seeking edification and uplift from classical music and a separate group looking to popular music for a cure for the blues. Some favoured light music over serious; others preferred classical music to the popular; but many enjoyed both types of music on different occasions, for different purposes.” See Charosh, 126.

11 Carew, 240. Although Charosh demonstrates that some nineteenth-century Americans did regard “popular,” or “light,” music as aesthetically – and intellectually – inferior to “classical” music, he affirms the catholicity of concert programming choices. See Charosh, 130.
with the so-called “classical” repertory. Although their harmonic structure tends to be more direct and less complex, the melodic content of parlour songs and ballads is often patterned on the Italianate or bel canto style. Henry Russell’s compositions, for example, have both harmonic and accompaniment patterns that show the influence of Italian opera. While parlour ballads were often composed with the skills of amateurs in mind, they could be easily adapted into satisfying performance pieces for more proficient musicians. Through the interpretation of accompaniment and the use of ornamentation, as well as the sheer technical command of the performer, a single song could easily be transformed and reinvented upon each performance: what came across as simple and uncomplicated under the hands of an amateur could be elevated to a level of polished sophistication when performed by a well-trained and experienced singer, such as Madame Bishop or another prima donna. For this reason, Richard Crawford coined the term “performer’s music” as an alternative to the “standard polarities – ‘classical’ and ‘popular,’ or ‘cultivated’ and ‘vernacular,’ or ‘serious’ and ‘light’ music,” which he suggests “[seem] more categorical and value-laden than a historical view of music would support.” Whereas the score of “composer’s music” (i.e., Crawford’s companion term for classical, cultivated, serious music) is authoritative and intended to be followed strictly, the score of a work of performer’s music functions as a blueprint that allows the performer freedom of interpretation. Crawford writes, “Performer’s music, while offering composers little control over performances, gave them access to customers in the marketplace”; according to Scott, it was the economic success of this music

13 Scott, Singing Bourgeois, 38–41.
that eventually contributed to its devaluation as lesser music. In the mid-nineteenth century, though, these distinctions had little bearing on concert programming practices, and much of the vocal repertoire performed by both professional and amateur musicians at Halifax’s public concerts was part of the vast commercial repertoire that proliferated on both public stages and in private homes throughout Britain and North America.

**Theatre Music and Popular Song**

Like concerts held in major cities, those of Halifax frequently included songs from English stage works, especially during the first few decades of the pre-Confederation period when many of the professional singers who visited Halifax were stage actors. Touring artists like Miss George, Mrs. Gill, and Charles Horn had previously performed at London’s Royal Theatres, and other major theatres. Mr. Keene had previously performed at the Bowery Theatre in New York. These singers could draw from the repertory of stage music they had performed in dramatic productions. Their connections with major theatres also gave them access to current music. For example, a notice in *The Free Press* announced on 23 September 1828 that Mr. Keene “Having (by the George Henry, from Boston) received the principal part of the Opera Music, will be enabled ... to present to his friends an entire new selection of Songs, Ballads, &c., but still retaining a few of the Favourite Airs of his preceding concerts.” Theatrical songs were frequently published as individual selections of sheet music, making them increasingly available to musicians without previous stage experience. Theatrical songs consequently became popular.

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in their own right throughout the Atlantic World, because of their widespread dissemination in
print.¹⁷

Among the most popular of the English stage songs were those written by Sir Henry Rowley Bishop, who incidentally was Anna Bishop’s estranged husband. Bishop was London’s
leading stage composer during the early nineteenth century, and his theatrical works as well as
his other compositions (glees, parlour songs, etc.) were common items on concert programmes,
including those performed in Halifax. The concert Mr. Keene gave on 23 September 1828, for
example, included two of Bishop’s songs. Similarly, Miss George, from London’s Haymarket
Theatre, performed at least one selection by Bishop in most, if not all of her Halifax concerts.
The concert that she and Mrs. Gill performed on 6 December 1828 included four Bishop
selections (see Figure 4.2). “Bid Me Discourse” and “Should He Upbraid” were both florid
display pieces that Bishop originally wrote for Shakespearean plays and that remained popular
for years.¹⁸ Both songs were performed in Halifax within less than a decade of their London
premieres: the former is from Twelfth Night, first performed in 1820, and the latter is from Two
Gentlemen of Verona, which premiered the following year. By the time of his death in 1855,
Bishop’s celebrity had begun to wane, but several of his songs and glees remained regular
concert items. Most notably, his famous ballad “Home Sweet Home” became one of the most
popular mid-nineteenth century concert songs in North America once Jenny Lind included it on
her 1850 American concert tour programme.¹⁹ While Lind never performed in Halifax,

David Nicholls (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1998), 175.
¹⁹ According to Nicholas Temperley, “Home, Sweet Home” “became a staple item of every ballad
Haligonians did hear “Home Sweet Home” rendered by prima donna Madame Biscaccianti on 8 July 1859.

Just as Bishop’s songs gained popularity by being disseminated through print, publications of the concert music performed by the era’s most popular artists – including Henry Russell, the Rainer Family, and the Hutchinson Family – likewise helped endear their repertoire to audiences, and also made it available to amateur musicians as well as other professional performers. Consequently, even though the Hutchinson Family never performed in the city, Haligonians did have opportunities to hear their music performed by other artists. The Harmoneon Family, for example, performed “The Grave of Bonaparte” in 1845, which the Hutchinsons had been performing regularly and had published in 1843.20 Haligonians did have opportunity to hear Henry Russell during his 1840 tour. His music remained popular for several decades, and was performed at Halifax concerts by various professional musicians and amateurs.21

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20 “The Grave of Bonaparte” is included in Nicholas Tawa’s list of “The Most Popular Songs in the Extant Collections of Music” in Sweet Songs for Gentle Americans, 199. It was composed by Lyman Heath, a singing master from Nashua, New Hampshire (a town near the Hutchinsons’ home in Milford) who wrote numerous songs for the Hutchinsons. See Dale Cockrell, ed., Excelsior: Journals of the Hutchinson Family Singers 1842–1846 (Stuyvesant: Pendragon Press, 1989), xxix. “The Grave of Bonaparte” was one of fifteen Hutchinson songs published in 1843, when the family’s fame was rising and publishers recognized the market value of sheet music that was labelled “as sung by the Hutchinson Family.” See Ibid., 161 and also Scott Gac, Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth Century Culture of Reform (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 149. (Cockrell takes note of only thirteen songs that were published in 1843, but Gac updates the total to fifteen in his more recent publication.)

21 For example, not surprisingly, George Henry Russell’s 1857 programme consisted of his uncle Henry’s most popular compositions, including “Woodman Spare That Tree,” “I’m Afloat, I’m Afloat,” “The Mania,” and “Cheer Boys, Cheer.” Two years prior to George Henry’s tour, Messrs. Frank Russell (not a relation), Hassett and Reynolds of the Harmonicons performed “I’m Afloat” and “Cheer Boys” in their concert on 13 September 1855 with Messrs. Packard and Chandler, a professional singer and pianist who came to Halifax with the Russian War Panorama. The latter song was also sung by William Ackhurst’s son on 19 February 1855 at a temperance entertainment by the amateur youth of the Cold Water Army.
CONCERT

MISS GEORGE AND MRS. GILL,

Respectfully announce to the Inhabitants of Halifax, that they will have the honour of giving their

FAREWELL CONCERT,

Previous to their departure for Boston,
THIS EVENING, Tuesday, Dec. 9,
At the Exchange Coffee House.

The Concert will consist of Two Parts.

PART FIRST.

Song – Miss George ... “Should he upbraid,” Bishop.
Ballad – Mrs. Gill ... “The Sun was burning,” Wade.
Duett – Miss George & Mrs. Gill ... “Return O my love,” Radwell.
   Song – Miss George ... “My Soldier Gay.”
   Air – Mrs. Gill ... “The Merry Flageolet,” Barnette.
Duett – Miss George & Mrs. Gill ... “As it fell upon a day,” Bishop.
   Italian Air – Miss George ... “Di piacer,” Rossini.

PART SECOND.

Ballad – Miss George ... “Rest Warrior rest,” Bishop.
Song – Mrs. Gill ... “O! steal not the Ray,” Clifton.
Duett – Miss George and Mrs. Gill ... “The moon-beam.”
Italian Air – Miss George (by particular desire) ... “Resta Ingrata.”
Scotch Duett – Miss George and Mrs. Gill.
   Ballad – Miss George ... Radwell.
   Song – Miss George ... “Bid me discourse,” Bishop.
FINALE.

Doors open at half past 7, the Concert to commence at 8 o’clock.
Tickets one Dollar each, to be had at the Exchange Coffee House.
Songs or ballads written for home consumption were also common items on nineteenth-century concert programmes. Although composed with the domestic music market in mind, such music frequently transcended the private sphere and functioned equally as concert favourites. As Nicholas Temperley notes, a common marketing technique was to launch the publication of a new parlour song with a concert performance. In printed form the score was a melody with piano accompaniment, but for its public debut it would be performed by a leading concert singer accompanied by an orchestra. Parlour songs’ accessible style and the ease with which they could be acquired made them popular choices for Nova Scotian amateurs, but professional singers living in or visiting Halifax performed them as well. Easily adapted and arranged, parlour ballads were also part of the garrison bands’ performing repertoire. For example, Edwin Ransford’s 1837 song “In the Days When We Were Gipsying” – the song Charlotte Brontë’s Bessie sings as she makes a bonnet for Georgina’s doll in Jane Eyre – was performed in Halifax by Mrs. Gibbs during her engagement with Theatre Royal in 1838. Three years later, a correspondent to the Morning Post named Matilda Jane was delighted to wake from her slumber to hear “that beautiful air” being performed by the 69th Regiment Band.

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25 Morning Post, 26 July 1842. Apparently others besides Matilda Jane also liked that song: on 4 August 1842, an author for the Post wrote, “The 69th Band will play on the Parade this morning. We move that ‘The days when we went gipsying’ be one of the airs of the morning. This is one of the songs so delightfully warbled by the celebrated Mrs. Gibbs when she was in Halifax a few years ago.” Presumably in reference to the same song, the Morning Post wrote again on 7 August, “The 69th Band now play that favourite tune very frequently, with (continued on next page)
Oratorio and Sacred Music

Nova Scotian audiences occasionally had opportunities to hear the oratorio repertoire beloved by British and American choral societies. Two letters printed in the Acadian Recorder in March and April of 1831 suggests that either an oratorio or a concert of oratorio selections had recently been performed. On 26 March, “A Churchman” wrote to express his great consternation that Haligonians had been introduced to oratorio, a genre which he believed corrupted sacred music with its theatricality and inherent nature as public amusements. “Philo Musicus,” however, rebutted his claims. Both writers made reference to Handel’s Messiah, suggesting that excerpts from that work were likely among the ones recently performed. Likely, the event that prompted both letters was a Morning Concert held in the Council Chamber of Province House on 15 March, under the patronage of Lieutenant Governor and Lady Sarah Maitland. Three garrison bands and several amateur singers – according to the Novascotian, “half a dozen excellent singers” – performed.26 A programme is not available, but the review printed in the Novascotian on 17 March indicates that the concert entailed overtures, choruses, and solos from works by Mozart, Handel, and Haydn.27

Subsequent performances of oratorio repertoire, by all published accounts, were not controversial, but rather, well received. Indeed, as explained in the previous chapter, it was a concert of oratorio excerpts and other sacred music that helped to rekindle enthusiasm for the St. Luke Family, whose previous concerts had been poorly attended.28 Figure 4.3 presents the

incomparable taste and sweetness. The arrangement of their pieces generally seems to be effected with excellent judgement.”

26 Halifax Journal, 7 March 1831; Novascotian, 17 March 1831; and Acadian Recorder, 19 March 1831.
27 Novascotian, 17 March 1831.
28 Glowing reviews were printed in The Times, 25 October 1842; Morning Post, 20 October 1842; and Novascotian, 20 October 1842.
 programme for their 18 October 1842 concert, which included selections from *Messiah* and Haydn’s *Creation*. That concert, in turn, inspired the formation of Halifax’s Harmonic Society, which following the example of British and American choral societies, was dedicated to performing sacred choral works by the great European masters – namely Handel, Haydn, and Mozart. Again, extant programmes are limited, making it difficult to assess the extent of their performing repertoire. Those that have survived from the 1840s (unfortunately, none are available from the 1850s), along with newspaper reviews, suggest that choruses from *Messiah* and *The Creation* were performed at most, if not all of their concerts. As the two programmes represented in Figures 4.4 and 4.5 show, the Harmonic Society also performed non-oratorio sacred music by Mozart and Pergolesi, and lesser known composers like Vincenzo Righini.

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The Ross Thompson Collection of Dalhousie University Archives contains James Thomson’s copy of the score of Haydn’s *Creation*. Thompson was listed as a member of the Harmonic Society in 1843. See “Rules & Regulations of the Halifax Harmonic Society 1843” (Halifax: W. Cunnabell, 1843), 6, Documents of the Halifax Harmonic Society, Akins Collection, AK P90 H22 1843, Nova Scotia Archives. His score was published in 1827 by the Boston Handel and Haydn Society. Markings in the table of contents suggest that the choir performed the following movements: “And the Spirit of God,” “Despairing, Cursing Rage,” “The Marvellous Works,” “The Heavens Are Telling,” “Achieved Is the Glorious Work,” “Of Stars the Fairest,” and “Hail, Bounteous Lord.”
Grand Performance of Sacred Music
Selected from the Oratorios of Messiah and Creation,
accompanied by an instrumental BAND,
Consisting of 4 Violins, Flute, Clarionette, Bassoon,
Trombone, 2 Horns, and Trumpet.

THE CHORUS
Of sixteen voices will be sustained by Amateur
Ladies and gentlemen of Halifax,
who have kindly volunteered for the occasion.

SOLO PERFORMERS,
Miss St. Luke, An Amateur Lady of the City,
To take place on TUESDAY EVENING,
next, October 18th, at the Halifax Hotel.

PROGRAMME.

PART I.
1. Introductory Symphony – Handel.
4. Sacred Song – Mr. St. Luke, from the Messiah,
“But thou didst not leave his soul in hell” – Handel.
6. Chorus – by the Ladies and Gentlemen of the city, from the Messiah,
“Lift up your heads” – Handel.

PART II.
1. Pastorale Symphony – from the Oratorio of the Messiah – Handel.
6. GRAND CHORUS FINALE – By the Ladies and Gentlemen of the city,
from the Creation, “The Heavens are telling the Glory of God” – [Haydn].
HARMONIC SOCIETY – PROGRAMME
Tuesday Evening, April 30, 1844

PART I

OVERTURE – Mozart.
CHORUS – “Lift up your heads,” from Messiah – Handel.
SONG – “In Native Worth,” from Creation – Haydn.
CHORUS – “The Lord is great” – Vincenzo Righini.
CHORUS – “Sing unto God,” from Mass – Haydn.
Duetto – “All things fair and bright are thine” – Moore and Shaw.
Recit and Chorus – “Awake the Harp,” from Creation – Haydn.

PART II

Chorus – “Glory be to God on High” – Mozart.
Chorus – “Praise ye the Lord, Glorify him forever.”
Chorus – “Sons of Zion” – Newman.

Chorus – “The Arm of the Lord is upon them” [Insane et vanae curae] – Haydn.
Recit and Chorus – “Now the Philistines gathered” – Haydn.
Chorus – “Come, gentle seasons,” from The Seasons – Haydn.
Chorus – “Glory be to God in the Highest” – Pergolesi.
HARMONIC SOCIETY – PROGRAMME

Friday Evening, January 30, 1846

PART I
OVERTURE – Pergolesi.
CHORUS – “Glory be to God on High” – Mozart.
SONG – “Hope” – Glover.
RECIT and CHORUS – “Now the Philistines gathered” – Haydn.
DUETT – “All things fair and bright are thine” – Moore and Shaw.
CHORUS – “The Heavens are telling,” from Creation – Haydn.

PART II
OVERTURE – Bellini.
CHORUS – “Let us with a joyful mind” – Mozart.
SONG – “Let the bright Seraphim” – Handel.
CHORUS – “Lift up your heads,” from Messiah – Handel.
SONG – “My Flock, my Friends, farewell” – David.
QUINTETT. – Instrument.
GRAND CONCERT PIECE OF CHORUS AND SOLOS – “The Rejoice of Joshua,”
with orchestra accompaniments by J.G. Jones – Rodwell.
CHORUS – “The Lord is great” – V. Righini.
DUETT – “By the waters of Babylon” – Nares.
FINALE – “Praise God from whom all blessings flow.”
**Instrumental Performance**

Like Henri Herz, Sigismund Thalberg and other European piano virtuosi who toured throughout North America during the mid-nineteenth century, the pianists who performed in Nova Scotian concerts performed numerous variation sets, fantasias, and concert rondos. Variation sets constituted a significant portion of other instrumental soloists’ repertoire as well. Typically, the melodies of the era’s popular vocal music were used as the basis for what, in some cases, could be an elaborate display piece. The programme given by flautist Mr. Hanna and pianist Mrs. Ostinelli on 27 July 1832, for example (see Figure 4.6), consisted almost entirely of variation sets and fantasias. Some instrumentalists performed their own arrangements, but the published works of Europe’s prominent virtuosi were also rendered before Haligonian audiences. Mrs. Ostinelli, as Figure 4.6 illustrates, played several sets of Herz’s variations. Herz himself did not tour to North America until 1846, and so Mrs. Ostinelli was one of the musicians responsible for introducing North American audiences to his music. Mr. B.J. Lang, a pianist brought to Halifax in November 1857 by Charles Elliott, played Sigismund Thalberg’s *Fantasia on the Prayer from “Moses and Egypt”* and *Variations on “Home Sweet Home.”*

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32 Although there is no record of Casseres playing it in Halifax, the latter work was apparently in his repertoire, because he did perform it in Saint John, New Brunswick in November 1858 (see *Evening Express*, 8 November 1858).
4.6 Reproduction of concert programme given by Mr. Hanna and Mrs. Ostinelli with the 34th Regt. Band, Halifax, 27 July 1832 (Acadian Recorder, 27 July 1832)

PART I

OVERTURE – La Donna di Lago, Rossini.
VARIATIONS (to Cease your Funning) – Mrs. Ostinelli, Hunt.
FLUTE SOLO – Tuton’s celebrated Fantasia.
OVERTURE – Il barbiere de Siviglia, Rossini.
FLUTE SOLO – Di tan Palpite, Card.
VARIATIONS (Swiss Boy) – Mrs. Ostinelli, Hertz.

PART II

OVERTURE – Masaniello, Auber.
FLUTE SOLO – Air with Variations and Rondo, Tulou.
The Grand National Air, La Parisienne, with Variations – Mrs. Ostinelli, Hertz.
FLUTE SOLO – A Favourite Irish Air and Rondo, Nicholson.
VARIATIONS (Scotch Air) – Mrs. Ostinelli, Andrews.
OVERTURE – De L’Inganno Felice, Rossini.

In their preference for variation sets and splashy display pieces, Halifax’s instrumental soloists were following the programming practices established by London’s concertizers; however, whereas Weber’s research has shown that, from the late 1840s onwards, London benefit concerts gradually began to incorporate more “art” music (i.e., the standard fare of modern “classical” recitals), there is no indication of a similar transition occurring in Halifax public concerts. The Germanic repertoire that eventually succeeded as the main staple of instrumental recitals appears to have had few practitioners within the group of professional instrumentalists that toured in Halifax. The three Chopin Mazurkas and the Liszt Trompete Fantasia performed by pianist Count Wolowski during a 9 June 1853 concert are among the few recorded programme items that still might be considered part of the modern day classical
pianist’s canon.\textsuperscript{33} Given the limited and fragmented nature of concert records, though, there is much remaining unknown about instrumental performances, and the possibility that “classical” instrumental repertoire was included in public concerts should not be ruled out. It is also possible that such repertoire was reserved for private performances. An extant programme for a recital Señor Louis Casseres gave in Worcester, Massachusetts, for example, shows that Casseres performed Beethoven’s Sonata Op. 26, Chopin’s \textit{Grande Valse Brillante}, and Mendelssohn’s \textit{Andante and Rondo Capriccioso} among other works, and therefore that his performing repertoire encompassed more than just variation sets.\textsuperscript{34} Whether he performed any of these selections or similar material in Halifax is impossible to determine at this time, but it is certainly plausible that he – and other instrumentalists – presented programmes similar to this one either publicly or in private settings in Halifax.

Similarly, although the programmes Hall found show that the garrison bands performed symphonies and concertos at concerts in the late eighteenth century, there are few references to this type of instrumental ensemble repertoire in the nineteenth, and especially the mid-nineteenth century. One notable exception is the 20 May 1829 “Amateur Concert” performed by Miss George and Mrs. Gill with Lieutenants Abbott and Norcott (flutes), Major Cobbe (violoncello), Captain Cary (violoncello), Mr. Richardson (violin), and several other musicians from the garrison.\textsuperscript{35} The programme included Haydn’s \textit{Surprise Symphony} and Beethoven’s \textit{Overture to “Prometheus”}, as well as a flute concerto by Devienne featuring Lieutenant Abbott. Again, the

\textsuperscript{33} The programme for prima donna Signora Valentina’s concert, at which Wolowski performed the works by Chopin and Liszt, was printed in the \textit{British North American}, 10 June 1853.
\textsuperscript{34} Programme for Solo Recital by Louis Casseres in Worcester, MA, 5 May 1859, \textit{American Broadsides and Ephemera}, First Series, No. 10531.
\textsuperscript{35} A reproduction of this concert programme, which was printed in the \textit{Halifax Journal}, 18 May 1829, appears in Chapter 2.
scarcity of records makes it difficult to assess what the garrison bands – or amateur bands – performed in concert. Richard Hansen writes that both American and European wind bands of the mid-nineteenth century usually began and ended their programmes with either overtures or symphonies by leading European composers; likewise, Nova Scotia’s bands may also have performed arrangements of symphonies transcribed for ensembles of wind instruments, although the few references that there are to bands’ repertoire suggest that overtures were more common (more on this point below).  

Aside from overtures, nineteenth-century wind band repertory included marches, polkas, quicksteps, and other dance-based genres. Transcriptions of vocal music were also central to wind bands’ concert programming. Like instrumental soloists, wind bands throughout the Atlantic World frequently performed arrangements of the music also popular on vocal programmes. As James Moss explains, because band instrumentation was not standardized in the nineteenth century, music was rarely published for bands before the inception of several band journals in the 1840s, and so bandmasters were largely responsible for preparing their bands’ music. Some bandmasters wrote original compositions, but more frequently they prepared

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37 The repertoire played by military and amateur bands in Nova Scotia mirrored that performed by their counterparts in the United States. For a general survey of the types of music performed by American brass bands, see Chapter 6, “Discoursing Sweet Music,” in Hazen and Hazen, 112–127; Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 275 – 281; and Hansen, 23–36.

arrangements of music that was already popular. Consequently, much of the music performed by Nova Scotia’s garrison and amateur bands at concerts or other public entertainments would have been part of the repertoire fluidly shared by all types of singers, instrumentalists, and ensembles. The extant programmes that do give details concerning what Nova Scotia’s bands performed indicate that their repertoire also reflected two of the era’s predominant musical influences: the music of the British Isles, and the Italian opera stage.

National Airs

One of the staple repertoires of Nova Scotia’s concerts (and other public music entertainments) throughout the entirety of the pre-Confederation period was the body of “national airs” that originated in Scotland and Ireland, and to a lesser extent, England and Wales. Today, many of the Scottish and Irish songs that were popular on the concert stage would be classified as belonging to Nova Scotia’s folk music heritage (and to some, their performance at nineteenth-century concerts might be regarded as proof of Nova Scotia’s conservative, tradition-steeped orientation); however, this music can – and should – be recognized as belonging equally to the province’s literate music tradition. Although the modern tendency is to classify aural and literate repertoires as discrete binaries, in nineteenth-century performance practice these “categories” were much more fluid. Popular Celtic songs, such as “Auld Robin Gray” (Scotland) and “The Minstrel Boy” (Ireland) were disseminated by print as well as aural means, and were considered just as appropriate for commercial stage performance as they were for a ceilidh, barn dance, or other “folk” setting. As Derek Scott writes, “no one in the eighteenth and early

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39 In 1852, William Crawford, the preceptor of the Truro amateur band, was presented with a gift from the band president in recognition of his work composing and arranging music for the band (Novascotian, 10 May 1852).
nineteenth centuries spoke about folk tunes, but rather referred to this widely-popular music as being ‘old airs’. Nova Scotia’s newspapers used the term “national airs” to refer to this repertoire, and also to British patriotic songs, namely “Rule Britannia” and “God Save the Queen.”

Certainly, with the provincial population comprised largely of immigrants and descendants of immigrants from the British Isles, national airs held a particular appeal for Nova Scotian audiences. When an Irish or “Scotch” song was performed on a concert programme, it was often the selection that was singled out in newspaper reviews – a telling sign of what the audience had enjoyed the most. For example, it was Madame Krollman’s “execution of that exquisitely beautiful Scotch ballad, ‘What’s a’ the steer Kinner” for which the Sun could not find “terms of commendation suitable to its undeniable merit” and Madame Biscaccianti’s singing of “Kathleen Mavourneen” that “went home to almost every heart.”

Regarding the garrison bands’ outdoor performances, an author for the Morning Post wrote in September 1844,

We are delighted to observe that they are returning again to the good old airs – the songs and melodies that were sung to us in our cradles by the lips of those we loved – songs identified with the homes of our Fathers, whether they be the sweet songs of auld Scotia, the wild notes of green Erin, the warlike strains of Cambria, or the pathetic ballads of Albion’s Isle. These are the tunes that we love – the minstrels that find a response in the bosoms of us all – the notes that awaken old associations – and that make every fibre in the frame vibrate with pleasure, as if meeting an old friend who has been lost to us for years, but whose every lineament was deeply engraved on our hearts.

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40 Scott, The Singing Bourgeoisie, 22.
41 The fact that “Rule Britannia” and “Auld Robin Grey” were both termed ‘national airs’ further illustrates that a conceptual shift has occurred since the mid-nineteenth century, since today “Rule Britannia” would seldom be placed in the same category as Scottish and Irish ‘traditional’ songs.
42 Sun, 29 July 1852; Morning Journal, 6 July 1859.
43 Morning Post, 21 September 1844.
Conversely, concert performers – ranging from touring artists to the popular garrison bands – were subject to criticism if they did not include enough national airs on the programme to suit a reviewer’s liking. Following touring artist Charles Elliott’s 28 September 1857 concert, an anonymous reviewer for the *Sun* made the following comment:

> We thought of taking the liberty of suggesting national British music, instead of much of the foreign, which musicians delight in, because, probably, of its difficulty and strangeness. The former is, and ever will be, as it ought, incomparably more popular to those with whom it is familiar, and whose emotions concerning friends, and early life, and country, it eloquently expresses.  

> “How infinitely more stirring to the heart are such airs as ‘The Blue Bells of Scotland’, ‘The Exile of Erin’, and ‘The Last Rose of Summer’,” concluded the *Morning Post* author.

The comments printed in both the *Morning Post* and the *Sun* suggest that nostalgia was a significant part of this repertoire’s appeal. For recent immigrants, British national airs were a comforting reminder of the homes they had left behind; for those born in Nova Scotia, or somewhere else in North America, national airs connected them to a history much older and more permanent than that of the comparatively youthful province of their birth. The *Morning Post* author also suggests that national airs may have helped to give their listeners a sense of common identity, and to endow them with a sense of connection to both their Empire and their province. As Stanley Pelkey argues, beginning in the late eighteenth century the Scottish and Irish songs that were so popular at concerts had come to be regarded as Britain’s national, patriotic music. Songs such as “The Blue Bells of Scotland” and “The Last Rose of Summer” could represent a particular “regional identity” (Scottish for the former, Irish for the latter), but they could also represent a unified Britain, and Pelkey contends that national airs contributed to

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44 *Sun*, 30 September 1857.
45 *Morning Post*, 21 September 1844.
the formation of the pan-British national identity that emerged in the late eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{46}

Thus, for Nova Scotian audiences and performers, national airs could help bridge the factionalism of Nova Scotia’s diverse population, and assert their unity, as both a provincial community and as a member-nation of the British Empire.

The \textit{Sun} author’s comments, though, suggest other pragmatic reasons why national airs held such great appeal. First, they were sung in English, and therefore their texts were comprehensible to audiences – and pronounceable for performers. Furthermore, their musical settings were often uncomplicated, placing their performance within the grasp of amateur musicians, and also making them more accessible and gratifying to audiences who had little previous exposure to the more virtuosic repertoire performed by some touring artists.

Nonetheless, while national airs may have had a particular nostalgic and patriotic appeal to Nova Scotia’s audiences, the saturation of concert programmes with national airs was not unique to Nova Scotia. Touring artists performed in Halifax the same repertoire that they sang on concert stages in the United States, the West Indies, or South America. By choosing to perform national airs at concerts, Nova Scotian musicians were embracing the programming practices of a wide variety of professional musicians of diverse national origins. They were also performing the music that was available to them as commercial repertoire – the scores that they could purchase in local stores, or import from foreign publishers.

In Halifax, singers of every ilk performed Scottish, Irish, and English airs: the English theatre singers and Nova Scotia’s musical amateurs, as well as the prima donnas. Even “Ethiopian” performers occasionally included a national air alongside their burlesque parodies and Southern plantation songs. The programme for the Harmoneons’ 1855 concert with Chandler and Packard and the City Quadrille Band, for example, included Scottish and Irish ballads along with Henry Russell songs. Some professional musicians even specialized in performing national airs. In August 1840, Mr. P.F. White, an Irish harpist and vocalist performed a concert series in Halifax that combined a programme of mainly Irish ballads with a lecture on Ireland and its music. National airs were also part of the standard fare performed by bands, as well as by instrumental soloists. In particular, Scottish and Irish melodies frequently served as the thematic basis for the virtuosic variation sets and fantasias performed by pianists, violinists, and flautists. As the programme printed above in Figure 4.6 of Hanna and Ostinelli’s 1832 concert shows, both flautist and pianist performed variation sets on “favourite” Scotch and Irish airs. Several weeks after that performance, Hanna and Ostinelli gave another concert; on that programme (shown below in Figure 4.7) Ostinelli performed a Kalkbrenner fantasia based on the Scottish air, “Robin Adair.” While these programmes indicate that Ostinelli’s variation sets were each based on a single air, Charles Elliott combined both the Scottish air “Ye banks and braes” with the Irish air “St. Patrick’s Day” into one fantasia for his 26 May 1857 concert. These are only three of many examples but they demonstrate that national airs were used within instrumental repertoire in a variety of ways.

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47 See Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 189. Crawford notes that Jenny Lind often included Scottish and Irish songs on her concert programmes, and that these songs were “eagerly anticipated by Lind’s American audiences.” He quotes a Boston critic, who wrote that audiences “‘who would sit unmoved during the exercise of her matchless powers in the scientific productions of Mozart, Bellini, etc.,’ went into raptures of delight when she sat down at the piano and rendered the ‘folk songs.’”
4.7 Reproduction of concert programme given by Mr. Hanna and Mrs. Ostinelli with the 34th Regt. Band, Halifax, 10 August 1832 (Acadian Recorder, 10 August 1832)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>PART FIRST</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OVERTURE – “La Gazzza Ladra” – [Rossini].</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVERTURE – “Cenerentola” – Rossini.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOLO – Flute. Air with variations – Mr Hanna, Drouet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VARIATIONS – (By request) &quot;Swiss Boy” – Mrs. Ostinelli.</td>
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<tr>
<th>PART SECOND</th>
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<tr>
<td>OVERTURE – “Guillaume Tell” – Rossini.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOLO – Flute – Mr. Hanna, Tolue.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FANTASIA – In which is introduced the favorite Air of Robin Adair – Mrs. Ostinelli, [Kalkbrenner].</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOLO – Flute–Variations – Mr. Hanna.</td>
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<tr>
<td>VARIATIONS – Mrs. Ostinelli, Hertz.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVERTURE – Figaro – Mozart.</td>
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The Pervasive Influence of Opera

The Hanna-Ostinelli programmes in Figures 4.6 and 4.7 also illustrate a second pervasive influence that permeated many aspects of Nova Scotia’s musical life: the music of Italian opera. As Crawford writes, Italian opera was “the most significant force to hit the American performing world in the first half of the nineteenth century,” and although staged productions were seldom mounted outside New York or New Orleans, its influence “reached far beyond the operatic stage.”

Italian opera as a dramatic form had little bearing in Nova Scotia; while some Nova

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48 Crawford, *American Musical Landscape*, 73–74. Nowhere in New England was there an opera house, or a theatre that regularly supported opera productions; at 1850, New York and New Orleans were the only two cities in North America to have permanent opera companies. Touring troupes were the sole method by which the majority of interested Americans could see staged productions. See Katherine Preston, *Opera on the Road: Traveling Opera Troupes in the United States, 1825–60* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), especially 99–148. Opera as a dramatic medium had far less impact in the New World than it did as a musical genre. According to Nicholas Tawa, New Englanders demonstrated little interest in opera productions. See Tawa, *From Psalm to* (continued on next page)
Scotians may well have experienced opera performances during journeys abroad, probably the closest approximations to a staged opera production mounted in Nova Scotia were the scenes and character sketches enacted by the Heron sisters, the scenes from *La Traviata* and *Il Trovatore*. Madame Fabbri and company performed in costume at Temperance Hall on 1 July 1861 (see Figure 4.8), and the passages from *Norma* presented by Anna Bishop and Miss Reignold at the Theatre Royal in August 1861. The music of Italian opera, however, infiltrated nearly every form of public musical entertainment. Operatic selections appear frequently on the programmes printed in Halifax’s newspapers, and concert reviews give further testimony to the ubiquity of Italian operatic music within Halifax’s concert life.

Not all Nova Scotian audiences, however, expressed enthusiasm for the operatic music they heard at public concerts. A *Morning Post* critic, for instance, remarked following Miss St. Luke’s 2 June 1842 concert, “the Italian melodies we would not give a button for, but the English songs were well sung and two of them enthusiastically encored.” Nonetheless, since operatic music was ubiquitous within the nineteenth-century performance canon, Nova Scotians who attended touring artists’ concerts were exposed to Italian melodies whether they “gave a button” for them or not. The prominence given to operatic music on concert programmes only increased throughout the pre-Confederation era, especially once prima donna singers began touring as far north as the provincial realm of Nova Scotia. Katherine Preston writes that American audiences’ increasing exposure to operatic music throughout the nineteenth-century “developed an almost-insatiable demand for it: in mounted operas, concerts (in Italian or English), and in instrumental

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49 *Morning Post*, 4 June 1842.
arrangements of ‘gems from the operas’.”50 Indeed, the frequency of criticism for operatic music within the Nova Scotian press decreased in the 1850s when public performances of such repertoire became common, suggesting that critics’ reactions may well have been tempered by their lack of familiarity. Furthermore, the fact that resident musicians and even Nova Scotian amateurs performed this repertoire more and more frequently indicates that critics’ apprehensions were not unanimous, and that some Nova Scotians were among the transatlantic audience that was enthralled by the music of Italian opera.

Operatic music pervaded concert programming in several ways.51 First of all, Italian opera arias were a central part of the repertoire performed in singers’ concerts. Naturally, they were sung in concert by the prima donnas who claimed to have performed at Europe’s opera houses, but singers of other backgrounds performed them as well. The English theatre singers included Italian arias on programmes with songs from their own native stage. Miss George, for example, sang an aria from Rossini’s La gazza ladra during her 9 December 1828 concert (see Figure 4.2). Some of the performers of virtuosic arias were mature, experienced singers, like Anna Bishop, but youthful musicians also attempted to perform favourite arias. Susannah St. Luke’s performing repertory included arias from several operas as well as oratorios, national airs, and ballads; likewise, sisters Fanny and Agnes Heron sang arias from some of the era’s most popular operas, including Norma and La Favorita. While the former three young women were likely in their late teens when they were performing operatic works, Miss Kilmiste was no more than fifteen and possibly as young as ten when she performed a selection from Norma for her

51 See Preston, Opera on the Road, 305–317.
family’s Halifax concert series of 1850. Even Mr. White, the “Irish Bard,” included an aria from *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and a cavatina from *Il Pirato* on a programme that otherwise featured Irish melodies and a lecture on Thomas Moore at his second Halifax concert in August 1840.

Moreover, operatic music also occupied a central position within instrumental repertoires. Opera overtures were part of the standard fare performed by wind bands throughout Europe and America. As Raoul Camus writes, band concerts were one of the primary means by which American audiences were exposed to operatic music (as well as other “classical” music) by Mozart, Rossini, Verdi, and other leading European composers. Halifax’s garrison bandmasters likewise transcribed and arranged overtures from popular operas for the regimental bands to perform. Figure 4.9 presents one of the rare surviving programmes from a garrison band promenade concert, which opened with the overture from *Oberon*. The garrison bands also opened other musicians’ concerts with opera overtures. The 34th Regiment Band, for example, began the Hanna-Ostinelli concert shown above in Figure 4.7 with the overture from Rossini’s *La gazza ladra*, opened the second half with the overture from *Guillaume Tell*, and concluded the evening with the overture from Mozart’s *Le nozze di Figaro*. Little information is

52 The review is not clear which Kilmiste daughter, Eliza or Emma, performed the selection from *Norma*. As of September 1848, Eliza was reported to be twelve and Emma eight (see *Novascotian*, 4 September 1848).

53 The programme for the 14 August 1840 concert was printed in the *Morning Herald* on the same day. A notice in the *Acadian Recorder*, 15 August 1840, states that White’s first concert (on 10 August) had been criticized severely by the *Novascotian*. White himself submitted a letter to the *Morning Herald*, which was published on 14 August, reacting to the *Novascotian*’s criticism. His response indicates that the critic was disappointed that White’s performance did not contain “such flights of crotchets and shakes as we expected to hear.” The programme for the first concert (printed in the *Acadian Recorder*, 8 August 1840) was composed solely of Irish and Scottish airs, so perhaps White’s inclusion of Italian arias on the 14 August programme was in reaction to this criticism.


55 The programme lists Bosquet as the composer, but likely he was the arranger and this was the overture from the opera by Carl Maria von Weber.
available for Nova Scotia’s amateur bands’ concerts, but most likely they performed opera overtures as well.

4.8 Reproduction of concert programme for concert of opera scenes given by Mme. Fabbri and Company, Halifax, 1 July 1861 (Acadian Recorder, 1 July 1861)

GRAND ITALIAN OPERA!
-----
BY GENERAL REQUEST
MADAME FABBRI
Will give on MONDAY EVENING, JULY 1,
A GRAND OPERATIC PERFORMANCE
(In Costume)
-----
LA TRAVIATA.
(Whole First Act.)
Grand Opera of Maestro Verdi.
VIOLETTA Mad. Inez Fabbri
FLORA Mad'lle Anina Rosetti
ALFREDO Mr. C. R. Adams.
And Chorus.
-----
IL TROVATORE.
(The Celebrated Miserere Scene)
Del Maestro Verdi.
LEONORA Mad. Inez Fabbri
MANRICO Mr. C. R. Adams
And Select Chorus of Ladies and Gentlemen.
-----
Pianist and Conductor-- HERR RICHARD MULDER.
See Programme for particulars.
-----
Single Tickets of Admission, with Reserved Seats,
Balcony $1. Family Tickets, admitting four persons
with reserved seats $3. Tickets, without reserved
seats, body of the Hall, 50 cts.; side Gallery 25 cts.
Tickets with reserved seats may be obtained at the
Store of Messrs. A. & W. MacKinlay, No. 10 Granville
Street, where plan of Hall may be seen.
Doors open at seven; Opera commences at 8 o’clock.
The Piano Fortes used on this occasion are from
the well known manufactory of Fraser & Son, Halifax.
Z. LIONARONS,
Agent.
Reworking symphonic overtures for wind band was only one way in which operatic music was appropriated as instrumental concert fare. Arias, duets, and other selections originally composed for voices were also transcribed and arranged for instruments. The 1858 promenade concert programme in Figure 4.9 for example, included a cavatina from *La gazza ladra*. A second extant band programme, this one from an 1862 concert in Horticultural Gardens (see Figure 4.10), likewise shows that the band performed arrangements of vocal music from several popular operas. At one of the St. Luke family’s 1842 concerts the 69th Regiment Band played an arrangement of “Ah! non giunge uman pensiero” from *La Sonnambula*, featuring a boy playing a cornopean solo. Halifax’s ex-military cornopeanist William Ackhurst also drew from the opera canon for his solo repertoire; on 27 October 1846, he and Baron de Fleur performed cornopean-piano duets based on music from *Norma*. Although Henry Russell’s concerts featured mainly his own compositions, Russell began his 10 December 1840 concert in Halifax by performing the overture to Weber’s *Oberon* on the piano and ended with a selection from Rossini’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Likewise, flautists, violinists, and other instrumentalists turned to the wealth of opera melodies publicly disseminated by the music-publishing industry as source material for their performances. Pianists such as de Fleur, Casseres and Wolowski accompanied singers’ arias, and then extemporised on other operatic selections, using favourite arias as the basis of variation sets, or combining them into medleys. The programme de Fleur presented with the 77th Regiment Band on 5 August 1840 (see Figure 4.11) illustrates several

56 Aside from the obscure “Bosquet,” most of the composers represented on the 9 February 1858 programme were the leading composers of the day. Rossini and Bellini were, of course, well known. D’Albert was Britain’s most prolific composer of dance music (more on him in the section on domestic music). Joseph Gung’l was known as the “Strauss of the North,” and was one of the leading composer-conductors of the mid-nineteenth century. His band toured through the United States in 1848. According to Hansen, “numerous editions of his music were available, and other travelling ensembles actively promoted his works.” See Hansen, 30. The other composer listed on the programme was Carey, who was the 62nd Regiment’s bandmaster.

57 *Novascotian*, 18 August 1842.
ways instrumentalists could draw from operatic repertoire. The band opened both halves of the concert with Rossini overtures, while de Fleur performed his own set of variations based on Bellini’s *Norma*. The band also played de Fleur’s arrangements of a quartette from *Mossengelio* and a chorus from *I Puritani* with harp accompaniment, and in the latter, a cornet solo.58

4.9 Reproduction of concert programme given by the 62nd Regt. Band, Halifax, 9 February 1858 (Halifax Morning Sun, 10 February 1858)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Promenade Concert at Mason’s Hall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>62nd Regiment Band</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>February 9, 1858</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overture</strong>, D’Oberon, Bosquet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cavatina</strong>, La Gazza Ladra, Rossini.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Valse</strong>, La Belle Suisse, D’Albert.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fandango</strong>, Souvenir de St. Sebastien, Bosquet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quadrille</strong>, Militaire, Gung’l.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quartette</strong>, I Puritani, Bellini.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Galop</strong>, Schuman, Carey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>God Save the Queen.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

58 “Mossengelio” is likely an erroneous spelling of Auber’s *Masaniello*, or La muette de Portici.
4.10 Reproduction of concert programme given by the 16th Regt. Band, Halifax, 23 September 1862
(Acadian Recorder, 20 September 1862)

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC
To be performed by the 16th Regimental Band,
On Tuesday next, at 3 ½ o’clock, at the Horticultural Society’s Gardens

1. The Zouave’s March – French.
2. Selections from the Opera Satanelli – Balfe.
3. Grand Overture, composed expressly for the International Exhibition of 1862 – Verdi
5. Duett from the Opera Norma – Bellini.
6. Grand Selection from Opera Martha – Fleton [Flotow].

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Piece</th>
<th>Performers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Overture from the Opera of “Cenerentola,” by Rossini – FULL BAND.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The “Silver Bell” of Paganini,” Grand Variation for Piano Forte and Æolian Attachment, on L. Gilbert’s Grand Square Æolian Attachment Piano Forte, arranged and executed by – DE FLEUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Song, Quartette from the Opera “Mossengelio,” the “Fish-erman from Naples,” with accompaniment of Harp and Orchestra, arranged by – DE FLEUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Divertion from Strauss’ favourite Waltzes for two performers, on Lemuel Gilbert’s celebrated Grand Square Piano Forte, executed by – MISS ROBINSON and DE FLEUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Overture from the Opera the “Barber of Seville,” by Rossini – FULL BAND.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Grand Variations from the Opera of Norma, composed for Piano Forte and Æolian, and executed by – DE FLEUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Song, Chorus from the Opera “Puritany,” with accompaniment of Harp, Orchestra, and Cornet a Piston Solo, arranged by – DE FLEUR.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Imperial Waltz for two Performers, on L. Gilbert’s Patent Action Square Piano Forte, composed by De Fleur, and executed by – MISS ROBINSON and DE FLEUR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>God Save the Queen – FULL BAND</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Even minstrel troupes generated opportunities for the transmission of music from the opera houses of European capitals to Nova Scotia’s provincial concert stages. As Dale Cockrell, William Mahar, and other scholars have argued, despite the vastly different pretensions of minstrel shows, opera was an integral component of blackface performance and minstrelsy.
Costumed in blackface, minstrel troupes performed operatic burlesques as well as parodies of popular arias. Operas such as *Ernani*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, and *La Sonnambula* became *Herr Nanny*, *Lucy did Sham Amour*, and *The Roof Scrambler*; an aria such as “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls” (from Balfe’s *The Bohemian Girl*) could be reworked with parodic lyrics in “Ethiopian” dialect, to become “I Dreamt I Had Money to Buy a Shawl.” The visual and textual aspects of the parodied operas were often greatly transfigured; however, the music that minstrel shows borrowed from the operatic stage was seldom altered. As Preston writes, “The humour was in the juxtaposition of familiar operatic music and lyrics with the ridiculous words and absurd situations of the burlesque.”

Blackface parodies did nothing to weaken the appeal of the music, and little was done to change it. ... There are very few if any parodies of the music and no attempts to render the songs (at least in the published ones) in the disjointed self-reflexive styles found elsewhere in minstrel show music. The parodies, then, were used to provide music that the minstrel composers could not have created themselves or to ridicule the conventions of their Italian and French musical sources.

The second part of Carle’s Minstrels’ 4 October 1853 Halifax programme, for example, began with an instrumental performance of “Grand Quickstep from ‘Fra Diavolo’” followed by the entire company presenting an “Operatic Opening Chorus.” In 1859, a *Morning Post* reviewer wrote of the Harmoneons’ 4 July concert, “Their choruses were very fine, particularly the ‘Phantom Chorus’ – a burlesque on the chorus of the same name in the beautiful opera of ‘La

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59 Preston, *Opera on the Road*, 312.
60 Ibid., 312.
Sonnambula’ – and, although a burlesque, the music was mostly correctly rendered.” 63 Perhaps as an indicator of their earnest appreciation for the music they parodied, Ordway’s Aeolian Vocalists gave a “white” concert on 6 September 1851, which included gems from *Lucia di Lammermoor, Lucretia Borgia, La Sonnambula, Masaniello, Norma, La Favorita*, and *Bohemian Girl.* 64

While staged opera productions were outside the experience of most nineteenth-century Anglo people, as Crawford argues the melodies of Italian operas were paradoxically one of the nineteenth century’s most accessible musical idioms. 65 As many of the programmes reproduced above illustrate, the operatic selections performed at Halifax public concerts came from some of Europe’s most popular operas. In the first half of the pre-Confederation period works by Rossini, Mozart, Auber, and Balfe were the most common; from the 1840s onward, the operas of Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi rose to the forefront as performers’ favourites. In many cases, these operatic selections were performed in Halifax within a matter of years of the operas’ European premieres. The manner in which such selections were performed often varied greatly from their original context; nonetheless, through its mutability, opera’s music made Haligonian and other Nova Scotian audiences participants in an international cultural phenomenon.

**Cosmopolitanism in Concert**

As all of the above programmes demonstrate, throughout the pre-Confederation era concert-going Nova Scotians were not only exposed to internationally fashionable music, but to

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63 Morning Post, 6 July 1859.
64 Acadian Recorder, 6 September 1851.
multiple interpretations of that music by performers espousing a variety of performance practices. Ultimately, much of the music heard in concert belonged to one large performance repertory, shared by singers, instrumentalists and ensembles, both professional and amateur, throughout the Atlantic World. Thus, national airs belonged equally on the concert programmes of amateur bands and prima donnas, and an opera aria was as likely to be performed by a troupe of handbell ringers, a piano-cornet duo, or a child performer.

Three final examples illustrate the heterogeneity and cosmopolitanism of public concert programming, and the fluidity with which the repertoire of these concerts was shared by its performers. Figure 4.12 presents the 2 June 1842 programme performed by Susannah St. Luke and family.\textsuperscript{66} During that performance, the audience heard several English ballads, one of Henry Russell’s most popular songs, and an extemporised version of Britain’s most emblematic national air. They heard a father play a violin concerto, accompanied by his pianist daughter, and a youthful son attempt a work by the great Paganini. They heard two challenging Italian arias by Rossini and Bellini, as well a comic song, comic duet, and glee. Finally they heard overtures from Rossini’s \textit{Tancredi} and \textit{L’italiana in Algeri}, but typical of the nineteenth-century experience, the “orchestra” that delivered these works was not comprised of strings, woodwinds, and brass, but two violins and a piano.

\textsuperscript{66} It was this concert that prompted the critic for the \textit{Morning Post} to write on 4 June 1842 that he would not “give a button” for the Italian melodies.
Miss St. Luke’s
GRAND VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL CONCERT,
By permission of his Worship the Mayor
Will take place on THURSDAY EVENING next, June 2nd,
at the Halifax Hotel, on which occasion
Master St. Luke, surnamed the YOUTHFUL PAGANINI
and Mr. St. Luke, the Tutor of Master and Miss St. Luke, will appear.

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PROGRAMME

OVERTURE – Tancredi Instrumental from Rossini’s celebrated Opera of that name,
RONDO – Miss St. Luke, “[Dalle Greja?]” from Bellini’s
    admired opera “de Eliza Clandio,” – Bellini.
    BALLAD – Miss St. Luke, “The Old Arm Chair,” accompanied by herself
        composed by – H. Russell.
   COMIC SONG – Mr. St. Luke, Largo “il Factotum,” from the opera of the
       Barber of Seville – Rossini.

Part 2nd.

    Rossini.
CONCERTO VIOLIN – Master St. Luke, in the course of which he will introduce
    Paganini’s celebrated Polacci – Mayseder & Paganini.
SOLO ON ONE STRING! – Master St. Luke, in the course of which, he will perform the
most difficult variation without touching the bow with either hand.
BRAVUNA – Miss St. Luke, from the opera of Cinderella, “Now with grief no longer
    bending,” with brilliant variations – Rossini.
COMIC DUETT – Music Master and Pupil, by Miss and Mr. St. Luke – Foravooti
    FINALE – Rule Britannia, Miss St. Luke
Figures 4.13 and 4.14 are programmes of amateur concerts given in Antigonish and Lunenburg. The first was performed by the Antigonish Amateur Band under the direction of former military bandsman Charles Kaestner on 6 May 1846, and was printed, along with a short review, in the *Novascotian* on 25 May. The Lunenburg concert was a benefit for the blind singer, Jane Bolman; the programme was recorded by Adolphus Gaetz (one of the performers in the amateur ensemble that accompanied her) in his diary on 1 January 1856.  Again, these programmes represent the seemingly disparate (by today’s standards) combination of musical idioms that freely intermingled on the concert stage, typical of nineteenth-century practice. (That being said, the Lunenburg programme does suggest an attempt to impose a categorical logic within the concert by assigning sacred works to the first half and “lighter” fare to the second.) Furthermore, they demonstrate that the musical repertoire heard at Halifax’s concerts was also known and performed outside the city. Moreover, these two examples are evidence of Nova Scotia’s assimilation within the transatlantic music world. The miscellaneous vocal and instrumental concert was not simply a transient phenomenon imposed upon Nova Scotians by foreign musicians *en route* to somewhere else, but a phenomenon that was embraced and naturalized by the provincial citizens themselves. The music that Nova Scotia’s musicians performed at such concerts was the music of a borderless, cosmopolitan culture.

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4.13 Reproduction of concert programme given by the Antigonish Amateur Music Society, Antigonish, 6 May 1846 (Novascotian, 25 May 1846)

PART I
2. Aria, from L’elisir d’amour.
3. Prince of Wales’ Quadrille.
5. Polish Air, - Solo for Trombone, with variations.
   6. 3 Waltzes, Coronation.

Intermission

1. “Am I not fondly thine own,” by Miss Lilla, Accompanied by Flutes, Violins, and Violoncellos
2. Duet from Don Giovanni, for Cornopean and French horn, Accompanied by Violins.

PART II
1. Duke of York’s March
2. Aria, from Puritani, - solo for Cornopean.
3. Alma Quadrilles.
4. My Arab Steed – Sung by a Gentleman Amateur, Accompanied by the Orchestra
5. Cachoucha Waltz, from “Le Diable Boiteaux.”
   6. Albertine Gallopade.
   7. Polka de Renown.
Finale – God Save the Queen.
4.14 Reproduction of concert programme for Miss Bolman’s Benefit Concert, Lunenburg, 1 January 1856
(from The Diary of Adolphus Gaetz, p. 21–22)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 1st.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Anthem from Luke 2 Chap. There were shepherds, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. He doeth all things well. Solo by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mortals Awake (Christmas piece)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The little Shroud. Solo by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Haec Dies, by Webbe</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Great is the Lord</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part 2nd.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Home Sweet home, with Variations – piano solo by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Mountain Maid’s Invitation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Billy Grimes, guitar accompaniment by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Lilly Bell.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. They Welcome Me Again. Solo by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Mary of the Wild Moor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Give Me a Cot. Solo by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Grave of Napoleon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The Little Maid, guitar accompaniment by Miss Bolman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. God Save the Queen.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Domestic Repertoires**

While some pre-Confederation Nova Scotians were exposed to internationally fashionable music by attending concerts (or, like the Antigonish and Lunenburg amateurs, by playing at concerts), even for those members of the concert-going public the opportunities for such occasions were limited. The concert hall was certainly an important and influential means by which cosmopolitan culture was imported to Nova Scotia, but nonetheless a relatively rare experience. Rather, the home was the primary site for Nova Scotian music-making, and thus for exposing Nova Scotians to musical repertoire.
The music trade was integral to, and largely responsible for, domestic music-making. As Hall, and also Phyllis Blakeley and Timothy McGee have found, Halifax had not been a settlement for long before merchants began importing both print music and instruments for home consumption. In the early years of the nineteenth century, such merchandise had limited availability, and as late as 1840 an author for the *Morning Post* lamented the difficulty of procuring music in Halifax. Nonetheless, the limited number of new scores available for purchase did not prevent Nova Scotians from learning, or even acquiring music; professional musicians, for example, offered copying services, thus making printed scores available in manuscript to Nova Scotian consumers. By mid-century, as Chapter 2 explained, the music trade had expanded, bringing regular importations of both British- and American-published music to Nova Scotia. Like concerts, these importations introduced Nova Scotians to a heterogeneous selection of cosmopolitan music.

Unfortunately, also like concerts, there is only a small amount of tangible evidence documenting Nova Scotia’s domestic music-making, and little of that evidence provides precise detail about the repertoire performed in Nova Scotian homes. Also, most of that evidence is from the latter part of the period. One source is extant Nova Scotian-owned music albums, of which there is a small number housed in several provincial and national library and archive collections. As was common practice in the nineteenth century, some Nova Scotian consumers had the sheet music they had purchased, or had received as gifts, bound into hard cover albums

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68 *Morning Post*, 26 November 1840.
69 For example, teachers Alexander Boyd (advertisement in *Acadian Recorder*, 31 May 1815), P.W. Leslie (advertisement in *Acadian Recorder*, 12 March 1825), and J.G. Haddock (advertisement in *Morning Journal*, 17 September 1855) advertised that they offered music copying services. In 1815, Abdiel Kirk advertised that he planned to open a music-lending library (advertisement in *Acadian Recorder*, 14 January 1815).
70 Music albums are contained in the Ross-Thompson Collection of the Dalhousie University Archives, and the music collections of the National Library and Archives of Canada and the Nova Scotia Archives.
once they had amassed a significant amount. Although not all of such albums have traceable origins, some have nameplates on their front covers, or the details of ownership written inside. Sometimes owners engraved or wrote their residence and even the date of binding on their albums. Some owners bound their music into separate albums according to genre (i.e. one album for songs and another for piano solos); others included a range of musical styles within one album. Some even wrote the date they had acquired a particular piece of music at the top of the score. Also, some Haligonian merchants stamped or embossed their store’s logo on some of the scores that they sold, making it occasionally possible to know where, and sometimes, even approximately when a score was purchased. The small body of extant albums can hardly represent all the music owned by Nova Scotian musicians during the pre-Confederation period, but it does demonstrate that Nova Scotian consumers purchased the same music as their British and American peers, and that the same music heard on London and Boston concert stages was played in Nova Scotian homes.

The merchants who sold Nova Scotian consumers the sheet music comprising those albums often advertised their wares, so local newspapers provide some insight into the repertoires of music that were performed in the domestic sphere. The advertisements merchants placed were seldom long or detailed, but nonetheless give a general idea of the types of publications they carried. As both demand and competition for sheet music grew, some merchants – in particular, J. Andrew Graham of Halifax’s London Bookstore – occasionally paid for detailed advertisements. The information that Graham and other merchants included in such newspaper advertisements is still limited, but sometimes might include the titles of one, two, or even more especially popular works that arrived among a recent shipment (see Figure 4.15), or list the names of the popular composers represented within the selection of purchasable music
that store carried (see Figure 4.16). Such advertisements consequently help to identify the music that was in the most demand from Nova Scotian consumers.

4.15 Advertisement for the London Bookstore  
(British Colonist, 23 January 1855)

New and Cheap  
LONDON MUSIC;  
RECEIVED AT THE  
LONDON BOOK STORE.  

POPULAR SONGS.  
RED, WHITE, AND BLUE, (Britannia  
Rides in the Ocean, copyright, &c.,  
Stand to your guns, words by Dibdin, Music by  
Ford,  
Village Band, by Dinkin (the only correct edition)  
Parthian pour la Syrie; English and French words,  

Henry Russell's last New Songs.  
Rouse, Brothers; Rouse! We were boys together;  
A Life in the West—Sally after Rain,  
Many changes I have seen—The Soldier's Bride,  
Wind of the Winter Night—Be not just to cast the  
Skeete,  
Sir Harold the Hobbiter—The Main Truck,  
Dedicated to the Society Mr Mother's Portrait,  
Forstater,  
The Feast of the Despots,  
Fanny, Watterman,  
Let's be gay—Ten John Littlejohn,  
parcnce song,  
The True Men of Old,  

Eliza Cook's Songs.  
Her own Poetry to her own Music.  
Spring; Spring,  
Don't tell the World you  
Dread Laws,  
We are waiting for you  
The Piper's Daughter,  
The Wedding Bells,  
Sweet Green Leaves,  
The Ring and the Kirk,  

New Waltzes.  
The Eugenie Waltz and Imperial Mauvaise—Henry  
Russo; and Manoela Waltz—Auber  
Villaine Waltz and Gallop—Jules Normand  
Schulhoff's Grand Value Waltz, Op. 6,  
Immortal Watter—Gang!  
Dreams on the Ocean—Gang!  
Petra Cavern—Fugl Herron.  

New Quadrilles.  
Pop goes the Weasel, La Tempete, and Le Grand  
Pero, with description of the figures.  
The Eugenie, with portrait.  
La Napoleonina and L'Imperale, the new fashionable dances, with accurate descriptions of both  
Selection of Eleven Favorite Scotch Reels.  
Selection of the best Country Dances—Jules Normand  
Pop goes the Weasel Quadrilles—Jules Norman.  
The Low-Backed Car—Lover.  
Also a Large Collection war POLKAS, Schottisches,  
Gigues, Suggested Music, Piano forte Duits, Overtures, &c.,  
Confet; Catalogues Gratis.  

Gifted London Music is fast superseding all other.  
It is the wonder and delight of all  
Museus who have seen it. It is characterized by its great accuracy—the beauty of the designs—but  
above all by the extraordinary low price at which it is sold—the less than one quarter the cost of any other Music.  

Sold only at the London Bookstore,  
21 Granville Street.  

Gratis  
CATALOGUES of Music, by the most eminent  
Composers of England, France and Germany, sold at the  
LONDON BOOK STORE  
Price 4d. and 8d. each, now be procured Gratis. This  
Music comprises the splendid compositions  
Mendelssohn, Theodore Oeston, Lefebure Wely, A.  
Goria, Rene Favarger, Jules Schulhoff, Vincent Wallace,  
A. Leduc, Oscar Comettant, Joseph Ascher, Rosellen,  
Joseph Gungl, Ferdinand Beyer, Adrian Talexy,  
E. F. Fitzwilliam, &c.  

** Hundreds of the most popular Quadrilles, Polkas,  
danzes, Schottisches, Galops, Marches, and Overtures,  
(together with Henry Russell's Copyright Songs. English,  
Scotch, and German Songs,) the whole beautifully  
arranged by the Most Eminent Masters.  
This music is printed from engraved Plates, adorned with  
handsome illustrations, and notwithstanding its great  
superiority, is sold for less than one quarter the price of  
any other music.  
N. B. To be procured only at the LONDON BOOK  
STORE, 21 Granville Street.  
may 1  

Graham & Son.
On 11 February 1854, Graham’s London Bookstore was patronized by Bostonian socialite Sarah Clinch, who was shopping with her Haligonian cousin Bella Bullock for a friend’s birthday present. She left with a book for the present, and also some music for herself. Nine days later the cousins were back at Graham’s store and once again bought music. Unfortunately, Clinch’s short diary entries do not indicate what she purchased during either visit. More than likely, what she took home was either a parlour song with piano accompaniment, a set of variations for the piano, or a quadrille, polka, or similar stylized dance; almost certainly, her purchase was a score or two of sheet music. Advertisements indicate that Nova Scotian consumers could buy instructional books, books of collected works, and even oratorio scores, but the vast majority of what provincial merchants sold was sheet music – not surprising, given the immense quantities of that type of publication produced by British and American firms.

Intended for the home, where the piano reigned supreme in the nineteenth century, almost all of this music is written for keyboard. Approximately half of the music that Nova Scotians could purchase was written for piano alone; the other half was for voice with piano accompaniment. Most was intended for amateurs, although some composers did produce challenging works as well. Occasionally, composers wrote (and publishers made available) ad libitum parts for violin, flute, cornet, or other “masculine” instruments. Even when ad libitum parts were not available, though, other musicians besides singers and pianists may have used these scores. As Crawford explains, sheet music was “performer’s music,” meaning the score provides only a template for countless performance possibilities. The scores Nova Scotians purchased may have been performed in their homes exactly as written, by piano and treble singers, but voices very easily

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72 Crawford, America’s Musical Life, x.
could have been swapped for violin or cornet. The varied performances of this music given by Nova Scotia’s assorted professional and amateur musicians can only be imagined.

**Vocal Music**

The vocal music heard in Nova Scotian homes primarily consisted of the ubiquitous parlour songs (or “ballads”) written and published by the thousands in both Britain and the United States. Intended for the genteel environment of the domestic home, parlour songs were scored for treble voice with supportive piano accompaniment, typically based on broken-chord patterns. The majority of the songs in Nova Scotian albums are for solo voice, but duets are also fairly common. There are also several examples of glees (usually with piano accompaniment) and solos with a four-part chorus.

Among the extant Nova Scotian-owned scores are numerous examples of national airs, as well as newly composed songs in the style of Scottish or Irish ballads. Given the nostalgia these songs could hold for Nova Scotia’s immigrant and immigrant-descended population, national airs were undoubtedly a central component of the repertoire performed in Nova Scotian homes. In *Belinda Dalton, or Scenes in the Life of a Halifax Belle*, for example, author Mary Herbert has her heroine flip through a music album to discover the score for “Oh Steer my bark to Erin’s Isle,” which she selects to earn the approval of the aloof Irishman Captain Elton. The presence of such music in Nova Scotian albums suggests that the domestic parlour could be used as a site for expressing and consolidating national identity. At the same time, though, there are also examples of overtly “American” music including Civil War songs, ultimately indicating that

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73 Mary E. Herbert, *Belinda Dalton, or, Scenes in the Life of a Halifax Belle, Founded on Fact* (Halifax: Mary E. Herbert, 1859), 9.
Nova Scotians purchased music that was current – and available. Furthermore, as Nicholas Tawa has found, Scottish and Irish songs were extremely popular in the United States, and countless arrangements were produced by American, as well as British publishers. The proliferation of this music in Nova Scotia was thus a market phenomenon, as much as it was a national expression.

Much of the vocal music was ephemeral, written by musicians who were obscure even during their own lifetimes, but the sheet music industry also made and supported numerous celebrity composers. It also helped to disseminate and popularize the music sung in concert by the era’s preeminent performers, such as the Hutchinson Family and Henry Russell. Parlour publications consequently familiarized Nova Scotian consumers with popular musicians as well as popular music. As both of Graham’s advertisement above in Figures 4.15 and 4.16 indicate, Henry Russell’s songs were a commodity of significant demand among Nova Scotia’s amateur musicians. Numerous copies of Russell scores, as well as music by Henry Bishop can be found in extant albums. The popularity of both composers’ music would have been reinforced by its prevalence on concert programmes, and vice versa.

Near the end of the pre-Confederation period, another composer well represented within the extant albums was Charlotte Alington Barnard, alias “Claribel,” whose songs, according to Derek Scott, “were favourites in British and American homes from the 1860s to the 1880s.” Nova Scotians also imported and purchased arrangements of the music performed by the era’s acclaimed touring troupes. The Hutchinson and Rainer Families were the most famous of the performers represented in the extant albums, but there are also examples of music “as sung by” the Harmoneons and Ordway’s Aeolian Vocalists – troupes that actually visited Nova Scotia.

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74 Scott, Sounds of the Metropolis, 36. See also Scott, The Singing Bourgeois, 72–77.
Piano Music

The selection of piano music advertised in Nova Scotian newspapers and contained in extant albums again represents the popular trends of the British and American domestic music markets. The large majority of piano music published in the nineteenth century falls within two general categories: variation sets, medleys, fantasias, and other forms based on pre-existing music; and dance or dance-based forms. 75 Maurice Hinson and H. Wiley Hitchcock identify a third general category, which includes sonatas, ronds, character pieces, and other newly-composed forms with no extra-musical basis, but as they observe, this category represented a much smaller portion of the sheet music industry’s output. While sonatas were a common item in the amateur keyboardist’s repertoire in the eighteenth century, Temperley explains that most parlour pianists of the mid-nineteenth century thought that form of music was too serious. 76 Rondos and character pieces were more popular; according to Scott, few nineteenth-century British drawing rooms lacked an edition of Mendelssohn’s Lieder ohne Worte. 77 Evidence suggests that Nova Scotians were fond of Mendelssohn’s piano (and vocal) works as well. Another well-liked and widely-disseminated piano work of which there are extant Nova Scotian-

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77 Scott, The Singing Bourgeoisie, 53.
owned copied was Thekla Badarzewska’s “The Maiden’s Prayer,” which was sold and played around the world from 1860 well into the 1900s.78

By far more prevalent in Nova Scotian albums and advertisements, though, are variation sets (and similar forms) and dance-based music. Again, much of this music was the era’s ephemera by obscure composers, although there are numerous examples of works by, or based on works by Herz, Kalkbrenner, and other star pianists. It could range in difficulty, from a simple melody with *Albreti* bass accompaniment, to a challenging work with running octaves, rapid scalar and arpeggio figurations, and leaping chordal patterns. (Whether or not amateurs were able to master these challenges is impossible to determine, but finger markings pencilled in scores suggest that Nova Scotian pianists occasionally did attempt these harder works.) Halifax pianist E.C. Saffery’s “The Rail-Road Quick Step,” published circa mid-1850s by Oliver Ditson of Boston, is typical of much of this music, and represents approximately an average level of technical difficulty (see Figure 4.17). Like Saffery’s quick step, the piano music Nova Scotians imported tended to have descriptive or pictorial titles – a strategy, according to Crawford, employed to turn routine musical material into something saleable.79

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Mark McKnight attributes the proliferation of dance-based piano music to the craze for social dancing during the nineteenth century. Clinch’s diary, for instance, is filled with references to dancing, illustrating how popular dancing was among Halifax’s social circles. Clinch attended a few public balls, but most of the dancing she did in Halifax was at the private home gatherings hosted by her family and friends. She also notes at least one occasion upon which she and her friends took turns at the parlour piano while others danced during such social gatherings.

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evenings.\textsuperscript{81} It is quite possible that Clinch used one of the scores she purchased at the London Bookstore for her turn at the piano. The fact that the countless quadrilles, polkas, and other piano dances published as sheet music could serve as functional repertoire, as well as material for home-study or even concert performance, undoubtedly helped to make it a popular investment for sheet music consumers. As McKnight explains, the countless scores of piano dances were based on the dance styles most popular in ballrooms; he identifies the waltz (and related dances), march (and related dances), polka and schottische, and cotillion and quadrille as the forms most frequently published as sheet music compositions. The Nova Scotian records are too limited to make any definitive conclusions regarding the forms most popular, but quadrilles, waltzes, polkas, and galops appear to have been especially common purchases. There are numerous examples of works by Charles d’Albert, who according to Temperley was Britain’s most prolific dance composer in the 1850s, and to a lesser extent, by Stephen Glover, another popular British composer.\textsuperscript{82}

Although many piano dances were original compositions, many others were based on pre-existing works, and arranged to suit the rhythmic conventions of a given dance form. Like the variation-based forms that also proliferated as sheet music, dance music drew from the repertoire of music already popular in either print form or on the concert stage. Simple, well-known tunes, such as “Pop Goes the Weasel,” were one source from which composers borrowed. Another common, and perhaps even more popular, melodic source for dances, variation sets,

\textsuperscript{81} Hallett, 40. The party she describes took place on 16 December 1853. She writes, “I danced three sets of quadrilles, one with Dr. Grigor, one with Mr. Murphy, and one with a Mr. Forma. I liked him least of all, and I played for one set and Capt. Shellion stood by the piano beating time all the while. He did when Emily Wainwright was playing too. He is considered the handsomest man in the regiment. … Mrs. Twining, Mrs. Taylor & Emily Wainwright sang and Cassie Twining, Mrs. Thompson, Emily & Helen Wainwright and I played. When we came away, Mrs. Thompson, the only lady remaining, for six of us went away together, was playing a reel and the gentlemen were dancing.”

\textsuperscript{82} Temperley, “Ballroom and Dancing-Room Music,” 113.
medleys, and fantasias were national airs, such as “The Campbells are Coming”, “The Blue Bells of Scotland” and “The Last Rose of Summer.” Again, these types of arrangements probably had a distinctive appeal to Nova Scotians’ sense of British patriotism and nostalgia, but at the same time were also produced by the thousands by American publishers and consequently reflected a market trend.

Finally, another type of piano music imported to and purchased in Nova Scotia was arrangements of quadrilles, polkas, and other dances that had been performed by orchestras or bands. Some of these works had been originally used for dancing, and were piano versions of the music heard at state balls in London. Also common within Nova Scotian extant albums are arrangements of the music performed by show bands and orchestras, especially Louis Jullien’s famous band. The advertisement in Figure 4.15 shows that Graham was selling several waltzes by Gung’l, the “Strauss of the North,” whose compositions were played by wind bands throughout North America. Such publications helped to popularize these bands, and also to introduce their music to an audience much larger than what could ever attend their concerts. (It is also possible that Nova Scotian bandmasters may have used these scores to re-transcribe such works for both Nova Scotia’s garrison and amateur bands.)

Figures 4.18 through 4.21 below present several images from a manuscript album containing piano music. Dated 1839, the album belonged to sixteen year-old Havilah Jane Thorne and her sister Anna of Bridgetown. Living in Bridgetown, the Thorne sisters may not have had access to print scores, instead relying on their teacher to write out music for them to

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83 Hansen, 30.
84 Music Book of Miss Havilah Thorne, 1839, MG 20 Vol. 191, No. 1, Nova Scotia Archives.
play. Or, they may have used the album to supplement their print collection, copying down scores belonging to their friends: there are at least six different styles of handwriting, which indicates that multiple authors contributed to the sisters’ repertoire. Many of the entries have only a melody, suggesting that Havilah and Anna may have learned to improvise thoroughbass accompaniments. Those that have both treble and bass parts, though, indicate that they were not particularly accomplished pianists. Nonetheless, despite its unassuming appearance (and numerous notational errors), their music album is filled with fashionable music. Among its pages are quadrilles, waltzes, and other popular dances. The sisters also transcribed national airs and parlour ballads, several of which Nicholas Tawa lists among the most popular compositions in American sheet music collections. “The Blue Bells of Scotland” and “Rule Britannia” (Figure 4.19) were two of the most beloved national airs of the era (the Thorne sisters, in fact, included two versions of both pieces in their album). “The Lords of Creation Men We Call,” shown in Figure 4.20, was a parlour ballad published in Philadelphia by Fiot, Meignen and Company in 1838; the Thorne’s copy lacks the piano introduction and conclusion, but otherwise is an exact transcription of this score. In short, Havilah and Anna’s album indicates that the piano allowed the Thorne family, despite living in rural Bridgetown, to experience the same music heard in parlours throughout the Atlantic World.

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85 According to Elizabeth Ruggles Coward, who donated the album to the Nova Scotia Public Archives, her grandmother Havilah took music lessons from William Monk.

86 On 15 July 1854 Sarah Clinch noted that her cousin Louisa spent the morning copying music, so clearly copying scores from friends was one means by which young Nova Scotian women obtained music. See Hallett, 150.


4.18 Index from the Havilah Thorne Music Album (MG 20 Vol. 191 No. 1, Nova Scotia Archives)

4.19 “Blue Bells of Scotland” and “Rule Britannia” (Thorne Album)
4.20 “The Lords of Creation Men We Call” (Thorne Album)

4.21 “Green Hills of Tyrol” (Thorne Album)

Excerpt of score, beginning at m. 9
Opera at Home

Whether they were aware of it or not, the parlour piano also allowed the Thorne family to experience operatic music. Although several pages are missing from the album, the table of contents remains (see Figure 4.18) and shows that the book once contained “Der Freischütz Waltz” and “March from Don Quixote,” as well as a piece called “The Opera Hat.” Surviving intact is “Green Hills of Tyrol,” a piano arrangement of a parlour ballad published by English poet George Linley in 1832. Linley’s song was popular in its own right, but the source of its melody was even more widely-known: the Tyrolean chorus from Act Three of Rossini’s 1829 opera, Guillaume Tell.

This simplistic arrangement, along with the missing pieces listed in Havilah’s table of contents illustrate yet another way in which operatic music permeated Nova Scotia’s musical life. Just as the melody of Italian opera saturated Halifax concert programmes, it also filtered through all categories of sheet music publications consumed in Nova Scotian homes. Opera was as much part of domestic music-making as it was part of the public sphere, and sheet music may have been even more important for transferring European music culture to Nova Scotia than concerts were: while concerts provided only rare occasions to hear operatic works, home performance – as made possible by the publishing industry – allowed Nova Scotians to repeat their favourite arias as often as they desired. It was, in large part, due to the sheet music industry, that operatic music was able to become, as Hamm asserts “the most pervasive musical influence in America since Thomas Moore’s Irish Melodies.” Sheet music enabled opera to pervade Nova Scotia as well, and the same operas that were popular on stage throughout the

89 “The Green Hills of Tyrol” is included on Tawa’s list of the most popular songs in extant American music collections. See Tawa, Sweet Songs for Gentle Americans, 199.
Atlantic World – *Der Freischütz, Il barbiere di Siviglia, Norma, La Traviata, II Trovatore, La Sonnambula*, and more – were part, albeit in altered form, of the domestic repertoire of Nova Scotian homes. Consequently, while newspaper reviews occasionally expressed some dissatisfaction with the performances of opera arias given at Halifax concerts, the prevalence of opera-based music within extant albums suggests that not all Nova Scotians shared those reviewers’ apprehensions; perhaps the reviewers were reacting to the performance style and foreign text (not an issue in a quadrille for the piano) rather than to the music itself.

Operatic music was disseminated through print in a variety of ways, most of which are represented in Nova Scotian albums and advertisements. Sarah Clinch, for example, wrote about singing a “very dashing Italian song” in her diary: she was in “the middle of an unusually high note” when, to her embarrassment, the Bishop came into her parlour to ask who he had heard singing all the way from the corner of the street! Most likely, the song that caused Sarah this grief was an opera aria – perhaps one of the scores she had purchased at Graham’s store.

Individual arias were arranged with piano accompaniment and sold as single scores. While some publishers kept the original Italian words, others translated the texts into English or wrote completely new (English) words with little or no relation to the original. According to Hamm, “Songs fashioned from airs by Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and other Italians became best-selling items of sheet music for several decades beginning about 1825”; such “revised” arias were shipped to Nova Scotia along with other parlour songs from British and American publishers.

As the advertisement for Graham’s London Bookstore in Figure 4.23 shows, Nova Scotians, by

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91 Hallett, 158. Clinch also noted another amusing anecdote involving operatic music, which happened on 7 July 1854 while she was visiting family in Windsor: “Mr. McKay was here and went to sleep while Louisa was singing some Italian songs and on waking up, thanked her for her beautiful music” (Ibid., 146).

92 Hamm, 197.
the 1850s (and perhaps earlier), could even purchase full scores and librettos, and thus read through an entire opera at home – something they couldn’t experience in concerts.

Even more prevalent, though, within the extant Nova Scotian albums are piano-only arrangements of operatic music. Thomas Christensen writes that the piano was the “primary medium by which most musicians of the nineteenth century got to know their operas”; while Christensen refers specifically to piano-vocal scores, the piano ultimately introduced Nova Scotian musicians to opera – or at least parts of operas – through several forms. One common type of piano publication was transcriptions of opera overtures. Arias or other memorable melodies were arranged into medleys representing a single opera, or combined into “potpourris” of “gems” from various operas. Aria melodies were also used as the basis of fantasias and variation sets, and for every conceivable dance form.

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93 Thomas Christensen, “Public Music in Private Spaces: Piano-Vocal Scores and the Domestication of Opera,” in *Music and the Cultures of Print*, ed. Kate van Orden (New York and London: Garland, 2000), 84. As Christensen writes, “By allowing individuals to play and reproduce this music in the privacy of their homes (at least for individuals who were musically literate and had access to a keyboard), the piano-vocal score was paradoxically able to bring the music to a broader public sphere.” See Christensen, 86. On the role of the piano in disseminating operatic music, see also James Parakilas, “Thinking Industrially,” in *Piano Roles: Three Hundred Years of Life with the Piano*, ed. James Parakilas (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 190.
Advertisement for Graham’s London Bookstore
(British Colonist, 7 June 1855)

Four Cases New Books, Music, &c.
Received at the LONDON BOOK STORE,
per R. M. S. Africa.
JUNE 7.
GRAHAM & SON.

"THE PRIDE OF THE MESS," a naval novel of the American War, by author of Cavendish, price 1s. 10 1/2d. "Israel Potter," his fifty years of exile, by Herman Melville, price 1s. 3d. (about one fourth the cost of the American copy.) "The Bride of the Wilderness," 1s. 3d. "The Hour and the Man," 1s. 10 1/2d. "The Emigrant's Lost Son" 2s. 6d. and a variety of other New Works.

Received at the LONDON BOOK STORE
ALSO,—Price Fifteen Pence.

"SMALL FARMS," how they ought to be managed. By Martin Doyle.


June 7.

Vocal Gems of Foreign Operas.

EACH Book containing 16 Pages Music, price 1s. 3d., with English and the original Words. Selections from upwards of twenty Opera, already published. Received also, a large assortment of New Quadrilles, Polkas, Waltzes, Songs, Piano Forte Pieces and Duets, Superior London Music, price 4d. and 8d. each. Sold only at the LONDON BOOK STORE.

BOOSEY'S OPERAS.

La sonnambula, complete, price 7s. 6d; Norma, complete, 5s. Lucrezia Bergia, complete, 5s. Libretto Books, containing the original words, with an English version, and the Music of the principal airs, price 1s. 3d.

June 7.
From Stage to Parlour

From Havilah Thorne’s arrangement of “Green Hills of Tyrol” to Sarah Clinch’s dashing Italian song, the music of opera made its way from the concert stage into Nova Scotian homes. This stage-parlour transferral is also illustrated in Table 4.1 below, which presents a sample of the types of sheet music publications that were part of Nova Scotians’ domestic repertoire. Two of the representative albums were bound in the 1850s (meaning the scores had been collected previously) and contain music for piano only; the third album was bound in 1867 and contains music for voice. All three are comprised of a mixture of music by composers both well-known and obscure, and of original compositions as well as arrangements of music from other sources, including national airs. Operatic music infiltrates all three, from transcribed overtures (“Overture to The Caliph of Baghdad” in No. 1) to variation sets (“Variations on Non Piu Mesta” in No. 2) to opera melodies arranged with new texts (“On to the Field of Glory” in No. 3). Aside from the operatic arrangements, though, these albums bear a connection to the concert stage in several other ways. They include music composed and/or arranged by the era’s famous virtuosi (Herz’s “Blue Bells of Scotland” and Kalkbrenner’s “Air with Variations,” both in No. 1). They also include arrangements of music performed by the era’s foremost performing ensembles (Jullien’s “The English Quadrille” in No. 1 and the American Brass Band’s “Katy Darling Quick Step” in No. 2). Finally, they include music performed at concerts in metropolitan centres (“The Maid of Elsmere,” performed at the London Concerts, in No. 3) or at other significant ceremonial or public events (“Queen Victoria’s Coronation March” in No. 2).

Consequently, although neither Herz nor Jullien extended their North American tours to Nova Scotia, Nova Scotian amateurs could – and did – become acquainted with the material they performed. Although few Nova Scotians could experience attending the London opera or public concerts, again, they could still experience the music – albeit in altered form. Certainly,
performing a potpourri of melodies from Bellini’s popular operas on a parlour piano was not a comparable experience to attending a staged opera. Nor was sheet music a substitute for live performance by professionals; it did, however, represent how the majority of Anglo people – including those who lived in the largest of metropolitan centres – enjoyed music on a regular basis. The ephemeral nature of Nova Scotia’s domestic repertoire should not cause the significance of that repertoire to be dismissed. While receiving crates of sheet music from passing cargo ships did not make Halifax a cultural capital, the contents of those crates did help Haligonians and other Nova Scotians to be informed of the music culture beyond their doorsteps. Piano arrangements may have provided only a paltry substitute for London’s public musical life, but they nonetheless allowed their performers to sample the music culture they read about in newspapers and novels, and to feel as though they were sharing at least part of the cultural experiences of their London and Boston peers.

Table 4.1 Selected Contents of Nova Scotian’s Music Albums

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. 1 Selected Contents of Miss E. L. Harris’ Music Album, 1851 (Dalhousie University, Ross-Thompson Collection Book 2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#45. “My Bark Which O’er the Tide” from Balfe’s Opera, The Daughter of St. Mark - arranged by Edward F. Rimbault (London: Chappell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#47. “Blue Bells of Scotland,” with variations for piano – Hertz (Boston: G. P. Reed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#49. “The Overture to The Caliph of Baghdad,” composed by Boieldieu – arranged by Henry West (no publisher info)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. 2 Selected Contents of Mary Cogswell’s Music Album, ca. 1850s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(MG 31 Volume 31 No.1, Nova Scotia Archives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2. “Variations pour le piano forte sur l’air Non Piu Mesta” de <em>La Cenerentola</em> de Rossini – Herz (Baltimore: G. Willig)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4. “Variations to the Admired Air of ‘My Lodging is on the Cold Ground’”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– arranged by T. Valentine (New York: J.E. Gould &amp; Co.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7. “Pot Pourri of Favorite Melodies from <em>La Sonnambula</em>”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Musical Bouquet No. 50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#13. “The Overture to <em>Il barbiere de Siviglia</em>” composed by Rossini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Musical Bouquet Nos. 38 &amp; 39)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#23. “Union Waltz” arranged for the piano forte from Von Weber’s Opera <em>Preciosa</em> – J. C. Viereck (Boston: Ditson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#24. “Le Souper” Waltz from Donizetti’s Opera <em>Lucrezia Borgia</em> – A. Cascantes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Boston: Ditson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#33. “Katy Darling, Quick Step,” as performed by the American Brass Band – W. F. Marshall (Boston: Ditson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#37. “The Sturm Marsch Galop,” as performed at Her Majesty’s State Balls and Almacks by Wellington Guernsey – arranged by Mr. John Weippert (New York: Wm. Hall &amp; Son)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| No. 3 Selected Contents of James G. Smith’s Music Album, 1867  
(MG 31 Volume 31 No.2, Nova Scotia Archives) |
|----------------------------------------------------------|
| #2. “Carrie Lee,” as sung by Mr. G. J. Wilsom of the Christy Minstrels  
(purchased at Hagarty’s Musical Warehouse) |
& c.  Adapted from a celebrated melody by Beethoven (London: Mori & Lavenu) |
| #11. “On to the Field of Glory,” song arranged from the celebrated duet in Belisario by  
Donizetti (Boston: Ditson) |
| #16. “Just Before the Battle, Mother,” song by Geo. F. Root (Chicago: Root & Cady) |
| #23. “Miserere” from Il Trovatore, from “Harp of Italy: A Collection of Vocal Extracts from  
the most admired Operas.” Translated and arranged as a sextette by Harrison Millard  
(Boston: Ditson) |
Brotherhood of the United States by a member of the society. Music by an American  
(Chicago: H.M. Higgins) |
| #35. “The Old Sexton,” composed and sung by Henry Russell (Musical Bouquet No. 64) |
| #36. No. 30 (Recit) “Arise Elijah” and No. 31 (Air) “O Rest in the Lord” from  
Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy’s Oratorio, Elijah (London: Ewer & Co.) |
Nova Scotia’s Musical Potpourri

In his study of nineteenth-century concert culture in London, Paris, and Vienna, William Weber argues that public concert life increasingly exerted influence over the domestic home, and the music-making practiced privately inside. He attributes the meshing of the public and private spheres largely to the publishing industry, which made it possible for the music of the concert stage to enter the repertory of amateur musicians. This influence, though, went both ways, for the amateurs who learned to play the music of concert artists at home became, in turn, the audiences for those artists’ public performances.

A similar phenomenon was developing in Nova Scotia throughout the pre-Confederation era, also aided in part by the publishing industry. The music that touring artists, military bands, and other professional musicians performed in public was available in various arranged forms, to Nova Scotian amateurs. Consequently, while concert opportunities were limited, especially outside Halifax, parlour pianos and other domestic instruments enabled Nova Scotians regular exposure to a wide variety of musical repertoire. Sheet music publications also introduced this repertoire to a wider audience than that which concerts reached. At the same time, as Nova Scotian amateurs gained musical training, the music they performed when they joined touring artists, military musicians and resident professionals on stage included the opera fantasias, national air arrangements, parlour songs, and even oratorio excerpts they had learned at home. Ultimately, the musical repertoire of Nova Scotia’s public and private spheres was one large potpourri, comprised of music of diverse origins performed by singers and instrumentalists of widely-ranging talent and training.

94 Weber, Music of the Middle Class, 38.
As the concert life of London, Paris, and Vienna intertwined even more closely with the domestic sphere, the transferral process Weber documents was also bringing the music culture of London and other European cities, as well as that of American capitals, to both Nova Scotian concert stages and homes. The rhetoric of newspaper advertisements, such as those reproduced above, indicates that Nova Scotians wanted to hear and play the newest, most fashionable music by the era’s most popular composers, as well as traditional and nostalgic national airs. Life in a small, peripheral province did not diminish the desire of Nova Scotia’s privileged inhabitants to be part of a larger culture than that of their immediate colonial society. Through a combination of forces, especially the travels of musicians and the growing sheet music industry, Nova Scotians were increasingly able to access the cosmopolitan musical repertoire of the Atlantic World.
PART 2:

THE VALUE OF MUSIC IN
NOVA SCOTIA’S AGE OF PROGRESS
“Everything about Halifax encourages the cultivation of music – the clear air – the fine scenery, with a splendid ocean view – the taste of our citizens – exhibited even in the measured tramp of our city urchins in company with every military display,” wrote an anonymous author in an article for the *Morning Post* on 21 September 1844. Halifax’s musical life also had the distinct advantage of being encouraged by a dynamic institution: the efficient bands of the British military establishment. “There are perhaps but few communities in the whole universe, more highly favoured than Halifax in their opportunities for enjoying the Divine recreation of Music,” the article propounded, and these opportunities were due in no small measure to the leadership of the garrison’s musicians. The author admitted that until recently, however, few efforts otherwise had been made toward the improvement of the people’s music education. Now that the garrison bands had been joined by the Harmonic Society and other societies in the philanthropic mission of cultivating the city’s musical taste and talent, though, the author expressed confidence that “vast impetus to the love of Music in this community” was impending. Their leadership promised not only that the future men and women of Halifax would be instructed in the “forceful art,” but that those residing outside of the city would also be inspired to cultivate music, thus enabling music’s ameliorating power to spread the “length and breadth of the Province” to the “incalculable benefit” of the Nova Scotian people.¹

¹ *Morning Post*, 21 September 1844.
The *Morning Post*’s enthusiastic description of Halifax in 1844 has much to say, not only about the state of musical practices in colonial Nova Scotia, but about the people’s interest in their own musical life. From time to time throughout the pre-Confederation period, similar comments appeared in the Nova Scotian press, waxing enthusiastically on the musical talents of Nova Scotians or commending with highest praise the province’s practitioners of music for their indoctrination in the art and their good taste. The letter from a British gentleman printed in the *Halifax Journal* in 1820, for instance, expressed great surprise and delight at the extent to which the practice of music had been adopted by the residents of the colonial society that the gentleman was visiting.\(^2\) Another visitor’s letter, published in the *Acadian Recorder* in 1822, marvelled at Halifax’s Amateur Quartette Club, which he claimed could outperform the leading ensembles of any American city. “I then began to think,” the author enthused, “that Halifax was a little Paris, where taste and the fine arts are cultivated and taught as a *carmen necessarium* of a child’s education.”\(^3\) In light of such lofty claims and prosaic rhetoric, however, the validity of such press reports sometimes becomes questionable. Are these observations, and other similar journalistic gems, accurate reflections of Nova Scotia’s musical life, or were the authors simply applying artistic licence to appeal to their readership?

Perhaps the more pertinent questions to ask, though, are why these authors were inspired to pen such words in the first place, and why the press was inclined to disseminate them to the public. Why was the people’s musicality a matter of concern? In a colonial society far removed from the British metropolis, where life was tenuous and insecure, what did it matter if Nova Scotians were musical, or had “good” taste? Why did the people living on an unforgiving patch

\(^3\) *Acadian Recorder*, 10 August 1822.
of Atlantic coastline make the effort to participate in the music culture of distant cities? Why did they go to great lengths to import pianos, and risk capital investment on the sale of cheap music and cumbersome instruments? Why did they spend their spare money on concert tickets, and their spare time learning to perform overtures of operas that they would never see? In short, why did music matter?

One, of perhaps many, possible answers to this question – and the answer that this chapter and the next will explore – is that music mattered because it represented progress, a concept that became increasingly important to the Nova Scotian public as the era of Confederation approached. At its most basic level, music was a luxury and therefore the cultivation of music was a manifestation of the province’s commercial success. The development of musical “infrastructure” also revealed the success of the people in eschewing their settler past and replacing it with a culture more in line with that of the Old World. Just as railroads, steamships, productive farms, thriving businesses, and representative government were all quantifiable measures of Nova Scotia’s progress, music, too, could fulfill this function. Cultivating music was an act of “catching up.” More importantly, the manner in which communities, and individuals within those communities, engaged with music testified to the character of the Nova Scotian people.

Music, this chapter argues, was a powerful agent for shaping character, and consequently was both a means to and a measure of Nova Scotia’s progress. Closely aligned with Victorian notions of progress, character – and more specifically, respectable character – was an all-important concept within nineteenth-century society. Respectability was vaguely defined, but essentially the respectable character was one that was industrious, responsible, virtuous, and
committed to the general good of the people. Character was most important to the emergent middle class, the Nova Scotians who, according to David Sutherland, were most articulate in terms of expressing their hopes and fears for Nova Scotia’s current and future progress. An individual’s character was essential to negotiating his/her status within society; taken collectively, individual character was, in turn, a measure of community character. Situating contemporary attitudes concerning music as a form of improvement within the turbulence of Nova Scotia’s mid-nineteenth century, this chapter considers how Nova Scotia’s music-makers could function as “improvers,” making possible the path to progress. By aligning with musical practices that were conducive to respectable character, music institutions helped to unite improvers, enforce social order, and illuminate the way to a respectable, progressive society. Ultimately, Nova Scotia’s musical life mattered to those writing the discourse of progress – as it so clearly did to the author of the opening vignette – because music, musicians, and music institutions provided a gauge of Nova Scotia’s character, and as such, a platform upon which to debate the past, present, and future of the province’s progress.

Progress, Character, Improvement

Throughout the pre-Confederation era, Nova Scotia’s gradual transformation from a rugged outpost to a civilized society enabled music to assume increasing precedence. As social conditions, economics, and other logistical factors enabled a growing number of Nova Scotians

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to pursue music as a pastime, the conviction that piano lessons, choral singing, concert-going, and other acts of music-making had value beyond sheer entertainment was articulated more frequently. By the 1840s, public discourse reveals both a growing desire and a growing urgency to foreground music as a regular and accessible component of Nova Scotian life. Newspaper editorials advocated for the institutionalization of music, recommending that music education be provided in schools, and encouraging their readers to either form new, or support currently-existing music societies. They also advocated for opportunities to hear music performance and to experience the forms of cultural entertainment enjoyed by friends and relatives living in metropolitan centres throughout the Atlantic World. Significantly, from the 1840s onward a burgeoning movement can be discerned within public discourse to encourage the development of native talent. This movement called for two actions: to support the endeavours of Nova Scotians of known talent, and to encourage more Nova Scotians to gain musical proficiency and contribute to civic music institutions. Although these adjurations were not always heeded (often resulting in a lamentation from the press upon the public’s poor taste), a core group of Nova Scotians continued to advocate for music’s cultivation, believing that “music’s spells” could improve both themselves and their communities.

As Nova Scotia’s musical community encouraged the cultivation of musical taste and the development of musical institutions, their advocacy was part of a larger movement gaining momentum in Nova Scotia. Throughout the province, various groups and individuals promoted wide-ranging agendas to address what they perceived as Nova Scotia’s deficiencies.⁶ From education to industry to developing natural resources, the agendas that cultural leaders supported

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were variously tasked with the betterment of the province’s political, economic, or social future. At the core of this movement, unifying all of its diverse strains, was the desire to bring colonial Nova Scotia into the age of progress.

“Progress” was the buzz word of the nineteenth century. Throughout the Atlantic World, Anglo people enthused about the progress their society had made, expressed concern about the progress that had not been achieved, and advocated for the progress of the future.

Progress was no less important in pre-Confederation Nova Scotia, where both the native-born and recent immigrants struggled to transform their homeland from a colonial backwater into a vibrant, flourishing civilization that was at once its own distinctive nation and a proud partner within a venerable Empire. Progress took many forms, and the discourse of progress underscored virtually every aspect of Nova Scotian life, from economics to social reform. The inauguration of the transatlantic steam line, for example, represented a progressive achievement, while the province’s limited agricultural development raised fears about the future’s prosperity. Progressive discourse resounded throughout Nova Scotian communities, especially Halifax, where citizens strove to turn the military outpost into a thriving, world-class capital.

The people, no less than technology, agriculture, industry, or commerce, were essential to Nova Scotia’s progress. “Look at the little Province,” proclaimed Joseph Howe, Nova Scotia’s preeminent spokesman for progress and reform, during a speech for the Mechanics’ Institute in

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1836, “...small as it is, some of us are proud to call [it] our own; its narrow boundaries, girded by the seas, and surrounded on every side by extensive, populous and powerful states. What resources has such a country to sustain her against the gigantic influences with which it must hourly contend?” The answer to this rhetorical question, according to Howe, was “the character, the intelligence, the energy, and self-devotion of her people.” A nation, after all, is a collective of people. If the individuals that comprised the nation were ignorant, lazy, impoverished, undisciplined, and/or immoral, Nova Scotia had no hope of achieving progress. Without cultivating the province’s primary resource, without a collective of enlightened, disciplined, morally astute citizens, Nova Scotians could neither look fondly back at the strides they had made since 1749, nor could they look forward with optimism to a future of prosperity.

As in other Anglo communities, the people’s character – both individual and collective – was frequently a source of anxiety for pre-Confederation Nova Scotians. Nicholas Tawa describes the years 1830 to 1860 in the United States as “a period in which a fresh recognition of social ills grew, and reform movements began to be formed to fight for their rectification, despite the lethargy or prejudices of those satisfied with the status quo.” He attributes the “search for morality” underpinning that period to the rapid and thorough change sweeping through the nation; as their world changed, Americans feared that the turbulent upheavals were leaving moral and spiritual decline in their wake. While the social, economic, and political conditions in pre-

10 Joseph Howe, Poems and Essays (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 271.
11 David Sutherland writes that Howe believed that prosperity “lay within the grasp of his fellow Nova Scotians, provided that they did not succumb either to defeatism or other character flaws, such as sloth, haste and misplaced ambition. See Sutherland, “Joseph Howe and the Boosting of Halifax,” in The Proceedings of the Joseph Howe Symposium, Mount Allison University, ed. Wayne A. Hunt (Halifax: Nimbus, 1984), 80.
13 Ibid., 6.
Confederation Nova Scotia were not the same as those of antebellum America, general parallels can be made regarding why Nova Scotians embarked on their own quest to battle the social ills they believed were threatening their moral welfare and hindering their colony’s progress. The nineteenth century’s first half was also a turbulent period for Nova Scotia, first as the colony transitioned from the prosperity of war to the uncertainty of peace, and then as governmental reforms and Britain’s waning interest in its North American colonies fuelled fierce debate about Nova Scotia’s political future.

In the midst of these periods of transition, a steady stream of immigrants of varied ethnic, religious, and social backgrounds added to the fray. Population growth was progress, but each boatload also meant more competition for living space, employment, and other of the province’s limited and unequally distributed resources. Tensions mounted throughout the 1830s when many of the settlers unloaded from these boats onto Nova Scotian docks were becoming progressively less desirable; rather than middle-class entrepreneurs immigrating to the New World for adventure and enterprise, they were the destitute refugees of the Highland Clearances, who arrived in the province with little else but a desperate need for public charity.14 The resentment such immigrants fuelled reached its peak in the late 1840s when Irish refugees seeking relief from the Potato Famine began arriving in Nova Scotia. They, along with Nova Scotia’s impoverished Acadian, Black, and Mi’kmaq communities, raised a host of anxieties, ranging

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In Halifax, the presence of the garrison helped to foster an image of a thriving, civilized urban centre, as garrison officers mingled with the local governing élite, merchants and professionals to form a visibly fashionable upper society. The rank-and-file members of the military establishment, however, frequently placed cracks in the genteel veneer created by their officers and their officers’ well-to-do peers.\footnote{Judith Fingard, \textit{The Dark Side of Life in Victorian Halifax} (Potters Lake, NS: Pottersfield Press, 1989), 16.} The garrison consequently was as much a source of anxiety for Haligonian reformers as it was a reassurance that the Nova Scotian colony could support a neo-British society. While the city’s south end was the site of several impressive mansions, and the north end came to be a middle-class haven, the waterfront region near the barracks was a hive of immorality, where prostitutes flocked and drunken soldiers and seamen brawled in shabby taverns.

Beyond the garrison, social ills causing moral decline and inhibiting progress were also seldom hard to find. The rough conditions of settler life, coupled with economic disparity, were often not conducive to the state of respectability to which Nova Scotia’s reformers aspired. The poverty that characterized the predominant mode of Nova Scotian living was itself a sign that true progress had failed to galvanize the colony; the mechanisms of coping with poverty that some employed were a further affront to collective morality. The destitute, combined with hard-living soldiers, beggars, prostitutes, thieves, gamblers, and other bad characters posed persistent obstacles to Nova Scotia’s state of moral order. Nova Scotia seldom experienced full-scale riot,
but occasional communal violence did erupt. Violence occurred more frequently on the individual level, when disputes over money or property took an ugly turn, or when intoxicated youth resorted to fisticuffs to relieve boredom. Boredom also propelled both the young and old to commit other acts of debauchery, including gambling, vandalism, petty crime, and creating a public nuisance, all of which reflected poorly on Nova Scotia’s moral character. A columnist for the *Acadian Recorder*’s “Talk About Town” feature remarked sarcastically,

The talk is that a convincing sign of our ‘progression’ may be seen in the crowd of touters, loafing in front of one of our crack hotels, every Sunday, talking, staring, smoking, and spitting with a quiet elegance that would touch the heart of a Barrack street belle; but which is altogether thrown away on the people passing to their places of worship. Throughout the pre-Confederation era, newspaper editors variously criticized, lamented, and rallied against the persistent displays of rowdiness, unruliness, and vulgarity that disrupted their vision of Nova Scotia as a civilized and progressive society.

**The “Spirit of Improvement”**

Like other Anglo people, Nova Scotians believed that the pathway to progress was through improvement. As Sarah Tarlow explains, “historical Progress was to be realized through the accumulation of numerous acts of Improvement, enacted upon land, manufacture,

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18 *Acadian Recorder*, 24 July 1858. The “Talk About Town” column was frequently used as a platform for social critique, and its tone was often either sarcastic or satirical.

19 Samson, 250–283.
communication, society, the self and every other sphere of human endeavour.”

According to Tarlow, the idea of improvement “is characteristic of modernity” and only emerged as a social construct in the latter eighteenth century; by the nineteenth century, improvement was at the forefront of public thought and action, prompting historian Asa Briggs to term 1783 to 1867 Britain’s “Age of Improvement.” Improvement, like progress, could take multiple forms, ranging from management of natural resource to social reform. The “spirit of improvement” coursed through Nova Scotia during the pre-Confederation era, inspiring critics and visionaries to put pen to paper, and activists to band together to effect improving changes for the common good; according to Daniel Samson, “improvement came to possess a crucial importance within almost every level of colonial society.”

As Samson explains, Nova Scotians recognized that progress was never certain, but required direct human action. Nova Scotia’s “improvers” were a numerous and diverse group who, guided by their sense of moral duty, advocated for the betterment of their society through agriculture, education, temperance, literacy, religiosity, philanthropy, and as this chapter contends, music.

To combat the social ills plaguing Nova Scotian morality, and ultimately, hindering progress, Nova Scotia’s improvers formed voluntary societies, dedicated to either general or specific causes. Most provided their members with a venue for sociability. At their core, though, was the desire to better their community by offering a course of improvement to either


21 Tarlow, 11–12. Tarlow refers to Asa Briggs’ history of England from 1783 to 1867, titled *The Age of Improvement*.

22 Samson, 270.

23 Ibid., 251. See also Tarlow, 20. Tarlow explains that “Improvement required active, directed effort.”
themselves or their less fortunate neighbours.\textsuperscript{24} In addition to Mechanics’ Institutes, the organizations that formed in various Nova Scotian communities included (but were not limited to) Masonic orders, Bible societies, benevolent societies, abstinence societies, library and/or literary societies, philanthropy societies, and societies dedicated to assisting a particular subculture or ethnic group, such as the Charitable Irish Society. The range of these societies’ interests and objectives effectively demonstrates that the “spirit of improvement” was not motivated by a single agenda, but was a complex, sometimes contested, nexus of ideals that created space for the contribution of many different players.

\textbf{The Temperance Movement}

In particular, Nova Scotian improvers targeted alcoholic consumption as one of, if not, the major cause of the immorality plaguing Nova Scotia’s communities. In the early colonial years, drinking alcohol had been a normative part of life in Nova Scotia, as it had been in most Anglo societies; around the turn of the nineteenth century, however, attitudes toward alcohol began to shift radically as the Temperance Movement took hold and gained followers throughout Britain and North America.\textsuperscript{25} The circulation of New England evangelist Lyman Beecher’s influential temperance tract prompted several Nova Scotian communities to form Temperance

\textsuperscript{24} Tarlow writes, “The improvement of the nation [i.e., Britain] was widely believed to be the product of the accumulation of improved individuals separately pursuing the betterment of their own enterprises and interests.” See Tarlow, 137.

\textsuperscript{25} Ernest J. Dick writes, “[Alcohol] was such a normal part of daily routine that anyone who abstained was considered slightly deranged and physically less than robust. Particularly in urban life where the purity of the water was often suspect, rum was a safe beverage. Alcohol was considered essential in a North American climate to ward off extremes of cold.” See Dick, “From Temperance to Prohibition in 19\textsuperscript{th} Century Nova Scotia,” \textit{Dalhousie Review} 61/3 (1981): 531. On the Temperance Movement generally, and the change in attitude toward drink, see Lilian Lewis Shiman, \textit{Crusade against Drink in Victorian England} (Basingstoke, UK: MacMillan Press, 1988), 1–5, and Jack S. Blocker, Jr., \textit{American Temperance Movements: Cycles of Reform} (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1989), 3–17.
societies in the 1820s. The Temperance Movement’s momentum escalated once the fraternal order of the Sons of Temperance came to Nova Scotia in 1847, five years after it had been initiated in New York. By mid century, battle cries for (and also against) temperance resounded throughout Nova Scotian public discourse. Society members and other temperance advocates decried alcoholic consumption because its intoxicating effects could lead to other vices, and thus pave an easy path to poverty, criminality, and moral decline. Temperance advocates believed, according to Rosemary Ommer, that “intemperance ‘placed in jeopardy the salvation, security and prosperity of the individual, the family and the community’.” To some Nova Scotians, intemperance not only poisoned moral order but made people non-productive regardless of their class, age, or gender, and consequently the province’s ready supply of alcohol was one of Nova Scotia’s greatest obstacles to progress.

Music played a critical role in the Temperance movement. Musical performances were often part of Temperance society meetings, with song used as a platform to disseminate the tenets of abstinence and reinforce membership. While such performances were often didactic, they simultaneously served the more rudimentary purpose of creating the convivial atmosphere necessary to entice members to the meetings. “The Introduction by Mr. Winterbotham of

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26 Dick, 533. The title of that tract was “Six Sermons on the Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils, and Remedy of Intemperance.”
27 Ibid., 532.
Popular Melodies into these Temperance Meetings is a most decided improvement,” wrote an author for the Novascotian in 1849, “while it is a modern aid to this reform. We have long thought it desirable that a substitute for the wine cup should be offered to the man who is being brought to lay aside his drinking.”30 Like other Anglo Temperance societies, many of those in Nova Scotia’s communities formed choirs. These choirs, as well as individual musician-members, and sometimes even hired musicians, made membership more attractive to those who would be less inclined to belong to a society that spent all its time listening to lectures.

**Improvement Through Rational Entertainment**

By incorporating musical performances into their meetings, Temperance groups and other voluntary societies embraced the idea that providing the populace with rational entertainment was a key defence against immorality. If people, and especially young men, were provided with constructive means of passing time, they would be less inclined to “spend the best share of their time in gawking lazily at the street corners to stare at passers-by, lounging about drinking saloons, smoking and guzzling, and in other irrational modes of getting over life, equally injurious to both moral and physical health.”31 Consequently, public discourse throughout the pre-Confederation period often expressed concern over the lack of appropriate amusements available to community members. Especially once the “spirit of improvement” gathered momentum in the 1840s and 1850s, various clubs and institutions were proposed for the purpose of combating boredom-induced depravity. The British Colonist, for instance, attempted to

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30 *Novascotian*, 12 March 1849.

31 *Acadian Recorder*, 18 July 1857.
promote the newly-formed Halifax Chess Club to its readers in 1853 by appealing to the desire to provide city youth with appropriate recreation:

In a Town so destitute of places of innocent amusement and recreation as is Halifax, to the friends of youth and morality, the Committee would confidently recommend this Institution, where with the highest literary entertainment may be found, pleasure without dissipation, excitement without intoxication, relaxation without idleness, and as a place of resort in the evenings, quite as desirable the Committee would modestly suggest, as wine cellars and the corners of the streets.32

Entertainments intended for passive spectatorship also constituted a rational employment of leisure time. For this reason, the Sons of Temperance were instrumental in providing Halifax with a multi-purpose venue with tiered seating and a stage that could be used as a concert hall or amphitheatre. Temperance societies and Masonic fraternities in other Nova Scotian communities likewise offered their meeting halls as sites for rational entertainment.

While some maintained that any relief from boredom was good, others argued that certain forms of irrational entertainment could do as much harm as no recreation at all. “Amusement may be innocent and instructive, or pernicious and introductory of the worst evils,” cautioned an author for the Morning Post.33 Exactly what constituted “innocent and instructive,” of course, varied from one improver to the next. Lectures and literary soirees were upheld as the epitome of rational entertainment. The various panoramas that travelling companies brought to Nova Scotia were also deemed meritorious because of their educative content. Lacking intellectual

32 British Colonist, 25 October 1853. The above description of Halifax’s young men “gawking lazily … smoking and guzzling” was part of a notice attempting to foster support for building a gymnasium in Halifax. A gymnasium, of course, provided a different form of recreation than a chess club, but the ultimate rationale the Acadian Recorder used for promoting its object was similar to that underlying the British Colonist’s notice. While the benefits of exercise were a good reason for building a gymnasium, the Acadian Recorder’s author suggested that the moral benefit that would result was an even more compelling reason for such a facility: “Can it be supposed that they would be so liable to this reproach if there was a place to which, when the young man found a little leisure on his hands, he could repair, at any time of the day, and find every facility at hand for combining recreation with healthful exercise? It certainly seems unreasonable to think so.”

33 Morning Post, 5 December 1846.
benefit, magic shows, acrobatic displays, and similar entertainments featuring visual spectacle occupied a more neutral space in public opinion. The circuses that came to Nova Scotia during the summer via the transatlantic circuit, however, occasionally met with criticism because of the scenes of violence and rowdyism that often erupted in their wake.\textsuperscript{34}

The theatre also occasionally fell under public scrutiny, even though it was a popular form of entertainment and one that was supported by many prominent citizens. The scholarship on theatre in nineteenth-century Nova Scotia is limited, and there are currently no studies concerning Nova Scotians’ attitudes toward the theatre, or on the dynamics of audience behaviour. In their absence, Richard Butsch’s \textit{The Making of American Audiences} helps to elucidate why objections to theatre were occasionally voiced. As Butsch explains, approximately between 1825 and 1850 American theatre developed and sustained a subculture characterized by rowdiness and vulgarity, which members of the upper- and middle-classes attributed to the presence of the working class. Liquor generally flowed freely at theatrical performances, and not uncommon was the outbreak of riots, often instigated by “b’hoys”—unruly young men who deliberately rejected the codes of respectable behaviour.\textsuperscript{35} How strong the presence of this subculture was in Nova Scotian theatres is not known, but evidence does suggest that scenes of rowdiness, riot, and intoxication sometimes were an undesired counterpoint to the élite sociability at theatrical entertainments. The Presbyterian-controlled Temperance Hall, for example, had a no-theatre policy; consequently, in 1856 E.A. Sothern’s

\textsuperscript{34} The \textit{British Colonist}, 22 July 1854, for example, reported that a circus in Saint John had been the scene of “most disgraceful violence and rowdyism” when several boys attacked two black vendors’ tents. One would suspect racism was the underlying issue of this incident, but the \textit{Colonist} attributed it to the rowdy behaviour typical of circuses. The author concluded the brief article by stating, “as the evils which a Circus carries in its train are pretty notorious, we hope our City authorities will be on the alert to provide the proper means for the repression of rowdyism and its accompaniments.”

theatrical company was denied permission to use the hall, despite assurances that the company’s performances were entirely chaste and respectable. Other factors, of course, may have contributed to Sothern’s exclusion from Temperance Hall, especially in light of the fact that the facility’s managers did permit other spectator entertainments of a theatrical nature. The Heron Family, for instance, performed in Temperance Hall and their variety show-style entertainments interspersed dramatic scenes and character sketches with musical numbers. Ultimately, these seeming inconsistencies illustrate that public opinion was not unanimous, and that the idea of what constituted “rational” entertainment was ambiguous and contested. Perhaps because the theatre was such a popular form of entertainment, the ambiguity concerning its rationality and morality was particularly acute.

Even the “chaste” Heron Family’s semi-theatrical performances raised some objections from members of the Halifax community during their 1852 tour. The Herons responded to this criticism by performing an all-music concert, which according to the British Colonist had been requested by several families. Anticipating an overflowing hall, the Colonist predicted that the Herons’ “grand sacred and miscellaneous concert” would be “highly acceptable to the lovers of music, and the public in general.” While critics could take issue with theatrical performances even when the cast was a family of young girls accompanied on stage by their parents, a music concert offered a morally-sound medium by which to entertain the public. Concerts “possess all the attraction without the immorality of a Theatre,” explained an author for the Morning Post in 1844, inspired to put pen to paper by a Harmonic Society concert. Although newspaper

37 British Colonist, 2 and 7 September 1852.
38 Morning Post, 4 May 1844.
reviews occasionally indicate that audience behaviour at concerts was not always decorous or in line with the ideals of respectability, overall, concerts elicited much less public concern than theatrical performances regarding whether the entertainment on stage would prompt a response of vulgarity or violence. Thus, whereas theatre advertisements sometimes indicated that police would attend to maintain order and ensure an appropriate environment for respectable attendees, such reassurances seldom appeared in concert advertisements.⁴⁹

As rational entertainments, concerts not only provided an alternative to immoral pastimes, but presented audiences with an experience that benefited the mind as it safeguarded the body. While some forms of public entertainment simply filled leisure hours with amusement, music concerts edified and enlightened as they entertained. An author for the Novascotian, for example, asserted that, “to persons of refined taste,” the musical entertainment Miss St. Luke presented at her concert “must have far transcended in interest, and in capability to impart delight, any equestrian or gymnastic performance that has ever taken place in this city.”⁴⁰ Similarly, other advocates for the advancement of music in Nova Scotia emphasized music’s ability to elevate, cultivate, refine, and enlighten, both those who listened and those who performed. Music’s potent charms roused participants’ intellect as well as their senses. Concerts, in essence, could be construed as a form of public education, for they inculcated

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³⁹ One of the rare occasions during which a police officer was stationed at a concert was Mr. Keene’s 29 August 1828 performance at Masonic Hall; however, the cause of the problem appears to have been rowdy people outside the hall, and not the concert audience itself. Following Keene’s first performance in Halifax on 25 August, an author for the Novascotian reported on 26 August, “We would suggest to our Magistrates, and Police Officers, the propriety of keeping peace and decorum in the streets adjoining the Lodge, on the next evening; because the performance on Monday was repeatedly interrupted by all kinds of discordant noises; and several persons effected an entrance to the Hall through the back windows, and others threw dirt and offal in, to the great annoyance both of the Singer and the audience.” On 2 September, an author for the Free Press acknowledged that a police force was deployed after that regrettable incident and Keene’s subsequent concerts were undisturbed. None of Keene’s advertisements, though, mentioned the police presence, as some theatre advertisements did.

⁴⁰ Novascotian, 27 January 1845.
refinement, respectability, and intelligence in their audience. Through their music, concertizers helped to foster a more respectable and cultured class of Nova Scotians; as they were refined and cultivated by sweet sounds, audiences contributed to the improvement and progress of their society.

**The Merits of Music**

On one level, concerts were a form of rational entertainment because they removed the body from the physical site of immoral temptations and engaged the listener in an alternative and desirable form of recreation. Likewise, the act of learning music was a pastime that steered its practitioners away from other pursuits that were detrimental to character. Moreover, though, while some forms of public entertainment simply filled leisure hours with amusement, music concerts edified and enlightened as they entertained. Numerous advocates who voiced their opinions through the Nova Scotian press expressed the idea that music had special powers to cultivate, refine, and ultimately, improve its practitioners. Music, wrote an author for the *Morning Post,*

> enhances the loveliness of character and amiability of the other sex, melts the stern spirit of man, when relaxed from his hardier pursuits, gives a zest to the charms of social intercourse, and imparts a virtuous harmony to the beatings of love, soothes the troubled spirit in the hour of affliction, chastens every passion in scenes of joyousness and mirth, and cherishes virtue with all the pleasing allurements of poesy and song.⁴¹

According to another author for that same paper, music could be “a powerful auxiliary in ameliorating the condition of the Human family and elevating the moral sentiments of other

⁴¹ *Morning Post,* 26 November 1840.
Music, with its ability to soothe the senses and the soul, could make an idle hour more pleasant and improve the quality of daily living; more importantly, music’s inherent nature was thought to turn leisure into a conduit for elevating moral rectitude.

In espousing the belief that music could safeguard the respectability of its practitioners and prevent moral corruption, Nova Scotia’s “musical advocates” embraced and promoted a predominant ideology that was shared throughout the Atlantic World (yet another manifestation of how colonial Nova Scotia was a participant in a cosmopolitan culture of both ideas and art). As David Russell, Derek Scott, Steven Baur, and other scholars have demonstrated, the idea that music was a rational, beneficial, morally-uplifting entertainment medium became an increasingly prevalent concept in nineteenth-century Anglo-American thought. Tawa writes,

Contemporary spokespeople cited music’s ability to convey beneficial principles, promote social decorum, and encapsulate human events within a moral framework. Song acted like an inoculation against moral disease. Properly channelled, it directed a person toward right thought and conduct and thus was restorative and praiseworthy.

In Britain, this ideology frequently assumed a classist dimension, as members of the upper- and middle-classes prescribed singing or various forms of collaborative music-making as an antidote for what they perceived to be the degeneration of the working class. At the same time, this ideology also resonated with the quest for self-improvement and the assertion of moral character that were essential to concepts of respectability, thus prompting the higher classes to pursue

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42 Morning Post, 21 September 1844.
45 For a summary of various initiatives to “moralize” Britain’s lower classes through music, see Russell, 24–36.
music for their own benefit as well. In Nova Scotia, there is little evidence to suggest that a movement to establish music institutions for the improvement of the labouring poor, such as transpired in Britain, took place in the province prior to 1867; rather, newspaper editors and other Nova Scotians who advocated for the cultivation of music did so in general terms, suggesting that the intended beneficiaries of music’s moral-refining powers were their upper and middle class peers – those who most publicly represented the essence of the Nova Scotian character.

As William Weber writes, “the watchword of middle class values was discipline, and musical training helped instil it in young people.” Music’s powers also extended to adults, especially those who actively participated in Nova Scotia’s amateur music societies. As the “spirit of improvement” gained momentum throughout Nova Scotia, advocates for the advancement of music emphasized its ability to elevate, cultivate, refine, and enlighten those who listened, and especially those who performed. The development of institutions, and the inculcation of musical taste and training thus promised to foster a more respectable and cultured class of Nova Scotians; music was not only a form of entertainment, but a means by which to improve the collective moral character of the Nova Scotian people.

**Repertoires of Refinement**

Not all music, however, was considered equally capable of refining character, cultivating intellect, or safeguarding morality. As an author for the *Novascotian* opined, “Music kept within its proper sphere and limits cannot injure. Even this divine art, however, may be prostituted by

46 Milestone, 298.

the lewd song. This is divinity demonised.”

48 What constituted music’s “proper sphere,” of course, was not always clearly defined, nor was it a unanimously shared ideal. Members of the Nova Scotian press occasionally offered critical appraisals of musical repertoire as part of concert reviews and other journalistic writing, but the opinions expressed by concert reviewers likely did not represent those shared by every single member of the concert-going public. Furthermore, given that newspapers were known to print blatant “puffery” in order to collect advertising revenues, what “reviewers” wrote may not necessarily have reflected even their own opinions. 49 Nonetheless, the consistency with which certain musical genres were represented in the press indicates that some members of the so-called “musical public” did discern a moral-musical hierarchy. The music low on that hierarchy at best revealed poor taste on the part of its supporters, and at worst, threatened to compromise morality.

48 Novascotian, 14 August 1848.

49 On the topic of “puffery,” see Patrick O’Neill “From Puffery to Criticism – William Lyon Mackenzie, Joseph Howe, and Daniel Morrison: Theatre Criticism in Halifax and Toronto, 1826–1857,” in Establishing Our Boundaries: English-Canadian Theatre Criticism, ed. Anton Wagner (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 61–64 and 76–77. Performers contracted their advertising to certain newspapers and “sweetened the deal” by offering editors free tickets to their concerts; in exchange, those newspapers printed flattering testimonials for the duration of the performer’s visit. Newspapers were well aware of the practice, and occasionally lambasted their rivals for “puffing” (and then printed a puff of their own!). For example, the Acadian Recorder printed an article on 8 August 1857 entitled “The Puffing Nuisance.” It began, “Puffing has become one of the greatest nuisances with which newspaper readers and, we may add, newspaper publishers, are pestered with at the present day. The extensive perusal of such popular works as ‘Sam Slick’ and the history of such slippery villains as Barnum, have, of late years, rapidly disseminated the idea, which many persons already possessed without any such education, that business, of whatever description, can be profitably pursued only by a regular system of gulling the public. Unfortunately there is too much truth in this supposition; otherwise the system would not, could not be kept up to the extent to which it now prevails. But we think that that particular effort in the way of gulling which manifests itself in newspaper puffs, is quite overdone even with a view to the object for which it is intended. Some of our journals have got so much into the habit of puffing for a consideration, and sometimes for a very small consideration that these fulsome things occupy a very large proportion of their columns of what is called ‘reading matter.’” Even the Acadian Recorder, though, occasionally puffed – by accident, of course! Suggesting that in some cases newspaper editors may have been misled to print such nonsense out of good nature, he acknowledged, “On some few occasions, carefully prepared ‘special notices,’ accompanying advertisements, have, through mistake, found their way into our own columns; and the same misfortune may have sometimes happened to our neighbours.”
“Negro Melodies”

The “negro melodies” performed by blackface performers at minstrel shows and by other entertainers were the musical repertoire most criticized by the Nova Scotian press. Most often, though, it was not the melodies that provoked criticism, but the lyrics set to those melodies. For example, when the Harmoneons (then called the “Harmoneon Family”) first arrived in Halifax, they gave several all-music concerts, perhaps to test the receptiveness of their Halifax audiences before performing the city’s first minstrel show on 29 April 1845. Their concert programmes included “negro melodies” along with popular parlour ballads. A *Morning Chronicle* reviewer praised the Harmoneons’ vocal quality and mellifluous four-part harmony, but expressed disappointment with their choice of comic songs: “‘Old Dan Tucker’ – ‘the Great Booby’, &c., are not in the best taste – and the powers of these vocalists are fitted for a far higher and more refined department of singing.”\(^50\) Clearly, not all audience members found the “negro melodies” in poor taste, because the Harmoneons proceeded to perform full-fledged minstrel shows – according to advertisements, by popular request – and returned to the province six times over the next fifteen years to give more.\(^51\) Still, the consistent criticism levelled at their, and other minstrels’ song choices indicates that there indeed was a segment of the Nova Scotian population that considered “negro melodies” an example of “divinity demonized.”

**Refining Influences**

The “higher and more refined department of singing” the *Chronicle*’s author referred to would have been the musical repertoire performed at other all-music concerts, which as the

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50 *Morning Chronicle*, 12 April 1845; reprinted in the *Novascotian*, 14 April 1845.
51 *Morning Post*, 19 April 1845.
previous chapter explained, typically comprised a blend of national airs, parlour songs, and opera arias or arrangements. Nova Scotians were unanimous in their approval for national airs, emphasizing the ability of such songs’ familiar words and accessible musical language to speak directly to the soul and stir the sense. As Chapter 4 argued, national airs appealed to nostalgic British sentiment, and their performance was an aural reminder of Nova Scotia’s membership in a proud and progressive empire. Nicholas Temperley posits that parlour songs were also popular with British audiences and home consumers because they likewise asserted and affirmed British national character. Richard Crawford and Nicholas Tawa suggest that, even more generally, parlour songs appealed to listeners and performers because their lyrics entrenched middle-class values of respectability and refined morality. Thus, the Chronicle recommended that, as recourse to improvement, the Harmoneons should perform more songs in the class of “She Sleeps in the Valley” and “The Grave of Bonaparte.” Those refined songs, maintained the reviewer, were not only better suited to the Harmoneons’ skilful singing, but unlike the coarsely comic “negro melodies,” had the power to touch “those chords of feeling that lie deep in the human bosom, and vibrate to the tones of ‘Heaven born melody’.” In short, by engaging with parlour songs, as well as national airs, performers and listeners were embracing the moral codes of respectable society.

Instrumental music and especially operatic music occupied a more ambiguous position in public opinion, and were occasionally charged with being empty, unsatisfying displays of

54 Morning Chronicle, 12 April 1845.
virtuosity. Regarding “foreign airs,” an author for the *Colonial Pearl* remarked in 1840, “The soul is not stirred, no sentiments are excited, a pleasing, confusing maze passes across the ear, and all is over.” Nonetheless, while critics did not always express appreciation for instrumental or operatic performances, they did not express any anxieties about such performances either – only occasional desire for musicians to program fewer foreign airs and more national ones. The main problem for most detractors seemed to be that this music was too sophisticated, and consequently beyond the understanding of most audiences. (As Chapter 4 suggests, this issue likely stemmed from lack of familiarity with operatic repertoire, and became less problematic as Nova Scotians had more exposure to this music through both concerts and home performances.) For example, after the Heron Family’s July 1855 performances the *Acadian Recorder* commented, “The remarkably perfect execution of the most famous passages of the finest Italian Operas, by Misses Fanny and Agnes, delight the listeners of refined taste, while it pleasingly astonishes the less fastidious.” That an appreciation for operatic music, and also instrumental performance indicated the aficionado’s superior taste and refinement was reiterated by other voices from within the Nova Scotian press.

**Sacred Music of the European Masters**

Sacred music was the musical repertory that figured most prominently in the discourse of Nova Scotians who advocated for the moral benefits of music-making. In many respects, the belief that sacred music had moralizing powers reflects the close intertwine of church and

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55 *Colonial Pearl*, 7 March 1840.
56 *Acadian Recorder*, 28 July 1855. The reviewer continued, “But none possessed of a soul capable of admiring a strain of genuine pathos can ever forget the rendering of “The Harp that Once Through Tara’s Halls” by Fanny.”
daily life that characterized most Anglo societies in the nineteenth century. It also ties in closely
to the movement within churches to elevate their worship services by improving congregational
singing, and helping amateur singers develop the skills to actualize such reform was the overt
purpose of many of Nova Scotia’s singing societies, schools, and classes, especially those
affiliated with a particular church congregation. Moreover, though, advocates believed that the
improvement sacred music could induce was not limited to any one congregation, but could
transcend the boundaries of the worship context to benefit the entire community. Sacred music
not only provided a conduit to elevate praise from earthly to heavenly terrain, but more
importantly, it elevated, refined, and cultivated the moral character of its practitioners.

If sacred music occupied the top portion of a “moral-musical hierarchy,” sacred music by
Europe’s leading composers, and especially their oratorios, represented its pinnacle. Although
one Nova Scotian critic of the 1830s was opposed to the oratorio genre because of its
“theatricality” (see Chapter 4), the public discourse of the 1840s and onward indicates that
oratorio music was consider one of, if not the most, edifying of all musical forms. As an author
for The Times explained, the sacred music of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, and other
masters “has always had a tendency to confirm a pure and legitimate taste, and its practice is
intellectual, moral, and pleasing.” To other members of Nova Scotia’s musical community as
well, the Classical oratorio repertoire was the highest and most refined of all musical
“departments.” Consequently, by the 1840s, public discourse reflects a growing desire for Nova
Scotians to be versed in the musical repertoire brought to Bostonian audiences by the Boston
Handel and Haydn society – an institution, according to the Morning Post that did “more for the

57 The Lunenburg Harmonic Society, operational in Lunenburg between 1828 and 1832, for instance, was
formed for the purpose of improving congregational singing.
58 The Times, 1 November 1842.
refinement of morals and the cultivation of true taste and the extension of rational entertainments in that city, than the most reflective mind can easily estimate.\textsuperscript{59} Twice, the desire to introduce such refining and cultivating influences to Nova Scotians led to the formation of a Halifax Harmonic Society.

Another manifestation of the belief in sacred music’s moralizing power, and the desire to promote its practice in Nova Scotia came in March of 1855 when Halifax musician Louis Casseres was invited to give a two-part lecture on sacred music at the Mechanics’ Institute, under the patronage of Lady LeMarchant. Given that the speakers at the Mechanics’ Institute were usually distinguished politicians, lawyers, or literary men bearing the title “Esquire,” the fact that a musician was invited to speak is noteworthy in itself; however, even more significant was the reaction to these lectures. According to a notice in the \textit{Morning Journal}, the second lecture “was numerously and respectably attended, and hundreds were compelled to return to their homes without gaining admission”; those who were able to attend received Casseres with “deafening shouts of applause.”\textsuperscript{60} While the local press often printed short reports on the lectures delivered at the Mechanics’ Institute, Casseres’ presentation generated an unusual flurry of attention, and the \textit{Morning Journal} even printed a transcript of the lectures. Casseres was also asked to repeat his lectures at Temperance Hall, under the patronage of the mayor.

That summer Casseres embarked on his concert tour of Nova Scotia’s South Shore, which gave him opportunity to repeat his sacred music lectures in the towns he visited. The review printed in the \textit{Liverpool Transcript} indicates that he was received in Liverpool with the same enthusiasm as in Halifax. Moreover, the review also reveals that there was a growing

\textsuperscript{59} \textit{Morning Post}, 26 November 1840.
\textsuperscript{60} \textit{Morning Journal}, 30 March 1855.
desire in Liverpool for the people to be versed in the musical repertoire that was the subject of
the lectures:

We question whether there are twelve singers in the County who could sing one
of Palestrina’s Fugue Anthems, or even “Their sound is gone out,” from the
*Messiah*. ... Meanwhile the Sacred Music of the Sanctuary gets worse and worse
and our choirs seem to be grumbling out a Requiem at the grave of their own
happiness. Under these circumstances what can be done? We would suggest that
a convention of all persons interested in Sacred Music be called in some central
place in the Province, that the subject be ventilated by discussion. Let Senor
Casseres and his friends in Halifax who love the pure ecclesiastical style move in
this matter and we pledge our word that deputation shall be sent from this town.
When people come to understand good music they will abandon the trash. 61

Like advocates in Halifax, this reviewer believed that the music most beneficial to its
practitioners was the sacred music of Europe’s great masters.

Musicians as “Improvers”

By exposing Nova Scotians to the benefits of an art that inculcated refinement,
respectability, and intelligence, the various members of Nova Scotia’s musical community were,
in essence, improvers, guiding their peers toward an enlightened and morally astute state of
character. Concertizers, for instance, provided their audiences with not only rational
entertainment, but a form of public education. In particular, J.S. Cunnabell was praised for his
efforts at cultivating a taste for music amongst his fellow Haligonians, and also for encouraging
native music-making to develop in Nova Scotia. 62 The musicians the press portrayed as
“improvers” were most often native amateurs, but foreign musicians – both touring artists and

61 *Liverpool Transcript*, 2 August 1855.

62 For example, an author for the *Sun*, 1 May 1848, called Cunnabell “indefatigable in his exertions to
improve public taste and ear for music.”
resident professionals – also assisted in improving Nova Scotia’s character by inspiring their clients to appreciate their genteel art. Regarding Casseres’ contribution to the cultivation of Halifax’s musical life, for example, an Acadian Recorder author wrote,

He is deserving of the thanks of the community for this effort; and all who know the refining and elevating influences of music upon the mind and the extent to which, unfortunately, it is neglected in this city, will cheerfully second his efforts so that they may bring a return of something more substantial than thanks. 63

Similarly, because “the experiment to cultivate a taste for the higher order of music [deserved] encouragement,” the British Colonist encouraged readers to patronize touring violinist Charles Elliott’s concerts (at which Casseres also performed). 64 The Morning Journal was also “always happy to say an encouraging word for those who are engaged in the cultivation of the public taste in this refined and elevating art, believing that it has much to do with the innocent enjoyment, and even the good morals of Society,” and identified Mr. Jeans’ 8 April 1858 concert worthy of patronage for that reason. 65

**Women As Improvers**

Music also offered a means by which Nova Scotia’s musical women could contribute to Nova Scotia’s improvement and progress. Joseph Howe delineated the important role women in general served in the progress movement in a speech entitled, “The Moral Influence of Women,” which he delivered to the Halifax Mechanics’ Institute in 1836. 66 Telling the female portion of his audience, “You have the destinies of Nova Scotia in your hands,” Howe invoked Nova

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63 *Acadian Recorder*, 20 June 1857.
64 *British Colonist*, 29 September 1857.
65 *Morning Journal*, 5 April 1858.
66 Howe, 248–275.
Scotia’s women to use their immense moral influence to inspire their male compatriots, and to “cultivate the character, the intelligence, the energy, and self-devotion of [Nova Scotia’s] people.”\textsuperscript{67} Howe’s call-to-action, of course, was tempered by the era’s gender ideology, and consequently the women’s “leadership” role he outlined remained within boundaries of feminine propriety, and channelled out of women’s domestic duties and feminine accomplishments. Nonetheless, although Howe did not specifically mention music, his emphasis on female moral guidance grounded in domesticity establishes a framework that enables women’s music-making to be regarded as an agent of improvement, and women musicians as active improvers.

Through their music-making, young ladies could help to cultivate and refine their families’ taste while they provided entertainment for the family parlour. As daughters became mothers, they could engender a domestic environment that was conducive to the family’s happiness, and more importantly, that nurtured the development of their children into productive and morally responsible members of society. “The Nova Scotian mother, too,” proclaimed Howe,

\begin{quote}
may do her part, while the graceful forms of childhood glide around her knees, and the ductile elements of the youthful mind are forming beneath her eye; she may inculcate not only the ordinary principles of morals, but those lessons of public virtue applicable to the situation of the country and the probable duties of life – which, like bread cast upon the waters, will come back to her in pride and admiration, after many days.\textsuperscript{68}
\end{quote}

One facet through which women could inculcate moral principles was through the positive example they set by their own musical abilities. Furthermore, as the overseers of their children’s upbringing, women could impart their musical knowledge to their children – or at least ensure that their children received musical training. In doing so, they endowed their children with an

\textsuperscript{67} Ibid., 271.
\textsuperscript{68} Ibid., 272.
education that would promote discipline and moral rectitude, and that would enable their sons, and especially, their daughters, to contribute to the future progress of their society.

Music also offered women a means by which to serve as improvers in the public sphere without transgressing the boundaries of feminine accomplishment. Responding to the Harmonic Society’s announcement that its season was about to commence, an author for the *Morning Post* remarked,

> Anything in these dull days to impart life and spirit to the monotonous routine of city life! – but when that “anything” is of a strictly moral and healthful character, and as well a species of entertainment that improves as well as pleases – that brings one within the genial influences of woman’s elevated taste and cultivated powers – then, indeed, it ought to receive a double welcome.\(^69\)

If the ontological association of music with femininity and domesticity could help to sanctify concerts as rational entertainment, likewise the direct participation of women in concert life could also contribute substantially to sustaining that cultural institution. One way that women could support concerts was through their patronage. Butsch illustrates the general power of female patrons in his discussion of nineteenth-century American audiences: in the mid-century, entertainment producers made a concerted effort to draw women to the theatre, because gaining a female audience was key to establishing theatre-going as respectable, and thus to securing middle-class patronage.\(^70\) Women, as the guardians of respectability, provided cultural leadership, establishing through their example what was worthy of attention and what was not. William Weber thus argues that women’s leadership was one of several integral components propelling the growth of concert life in London during the mid-nineteenth century; “women,”

\(^69\) *Morning Post*, 11 December 1843.  
Weber writes, “controlled the directions in which fashions were moving.”71 In the home, women could instil an appreciation for music in their families that would incline their husbands, daughters, and sons toward the pursuit of rational, moral entertainment. Outside the home, the women who attended concerts set an example for the community, and supported an institution that helped to cultivate and refine the Nova Scotian character.

Through their participation in public concerts, women amateurs in particular could be regarded as community role models. Contrary to the prevailing notion of women’s musicality being confined to the private sphere, an author for the Morning Journal complained that not enough women were performing in the Harmonic Society’s concerts: “It is to be feared that too much false delicacy exists among the female portion of the community, as far as singing in public is concerned,” he wrote.72 He advocated for more female participants, assuring female musicians that the amateur framework of the Harmonic Society provided a wholly acceptable, and indeed, philanthropic public outlet for their talents:

There ought to be no misapprehension in this matter. In the neighbouring cities of the Union, certainly possessing equal taste and refinement as our own, the ladies are foremost in getting up and sustaining oratorios, concerts, &c. In short, without their indispensable aid in the improvement of the art, very little can be done in enlisting the sterner sex in the service of the Muses. We do hope the ladies will take this into their serious consideration, and by an exercise of the overwhelming influence which they unquestionably possess swell the ranks of the corps musicale under notice...73

71 Weber, 41. The other components underlying the growth of concert life were the general rise in domestic music-making, and the growing body of musicians subsisting as independent entrepreneurs rather than relying on court/aristocratic patronage.
72 Morning Journal, 15 October 1858.
73 Ibid.
Through their judicious performances, the women of Nova Scotia’s concert stages steered public taste toward cultivation, refinement, and moral rectitude, and in doing so, assumed a leadership role within the movement to foster a more progressive class of Nova Scotians.

The Model Bandsman

The “sterner sex” also contributed to Nova Scotia’s improvement and progress through their musical talents. For example, following Jane Bolman’s 13 April 1857 benefit concert, at which six gentlemen amateurs performed, a Halifax Daily Sun author enthused,

We were much pleased at these young gentlemen coming forward in this manner, and hope that the musical taste displayed by them will be more generally exhibited on the part of some of our young friends, who, complaining that they have no amusement, seek occupation and ruin in the tap-room and drinking saloon.74

In particular, the all-male amateur bands that formed in several Nova Scotian communities at mid-century were a facet of the movement to improve the Nova Scotian character. In the absence of membership lists, it is difficult to make claims concerning the class orientation of band participants, but there is currently no evidence to suggest that Nova Scotia’s band movement took the same form as Britain’s, whereby brass bands were primarily a mass activity of the working classes.75 Nonetheless, the ideals motivating the formation of Nova Scotia’s community bands share a general parallel with the British band phenomenon: within an improvement-oriented society, bands offered an outlet of rational entertainment that channelled young men’s energies into an activity that could benefit the community at large.

74 Halifax Daily Sun, 15 April 1857.
To attribute the rise in amateur banding that began in the 1850s to any single factor would be erroneous, but it cannot be coincidental that community bands came into existence as the Temperance movement was gaining in intensity. The idea of banding fit comfortably within a Temperance agenda, and consequently amateur bands received support and encouragement from those dedicated to advancing the Temperance cause. The St. Mary’s and St. Patrick’s Temperance Societies in Halifax, for example, formed a combined band in 1845, and in Yarmouth the Sons of Temperance attempted to start a band in 1848. The town band Yarmouth subsequently supported in the 1850s and 1860s appears to have been an independent organization, as were the bands established in Milton and Liverpool in 1855 and 1858 respectively, but these groups still played a role within the Temperance movement by exemplifying the rational expenditure of male leisure. “Well will it be for the peace of families if the rising generation, who now listen to the sweet strains of the Band, imitate the praiseworthy example of its membership, and devote more of their attention to music,” wrote “Viator,” a correspondent to the *Liverpool Transcript*, within a year of the Liverpool band’s establishment. He explained:

Soon would the intoxicating cup, the common indulgence of low minds, low tastes, and want of self-respect, lose its attractions for many who would otherwise be ruined by it. Where can we find a more temperate people than the inhabitants of Italy – that land of music – that home of the fine arts?  

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76 *Sun*, 29 October 1845. An author for *The Times* wrote on 28 October 1845, “The Amateur Temperance Band played through the principal streets of the City last evening – for practice we presume. The proficiency of this band is highly creditable – and their performance bids fair in a short time to equal the music of the Military Bands.” G.S. Brown advertised in the *Yarmouth Herald*, 3 April 1848, “Sons of Temperance, as you will shortly be getting up a BAND of (Freeman) Music, I wish to apprise you of the following instruments on hand: clarionets [sic.], flageolets, violins, flutes, fifes, accordions.”

77 *Liverpool Transcript*, 7 July 1859.
He concluded his letter by urging anyone who desired “to turn the leisure hours of our youth to elevating purposes” and “to lessen the attractions and the gains of future grog shops” to lend their support to the Liverpool band.

While abstainers approved of amateur bands because they kept young trumpeters and clarinettists out of the taverns, bands also appealed to the more general desire to inspire the province’s young men to industry, discipline, and respectable behaviour. To another Liverpool Transcript correspondent, who despaired of the number of Liverpool lads choosing a “sea-faring life,” the town band’s musical proficiency illustrated what young men could achieve if they invested their energies in useful pursuits. He, like “Viator,” mandated that “the young men who form [the band] should meet with the greatest possible encouragement from the people of Liverpool.”

Similarly, the Morning Herald commended the young gentlemen who formed an amateur band in Halifax in 1841. To recognize the service that these men were providing the community, the Herald’s author advocated that part of the fines collected from charges of public disturbance be appropriated for the band’s monetary operations. In general, the press expressed approval for the various banding efforts of Nova Scotian townsmen, and encouraged the public to lend these musicians their support. Amateur bands not only provided a community with rational entertainment as they cultivated young men’s tastes and tamed their unruly tendencies, but were “evidence of the spirit and taste” that was “[wished] to see prosper throughout Nova Scotia.”

Taken as a unit, a band was emblematic of a community’s progressive character and civic unity, while its individual members functioned as role models for other young townsmen.

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78 Liverpool Transcript, 16 December 1858.
79 Morning Herald, 9 August 1841.
80 Morning Post, 20 July 1841.
Amateur Societies

Other amateur groups also were commended for the contribution to Nova Scotia’s march of progress they made through the cultivating and moralizing powers of their music. For example, when the Amateur Glee Club formed by a group of young tradesmen and mechanics gave a concert in May 1837, the *Novascotian* remarked,

> Perhaps some may be disposed to smile at the idea of those who have to live by the labour of their hands attempting to cultivate a taste for music, or seeking the refining influences of such an association. We are glad, however, to see such a spirit springing up – such a desire manifested to bring within the reach of the middling classes rational pleasure, which are [*sic.*] too often believed to belong only to the rich.  

Church choirs could also occupy the role of civic improvers by presenting concert programmes of sacred music, thereby exposing audiences larger than their own congregations to the enlightening influences of the most rational form of musical art. Following the Universalist Church Choir’s concert on 29 December 1846, for example, various members of the press commended the choir for their efforts; an article in the *Novascotian* expressed desire for the choir to give more concerts with the hope that they would improve Haligonians’ musical taste.  

Similarly, authors for both the *Novascotian* and *The Times* praised the concertizing efforts of the children of Mr. Owen’s singing class, and urged readers to patronize Owen’s school and his future concerts. The performance his class gave on 7 August 1844 was even more impressive for the fact that the funds raised through a rational entertainment were to support a charitable cause, the Ladies’ Temperance and Benevolent Fund: “the reflection that the children were

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81 *Novascotian*; quoted in *The Times*, 23 May 1837.  
82 *Novascotian*, 4 January 1847; *Sun*, 30 December 1846.  
83 *Novascotian*, 12 August 1844; *The Times*, 13 August 1844.
nearly all pledged to one of the noblest of benevolent institutions, increased the pleasure of many among the audience,” enthused the Novascotian’s author.  

The rhetoric of improvement was articulated most emphatically in the discourse responding to the operations of the Halifax Harmonic Society and their concertizing activities. Just as the press urged the public to support amateur bands, they also used their influence to encourage the Harmonic Society. By joining the Harmonic Society and participating in its concerts, members became philanthropists for their role in helping cultivate the rational practice of music. “We consider that the formation of the Harmonic Society is or ought to be a serious matter,” wrote an Acadian Recorder author upon the Society’s revival in 1858, and “its members should be considered, not as a few persons who have joined together for the purpose of amusing themselves; but as so many teachers of the public mind and refiners of the public feeling.” Moreover, through both the positive example they set by their participation, and the rationalizing powers of their music, the Harmonic Society provided the community with moral leadership. Declaring that the Society should take pride in the importance the city attached to their existence – a fact evidenced by “the interest with which the people of [Halifax] regard its advancement” – a Morning Post author asserted that “the amount of benefit conferred on the younger members of the Society in giving a proper direction for their leisure hours in cultivating a taste for music (thereby benefiting themselves and extending that influence to others), would be difficult to estimate.” Similarly, the British Colonist claimed that there was “universal desire” to see the

84 Novascotian, 12 August 1844.
85 Acadian Recorder, 6 February 1858.
86 Morning Post, 4 May 1844.
revived Society prosper in 1858. Through its philanthropic service to its members, and also to the larger community, the Harmonic Society helped to effectuate the improvement of Nova Scotia’s character; as such, its very existence was a measure of Nova Scotia’s progress toward achieving a respectable and civilized society.

**Blackface Buffoonery**

Not all musical entertainments were considered beneficial to Nova Scotian audiences’ moral character. Although by most accounts minstrel shows were popular, the minstrel troupes that visited Nova Scotia nearly every year post-1845 often raised controversy regarding both the content of their entertainments and the quality of the audience that their performances attracted. Despite their ban on theatre, Temperance Hall’s managers did permit minstrel troupes to use their auditorium, even though minstrel shows incorporated theatrical elements and caused many of the same problems with which the theatre was charged. As Butsch explains, “minstrelsy was spared the tag of immorality that hung on theatre,” in part, because they referred to their performances as concerts. Certain members of the Nova Scotian press, however, did take issue with minstrel shows and expressed their disapproval in no uncertain terms. Whereas newspaper reviews of concerts and other musical entertainments might express dissatisfaction with the performance of a particular selection or with a performer’s failure to measure up to the degree of excellence promised in advertisements, the criticism that the press

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87 *British Colonist*, 9 February 1858.
88 Butsch, 86–87. See also Dale Cockrell, *Demons of Disorder: Early Blackface Minstrels and Their World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 150–152. Cockrell explains that the term “minstrel” helped blackface performers to gain access to respectable theatres, because many of the family singing groups of that era were referred to as minstrels.
levelled at minstrel shows tended to be much more severe. As mentioned above, critics sometimes disapproved of the “negro melodies” that formed the core repertory of their shows. Most often, though, it was not the performers’ music or musical capabilities that drew adverse reactions but the inherent nature of their style of entertainment, which some critics perceived as being crude, vulgar, and potentially, detrimental to audiences. For example, following a September 1849 concert by the Sable Harmonists, a British Colonist reviewer responded with approval for their singing, but took issue with the theatrical format in which their songs were presented:

We would, however, suggest to the vocalists that their performances would be much more satisfactory if only they would confine themselves to their legitimate occupation, by which we mean, singing, and singing only. An hour and a half might be pleasantly occupied in listening to their sweet voices pouring out such melodies as ‘Don’t you hear those bells a singing,’ but the nonsense about Lucy Long and the conversational part of the entertainment had much better be omitted, being vulgar and tiresome.89

Adding to the evening’s vulgarity were the costumes – “the rags and tatters” – that the performers donned for the show’s third act. In general, critics expressed particular distaste for the comic banter, costuming choices (and especially the cross-dressing), and ridiculous antics that characterized many minstrel shows.

Foremost among the anti-minstrelsy exponents was the Acadian Recorder, which repeatedly printed derogatory remarks about blackface performers and their audiences. Following Major Felch’s Ethiopian Opera Troupe’s tour to Halifax in 1857, the Recorder review began with a general rant about minstrel shows: “Of all descriptions of public amusement, these

89 British Colonist, 29 September 1849. “Lucy Long” was a song typically performed by a male doubly disguised in blackface and cross-dressed as a woman. It was often expanded into skits and dances, and sometimes used as a show finale. On “Lucy Long,” see William J. Mahar, Behind the Burnt Cork Mask: Early Blackface Minstrelsy and Antebellum American Popular Culture (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 307–312.
exhibitions of negro singers and buffoons are, with exception of those which are positively obscene, the lowest in their character and the most vitiating to the tastes of those who habitually go to witness them.” He then turned his attention specifically to Major Felch’s troupe, lambasting that company for “[coming] quite up to, or down to, the rank of contemptibility which is the silliest, lowest, and most disgusting these gangs of “Negro Melodists” have ever been able to attain.”

Even when acknowledging the tremendous attendance at the Halifax amateur Sable Harmonists’ concert, an author for the Recorder still managed to voice his distaste for minstrelsy:

> Though Ethiopian Minstrelsy is no novelty in these times, nor of such highly refined character as needs performers of stupendous genius to make it pass muster, still it delights the multitude, and is especially popular in this city. The Sable Harmonists, we may remark, are fully as good, if they do not excel, any band of the kind we have heard.

In general, the Recorder expressed particular disappointment that concerts by talented and respectable performers were scantly patronized, while the vulgar and ridiculous antics of minstrel troupes repeatedly drew good houses. Other newspapers, including the British Colonist, echoed the Recorder’s distaste for minstrelsy, labelling blackface performers “buffoons” and expressing concern that the widespread appreciation of such entertainment reflected a low state of Nova Scotian character.

A complexion of anxieties may have motivated the Recorder, Colonist, and other newspapers to decry the public’s taste in entertainment, and to hurl abuses at paying advertisers. David Sutherland posits that racism prompted critics to lash out against an entertainment form that audiences perceived as an accurate portrayal of black culture. The minstrel show genre was

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91 *Acadian Recorder*, 2 August 1851.
introduced to Nova Scotia at a time when racist attitudes against the impoverished black community were prevalent, and aggravated by that community’s movement to gain political representation. Black Nova Scotians typically were represented in the press, at best, as slovenly, imbecilic, or pitiful, and at worst, as potentially violent perpetrators against public morality. Sutherland suggests that the criticism levelled against minstrel shows resulted from the fact that they exposed the public to the undesirable elements of black culture, and in doing so, “offended the sensibilities of genteel white society.” “We think this smutting of the face, and colouring of the lips, and arraying the person for the purpose of mispersonating [sic.] the poor negro, is a sorrowful and pitiable sight,” wrote a British Colonist reviewer after an 1850 performance by the Harmoneons, “Heaven knows [the negro] is low enough already without thus exposing him to public ridicule.” Not only did minstrel shows offend audience sensibilities, they encouraged audience members to take delight in and enjoy a culture that hindered Nova Scotia’s progress, and more generally, a mode of deportment that plagued Nova Scotia’s character.

Another strike against minstrel shows was the rowdy audiences they tended to attract. This particular concern is expressed in no uncertain terms by a British Colonist reviewer following the 1849 performance by the Sable Harmonists (the professional American troupe):

We have seldom seen a more ill-mannered set than a large body that occupied the right of the hall on Thursday night. It consisted chiefly of boys, and those of a very low class. ... On entering at half past seven, we found this intelligent set of youths whistling, stamping and yelling for the performers, although it was announced in the programme that the entertainment was to commence at eight. The admission of such characters will prevent respectable people from attending. Certainly no lady of delicate feelings could feel comfortable in their presence. We would recommend to the Sable musicians to endeavour to give their performances

92 See David A. Sutherland, “Race Relations in Halifax, Nova Scotia, During the Mid-Victorian Quest for Reform,” Journal of the Canadian Historical Association 7/1 (1996): 42.
93 Ibid., 49.
94 British Colonist, 12 September 1850.
a higher tone. The laugh that is excited by Lucy Long and the silly dresses of the latter part of the evening is hardly worth obtaining at the price of a lowered character.95

Other reviewers also reported on the rowdy behaviour that ensued during minstrel shows. Sutherland writes that, according to one editor, minstrels’ vulgar language and deportment “[drove] respectable men and women from the theatre”; meanwhile, the vulgar behaviour of the crowd that was attracted to watch these performers further condemned minstrelsy in the public eye. According to the Recorder, blackface performers belonged “to a class of ‘artists’ which is calculated to please at best only the rudest and least cultivated tastes”; to the Colonist, minstrel shows “catered to the vicious class that to a certain extent poisons every community, whose mouth is best excited by vulgar caricature, whose best embodiment of wit is an immodest vogue.”96 Rather than offering moral or refining influences, minstrelsy (in the eyes of its detractors) caused the poison infecting Nova Scotian communities to fester.

The disapproval newspaper critics expressed for what they considered the vulgar elements of minstrel shows, however, did not represent a unanimous public opinion, nor did it prevent Nova Scotian audiences from patronizing touring minstrel troupes’ entertainments. Whereas concert reviews often lamented the size of the audience that had attended to hear a prima donna or a virtuoso violinist perform, reviews of minstrel shows seldom report anything other than consistently large audiences throughout the duration of a troupe’s visit in the province. Some newspapers also included praise for the performers and the entertainment they gave to audiences along with their report on the sizeable crowd assembled in the hall, but whether these

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95 British Colonist, 29 September 1849.
96 Acadian Recorder, 15 November 1856; British Colonist, 29 September 1849.
were sincere expressions or “puffs” is difficult to discern. Nonetheless, regardless of whether or not some of these “reviews” were works of honest journalism or paid-for statements prepared by publicity agents, the sentiments they expressed did reflect the enthusiasm of a significant body of Nova Scotians – an enthusiasm that manifested in the formation of at least two amateur minstrel troupes in Halifax, the Carolina Serenaders and the Sable Harmonists. Undoubtedly this widespread enthusiasm triggered critics’ anxieties and further inclined them to denounce the minstrel troupes that made periodic excursions to Nova Scotia.

Not all minstrel troupes received such heavy criticism from reviewers, which likely reflects the fact that minstrelsy was not strictly codified and that the nature and style of entertainment varied significantly from one troupe to the next. Neither the Harmoneons, for example, nor Ordway’s Aeolian Vocalists were criticized as severely as some of the other American troupes. Nonetheless, the point remains that minstrelsy was controversial and subject to objection from certain persons, who for varying reasons, thought it a degenerate form, even though for many Nova Scotians it was more entertaining and meaningful than the musical fare promoted by upper- and middle-class improvers. To some, minstrelsy was simply entertainment; to others, it exemplified music demonized, and like alcohol, was injurious to the character of those who imbibed.

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97 The critical commentary printed in the Acadian Recorder, 8 August 1857, on the prevalence of “puffery” in the Nova Scotian press suggests that many of the “reviews” of minstrel shows were examples of what that paper believed to be a lamentable practice. Complaining about how puffs were inserted amidst legitimate news and thus interrupted the flow of reading – and hindered the ability to discern fact from fiction – the critic writes, “Before [the reader] gets well underway again, he finds himself floundering in the midst of a paragraph describing in quite a Homeric style the astounding performances of a gang of low fellows who have taken it into their heads to black their faces and exhibit themselves as buffoons, at fifteen pence a sight.”

98 Mahar, 332–333.
Instituting Music, Instituting Order

While critics’ adverse reactions to minstrel shows reveals the lack of agreement among the Nova Scotian public concerning what constituted worthwhile entertainment, they also serve to illustrate the contempt that Nova Scotia’s “progressive class” held for the lower-class audience members who did not measure up to their standards of respectable behaviour. The middle-class reviewers writing for the Acadian Recorder, British Colonist, and other critical presses quite clearly looked down on the rowdy men occupying Temperance Hall’s cheapest seats with disdain and wished not to be affiliated with them. This low-class audience was an embarrassment to the community – and a contemptible hindrance to provincial progress.

Nova Scotia’s lower classes were not unilaterally cast in such negative light. As Judith Fingard explains, Nova Scotians distinguished between the “honest, deserving, labouring poor and those who were undeserving, profligate, or even criminal.” The former component of the lower class were victims of illness or other unfortunate circumstances and consequently deserved sympathy, and when possible, assistance; it was only the latter, victims of self-chosen vices, who were a stain on society. Samson notes that numerous of the pre-Confederation era’s “improvement projects” targeted the betterment of the lower classes. Nonetheless, at the same time as improvers worked for the social and moral reform of their society, nineteenth-century codes of respectability and social order propelled those same improvers to distance themselves from those who most needed to improve. Bonnie Huskins, for example, argues that the higher classes’ increasing desire to be socially distanced from the lower classes led to changes in Halifax’s public feasting patterns: whereas public feasts such as ox roasts, which allowed all

100 Samson, 269.
classes to interact, were common early in the century, by mid-century there began a move toward segregated patterns of social dining. Members of the higher classes organized public dinners for the poor in acts of charity, but for their own communal gatherings they held private banquets and tea soirée{s} that excluded the lower orders who once freely attended ox roasts. For Nova Scotia to be a progressive province required that it be inhabited by a refined and respectable class of citizens; for those with pretensions to be part of such a class, it was necessary to distinguish themselves from the poor, and especially, the immoral.

Music offered one means by which higher-class citizens could achieve distance from the lower classes, both figuratively and literally. Since music could inculcate discipline, refinement, and morality, a practitioner’s amateur skill or an aficionado’s knowledge could help to solidify his or her membership within respectable society. The controversy surrounding minstrelsy, though, exemplifies that not all forms of music-making held equal sway in terms of conferring social status. As Judith Fingard writes, music also played an important role in the lives of the members of the lower-class subculture. Attending a minstrel show, or engaging with other forms of music associated with the low-class, probably did not result in one’s exclusion from polite society; however, it probably did not serve to advance one’s social standing, either. Engaging with music not associated with the lower classes, on the other hand, could serve to create class distinction. The guided study of literate music required financial means, as did ownership of the “equipment” (instruments and scores) necessary to pursue musical training; for these reasons, as well as the desirable character attributes the study of music developed, an amateur’s musicianship could signify his/her social class. Engaging with “refined” repertoires

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102 Fingard, Dark Side, 191.
likewise could signify respectability. Rachel Milestone, for instance, argues that learning oratorio repertoire helped the middle-class members of Britain’s choral societies distance themselves from the lower classes.\textsuperscript{103} Moreover, certain musical practices could define a space for respectable society that excluded the socially undesirable. For these reasons, the pre-Confederation era witnessed several movements toward claiming Halifax’s musical institutions for the higher classes.

**Sites of Separation**

One musical site that automatically distanced the higher classes from the lower was the domestic home. From an exterior perspective, the geographic location of a family’s home and its architectural design designated its respectable status; placing a piano in the parlour helped to confirm the same of its interior.\textsuperscript{104} Seating one’s daughters at that piano to perform genteel ballads or selections from favourite operas both aurally and visually defined that space as respectable and refined. The house’s walls and location maintained the family’s physical distance from unrespectable society; the music that emanated from within those walls created a sonic barrier, blocking out undesired noises and encasing the family with the sound of their refinement and moral rectitude. Inviting friends to enjoy and partake in the music of the parlour affirmed the family’s membership within the respectable class, while consolidating and unifying the participants as peers within that class through the act of a shared cultural experience.

\textsuperscript{103} Milestone, 298.

In the public realm, however, social distance was less easy to achieve. Although Halifax’s geography was clearly defined by class-based neighbourhoods, outdoors on the city streets persons of all social orders mixed – whether they wished to or not. In his study of British travellers’ experiences in Halifax, Jeffrey McNairn posits that what British travellers found most unusual (in comparison to Britain) – and most distressing – about Halifax was the lack of social stratification they encountered on city streets: Mi’kmaq, Acadians, blacks, and other “lower orders” all mingled within the same public spaces as the city’s élite. While travellers felt “at home” in the private, domestic spaces of the higher classes, outdoors they distinctly felt that they were in the New World.  

The outdoors had also long been an important site within Nova Scotia’s musical life. Ceremonies, celebrations, and other organized outdoor events created formal occasions for enjoying musical performances, while street musicians, combined with those who could not resist humming a tune, provided the incidental music of daily life. Even sounds of the Harmonic Society occasionally wafted onto the street, as the following excerpt from the Acadian Recorder describes:

> The talk is, great credit is due to the members of the Harmonic Society for their noble exertions in trying to beat into the heads of the inhabitants of our city a taste for music; and it cannot be doubted but that their efforts to do so will meet with success. But then, the talk is, there is one fault to be brought against them; that is their “breaking the peace of our city” when proceeding home, on the evenings of their practise nights at the hour of 10½ o’clock, P.M. The noise they create is tremendous.

This amusing anecdote aside, much of the informal music-making heard outdoors was instigated by the lower classes. As Fingard writes, the music-loving subculture of Halifax’s slum district

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106 *Acadian Recorder*, 27 November 1858.
“was a loud, boisterous, hard-drinking culture that spilled out of the taverns and dance halls into the streets.” Raucous singing filled the air as patrons made their way from one tavern to the next, while street musicians used their talents to entice coins from the pockets of wealthier passersby.

Cutting through the cacophonous polyphony of street fiddlers, organ grinders, and merry revellers was the music of Nova Scotia’s wind bands, especially in Halifax, where – as the previous chapters have shown – the garrison’s musicians were an iconic part of the city soundscape. The music of bands on board naval ships drifted over the harbour, while military bands marched and practiced on the Commons. Military bands marched through the city streets, sounding the way for civic parades and processions, and accompanied civilians on sleigh rides, picnics, and boating excursions. Finally, military bands made another important contribution to the city’s musical life through the popular public concerts they gave on the Commons and on the lawn of Province Building. By performing in these outdoor spaces, the garrison’s bands straddled the deep divisions in Halifax’s overtly hierarchical society. Especially through their outdoor concerts, they allowed persons excluded from the Halifax Hotel, Temperance Hall, or other indoor venues to partake in the musical culture of the city’s élite.

It is significant, then, that the garrison band began to give semi-private concerts at the Horticultural Gardens in 1855. Wrote an author for the *Acadian Recorder* in 1857,

And we really scarcely know how a few hours could be spent more pleasantly than in this delightful spot, on the afternoon of one of the “band days.” Then, in addition to the ordinary attractions of the garden, the visitor may have his senses charmed by the sweet strains of a well trained military band, whilst the place is

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107 Fingard, *Dark Side*, 191.
108 Due to the irregularity with which band concerts were advertised, it is not clear if the Horticultural Gardens concerts completely replaced performances on the public lawns, or if they were offered in addition. Either way, the move to the gardens effectively regulated who had access to the bands’ entertainment.
still more enlivened by the presence and conversation of gay groups of ladies and gentlemen, the élite of the Society of Halifax.\textsuperscript{109}

Located in the city’s upper-class South End, the Horticultural Gardens represented Halifax’s civic progress and urban achievement: a site where pleasure-seekers could enjoy the delights of a natural environment that had been tamed and beautified by man, it was a concrete sign of Halifax’s transformation from colonial outpost to genteel city. The addition of bi-weekly band concerts furthered that sense of accomplishment; with a pleasure garden that offered entertainment by Britain’s fine musicians, Halifax had a civic institution that helped to bring the city in line with other Anglo urban centres.

The inauguration of these band concerts, though, also represented an act of social distancing, as it took what was a popular form of entertainment that once had been part of the city’s shared cultural experience and moved it into the exclusive realm of the higher-class subculture. Although entrance to the Gardens was at first free to the public, this initiative nonetheless moved the site of band music from shared public space to a space that was unquestionably élite.\textsuperscript{110} The following summer, a society membership or a ticket became necessary to gain admission to the garden concerts. According to the Acadian Recorder, entrants to the grounds were carefully monitored:

Why is it that, if you hold a “family ticket,” you are so vexatiously [sic.] reminded at times, that you do not always carry your marriage certificate in your pocket, and have not always a witness at hand to swear to the identity of each of your children? This is the way the talk goes. As to the announcement that strangers are admitted free the talk is that that is only in theory, as some have learned much to their own mortification. The talk is, if, every one of these fine days when the Band is playing in the Garden, any person could be admitted by paying a small sum at the gate, the public would think a good deal more of the Horticultural

\textsuperscript{109} Acadian Recorder, 11 July 1857 (emphasis original).

\textsuperscript{110} A notice in the British Colonist, 19 June 1855, indicates that the first band concert was not well advertised, perhaps in an attempt at maintaining an élite audience. A notice in the British Colonist, 21 June 1855, indicates that “for present” there is free admission.
Society and its Garden; and the finances of the Society would be in a good deal better condition at the close of the season than they are now likely to be.”

Despite some evident displeasure with the Horticultural Society’s policies, the band continued to perform in the gardens and attract Halifax’s most fashionable citizens. With the Horticultural Society’s arrangement, Halifax’s respectable residents could enjoy the city’s foremost performing ensemble, not only in the comfort of the beautiful grounds, but also in the comfort of sharing that experience exclusively with other respectable citizens. By moving the site of band music, this initiative appropriated the band and its repertoire of national airs and operatic arrangements, transforming a plebeian entertainment into one of privilege.

The Respectable Auditorium

A second important site for music within Nova Scotia’s public culture was the concert hall, or more aptly, the community hall. In his study of American theatre audiences, Butsch illustrates that the buildings in which theatre performances were held could function as filters for social order. As he explains, in New York, the city’s theatre buildings became associated with specific classes. The Bowery Theatre, for example, was the working-class theatre, while the Park Theatre was upper-class theatre and the venue for opera performances.

In Nova Scotia, however, where a community’s Masonic or Temperance Hall was the only indoor venue where public entertainments could be held, achieving such “institutional designation” was not possible. The theatre was relegated to its own building, but minstrel troupes shared the same stage at Halifax’s Temperance Hall as refined prima donnas.

111 *Acadian Recorder*, 19 July 1856 (italics are original).

112 Butsch, 45–46 and 64. According to Butsch, “opera performances offered at unfashionable houses, such as the Bowery and Richmond Hill Theatres in New York, were failures” (Ibid., 64).
Consequently, the physical edifice of Temperance Hall could not fulfill the same social ordering function as, for example, New York’s Park Theatre, nor did the act of purchasing a ticket to an entertainment in the auditorium necessarily confer respectable status. The hall, though, could be claimed as a respectable space depending on the type of entertainment it offered and the composition and behaviour of the audience that attended. A concert of “refined” music – national airs, parlour songs, instrumental and operatic music, and/or oratorio repertoire – was one occasion that could designate the hall’s auditorium as a venue for the higher classes. While the act of walking into Temperance Hall itself did not distance concert-goers from the lower classes, Nova Scotia’s concert-going public could identify themselves as part of respectable society by choosing the types of entertainment they patronized – and the audience members with whom they kept company.

Consequently, advance posting of concert programmes was important, not only in terms of generating interest, but in terms of helping potential audiences determine whether or not the entertainment would be an appropriate expenditure of their patronage. While, as Chapter 4 explained, it became less common for concertizers to publicize their programmes in advance in newspapers by mid-century, advertisements indicate that interested citizens could gain advance knowledge of the programme contents (concert advertisements almost invariably instruct readers, “for particulars, see programme” – see Figures 5.1 through 5.3).
5.1 Concert advertisements for Bolman and Cunnabell, 
(Acadian Recorder, 11 April 1857)

**CONCERT!!**

*Under the Patronage of Lady LeMarchant.*

**MISS BOLEMAN**

BEGS to announce to her friends and the public, that her first BENEFIT CONCERT of the season will take place at TEMPERANCE HALL, on Monday, the 13th inst., on which occasion she will be assisted by several gentlemen amateurs, and the following—

- Cornopean—Gentleman Amateur,
- Violin—Miss Jeans,
- Violincello—Mr. Jeans,
- Solo Pianist—Senor Casseres,
- Accompanists—Gentlemen Amateurs, and Mr. Casseres.

Admission—Dress Circle, 2s 6d; Pit, 1s 3d.

Tickets to be had at the Book Stores and at the Hall.

Doors opened at 7 o’clock, performance to commence at 8 precisely. Programme will soon be issued.

April 11.

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**Easter Holidays.**

**MR. J. S. CUNNAEBELL**, respectfully announces that he will give a

**CONCERT**

Of popular Vocal Music, at Temperance Hall, on the Evening of THURSDAY, 16th April.

He will be assisted by Miss Ives and several Ladies and Gentlemen Amateurs.

For particulars see Programme. Doors open at 7 o’clock, Concert to commence at 8 o’clock.

Tickets (Dress Circle 2s. 6d.; Parquette 1s. 3d.) for sale at the City Book Stores, and at Temperance Hall on Thursday Evening.

April 11.
5.2 Concert advertisement for the Hoffer Family
(Acadian Recorder, 29 September 1855)

HOFFER FAMILY.
The Celebrated Tyrolean Alpine Singers.
This Family would respectfully inform the Ladies and Gentlemen of this City; that they will give a
GRAND CONCERT,
At Temperance Hall, on TUESDAY EVENING, the 2nd October.
The newly invented Instrument, the Philharmonica, and their Original Songs, have caused immense excitement wherever they have appeared. For particulars see small bills.
Price of admission 1s. 3d.
Tickets to be had at the Bookstores, and on the evening of the Concert, at the doors.
Seats secured from 3 to 4 o'clock, p.m., on the evening of the Concert, without extra charge.
Doors open at 7. Commence at 8 o'clock.
The engraved Portraits of the Hoffer Family for sale at the doors. Persons taking eight Tickets will receive a Portrait gratis.

September 29.

5.3 Concert advertisement for Charles Elliott
(Acadian Recorder, 3 October 1857)

Temperance Hall.
Monday Evening, October 5.
Under the distinguished patronage of Colonel Ingall
C. B., the Officers of H. M. 62nd Regt. and
the Officers of H. M. Ships in Harbor.
CHARLES ELLIOTT’S
FAREWELL BENEFIT CONCERT.
Being his last performance in Halifax.
By permission of Col. Ingall, C. B., the Band of H. M. 62nd Regiment will be in attendance, and will perform several pieces under the direction of Mr. Carey.
Vocalists—Miss Jenny Twicell, and Mr. C. R. Adams.
Pianist—S. Casseres.
Price of Admission—Gallery 2s. 6d., Parquette 1s. 3d.
For particulars see Programme. October 3.
Élite patronage, and especially that of the Lieutenant-Governor and/or his wife, was also significant as a means of discriminating between types of entertainment. A Lieutenant-Governor’s patronage provided quality assurance to potential ticket buyers. For example, in order to promote Mr. Keene’s second concert in 1828, the *Free Press* announced that the first had been attended by a “highly respectable” audience (although not as extensive as had been expected). The author also emphasized that Countess Dalhousie, the wife of Nova Scotia’s former Lieutenant Governor, had been Keene’s patron in Quebec, where the singer had performed two years earlier: “although we are deprived of her Ladyship’s presence in this town, the remembrance of her condescension and her taste, must create in the minds of our fashionable fair a desire to imitate her example.”¹¹³ The presence of an élite patron not only legitimized a performer, but provided assurance to prospective audience members that, in attending that event, they would be in the company of respectable peers. “It is hoped that the Lieutenant-Governor’s patronage will bring out the haut-ton,” remarked an author for the *Sun* regarding one of Mme. Krollman’s 1854 concerts. In this way, lieutenant-governors could be musical improvers: recognizing, for example, Sir John Harvey’s patronage of Baron de Fleur’s October 1846 concert, the *Royal Gazette* indicated that it was just one instance of the Lieutenant-Governor’s desire to encourage the fine arts.¹¹⁴ Significantly, many of the concerts by the Harmonic Society as well as those given by international touring artists were under the patronage of either a Lieutenant-Governor or a high-ranking military or naval officer (see, for example, Figures 5.1

¹¹³ *The Free Press*, 26 August 1828. Lord Dalhousie and his wife were transferred to Quebec in 1820 at the end of their term in Nova Scotia.

¹¹⁴ *Royal Gazette*, 21 October 1846.
and 5.3). Élite patrons, however, rarely patronized minstrel shows. Advertising the Lieutenant-Governor’s attendance claimed that concert for the respectable class and indicated that, at least on that occasion, the entertainment in Temperance Hall would be removed from Nova Scotia’s undesirable subculture. Furthermore, attending an élite-patronized concert was a means of aligning oneself with respectable society.

To lay claims to the respectability of an entertainment (and thus promote “respectable class” attendance at future events), newspaper reviews of theatrical shows, panoramas, and other performance-based entertainments – including concerts – also drew attention to the calibre of the rest of the audience that was in attendance. Henry Schallehn’s 21 December 1843 concert, for instance, “was attended by a large audience of the beauty and fashion of the City”; likewise, the Harmonic Society concert on 22 February 1859 filled Temperance Hall “from floor to ceiling with a discriminating audience, comprising nearly the whole of the beauty and fashion of Halifax.” Butsch notes that the term “fashion” was used to denote the attendance of upper-class audiences, and “beauty” to denote specifically the ladies of that class. The presence of “fashion,” and especially, of “beauty” helped to legitimize an entertainment and consequently played a substantial role in determining its commercial success. Moreover, such reports also helped to inform all of the public readership (and not just those who attended concerts) what types of performances constituted “respectable” entertainments, while for concert-goers who had been among the “beauty and fashion,” such reports confirmed and legitimized their discriminating taste.

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In one instance, when Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Harvey patronized a concert by the New Brunswick Harmonic, an author for the Sun, 17 March 1848, remarked, “We regret their performances were not more worthy of such distinguished patronage.”

Morning Post, 23 December 1843; Morning Journal, 25 February 1859.

Butsch, 34.
The Refined Audience

Ultimately, though, while a concert by a prima donna under the Lieutenant-Governor’s patronage offered prospective attendees the potential of mingling in respectable company, it was up to the individual members of the audience to fulfill that potential. Even if they were doctors, lawyers, and politicians, a crowd of intoxicated, jeering, and unruly élite men was no better than an audience filled with rowdy “b’hoys.” A respectable entertainment was not only one that offered different content than those preferred by the lower classes, but one at which the audience members behaved in a manner indicative of their purported status. Butsch argues that it was this desire to claim the theatre as a respectable site – thus making it a space that could establish distance – that initiated the shift from eighteenth-century “active” audience practices (e.g., rowdyism, calling out to performers, socializing during performances) to the nineteenth-century culture of passive listening. “Rowdyism came to be considered a mark of lower-class status,” he writes, whereas “respectability meant an audience that was quiet, polite, and passive”; consequently, the 1830s witnessed the beginnings of a movement to “contain or eliminate rowdiness in audiences.”

Newspaper reviews from the 1840s indicate that Nova Scotians also became concerned with the behaviour of audiences. For example, the Morning Journal reported on an “impertinent fellow to whom decency and good behaviour were entire strangers” who threw an apple at the musicians during a performance by the Metropolitan Opera Troupe. The reviewer emphasized that the apple-thrower was not part of respectable society by calling his

118 Butsch, 5–6. Jennifer Hall-Witt finds that audience behaviour at the London opera underwent a shift from active to passive listening practices. Although circumstances were not quite the same (élites trying to earn respect of the growing middle-class component in the audience), she attributes this shift, in part, to the fact that “decorum became a mark of prestige” among London opera-goers. See Hall-Witt, Fashionable Acts: Opera and Elite Culture in London, 1780–1880 (Durham, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2007), 202.
conduct “low and discreditable,” and labelling him an “ignoramus.” Given that the members of the Metropolitan Opera Troupe were “delineators of Ethiopian character” it is perhaps not surprising that their concert attracted such a fellow; the important point, though, is how this review – as well as those reviews of minstrel shows described above – contrasted rowdyism with respectable behaviour.

Reports on the actions of unrespectable audience members established what constituted low-class behaviour, and therefore how Nova Scotia’s higher classes should not behave. In a self-congratulatory manner, the press contrasted these incidents with scenes of decorum, upholding the improvement of Nova Scotian audiences as signs of the improvement of society itself. The *Morning Post*, for example, reported after the Harmonic Society’s 9 April 1844 concert, “No small portion of the Beauty of Halifax were present, and it is but justice to say that the audience who filled the Hall to overflowing, lent to the performance that undivided attention which is always preferable to the noisy applause frequent on such occasions.” Over a decade later, a *Morning Journal* reviewer similarly praised the audience as well as the performers at the Harmonic Society’s 22 February 1859 concert:

> It was not the least gratifying feature of the entertainment on Thursday evening that, while there was an entire absence of noisy applause on the part of the audience, the several performers were listened to with rapt attention. This fact speaks unmistakably for the good taste of the citizens of Halifax.

One reason the audiences at the Harmonic Society concerts were so quiet was because of a society mandate: their 1843 “Rules and Regulations” book states,

> That at all Meetings of the Society, either for Practice, or on Public occasions, no expressions of applause, or the contrary shall be permitted; and any person so

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120 *Morning Post*, 11 April 1844.
offending, the President or presiding officer, shall immediately call “to order,” and explain, that it is contrary to the Rules of the Society, and destroys the effect that Sacred Music is intended to produce.

The press, however, did not explain to its readership that audiences’ passive listening was in response to the programmes’ contents, but rather conflated it with good taste. Consequently, the press played a significant role in codifying what respectable behaviour meant, while establishing these events as far removed from the unruly world of the lower class. These reports also enabled audiences to affirm their own respectability: reading the Post’s or the Journal’s glowing review of their attentive listening, members of that audience could conclude that they were indeed respectable and progressive Nova Scotians.

The Creation of Harmony

In one sense, “refined” concerts served to deepen the divisions within Nova Scotia’s hierarchical society by reinforcing the distance between the higher and lower classes. Conversely, and perhaps paradoxically, though, music institutions – and music in general – simultaneously served as an agent of community formation, bringing certain groups of people together as it pushed others apart. Concerts, for instance, were an opportunity for members of the higher classes to forge a common culture. Serving as a unifying force and creating social harmony was yet another way music could contribute to Nova Scotia’s progress.

As Nova Scotia’s “progressive citizens” distanced themselves from one part of the population, it was equally important that they could perceive of themselves as a united citizenry.

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with common values, beliefs, and goals: Nova Scotia could neither make progress nor be progressive if its people – or, at least, those who could contribute to progressive discourse – did not share a sense of solidarity or kinship. Fostering solidarity and kinship in colonial Nova Scotia, however, was not always easy. The waves of immigration that foisted European culture upon the Atlantic peninsula also caused the colony to develop a diverse population. While communities in northern Nova Scotia tended to be more homogeneous, those in the southern province, and especially Halifax, brought together settlers of a variety of religious and ethnic backgrounds. As settlers competed for Nova Scotia’s limited resources, they also struggled to assert their visions for the future of their new home.

According to David Sutherland, the significant population growth and flux in Halifax was another factor – in addition to the desire to promote improvement and social control – that led to the rise of voluntary societies at mid-century. He writes, “Rapid growth, especially when associated with mass immigration, meant that many city residents found themselves isolated in a sea of strangers. For such people voluntary societies could function as a substitute for lost kinship connections.”¹²³ Voluntary societies provided a forum in which people sharing common interests could coalesce, articulate and affirm their ideals, and work together toward their goals. By forging fraternal relationships, a voluntary society created a collective identity for its members. At the same time, this collective identity helped members to define and assert their individual identity within the community. Sutherland finds that voluntary societies were most attractive to people of middle-class professions – the Nova Scotians, he posits, with the greatest

¹²³ Sutherland, “Voluntary Societies,” 240.
need for self-assertion. Consequently, the voluntary movement was a key element in the formation of Nova Scotia’s middle class, and in enabling that class to perceive its progress. Bringing together like-minded individuals, Masonic orders, Sons of Temperance, and other voluntary societies served as a platform for the debate on Nova Scotia’s progress, and as a principal forum for Nova Scotia’s improvers to articulate their vision for the future.

Like temperance and other social causes, music was also a focal point around which interested citizens coalesced into a formal institution. United by a common interest in improving their city’s musical life as well as their own talents, Haligonians formed the first Halifax Harmonic Society in 1842 in counterpoint to the city’s growing culture of improvement-oriented organizations. The society’s membership included merchants, shop-keepers, artisans, and lawyers, many of whom were active in other voluntary societies. Several members were also active, or would become active in either civic or provincial politics, including Nova Scotia’s famous brew master, Alexander Keith, who was elected Halifax’s first mayor in 1841, and Henry Pryor, who served on city council before rising to mayor in 1853–54 and 1857–58. The majority of the singing members belonged to what Sutherland calls Halifax’s “shopocracy”: middle-class businessmen whose rising economic prosperity was coupled with a desire to participate more actively in civic and provincial government. Voluntary societies, such as the Harmonic Society, provided a forum through which the aspirant middle class could demonstrate their respectability and responsibility, and take active leadership within their community. Nonetheless, while voluntary societies were primarily middle-class institutions, upper-class élites did participate in societies as well, either by contributing their financial support or taking leadership roles within

\[\text{124 Ibid., 241. Sutherland explains that members of the lower classes seldom joined voluntary societies because of poverty and lack of leisure time.” Members of the élite upper class, on the other hand, “already possessed both self-assurance and what was needed for effective self-assertion” because of their privileged status.}\]
the societies they joined. The Harmonic Society’s patrons included members of the Halifax “gentry,” including Henry Cogswell and John Leander Starr. As patrons, these men were not part of the chorus, but could attend and bring guests to rehearsals. According to newspaper reports, the Harmonic Society’s concerts were also well supported by Halifax’s most fashionable citizens. As such, the Harmonic Society created – at least in theory – a meeting ground where Haligonians could coalesce over their mutual interest in improving themselves and their city through music.

Significantly, the music that middle-class singers chose to make a favourable impression upon their upper-class patrons was music of the “highest order”: sacred music composed by Europe’s greatest masters. There was, of course, a well-established precedent for choosing oratorio choruses and other sacred works by the “great masters”: the choral singing movement in England was founded on this repertoire, while in Boston the Handel and Haydn Society was predicated upon Lowell Mason’s assertion that church music reforms could only be exacted through European Classical music.125 Whereas the Handel and Haydn Society’s mandate, though, was to improve church music, the Halifax Society’s was “the improvement of its Members in the higher departments of Sacred Music, Vocal and Instrumental.” The rhetorical difference is subtle, but telling: the Haligonian society’s primary object was to improve its members through furthering their musical talents.126 As they developed their musical talents, their comradeship contributed a valuable service to the community. By choosing the most legitimate, most refined music as the basis of their collective identity, the members of the


126 Also, whereas the Boston Handel and Haydn Society would accept singers who were unable to read music, so long as they had a good voice (see Broyles, 141), the Halifax Harmonic Society stated, as its second rule, “As during its Meetings there will be no opportunity for receiving elementary instruction, some previous knowledge of Music is absolutely necessary, as a qualification for Membership” (See “Rules and Regulations,” 2).
Harmonic Society asserted to each other, and to their patrons, their status as respectable, disciplined, charitable, and civic-oriented citizens.

Moreover, choral societies that performed oratorio repertoire were a forum of social interaction that could provide a bonding activity for people of diverse social and religious backgrounds. As well as being of the “highest order,” the music they championed was written to satisfy the values of a heterogeneous society. As William Weber explains, with specific regard to Handel’s oratorios, since oratorios were intended as public entertainment, their libretti dealt with mainstream religious issues in a manner that would appeal to all denominations.  

Consequently, in her study of choral societies in Birmingham, Antje Pieper writes,

> The [Choral] Festival acted as a unifying force with no denomination being in any way favoured or disadvantaged by the performance of oratorios because human experiences and their moral implications possess universal qualities. The religious stories and characters portrayed in oratorios were thought to aid character-formation through spiritual elevation and moral instruction. Irrespective of religious denomination, oratorios provided virtuous entertainment which could be commonly appreciated by all.

Likewise, while it was operational, Halifax’s Harmonic Society’s membership came from diverse backgrounds: Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, Baptists, native-born, recent immigrant, Loyalist-descended, Scottish, English, German – all joined together to perform the “Hallelujah” chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* and “The Heavens Are Telling” from Haydn’s *Creation* for their Haligonian peers. “We hope no discordant note may ever destroy the harmony which at present animates and distinguishes our friends of the Harmonic Society,” remarked an

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author for the *Royal Gazette*. Unfortunately, the Harmonic Society was never able to develop into a self-sustaining organization like its Boston counterpart. The first society lasted four years; the 1858 revival lasted no more than two. The exact cause of the Society’s dissolution is not known, but press reports suggest that its termination in 1846 resulted from financial difficulties, perhaps mismanagement. It is quite possible that these financial difficulties came as the result of warring titans within the society; even if it was not caused by rivalry, the financial situation more than likely caused tension between members, disrupting the comradeship that a voluntary society, in theory, should foster. Nonetheless, while the society’s inner workings may not have been entirely peaceable, during its years of operation it served as an agent of community formation and the public image of the Harmonic Society created by the Halifax press was one of solidarity.

Bands, singing societies, and other musical institutions also helped to bridge factional divisions and unite citizens for the common purpose of improving their communities through their musical enjoyment. For example, an author for the *Sun* suggested in 1846 that a series of Literary and Musical Soirées would allow the “middling and higher classes” to “mingle as neighbours.”

Taking the pen name, “Concord,” a correspondent from Antigonish wrote the following in a letter to the *Novascotian* concerning the March 1846 concert by the Antigonish Amateur Music Society:

> Such amusements reflect great credit on the community and should be adopted wherever and whenever circumstances admit, as the most innocent and agreeable manner of spending the leisure hours of rural life. They serve also to unite parties

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129 *Royal Gazette*; quoted in the *Morning Post*, 4 May 1840.

130 *Sun*, 19 October 1846.
more firmly in the bonds of friendship, to wipe off old grudges, and soften the
asperities of characters.\textsuperscript{131}

Other advocates also believed that, in addition to the moral refinement musical institutions could
achieve, music itself could bring concord and model the state of social order to which Nova
Scotians should aspire. A \textit{Morning Journal} author, for instance, believed, that in the midst of the
"jarring and discord on the political Board" during the spring of 1857, the concerts given at
Temperance Hall first by Jane Bolman, and then by J.S. Cunnabell would “be a nice opportunity
for our Legislators to soothe their troubled spirits.”\textsuperscript{132} “Who does not feel his heart subdued to a
more generous love of his ‘brother man,’ and still more of ‘gentler sister woman’ when the
roughness and asperity of life’s conflicts are soothed away by the strains of vocal melody?”
asked an author for the \textit{Morning Post}, inspired by the Harmonic Society’s recent performances
of selections from \textit{Messiah} and \textit{Creation}. By joining their voices together in song, the Harmonic
Society and other musical ensembles modelled what a truly progressive Nova Scotia should be:
different voices blending in chorus to achieve a glorious harmony.

\textbf{Music as Progress}

“The intelligence of any community,” claimed an author for the \textit{Liverpool Transcript} in
1860, “can be fairly estimated by the spirit which it displays in the cultivation of a taste for
music.”\textsuperscript{133} If such was the case, then according to the author of the vignette that opened this
chapter Halifax was a very intelligent community indeed. Not everyone, however, agreed that

\textsuperscript{131} \textit{Novascotian}, 6 April 1846.
\textsuperscript{132} \textit{Morning Journal}, 23 March and 15 April 1846.
\textsuperscript{133} \textit{Liverpool Transcript}, 5 April 1860.
Halifax had succeeded in becoming one of the most favoured communities in the whole universe, nor did everyone reflect upon Nova Scotia’s musical life with such enthusiasm. While the press did indeed praise the efforts of the Harmonic Society, amateur bands, and other musicians, they also criticized, chastised, and occasionally lambasted the public for their poor taste, and despaired of the lack of musical cultivation. The long stretch of time during which Halifax was without a Harmonic Society, for example, was “a reproach upon the tastes of Haligonians,” according to the *Acadian Recorder*.134 This chapter has focused primarily on what *being* musical meant, on how developments in the province’s musical life contributed to and were reflected in public discourse; however, *not being* musical also had an impact on the public image of Nova Scotia. On one level, as the next chapter will explore in more detail, not being musical showed Nova Scotia’s failure to keep pace with more advanced societies. Moreover, though, the lack of music institutions, the failure to maintain an active oratorio society, the preference for minstrel shows over refined concerts, and so on, suggested inherent flaws in the Nova Scotian character: a lack of desire to pursue improvement; an inability to give rise to a truly respectable society; a failure to fully embrace the ideals of civilized, progressive society.

The vision of what progress should be and how it was best achieved was never entirely clear. Likewise, the quest to improve Nova Scotia was infused with contrasts, contradictions, and uncertainties. Sutherland writes that, in Halifax,

> The struggle to extract progress from flux spawned a contradictory blend of ambition and anxiety among Haligonians. Their mood vacillated between boosterish claims of possessing a destiny for greatness and complaint that Halifax would forever be doomed to a ‘dull, stupid, phlegmatic’ existence.135

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134 *Acadian Recorder*, 6 February 1856.
135 Sutherland, “Voluntary Societies,” 239.
Haligonians’ ambitions and fears replicated on the community-scale the contradictory blend of sensibilities that characterized the provincial debates on progress throughout (and beyond) the pre-Confederation era. Nova Scotia’s musical life was firmly embedded in the culture of improvement, and in turn, music helped to fuel both the ambitions and the anxieties regarding Nova Scotia’s past and present achievement, and future potential. To some, the limited cultivation of music confirmed and reinforced pre-existing concerns regarding Nova Scotia’s character; nonetheless, in spite of the disappointments and failures, the achievements of Nova Scotia’s music-makers remained a source of hope and pride.

Ultimately, music was only one voice within the chorus that accompanied Nova Scotia’s “spirit of improvement,” alternately expressing optimism and anxiety for the province’s present and future progress. Not all Nova Scotians contributed in the movement to cultivate music, nor were all encouraged to. Other improvement causes, especially temperance, were considered more pressing, and Nova Scotia’s musical improvers had to compete with other improvers – often unsuccessfully – for public support. To a core group, though, music offered a viable means of nurturing, improving, and sustaining the province’s most important natural resource – its people. To this group, music could improve, enlighten, and refine the moral character. Music, in effect, could help to foster the class of cultured and responsible citizens necessary to lead the way to progress, and encourage a more harmonious state of existence among those citizens. The total membership of that core group remains undetermined, but certain key leaders, including individuals within the Harmonic Society and amateur bands, occasionally occupied the public spotlight, and with the assistance of the press, set an example for other Nova Scotians to follow. As Nova Scotia gradually shed its colonial past and made the transition from a backwater colony to a self-assured province, the press encouraged their peers to embrace music as a means of effecting positive change, and as a means of recognizing their own improvement. The music
institutions that the press championed helped to unite citizens within Nova Scotia’s communities. As respectable Nova Scotians enjoyed a band concert on the garden grounds or listened attentively to a chorus from *The Creation* in the company of their peers, they could recognize that they were part of a collective of citizens whose persistence promised the hope of Nova Scotia’s progress.
CHAPTER 6:

PRIDE AND PROGRESS:
MUSIC, PATRIOTISM, AND THE ACHIEVEMENT
OF A NOVA SCOTIAN IDENTITY

On 4 October 1854, an audience of spectators from across Nova Scotia congregated on the east front lawn of Province House to hear a mass choir of sixty of their peers perform a Mozart Gloria. The performance was part of the opening ceremony for Nova Scotia’s first Industrial Exhibition, a landmark moment in provincial history. Inspired by the 1851 World Fair at London’s Crystal Palace, the Industrial Exhibition was organized to promote self-awareness and pride among the Nova Scotian people, and to foster an image of Nova Scotia as a progressive province. It was held in Halifax and was largely orchestrated by Haligonians, but committee members from across the province had also contributed to its planning. For the ten days of the exhibition, Province House was filled with displays showcasing Nova Scotians’ products, produce, and handiwork. A total of 1,260 Nova Scotians contributed 3,010 items to the displays, ranging from furniture to needlework to fruits and vegetables, and competed for the prizes that were awarded by a committee of judges. In the evenings, attendees sat in the Temperance Hall auditorium to hear lectures on the theme of Nova Scotia’s progress. There were also fireworks, military displays, and a regatta to entertain the crowds that arrived each day at the exhibition, which by the end of its course had drawn approximately 25,000 spectators to participate in the celebration of their developing province.¹

Music was also part of the celebration of Nova Scotia’s progress. Before listening to the choir sing the Mozart *Gloria*, the crowd had watched four army bands parade through the Halifax streets, escorting the voluntary societies involved in the procession to the Province House lawn. Local book merchant E.G. Fuller sold copies of Henry West’s “Exhibition Quadrilles,” which bore on the front cover a lithograph of Province House that Fuller had commissioned specifically for the occasion.\(^2\) Pianos were exhibited as part of the display for the Department of Manufactures in Wood, and a prize was designated for the best Nova Scotian-made piano. There was also a special prize department for music, judged by James Forman, William Ackhurst, and the Bandmaster of the 72\(^{nd}\) Regiment. Prizes were awarded to Henry Haycraft and Louis Casseres for composition, and also to a young pupil from the National School for music copying.\(^3\) Several months before the Exhibition’s opening, the committee appointed a special sub-committee to plan the music for the event. Ackhurst, a former Harmonic Society member, volunteered to organize the amateur choir for the opening ceremony, and was joined on the committee by Lt. Thompson as well as by fellow former Harmonic members, ex-mayor Henry Pryor and merchant M.G. Black, Jr.\(^4\) Significantly, the music they chose to open the ceremony of Nova Scotia’s progress, along with “God Save the Queen,” was a sacred chorus by one of Europe’s greatest masters.

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\(^2\) In his advertisement for the sheet music, Fuller announced that he also sold copies of the lithograph separately (see *Morning Journal*, 11 October 1854).

\(^3\) The prize winners of the music category were announced in the *British Colonist* on 4 November 1854. Casseres won two prizes (one for a sacred anthem and one for a piano solo with set of waltzes), while H.J. Haycraft won three prizes for a glee, a song, and a Credo. E.C. Saffery and Emma Brent also submitted compositions but were not awarded prizes. See *List of Exhibits at Province House – 1854 (Industrial Exhibition)*, 1854, MG 6 vol.1 no. 1, Nova Scotia Archives.

\(^4\) Industrial Exhibition – Executive Committee Minutes Book, 1854, MG 6 vol. 1 no. 2, Nova Scotia Archives.
The Industrial Exhibition was the second of three major provincial celebrations held in Halifax during what historians later came to classify as Nova Scotia’s “Golden Age.” The first was the Nova Scotian centennial, celebrated in 1849, and the third was the 1860 tour of North America by Edward Albert, Prince of Wales, which brought hundreds of visitors to Halifax to witness the Prince’s arrival at his second North American destination. Each of these celebrations marked a significant provincial milestone: the passing of a century of British colonization; the organization of a province-wide event that conceptualized Nova Scotia as a world-class nation; the visit of royalty, which thrust Nova Scotia into the international spotlight. These were indeed extraordinary events in Nova Scotia’s pre-Confederation history, yet in many ways they were simply large-scale manifestations of a cultural movement from within Nova Scotia’s daily life. As signs of progress began to surface throughout the countryside; as improvements to living conditions, technological developments, and imported culture helped to distance the province’s settler past; as the process of colonization gradually yielded a viable civilization, Nova Scotians began “to think as Nova Scotians.” The descendants of settlers, as well as more recent immigrants, came to recognize themselves as citizens of a provincial community, and to believe that they and their neighbours, as well as people living in distant Nova Scotian towns, shared a common past, present, and future. Along with this emerging Nova Scotian consciousness, those who acknowledged themselves as “Nova Scotians” increasingly took pride in their citizenship, and expressed their patriotism by channelling their energies into the vision of making Nova Scotia a thriving and progressive province. The celebrations of the

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5 Ian Radforth provides a thorough account of the Prince’s North American tour in *Royal Spectacle: The 1860 Visit of the Prince of Wales to Canada and the United States* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004). The Prince’s first destination was St. John’s, Newfoundland, where he arrived on 23 July 1860. He came to Halifax on 30 July.

1849 centennial, the Industrial Exhibition, and the royal visit were organized displays of this emergent consciousness, and also opportunities for Nova Scotians to demonstrate to themselves as well as to the larger world the achievements their province had made during its 100 years of colonization.

Music was also part of these other two celebrations. A special piece of sheet music was likewise created to commemorate the 1849 centennial. A mass choir once again helped to celebrate the prince’s arrival in 1860, and amateur bands joined those of the garrison to parade through the city streets; Liverpool’s town band was even sent to Halifax to help entertain His Royal Highness and the rest of the city’s visitors. Moreover, just as musicians provided the sonic accompaniment for these celebrations, music was also part of the cultural movement that fostered Nova Scotia’s collective identity. Because Nova Scotia’s musical developments and achievements were a microcosm of the province’s general progress, music could be used as a symbol of patriotic pride. Furthermore, music was one of the many bonding agents that helped to form the collective consciousness. Finally, Nova Scotia’s musical life provided a space wherein those who ascribed to the Nova Scotian collective identity could express their hopes and anxieties about their province’s viability, and promote their agenda to further Nova Scotia’s progress.

This chapter explores the various ways in which music-making encapsulated, responded to, was an expression of, and helped to advance Nova Scotia’s collective consciousness and the companion sensibility of patriotism. The first part of the chapter provides a general context to situate music within this cultural movement, and establishes a framework in which music, as a sign of progress, could serve as a focal point of provincial pride. The second part examines the

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7 A choir of 4,000 Sunday school children performed during the welcoming address. See Radforth, 95.
intersection of this movement with Nova Scotia’s domestic music market. As Nova Scotians began to think as provincial citizens, a small-but-growing number of entrepreneurs responded to the prevailing public sensibilities and sold consumer goods that distinctly appealed to the Nova Scotian market. In doing so, they helped to develop symbols of common identity that supported the emergent collective consciousness. Music, musicians, and musical entrepreneurs thus served to both express and foster the spirit of pride and progress that characterized pre-Confederation Nova Scotia’s “Golden Age.”

**Boosting Nova Scotia**

“In Nova Scotia, it is generally acknowledged that there is yet no feeling of nationality,” wrote an author for the *Novascotian* – likely Joseph Howe – on 20 July 1826. “The population is a mixture of nations, with sentiments of patriotism perhaps, but with little of it clinging to the soil. The Province is still too young, and there is nothing in her past history to excite feelings of reverence or passionate attachment.”8 As John Reid explains, Nova Scotia at 1815 was essentially a cluster of isolated communities with little sense of unity, other than the knowledge that they shared a common land mass under the rule of a common Empire.9 Over the course of the next fifty years, though, this impassiveness gradually diminished as a sense of common identity began to form. This developing “collective consciousness” was enabled, in part, by technological developments in transportation and communication which helped to overcome the

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8 *Novascotian*, 20 July 1826.
physical barriers to provincial unity, and strengthened the connection between geographically disparate communities. D.C. Harvey posits that the socio-cultural developments of Nova Scotia’s “Intellectual Awakening” were also integral to making citizens think and act as Nova Scotians. 10 Nova Scotia became, in many ways, what Benedict Anderson terms an “imagined community”: people living in different parts of the province who had never met nonetheless perceived of themselves as living in communion with one another and sharing the common identity of “Nova Scotian.” 11 Nova Scotia was not “imagined” as a sovereign nation, but rather like old Scotland, was a distinctive entity within the larger British Empire that had its own unique people and history. The strength of Nova Scotia’s collective consciousness had limitations, as the province’s marginalized peoples, and especially those living in isolated, rural regions, felt little attachment to the provincial community. 12 Among those living in centralized communities who possessed political, social, or cultural power, though, a sense of common identity did emerge, and Nova Scotians living throughout the province conceived of themselves as citizens with membership in a larger, provincial community. 13

This emergent collective consciousness was accompanied by a blossoming spirit of patriotism. According to Ian Ross Robertson, Nova Scotians by the 1850s had developed an “intense sense of local pride.” 14 Under the guidance of the province’s cultural producers, Nova Scotians increasingly took an interest in their history, became aware of its achievements, and

10 See Harvey, 113–121.
12 Wynn, 314–318.
13 Harvey, 100 and 120; and Den Otter, The Philosophy of Railways: The Transcontinental Railway Idea in British North America (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 67–68.
expressed confidence in its potential. Throughout the pre-Confederation era, various Nova Scotians – including musicians – contributed indirectly to the emerging sensibilities of confidence and optimism through the success of their accomplishments, while others – such as the Industrial Exhibition’s organizers – took direct action towards strengthening the collective consciousness and fostering provincial pride.

The idea of progress was central to this cultural movement, as Nova Scotia’s collective identity found expression in the commitment to improving Nova Scotia. Driving Nova Scotia’s quest for improvement were Nova Scotia’s cultural producers who worked in various ways to “boost” – that is, to encourage and inspire – Nova Scotia’s progress.15 “Boosters” supported numerous, and sometimes competing, agendas as they campaigned for their fellow citizens to embrace their provincial partisanship, to invest pride in their homeland, and to enable their province’s improvement. The supporters of the Industrial Exhibition, for example, believed that this event, and the subsequent county exhibitions it was likely to spur, would “[stimulate] the people to greater exertions, and [cause] them to progress more rapidly in the world wide march of progress.”16 As Chapter 5 demonstrated, boosting Nova Scotia’s musical life was also one of these agendas, as music could bring about progress through improving Nova Scotia’s character.

Pride, progress, and self-awareness were thus interrelated phenomena, forming a concentric relationship of ideas during Nova Scotia’s age of colonial maturation. To Nova Scotia’s boosters, the growing sense of “Nova Scotianness” was the ultimate manifestation of the province’s progress. Railroad lines, steamships, and newspapers were products of progress that

16 Morning Journal, 1 May 1854.
helped to unify individual towns into a provincial community. The various developments in social and cultural infrastructure of the mid-nineteenth century – including, as this chapter contends, music – contributed to the collective consciousness by forging bonds of common citizenship. Those developments also represented Nova Scotia’s transformation from colonial backwater to progressive colony, and consequently helped to foster both the pride and the optimism of the Nova Scotian people. Progress yielded patriotic pride, while the emerging patriotism strengthened the collective consciousness and gave Nova Scotians reason to invest their energies in improving the young colony.

**Keeping Pace**

In counterpoint to Nova Scotians’ burgeoning sense of provincial consciousness was a similarly developing awareness of Nova Scotia’s relationship to the larger Atlantic World, and especially of how Nova Scotia compared to other Anglo societies. If progress for Britain meant the advancement of its people, institutions, and technology to a position of world leadership, for Nova Scotia progress necessitated first catching up to the conditions of older societies and making its people, institutions, and technologies compare favourably with those of the mother country and the neighbouring United States. Britain, and particularly London, served as the main reference for Nova Scotia’s progress, but America’s commercial success was also an important touchstone. Boosters both measured and advocated for progress by comparing Nova Scotia’s achievements against those of the societies with which they wished to keep pace. Urban, agricultural, commercial, industrial, and technological developments, and as Chapter 5 argued, provincial character all provided reference points for such measures, as did the
individual and collective accomplishments of Nova Scotian people. Boosters took pride when favourable comparisons could be made and encouraged Nova Scotians to do the same. In the case of the disparities that such measurement yielded, boosters urged their fellow Nova Scotians to apply their innovation, energy, and perseverance to help Nova Scotia catch up to the standards of the progressive world.

Nova Scotia’s music institutions, and its musical life in general, provided one means by which to make such comparisons. To this end, international communication systems helped to keep Nova Scotians informed of musical developments experienced in other centres. Although music was seldom headlining news, Nova Scotian newspapers occasionally printed short reports noting the formation of a new civic music society, or the travels of an artist, like Jenny Lind, or included a short description of the music performed during a major ceremony. Newspapers sometimes also tracked the travels of touring artists who had once performed in Nova Scotia, as the performances of such individuals in large cities affirmed that Nova Scotia was occasionally privy to world-class entertainment.

The Nova Scotian press paid particular attention to the activities of the music institutions in nearby Saint John, New Brunswick. General interest was partly the motivation for these reports, since touring artists often performed in Saint John before travelling east to Halifax. By monitoring Saint John’s concert activity, Haligonians could compare what was being heard there to their own city’s concert life, and also gain advance knowledge of the performers headed their way. This interest in Saint John’s musical life, though, had deeper implications. As Halifax vied

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17 For example, in 1858 the Acadian Recorder ran a series of articles entitled “Notes of a Flying Visit Among Our Neighbours.” The 16 October instalment described the author’s experiences visiting Portland, Maine. His article provided a comparison of that city with Halifax, determining that Halifax was superior to Portland in natural beauty, commercial advantage, and wealth (although the architecture and landscape of Portland bested that of Halifax). He concluded, “there are some parts of Nova Scotia the grandeur and beauty of the scenery of which are seldom surpassed by anything of that kind to be met with among any of our neighbours.”
to be the main commercial centre on the British north Atlantic, Saint John was the city’s main rival. Saint John at mid-century was a larger urban centre, with a stronger shipbuilding industry and manufacturing base, although Halifax maintained the advantage of being the British military garrison. Keeping up with Saint John — a city with similar history and aspirations — was not only a measure of the success of Halifax’s colonial development, but was critical for Halifax’s future prosperity. Because of this rivalry, the Industrial Exhibition held in Saint John in 1851 was a secondary motivation spurring Nova Scotia’s exhibition committee into action. Over a decade earlier, the Nova Scotian press had watched the development of Saint John’s Harmonic Society. When the Saint John institution installed an organ in the city’s Mechanics Institute Hall, the Morning Herald reported, “Our Harmonic Society can’t come that yet [sic.]; but we can surpass the sister city in producing sweet sounds.”

With an eye to the musical developments happening in other North American cities as well as those in Britain, the Nova Scotian press identified Nova Scotia’s musical deficiencies and advocated for citizens to take action. A Morning Post author, for example, contrasted Halifax’s “supineness” with the music cultivation taking place in Boston. Claiming that the Handel and Haydn Society and the Boston Academy of Music, along with Boston’s several concert hall facilities, had many beneficial effects for the refinement of morals and the cultivation of taste in Boston, the author expressed his hope that Halifax would have, in the not-too-distant future, the guidance of competent instructors and a society dedicated to the performance of musical masterworks, and thus “be able to maintain some well founded pretension to musical taste and

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18 See Bonnie Huskins, “‘A Tale of Two Cities,’” 31–46. See also Otter, 73.
19 *Morning Herald*, 7 March 1843.
20 By this quirky turn-of-phrase, the author is suggesting that Halifax’s musical life was in a “supine” state, meaning it lacked inertia.
Other members of the press throughout the pre-Confederation period echoed the *Morning Post* author’s sentiments, and voiced their own aspirations for music institutions to be established and native musical talent to be encouraged. As the previous chapter established, the state of a community’s musical life served as a gauge of that intellect, refinement, and moral character. Such advocacy, then, for more concerts, for a permanent singing society, and for promoting native music-making, was not simply a plea for entertainment, but part of a larger booster agenda to effectuate Nova Scotia’s progress. As an article in the *Morning Post* explained, the cultivation of music could “elevate the tone of society, and give us a character which will elicit respect for us in other lands, and to procure this distinction of Nova Scotia, ought to be, and verily we believe is, the fervent wish of all her children.” Because of music’s capacity to improve moral character, boosters identified the cultivation of music as a means to help Nova Scotia keep pace within the Atlantic World.

**Pride and Nova Scotian Achievement**

Despite efforts to encourage industry, to improve moral character, to stimulate commerce, or to generally boost morale and promote progressive development, pre-Confederation Nova Scotia continued to lag behind the touchstone nations with which it sought to keep pace. Nonetheless, while “lagging behind” was the predominant characteristic of Nova Scotia’s march – or, perhaps more aptly, “struggle” – of progress, by 1867 the province could also boast numerous achievements that not only testified to its progress, but helped to foster Nova Scotians’ burgeoning sense of pride of place. The success of the Cunard steamline, for

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21 *Morning Post*, 26 November 1840.
22 *Morning Post*, 17 December 1840.
example, helped to create a surge of pride and to inspire optimism for future Nova Scotian achievement.

Thus, when Nova Scotia’s musical life did exhibit promise of catching up and developing a progressive character, it could contribute to the “intense sense of local pride” Robertson describes. “Oh! there’s a thrill of proud gratification rushes into the bosom of every lover of his country (and where is the Nova Scotian who is not?) when he contemplates the increasing cultivation in the intellectual field of his native land,” wrote a *Morning Post* author following Henry Russell’s visit to Halifax in 1840. As signs of Nova Scotia’s increasingly intellectual character, concerts – especially those performed by talented native performers – were promoted enthusiastically, and attendance at such concerts was treated as a matter of civic pride. The Harmonic Society, in particular, was a focal point of boosterish sentiment, and its press promotions were often shrouded in proud rhetoric. The *Morning Post* called the society a “highly prized acquisition to our City,” while *The Times* posited that the society, in addition to improving Halifax’s moral character, would help to enhance civic pride, and would attract the “notice of strangers.”

By mid-century, Nova Scotia could also boast of several individuals whose internationally-renowned accomplishments had earned the province recognition for something other than its colonial status and poverty. The success of these individuals, in turn, boosted local morale and pride. In particular, Thomas Chandler Haliburton – “the only literary figure in all the British North American colonies to attain an international reputation,” according to Robertson – became the figurehead for Nova Scotia’s potential, but as Robertson notes, several other

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23 *Morning Post*, 17 December 1840.
24 *Morning Post*, 11 April 1844; *The Times*, 7 May 1844.
internationally successful Nova Scotians also helped to swell local pride as their achievements hinted at the promise of future progress. These men included Dr. Abraham Gesner, the inventor of kerosene, and Sir William Fenwick Williams, one of the major heroes of the Crimean War. Gesner and Williams, Robertson writes, “joined Haliburton, Dawson, Howe, Enos Collins and Samuel Cunard as native Nova Scotians who could match the best of what British North America and indeed the English-speaking world as a whole could offer.”

Meanwhile, the success of local entrepreneurs, artisans, and intellectuals also bolstered patriotism, as their achievements testified to Nova Scotia’s ability to produce industrious, intelligent and creative people, and gave rise to the hope that Nova Scotia could one day become less dependent on the ideas and industries of other nations. The publications of Halifax author Mary Herbert, for instance, had little impact beyond the Halifax community, but were nonetheless received as signs of Nova Scotia’s potential. Taking pride in all demonstrable forms of progress, boosters encouraged Nova Scotians to support the various works of their fellow citizens.

The closest that a native Nova Scotian musician came to achieving an international reputation was J.S. Cunnabell, whose instructional book, A Selection of Airs, Marches, Waltzes, etc., Arranged as Progressive Lessons for the French Accordion, was published by C.H. Keith of Boston in 1840 and subsequently advertised in American newspapers. The Morning Post reprinted one of those American advertisements, offering it as evidence “that the natives of this place are occasionally heard of elsewhere than at home.” While no Nova Scotian musician succeeded, like Haliburton, in distinguishing their province abroad, they did, like Herbert, spark pride at home. Through their accomplishments in a cosmopolitan art that required discipline and

25 Robertson, 341.
26 Morning Post, 9 September 1840.
intelligence, Nova Scotia’s native musicians demonstrated that Nova Scotia could produce talented and capable people. Consequently, when a visitor to Halifax in 1822 remarked that Halifax’s amateur Quartette Club was equal in skill to any ensemble existing in any of the largest American cities, his words were put into print by the *Acadian Recorder*.\(^{27}\) In general, the Nova Scotian press supported natives’ music-making, both by advocating for the cultivation of local talent and enthusiastically promoting native concert giving. The press also encouraged their readership to recognize Nova Scotians’ musical talents as an admirable accomplishment and to take pride in the efforts of local musicians and their institutions. For example, the *British Colonist* advertised a concert by Mr. Miles’ singing class by stating, “The programme promises a rich treat which should be countenanced all the more that the pieces are to be executed by native talent.” The author added, “there can be no doubt that the youth of Nova Scotia can compare favourably, in talent, with the youth of any other country, and only require encouragement and practice for the proper development of their latent powers.”\(^{28}\) Similarly, the press urged the public to support and take pride in the efforts of the native musicians comprising amateur bands and music societies, whose achievements in a character-refining art also testified to Nova Scotia’s progress and potential.

As the first Nova Scotian to ever give a benefit concert, and one of the only native Nova Scotians to perform publicly in a professional capacity, Cunnabell received significant attention from the Halifax press. Boosterish rhetoric frequently pervaded the publicity surrounding his teaching and concerts. When Cunnabell returned from teaching in the United States and started a singing school in Halifax, the *Sun*, for instance, advised Haligonians to support his enterprise

\(^{27}\) *Acadian Recorder*, 10 August 1822.

\(^{28}\) *British Colonist*, 7 September 1848.
because he was a native of Halifax, and furthermore, because he was as talented as any of the itinerant foreign musicians that occasionally came to the city. Wishing Cunnabell success for his 8 June 1857 concert a Halifax Daily Sun author proclaimed, “as a Nova Scotian, we feel proud of him and the musical talent he possesses within his own family circle. We have no doubt but that the ‘patriotic and soul-inspiring melodies’ in store for Monday might have the effect of stimulating the ‘dormant patriotism’ of his countrymen.” Cunnabell’s first concert, ten years earlier on 28 June 1847, had been heralded as a historic moment, bringing an all-Nova Scotian company of musicians to the concert stage for the first time. For this and each of Cunnabell’s subsequent concerts, the press praised the musician and his family, and urged the public to support and take pride in his displays of native talent.

The Native vs Foreign Paradox

At the same time, though, some members of the press expressed concern that, despite Cunnabell’s merits as a musician, his concerts would receive inadequate support because he was a native Nova Scotian and not a foreign touring artist. Prior to Cunnabell’s first benefit concert, an Acadian Recorder author remarked,

By the way, in reference to [Cunnabell’s concert], some of the journals of the city, from ill-nature or simplicity recommended Mr. Cunnabell to public patronage because he is native. They ought not to have mentioned that fact unless they intended to do him positive injury, for it is the fashion to encourage strangers and neglect natives, when public exhibitions of talent are submitted to a discriminating audience elsewhere as well as Halifax.

Similarly, one year later an author for the The Times wrote,

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29 Sun, 10 July 1846.
30 Halifax Daily Sun, 5 June 1857.
31 Acadian Recorder, 26 June 1847.
We hope that Mr. Cunnabell may not by the operation of free-trade be wedged out in his time, by foreign importations. We fear that if it depends upon the encouragement of those who are enamoured of complete reciprocity, that his respectable talent as a composer and director will stand but little chance of successful patronage.\textsuperscript{32}

The latter comment, written as Nova Scotians’ anxieties concerning Britain’s new free-trade policy escalated, may have been more of a political statement disguised as musical commentary than an actual concern regarding Cunnabell’s ability to draw an audience; nonetheless, the author’s words effectively reveal the foreign domination of Nova Scotia’s musical life, and highlight the quandary both native musicians and their boosters faced.

The experience of the Maxner sisters in Halifax in 1857 also illustrates this quandary. Young musicians from Windsor, the Maxner sisters began performing in their hometown, and then came to Halifax to give a benefit concert on 4 July 1857. Most of the newspaper advertisements, which appeared well in advance of their concert, included a sentence or two reassuring the public that the sisters were indeed good performers. Nonetheless, evidence suggests that Halifax was not entirely confident that two young musicians from provincial Nova Scotia would be capable of presenting a satisfactory concert. When news of the Maxners’ intention to perform in Halifax began circulating in May, a writer for the \textit{Morning Journal}’s “Talk and Topics” column, commented

\begin{quote}
We know nothing of the merits of these young Ladies in that line, but make the general remark that there is no kindness in urging forward persons with merely ‘good voices’ until they have received sufficient training to enable them to command the approval of a discerning audience.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

When their concert date arrived, an \textit{Acadian Recorder} author praised the Maxners, but in a cautious manner that ultimately avoided making any guarantees regarding the girls’

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{32} \textit{The Times}, 30 May 1848.
\item\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Morning Journal}, 29 May 1857.
\end{itemize}
professionalism: the author wrote, “we are assured by a competent judge who has had opportunities of knowing that these young ladies have sweet, rich, and powerful voices. To what extent they have been cultivated, we are unable to say.”

Perhaps anticipating that a city audience would have reservations about the abilities of two country musicians, the Maxners recruited the services of Casseres and several of Halifax’s talented amateurs as a guarantee that their programme would include quality performances (see their advertisement in Figure 6.1).

Despite their efforts, though, and the press’ entreaties to support native talent, the Maxners failed to draw a good audience.

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34 Acadian Recorder, 4 July 1857. Notice that the author of the notice avoids making his own judgment, and instead passes the responsibility to the “competent judge” (who possibly may have been Casseres, the Maxners’ accompanist).

35 A reviewer for the Morning Journal, 10 July 1857, wrote, “We are sorry to hear the Misses Maxners’ concert was not well attended. Their vocal powers are highly spoken of and probably with more training and experience they may arrive at excellence. Let them not be discouraged.”
Ultimately, Nova Scotia appears to have suffered from the same problem plaguing Britain’s musical life. As has been well documented, foreign musicians reigned supreme in Britain during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, forcing native British musicians to either struggle for recognition at home or to search for employment elsewhere. This problem, though, was doubly acute for Nova Scotian musicians. According to Deborah Rohr, in the same manner that Italian and German musicians succeeded in Britain, British immigrants became the prestige musicians of the new frontiers to which they relocated, including North America. Forced to compete with British imports, along with musicians from large American cities and from other foreign countries, Nova Scotian musicians were trapped at the bottom tier of the musicians’ hierarchy.

Consequently, Nova Scotia’s musical life was governed by a curious paradox; on the one hand, boosters encouraged the development of native talent. On the other hand, concertgoers expected an assurance of quality entertainment in exchange for their ticket money, and wanted to hear performers who had won the approval of discerning audiences, not unknown musicians from country towns. The key to success seemingly lay in how a musician “marketed” him/herself. To perform as an amateur was informed by one set of expectations; to perform as a professional was informed by another. In presenting oneself as a professional artist at a benefit concert, one subjected oneself to the same level of scrutiny as the professional musicians who

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36 Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750–1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 31. In *Music of the Colonial and Revolutionary Era* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2004), John Ogasapian acknowledges that British musicians became the United States’ musical leaders following the Revolutionary War. See especially Chapter 9, “Church Music in the Federal Era,” 139–155. Similarly, Nicholas Temperley writes (in reference to the Federal period), “properly trained musicians from Britain were sought out and looked up to in America, not only to direct performances and offer their own compositions, but to teach, train, and guide American musicians and music lovers so that they in turn could become truly scientific. Any professionally trained musician from Britain was likely to be treated with respect as an ‘able master,’ and his services would be in some demand, particularly as a teacher.” See Temperley, *Bound for America: Three British Composers* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 4.
came to Halifax from the United States and Britain. In short, being a Nova Scotian did not guarantee a warm reception from the “fastidious” Halifax concert public. Miss Bolman, a blind musician from Lunenburg and the third of Nova Scotia’s native professional concertizers from the pre-Confederation period, appears to have been greeted by a substantial audience each time she performed. Her success, though, may be partially indebted to the conditions of her disability: some audience members may have felt compelled to support her as a charity case, while others may have been drawn by the novelty of a blind performer. Concert reviews suggest that Cunnabell’s concerts were also successful affairs, perhaps because Cunnabell was indeed a talented performer and because he “[had] the peculiar faculty of selecting appropriate pieces suited to the varied tastes of a Halifax audience.” Cunnabell’s success may have been enhanced by his selection of holidays as the occasions for his concerts. The Misses Maxner, however, perhaps because of a country versus town bias, did not fare as well, despite boosters’ efforts to promote native talent.

Nonetheless, although the fastidious members of the concert public did not always heed boosters’ urgings, the Nova Scotian press continued to advocate for the cultivation of native talent and encouraged the public to take pride in local amateurs’ achievements. Concert reviews also suggest that audiences had fewer qualms about supporting Nova Scotian concertizers when the musicians were amateurs rather than professionals. Pleased by the native artists comprising the Harmonic Society, whose efforts promised to elevate the provincial character, an author for

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37 According to Simon McVeigh, in general, the majority of the handicapped musicians who performed at London’s public concerts were treated as novel curiosities, and these musicians marketed themselves as such. Some blind performers, however, treated their disability as a cause for charity rather than as a novelty and “aspired to present a picture of normality.” Other blind performers, though, fell into the former class. And even if the performer wished to appear as normal, his/her desires did not prevent the audience from treating him/her as a curiosity. See McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 84–85.

38 *Sun*, 5 June 1857.
the *Novascotian* asserted that native musical talent should be given the same level of public support as native industry and manufacturing.39 “If amusement is really necessary, there is no reason why it should not be homespun,” wrote a *Morning Journal* author, expressing the hope that native musical talent would be encouraged and supported.40 Foreign musicians continued to dominate Nova Scotia’s musical life, but to the musical public and its boosters, the achievements of the province’s musicians were a testament to Nova Scotia’s progress, and the music they offered could be heard as a celebration of a young and promising provincial nation.

**The Piano and Nova Scotian Industry**

As boosters encouraged the public to recognize the progress of Nova Scotia’s musicians, the movement to support native talent transpired within the larger movement to support Nova Scotian industry, production, and achievement. Since Nova Scotia’s earliest days of colonization, the province had been primarily reliant on importation for both staples and luxury goods. Nova Scotians became increasingly cognizant of their heavy reliance on British and American industries, and by mid-century the desire to develop commercial and industrial independence was expressed, with growing urgency, in public discourse.41 This urgency was prompted, in part, by Britain’s decision to abandon the imperial commercial system, which

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39 *Novascotian*, 10 November 1845.

40 *Morning Journal*, 17 December 1858.

41 See for example, *Morning Journal*, 1 May 1854.
previously gave protection to the colonies from tariffs, in favour of free trade. This change in policy left Nova Scotia’s fragile economy even more vulnerable, as the large industries of the United States could now usurp the portions of the British market Nova Scotia had once supplied. Nova Scotians’ anxieties were further increased by the number of skilled Nova Scotian tradesmen leaving the province, lured away by the employment opportunities in the neighbouring United States. Moreover, in an age when industrial development quantified progress, Nova Scotia’s lack of native industries and reliance on other nations’ manufactured goods thus promised to impede the province’s ability to catch up and keep pace with the rest of the civilized world.

It was against this backdrop that, in the mid-1840s, several immigrant craftsmen attempted to establish Nova Scotia as a base for piano manufacturing. Within the span of a decade Halifax witnessed the four separate companies attempt to establish themselves in the city and place their products in competition against pianos imported from the most successful firms of London and Boston. Piano manufacturing in Nova Scotia remained a small-scale enterprise; to speak of a Nova Scotian piano “industry” is a bit of a misnomer, yet in many ways these businesses did form the beginnings of an industry. These piano companies were also among the first manufactories to produce locally a product that was traditionally imported to the province. Consequently, as Nova Scotians rallied for commercial/industrial independence, its piano manufactories became a discursive site for the debate on Nova Scotia’s potential to achieve prosperity. Nova Scotia’s piano makers consciously entered this debate, and used it as a

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platform to promote their businesses. Their pianos, in turn, emerged as symbols of Nova Scotia’s commercial progress.

The Expansion of an Industry

By the late 1840s, pianos had become fairly commonplace in Nova Scotia – at least in Halifax – and the piano business was gradually starting to take shape as a viable enterprise. Advances to piano crafting and production technology, coupled with the growing demand for musical entertainment emanating from Nova Scotian consumers’ homes, as well as the improvements to overseas shipping practices, meant that pianos began to arrive more frequently in the cargo unloaded at Halifax’s docks. A sense of a piano’s consumer worth can be gained from the phrasing and graphic presentation of advertisements for auctions, at which either new or second-hand pianos were sold.43 Auction advertisements typically listed the items for sale in a straightforward fashion (i.e., no adjectives). Pianos, however, often were described as “superior,” “handsome,” “fine-toned,” or “elegant”; or, the advertisement might specify the piano’s type of wood, or the origins of its make, especially if it was a London-made instrument (see Figure 6.2). The word “piano” was sometimes made visually prominent by being emboldened, capitalized, and/or placed at the beginning of a line, as exemplified in Figures 6.3

43 A political satire printed in the British Colonist on 6 June 1854 also provides a sense of the piano’s consumer value in Nova Scotia. Describing the Grand Railway Procession, the article satirized each of the Railway Commissioners with an image. A picture of a rooster, for example, represented the Provincial Secretary, who the Colonist frequently referred to as “the Stately Bird.” Joseph Howe, the Chief Commissioner, was described as “a travelling Safe, on its last legs,” likely because the Colonist believed that Howe was positioned to receive significant gains to his personal finances from a project that would drain heavily on public funds. The artist’s sketch depicting Howe “the travelling safe,” however, was not actually a picture of a safe but of a piano! Whether this graphic was chosen because it added an extra layer of meaning to the satire, or simply for pragmatic reasons (e.g., the press had a ready-made plate for a piano image on hand) is not clear, but regardless, the reference to a piano as a “safe” is indicative of the instrument’s monetary value.
and 6.4. In Figures 6.4 and 6.5, the auctioneer even announced the precise time bidding on the piano would begin, suggesting that there was high demand for these particular instruments.

6.2 Advertisement for Deblois and Merkel auction, Halifax (British Colonist, 11 March 1856)

6.3 Advertisement for W.M. Allan auction, Halifax (British Colonist, 18 November 1854)
The expansion of the American piano industry contributed significantly to the availability of pianos, and made Nova Scotia a satellite of the thriving business in Boston. American makers sent agents north to compete in the Nova Scotian market directly, even as Nova Scotian entrepreneurs began trading in American-made pianos as well as in London-made instruments. The label “London-made” still remained an assurance of quality, and Nova Scotians increasingly were able to obtain pianos made by London’s major firms of Broadwood and Collard & Collard. Potential piano buyers thus were provided with more options than they had been given in earlier
years, when pianos were “not a thing to be got” in Nova Scotia: the increased availability of pianos meant consumers could choose the make and model of their instrument, as well as from where and from whom they purchased it.\textsuperscript{44} The piano trade consequently became more competitive. Vying for their piece of the domestic music market, piano merchants began employing more persuasive approaches to advertising. Halifax’s Graham and Son, for example, promised consumers that the affordable Warnum and Sons piccolo pianos they imported from London were superior instruments with an impressive pedigree (Warnum and Sons had won a prize at the 1851 Great Exhibition – see Figures 6.6 and 6.7). In an 1856 advertisement (Figure 6.8) Mignowitz and Company made a dig at their competitors’ tendency to boast their pianos’ superiority, and placed a clever spin on that advertising practice to endorse their own merchandise. The pianos they sold “[did] not require to be puffed up in an advertisement,” Mignowitz claimed, because as instruments from a first-rate London maker, “they [could] speak for themselves.”\textsuperscript{45} Nonetheless, despite his pianos’ ability to “self-advocate,” Mignowitz – like Graham and other piano merchants – still thought it prudent to point out their pleasing tone and ability to endure the Nova Scotian climate.

\textsuperscript{44} Lord Dalhousie remarked on the unavailability of pianos in Nova Scotia in his diary upon his arrival in the province in 1816. See Marjory Whitelaw, ed. \textit{The Dalhousie Journals}, vol. 1 (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 1978), 22.  
\textsuperscript{45} \textit{Acadian Recorder}, 4 October 1856.
6.6 Advertisement for Graham and Son, Halifax
(British Colonist, 15 November 1853)

PICCOLO PIANO FORTE.
Manufactured by R. Wernum & Sons.
London.

The subscribers have received per barque Moro Castle, a supply of these celebrated PIANO FORTES, long and favourably known in this community. These instruments are well built, and from their general arrangements are well suited to extreme and trying climates. The act one may be relied upon for durability and promptness of touch. These superior instruments are offered at the very low price of £15.

The Manufacturers obtained a prize medal at the Great Exhibition in 1851.

Nov 15.
GRAYAM & SON.

6.8 Advertisement for Mignowitz & Co., Halifax
(Acadian Recorder, 4 October 1856)

Per Barque White Star.

MIGNOWITZ & CO.

In addition to former importations for the present season, have received as above, further supplies of seasonable GOODS, among which may be enumerated Women and Children's Plush BONNETS, Ladies' Black Crêpe and Silk Bonnets, Ladies' Woollen Gaunlets, Felted Paisley, and Wool, Long and Square SHAWLS, Infants Cashmere Hoods and Hais, &c., &c.

Also—2 London made PIANO FORTEs, of superior tone and finish, made expressly to stand the Climate,—they are from a first rate London Maker, and do not require to be pushed up in an advertisement, as they can speak for themselves. Parties in want of a good instrument, at a low figure can now supply themselves.

Oct 4.
147, Granville Street.

6.7 Advertisement for Graham and Son, Halifax
(British Colonist, 4 February 1854)

Patent Check Action

PIANO FORTE.
Manufactured by R. Wernum & Sons.
London.

These instruments are well known to the Musical World for their great superiority. They are to be found in all parts of the globe. Made of the very best materials, they are well suited for extreme and trying climates.

The strength and excellence of the action is proved by the length of time they keep in tune.

They are offered for sale at about half the price of other Pianos of the same quality.

Reference for these facts, can be made to any of the Music Professors in the city.

The Manufacturers obtained a prize medal for their instruments at the Great Exhibition in London in 1851.

Feb 4.
GRAYAM & SON.
As local merchants sought to fulfill the growing demand for pianos with American and British importations, several immigrant craftsmen also recognized an entrepreneurial opportunity. Thus, amidst the rallying cries for Nova Scotia’s commercial progress, Nova Scotia joined Britain and the United States in the piano industry. According to Helmut Kallmann and Florence Hayes, the first Nova Scotian piano builder was B. Slade, who began advertising the sale of his pianos and organs in the *Novascotian* in 1832; however, there is little other evidence of his work, suggesting that his business did not last for long. Nov Scotia’s first successful piano manufactory was the H & J Philips Piano Company, which began building pianos in 1847. The company’s founder, Henry (Heinrich) Joseph Philips, immigrated to Halifax in 1845 from Hamburg, where he had been working as a piano maker for fifteen years. John B. Philips, who was possibly Henry’s brother, also immigrated to Halifax that year, and in 1847 they entered into partnership to build “Nova Scotian” pianos. They imported the keys and action for their pianos from England, but built the rest of their pianos in their workshop on Barrington Street using local wooden materials. In August 1847, advertisements for a concert by the 20th Regiment Band announced that the bandmaster’s twelve year-old daughter, Miss Oliver, would perform a composition by Mozart on a superior piano furnished for the occasion by Messrs. Philips, the “first of its kind ever manufactured” in Halifax.

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48 *Morning Chronicle*, 9 August 1847. A concert review in the *Novascotian*, 16 August 1847, also commented on the “elegant” piano that the Philips had supplied and stated that it was the first piano manufactured in Nova Scotia.
A second firm, H & G Moir, joined the fledgling Nova Scotian piano industry in 1852. George MacLaren names George and William Moir as the builders/proprietors. Little is known about the Moirs’ business, other than they were located at the corner of Duke and Barrington streets.

**Encouragement for Native Manufacturing**

Responding to the prevailing attitudes advocating for Nova Scotian industry, the Moirs used their status as Nova Scotian craftsmen as their primary marketing tactic. As part of their advertising, they published a promotional pamphlet entitled *Encourage Protection and Home Manufacture: H & G Moir’s Improved Patented Piano Forte*. Following a brief article about the Moirs’ business, the pamphlet contained notices and reviews excerpted from the Halifax press, and the names of seven gentlemen from Halifax, two from Sydney, and one from Annapolis who had purchased Moirs’ pianos. Halifax music teachers A.H. Lockett, J.P. Hagarty, and Nicholas Oliveri (97th Regiment bandmaster) were listed as well, although it is not clear if they had purchased pianos or were simply able to testify to the quality of the Moirs’ craftsmanship. The front cover of the booklet reads, “Before you look to foreign works, read the Within, which you will find of paramount importance.” Establishing a piano manufactory had posed difficulties, the authors claimed, in light of the fact that several foreign businesses were at that point competing for the Nova Scotian piano market. The Moirs, however, had already “succeeded beyond [their] expectations” because the quality of their locally-made instruments met, if not, exceeded, the quality of foreign imports:

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49 See MacLaren, 91.
50 *Encourage Protection and Home Manufacture: H. & G. Moir’s Improved Patented Piano Forte* (Halifax: H. & G. Moir, ca. 1852), Akins Collection, AK F100 EN1, Nova Scotia Archives.
To enumerate the improvements in PIANO FORTES within the past few years would be useless, yet we do profess and have stated publicly, and as yet have not been contradicted ... that our “PATENT GRAND SQUARE PIANO FORTES” have not been surpassed or even equalled in this City, both for finish, durability, cheapness, utility and sweetness of tone. We had given our attentions to this branch of our Manufactory before we considered ourselves competent to decide on competing with the rapid improvements in other Countries: we now with confidence can do so.\(^{51}\)

The newspaper testimonials included in the pamphlet also had promoted the Moirs’ pianos by comparing them favourably to foreign products. An excerpt taken from the *Sun* began,

> We are frequently reminded by croaking gentlemen that the Country is “going” or has “gone” – “to the dogs” – that the natives are fleeing it to seek fortunes on a more favoured soil, but somehow or other maugre [sic.] all their wailing, we every now and then stumble on some young Nova Scotians, who, having been abroad, have returned with sharpened wits, improved skill, and more enterprising habits, to pursue their occupation under more favourable auspices, in their native land. To all such a warm welcome is due, and a helping hand.\(^{52}\)

The other two newspaper “testimonials” included in the pamphlet likewise emphasized the worthiness of the Moirs’ business endeavour, and encouraged citizens to be truly patriotic and support local industry, rather than buying “foreign trash.”

The pamphlet also included several newspaper excerpts that detailed a controversy that arose between the Moirs and R. J. Fulton, a “person who came to this city on a speculation, and who had no stake or interest in the province.”\(^{53}\) Fulton challenged the Moirs to a public exhibition, for the purpose of demonstrating that Boston builder Lemuel Gilbert’s “Boudoir” pianos were superior to the Haligonians’ products.\(^{54}\) The exhibition, as Fulton proposed it,
would have each contender engage a pianist to give a demonstration of that contender’s piano
before a panel of judges, who would evaluate the pianos based on workmanship, action, power,
and tone quality. The Moirs accepted Fulton’s challenge, confident that their instruments were
superior to Gilbert’s “Yankee catch-pennies.” A Morning Chronicle author praised the native
builders’ “spirited reply” to such an “arrogant challenge”:

It has too long been the practice of Nova Scotians to class themselves below
Englishmen, Yankees, &c. This is all stuff – arrant nonsense. What we want our
people to believe, is that in producing articles in limited quantity, requiring
neither extensive capital or complicated machinery, they can succeed as well as
those of other countries – if they will only try! The Moirs, acting upon this
maxim, are fast driving imported Pianos out of this market, - hence the acrimony
displayed in Fulton’s challenge.\textsuperscript{55}

Whether or not the proposed exhibition actually took place is not clear, but certainly the Moirs
did not succeed, as the Morning Chronicle suggested, in driving foreign importations out of the
Nova Scotian piano market. Still, the Moirs’ pamphlet, and the controversy it describes,
effectively illustrate that the piano industry played a contributing role in the Nova Scotian plight
for commercial independence, and more broadly, for self-assertion. In the midst of an era when
out-migration and steady importation made the prospects of commercial progress seem grim, the
Nova Scotian piano industry offered a ray of hope, and the piano emerged as a symbol of Nova
Scotia’s potential.

Unfortunately, the Moirs’ manufactory did not thrive and become the “Musical Deport of
Nova Scotia” as their pamphlet predicted, despite the support they received from the local press.

In October of 1853, their notices in the British Colonist suggest a growing business, but an

\textsuperscript{55} Encourage Protection and Home Manufacture, 13.
advertisement printed in that same paper on 27 December 1853 informed the public that William Allen would be auctioning off the furniture and musical instruments of Messrs. H and G. Moir.56

**Nova Scotian Innovation and Market Rivalry**

In the meantime, Halifax’s first piano builders proved to be more successful than the ill-fated Moirs. Henry Philips left the business in 1850, but John continued building pianos under his own name. Figure 6.9 illustrates the range of pianos that he sold. Like the Moirs, John Philips also promoted his pianos as items of native manufacturing, and emphasized that his handiwork was superior to any of the British- or American-made pianos imported through the Halifax docks (see Figures 6.10). The crux of his marketing strategy, though, was the suitability of his pianos to Nova Scotia’s climate. As the advertisement in Figure 6.11 exemplifies, Philips claimed that his pianos were designed to withstand extremes in climate and were more durable than any other piano available on the market. A piano’s ability to withstand climate changes, of course, was a serious concern to the potential piano buyer, and Nova Scotia’s northern-Atlantic climate was indeed hard on pianos, especially those not manufactured with that climate in mind. Other piano merchants, as Graham’s and Mignowitz’s advertisements in Figures 6.6 through 6.8 illustrate, also highlighted their pianos’ ability to withstand harsh climate. The above advertisements may possibly have been a response to Philips’ advertising campaign, or vice versa, or all of these advertisements may simply reflect a prevalent concern among piano buyers; either way, they aptly illustrate the competition inherent in the piano market – and that the Nova

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56 The Moirs’ notice in the *British Colonist*, 15 October 1853, indicated that they had just enlarged their stock and finished some patent square grand piano fortes. A second notice on 25 October indicated that they wanted to hire two boys as apprentices to the piano trade. William Allen’s advertisement in the *British Colonist*, 27 December 1853, lists a melodeon, violin, and four accordions, as well as four unfinished pianos and a variety of cabinet makers’ tools among the auction’s contents.
Scotian maker was determined to succeed against foreign rivals. As a Nova Scotian maker, Philips may have had an advantage over the imported competition in that he could claim authority on the local climate: his pianos were made in, and for, Nova Scotia.

6.9 Advertisement for Philips Pianos
*(Acadian Recorder, 20 September 1859)*

6.10 Advertisement for Philips Pianos
*(British Colonist, 9 September 1854)*
Philips also appears to have had local support for his business. Shortly after he and Henry established their enterprise in Halifax, Nova Scotia’s Lieutenant-Governor Sir John Harvey purchased the first of their pianos in 1846. By taking action in favour of native manufacturing, Harvey’s purchase undoubtedly helped to promote Philips’ pianos among the élite community. Philips also sold at least two of his pianos to foreign touring artists: he made a piano for the Heron Family during their 1852 concert tour to Halifax, and Madame Krollman took one of his pianos with her to Bermuda after her visit to Halifax in 1854. With these purchases, Nova Scotia was, for once, put in the role of an exporter, rather than importer, of musical culture. Most likely, having professional musicians purchase his pianos was a good

57 Blakeley, “Philips.”
58 British Colonist, 11 November 1852; Journal, 24 November 1854.
promotion for Philips’ business. The fact that the press commented on these purchases, though, suggests that the voyage of a Nova Scotian piano to Bermuda, in the company of a well-travelled artist, had significance beyond Philips’ personal success.

Prior to 1858, Philips occasionally loaned Temperance Hall a piano when one was required for a concert, although this act may have been as much a promotional strategy on his behalf as it was a sign that his pianos were highly regarded. In March of 1858, Philips completed an eight-foot, nine-inch grand piano with seven-and-a-quarter octaves for permanent use in Temperance Hall – “a magnificent instrument, in every respect,” according to an author for the *Halifax Morning Sun*. Commentators expressed hope that this new piano would stimulate the progress of Halifax’s musical life, by enabling more solo piano performances at Temperance Hall. The piano had its debut performance on 23 March at a Harmonic Society Concert. With a chorus of Nova Scotian amateurs singing works by Haydn and Mozart, and piano accompaniments played on a Nova Scotian grand, that concert effectively encapsulated Nova Scotia’s aspirations at mid-century: to assert itself as a self-supporting, progressive, world-class nation through the industry and achievement of its people. By producing “the largest and most powerful Piano Forte in the Province,” Philips’ enterprise helped to loosen the bonds of foreign commercial domination, and gave concrete evidence that Nova Scotian manufacturers could equal, even exceed, the workmanship of foreign producers.

Two years before building the Temperance Hall grand, Philips patented an iron-frame piano (see Figure 6.12). An *Acadian Recorder* author claimed the new cast-iron frame Philips invented gave the piano a brilliant tone and powerful resonance. Philips professed that his new

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59 *Acadian Recorder*, 20 March 1858; *Morning Sun*, 26 March 1858.
60 *Acadian Recorder*, 27 March 1858, and *Morning Sun*, 26 March 1858.
61 *Acadian Recorder*, 20 March 1858.
piano was the only instrument capable of staying in tune during extremes of heat, cold, and
damp, and thus with this patent he intensified his claim that his Nova Scotian-made piano was
the product best suited to the Nova Scotian climate. (Philips, in fact, may have been the “puffer”
referred to in Mignowitz’s advertisement from Figure 6.8, given that Philips had been actively
promoting his new piano at that time.) “We cannot but regard Mr. Philips’ invention as one of
very great importance to the musical world,” wrote an author for the *Acadian Recorder*. The
*Recorder’s* prediction, of course, was not fulfilled. Nonetheless, Philips’ invention may not have
been as revolutionary as kerosene, but for at least a fleeting moment it seemed promising that
Nova Scotia would become a leader in one of the most important commercial industries of the
nineteenth-century Atlantic World.

**The Nova Scotian Piano on the World Stage**

In 1854, Philips entered a square horizontal piano and a rosewood cottage piano in the
provincial Industrial Exhibition. His former partner Henry, then a resident of Bridgetown,
entered a “native bird-eye maple piano, with melodian accompaniment.” Local merchants
Della Torre and Rayner, and E.G. Fuller also contributed pianos to the display, although those
instruments were not eligible for prizes because they were imported instruments. Reporting on
the sights at the Industrial Exhibition, the *British Colonist*’s reviewer commented, “the pianos
made by Mr. Philips are beautifully polished, and are, we understand, of excellent quality and
tone.” Henry’s maple piano was awarded a £5 prize, while John’s square piano was awarded

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62 *Acadian Recorder*, 19 April 1856.
63 Lists of prize winners were published in instalments in local newspapers. The list of winners in the
Department of Manufactures in Wood was printed in the *British Colonist*, 31 October 1854.
64 *British Colonist*, 10 October 1854.
£10, one of the highest monetary prizes granted during the exhibition (and yet another sign of the piano’s consumer value).  

Perhaps Philips’ greatest achievement, though, occurred early on in his Nova Scotian career when one of his pianos was included in the Nova Scotian exhibit at the London World Fair at Crystal Palace. The exhibit’s primary focus was on Nova Scotian mineralogy, according to the catalogue, “to illustrate the proposition, ‘That the province of Nova Scotia is capable of supplying the whole British Empire with steel and charcoal iron, equal to the best foreign articles, and at greatly reduced prices’.” The exhibit also included articles, such as animal pelts and Mi’kmaq artifacts, which showcased Nova Scotia’s colonial roots. Philips’ piano was the only manufactured item included in the exhibit, possibly chosen because it was made – like Henry’s 1854 piano – of Nova Scotian bird’s-eye maple. According to Sutherland, the display had been “hurriedly assembled,” but nevertheless “won praise and medals at the imperial capital, thereby boosting local pride and preparing the way for further endeavour.” Significantly, contributing to the exhibit’s success was a maple-framed piano. If the “colonial” items represented Nova Scotia’s past and the minerals its future, the piano represented its potential to realize the vision of a wild land transformed into productive civilization.

Pianos also represented Nova Scotia at the London International Exhibition in 1862, although at this exhibition none of the pianos were crafted by one of the Philips. Instead, the entries were submitted by two new firms, who like the Philips and the Moirs, saw entrepreneurial opportunity in an expanding market. The first of these new firms was William Fraser and Sons

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65 Only items such as horses and wagons earned larger prizes.
67 Sutherland, “Nova Scotia’s Response,” 73.
William Fraser, a Scottish cabinet- and furniture-maker, had begun manufacturing pianos in 1856 with Charles Chatfield, a twenty-year veteran of the piano trade in London and the United States. Chatfield left Nova Scotia shortly afterward and was replaced in the business by Fraser’s son, who had recently returned from the United States where he had been developing his skills as a piano-maker. Fraser and Sons bought out John Philips in 1859 when he closed his firm and left Nova Scotia. The other Nova Scotian firm at the 1862 Exhibition, Brockley and Co., was also partially indebted to Philips: the same year that William Fraser began building pianos, Philips convinced Thomas Brockley, a foreman at the well-known London company of Broadwood and Stodard, to join him in Nova Scotia as a partner. The partnership, however, failed to materialize. Instead, Brockley’s son Alfred came to Halifax in 1857 to help his father start a family firm, and together with the assistance of John Misener and George Anderson, William and Alfred established Brockley and Company. Both the Fraser and Brockley companies entered pianos at the 1862 Exhibition, which were, according to the commissioners’ report, “Great additions to the [Nova Scotian] court.” Brockley’s cottage piano was awarded £25 and an honourable mention. Fraser and Sons did not win any honours in 1862, but they sent another piano – also made from native bird’s-eye maple – to the 1867 Paris International Exhibition, which this time received a special prize. In effect, the pianos of Philips, Fraser, and Brockley operated as ambassadors for Nova Scotia, demonstrating to the leading world nations that the province’s people were capable of producing manufactures on par with

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68 The reference to Chatfield’s experience was printed in an advertisement in the Morning Journal, 7 April 1856.
69 The notice of the dissolution of Chatfield and Fraser by mutual consent appears in the British Colonist, 8 April 1856, and the Morning Journal, 12 May 1856; the advertisement indicating that Fraser’s son had recently returned to Halifax from learning to build pianos in the United States appears in the Morning Journal, 30 May 1856.
70 MacLaren, 92.
those of Britain and the United States – and that the colony was capable of reproducing the best of civilized culture.

6.13 Advertisement for Fraser & Sons Pianos
(Hutchinson’s Nova Scotia Directory 1866/6, p. 353)

While the Nova Scotian piano industry never became a big business, the relatively quick succession with which four piano companies were established stands as testimony to the growth of Nova Scotia’s domestic music market. As Nova Scotian entrepreneurs sought to supply the demand for pianos, the products of their craftsmanship assumed symbolic importance within a larger cultural phenomenon. For instance, following Jane Bolman’s 13 April 1857 concert, for which the performers used one of Philips’ patent iron pianos, an author for the Morning Journal remarked, “Our citizens should be proud that in this place such instruments are made, which in
point of technical advantages, yield to none out of Europe.\textsuperscript{71} Pianos, in many ways, represented
the colonial vision: products of native wilderness were tamed and transformed to create one of
the most archetypical symbols of European culture. The Nova Scotian piano, and the music that
could be coaxed from it, were the physical and aural quintessence of Nova Scotia’s progress. As
such, it could be used to symbolize Nova Scotian achievement, and to inspire Nova Scotian
pride.

Music Publishing and the Search for Symbols of Common Identity

Just as Nova Scotia’s piano trade became a point of intersection for the competing British
and American piano industries, the province’s domestic market for sheet music also occupied an
intermediary position between the prolific British and American sheet music publishers. By
mid-century, crate loads of parlour songs, piano dance arrangements, and opera transcriptions
were shipped to Nova Scotia regularly from the major publishers of Boston and London as well
as other cities, such that Halifax merchants could choose to deal exclusively in either British or
American print goods. These crates were shipped to Nova Scotia, partly because publishing
houses were seeking to expand their commercial territory, but also because of the growing
demand for print music emanating from Nova Scotia homes: the pianos that consumers
purchased required appropriate music in order to be an effective tool of cultivation and
refinement. Like the Halifax piano builders who sought to redirect some of the monies spent on
foreign importations into local business ventures, several Nova Scotian entrepreneurs also took

\textsuperscript{71} \textit{Morning Journal}, 15 April 1857.
action to channel a portion of the sheet music industry’s profits into local coffers. Perhaps recognizing the impossible competition posed by publishing giants on either side of the Atlantic, these entrepreneurs did not presuppose to free the Nova Scotian music market from foreign domination through establishing a native industry, as the piano builders did. Sheet music publishing in Nova Scotia – even more so than piano building – remained on a very small scale, and never amounted to anything more than an offshoot business venture in which a few entrepreneurs occasionally dabbled for a few extra pennies. Nonetheless, the fact that Nova Scotian entrepreneurs did grapple for a tiny portion of the music market is significant, because their efforts represented Nova Scotian commercial incentive, and more importantly, because the material objects of their enterprise – Nova Scotian products for Nova Scotian people – were created for a culture in the process of defining itself.

**The Beginnings of Music Publishing in Nova Scotia**

The first Nova Scotian entrepreneur to enter the print music trade was James Dawson of Pictou, a bookseller and newspaper publisher. In 1838, Dawson imported music type to print and publish a collection of sacred music entitled *The Harmonicon*. (Dawson published two subsequent editions in 1841 and 1849, but these were produced by other printers.) *The Harmonicon* comprised psalm tunes, anthems, and fusing tunes written in four-part harmony, and was prefaced with an introductory text on vocal music. Although it was intended primarily for congregational singing in churches, Bertrum MacDonald and Nancy Vogan cite evidence that

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72 At least none of the advertisements placed by sheet music merchants suggested they had hopes of seizing control of the music market, as those placed by piano merchants did.

it was also used as a “method book” for singing societies.\footnote{Ibid., 61.} Various bookstores throughout the province sold *The Harmonicon* so most likely it was used in domestic contexts as well.

Within a matter of years after Dawson’s publication several Halifax merchants began to publish locally-authored sheet music. The first known extant score was co-published between 1844 and 1846 by Halifax booksellers Graham and Mackenzie.\footnote{The score is not dated, but since J.G. Jones was a resident of Halifax between June of 1844 and March of 1846 it was almost certainly published during that time (also, Falkland was Nova Scotia’s Lieutenant-Governor between 1840 and 1846).} Titled “The Halifax Quick March,” it was composed by J.G. Jones, director of the Harmonic Society at the time, and dedicated to Lieutenant-Governor Lord Viscount Falkland. In July 1849 the *British Colonist* advertised that E.G. Fuller, proprietor of the American Bookstore, had for sale copies of the “Centenary, or Fancy Fair Polka and Glop,” composed by Halifax musician Arthur H. Lockett.\footnote{*British Colonist*, 10 July 1849.}

In September, Fuller announced that he had published and was selling another four locally-composed works: “Nova Scotia Waltz,” by H. Winterbotham, “The Flag of Old England,” by R.G. Halls, and “Mayflower Polka” and “Sleigh Ride Galop” by Joseph P. Hagarty. The arrival of these publications was noted by several newspapers, including the *Novascotian*, which encouraged readers, “Fuller’s enterprise deserves patronage.”\footnote{*Novascotian*, 10 September 1849.} Unlike Dawson, neither Graham and Mackenzie nor Fuller printed these scores themselves but arranged their production with an external company, likely an American firm. Several of the scores Fuller published were lithographed by J.H. Bufford of Boston, as was Jones’ “Halifax Quick March.” Fuller did have business contact with Oliver Ditson of Boston (in at least one occasion Fuller was a subsidiary publisher for Ditson – see below), so Ditson’s company also may have been involved in the...
production of some or all of Fuller’s scores.\textsuperscript{78} As publishers, Graham, Mackenzie and Fuller would have acted as the intermediary between the composer and printer, and would have been responsible for the music’s promotions and sales. They may also have helped to finance the printing, and possibly requested that the composers write them in the first place.\textsuperscript{79} Although the physical scores were not manufactured locally, Graham and Mackenzie’s and Fuller’s direct involvement still constitutes Nova Scotian enterprise. Furthermore, the music printed on the scores was composed by resident musicians.

\textbf{Print Culture and Nova Scotian Identity}

What is particularly significant about Fuller’s publishing enterprise – aside from the local authorship of his publications – is that he started in 1849, the one hundredth anniversary of Halifax’s founding and the year officially designated as Nova Scotia’s centennial. Moreover, both he and Graham and Mackenzie began selling locally-composed, Nova Scotian-themed music during a cultural epoch characterized by, according to Sutherland, “the urge to find events and symbols which could be used to create a common sense of citizenship.”\textsuperscript{80} This movement to forge a collective consciousness inspired, for example, the formation of the Nova Scotian Philanthropic Society, a Halifax voluntary organization which Sutherland describes as “an

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Judith Fingard, Janet Guildford, and David Sutherland, \textit{Halifax: The First 250 Years} (Halifax: Formac, 1999), 63. See also Reid, 100.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
organization of locally-born men who wanted to assert their patriotism."81 To this end, the society organized annual festivities for Halifax’s Natal Day, as well as exceptional occasions, such as the coronation of Queen Victoria, which would unite the community through the act of commemorating and celebrating their shared heritage. The 1849 Centennial celebration was a particularly epochal event in this regard, as it represented Nova Scotians recognizing that they belonged to a century-old province.

While public festivals and celebrations, including the Nova Scotia Centennial and the Industrial Exhibition, were participatory, experiential expressions of citizenship and patriotism, the movement to create symbols of common identity was more quietly reflected in, and advanced by Nova Scotia’s developing print culture. Two of the earliest manifestations of this collective movement were Thomas Chandler Haliburton’s *A General Description of Nova Scotia* and *An Historical and Statistical Account of Nova Scotia*.82 Published in 1823 by Halifax’s Royal Acadian School and in 1829 by Joseph Howe respectively, these two books represented the first efforts to record Nova Scotia’s history. By narrating Nova Scotia’s history, Haliburton helped to delineate the imagined community to which Nova Scotians belonged. The “enthusiasm for self-discovery” that inspired Haliburton’s history, also underpinned Joseph Howe’s *Western and Eastern Rambles*, a collection of sketches he published in serial form in the *Novascotian* between 1828 and 1831 describing his travels around the countryside; in Howe’s words, he wished to “make the race growing upon her soil familiar with the beauties and resources of Nova Scotia, to make them feel that they had a country beneath their feet worthy of being loved and

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81 Fingard et al., 63.
A fourth significant literary work of this era was *Wildflowers of Nova Scotia* (1839), a collection of wildflower illustrations painted by Halifax artist Maria Morris with an explanatory text written by local naturalist Titus Smith. Like Haliburton’s and Howe’s works, it was purposed with familiarizing Nova Scotians with their native land; it was different, though, in that Morris’ drawings of mayflowers and other flora provided visual symbols to stimulate the provincial consciousness. All of these print works were a testament to Nova Scotian creativity and talent, as they simultaneously helped to forge a collective identity.

Similarly, these early sheet music publications presented symbols of common identity in response to the emerging collective consciousness and the growing urge to concretize Nova Scotia’s identity. As Richard Crawford argues, the main marketing tool in the sheet music industry’s arsenal was a work’s title, especially in the case of music written for solo piano. Consequently, the majority of nineteenth-century polkas, galops, waltzes, marches, etc., are seldom simply called “Polka,” “Galop,” “Waltz,” or “March,” but rather have fanciful titles, intended to catch prospective buyers’ attention. A well-chosen title, as Crawford writes, could turn “routine musical material into something picturesque.”

Significantly, all the titles of these first six publications are themed on a topic relating to the one hundred year-old province. Jones’ “Halifax Quick March” commemorated a progressive city with a lively piano dance, and a detailed lithograph of the city on the score’s front cover (see Figure 6.14). From Fuller’s centennial set, Winterbotham’s “Nova Scotia Waltz” was a tribute to the one hundred year-old province, while Hagarty’s “Mayflower Polka” was a tribute to one of the province’s

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most recognizable symbols: its provincial flower. Lockett’s “Centenary, or Fancy Fair Polka and Galop” was named in honour of the fair held in celebration of the Nova Scotian centennial. The fair was purposed with inspiring patriotism through participatory celebration; Lockett’s score, in turn, commemorated that event, and was both a physical (i.e., the print object) and musical souvenir of an important provincial moment. Fuller’s customers could participate in the celebration by purchasing the score, and afterward, re-experience that celebration by playing the polka and galop at home. Hall’s “The Flag of Old England” was set to a text written by Joseph Howe for the centennial ceremony. The text – which began “Hail to the day when the Britons came over” – invoked both Nova Scotia’s British patriotism and aspirations to honour “the flag of old England” through its progress (see Figure 6.15). With its suitably triumphant musical setting, the song was thus an affirmation of Nova Scotia’s identity, past, present, and future.

Even Hagarty’s “Sleigh Ride Galop” could be regarded as a tribute to the Nova Scotian province. Sleigh rides were a popular form of recreation frequently held in Halifax during the winter months. Although the title is not overtly patriotic, the music commemorates a pastime – an event of common citizenship – that was beloved by the citizens as a communal bonding activity. Years before, in 1826, an author for the Novascotian argued that public amusements and entertainments offered the key to stimulating Nova Scotia’s then-lacking patriotism. He wrote, “But the grand effect which I would wish to enforce… is the favourable influence which they [public amusements] are in exciting a love of country, and hastening on the formation of a national character.”

If amusement could indeed generate patriotism, as the Novascotian’s...
author suggested, a sleigh ride could well double with the mayflower as a symbol of Nova Scotia’s common identity.  

86 It is even possible that this piece was performed during a sleigh ride, thus endowing the music with an added layer of meaning for consumers that participated in the sleigh ride.
Verse 1

All hail to the day when the Britons came over,
And planted their standard, with sea-foam still wet,
Around and above us their spirits will hover,
Rejoicing to mark how we honor it yet.
Beneath it the emblems they cherished are waving,
The Rose of Old England the roadside perfumes;
The Shamrock and Thistle the north winds are braving,
Securely the Mayflower blushes and blooms.

Chorus

Hail to the day when the Britons came over,
And planted their standard with sea-foam still wet,
Around and above us their spirits will hover,
Rejoicing to mark how we honor it yet.
We'll honor it yet, we'll honor it yet,
The flag of Old England! we'll honor it yet!

Thus, to enter a commercial market dominated by powerful British and American industries, Graham and Mackenzie and Fuller presented products that had distinct appeal to their target consumers. The centennial celebration of 1849 provided Fuller with an entrepreneurial opportunity; he seized that opportunity by developing a line of merchandise appropriate to the occasion. His sheet music not only commemorated the immediate event, but captured the prevailing public spirit and satisfied a consumer interest that had roots in a social phenomena stemming from beyond the commercial marketplace. Just as some of the first works of commercial literature produced in Nova Scotia were motivated by the Nova Scotian desire for self-discovery, sheet music publication was also inspired by, and was a response to this cultural movement. Like Haliburton, Howe, and Morris and Smith, Nova Scotian composers established their authorship in print by acknowledging and celebrating the young-but-progressing province.
Composing Symbols of Common Identity

Graham, and especially Fuller continued periodically to publish sheet music composed by resident composers, and they were joined in this endeavour by several other booksellers. Several of the composers local publishers supported were regiment band masters or army musicians from the garrison, while Hagarty, Louis Casseres, E.C. Saffery, Emma Saffery Brent, and Francis Robinson were civilian resident professionals who were local teachers, performers at public concerts, and/or church organists. In all cases, they were influential members of the local music community with a high public profile. Table 6.1 presents a list of all the Halifax music publishers identified to date, and the scores that they published. In some cases, a Halifax merchant acted as a subsidiary of a larger American firm; nonetheless, the Halifax merchant still would have been involved in the publication process, and the composers of those works were still Halifax-based musicians. Of the extant scores, several of them are preserved in music albums of Nova Scotian provenance. Copyright dates are only occasionally printed on the score, but some of these scores can be dated definitively because, like Fuller’s first five publications, their arrival at the bookstore was announced in one of Halifax’s newspapers. 87 Not only do such newspaper advertisements provide a documentary record of Nova Scotian publications, but they demonstrate that the musical works of Nova Scotian composers were given special attention by the local press. This promotional practice suggests that locally-authored scores were of particular interest to the consumer public, and of interest to the reading public as well.

87 The sale of Jones’ composition may also have been announced in the Nova Scotian press, but I have not yet been able to find an advertisement. Time has not permitted me to search every newspaper, though, so I am hopeful that an advertisement will surface eventually!
Table 6.1 Sheet Music Published by Nova Scotian Publishers

†Denotes Military Musician  ‡Score not available

**Publisher: Graham & Mackenzie**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Sheet Music</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Jones, J.G. | “The Halifax Quick March” (ca. 1844–1846)  
- dedicated to Lord Viscount Falkland |

**Publisher: E. G. Fuller**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher</th>
<th>Sheet Music</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Brent, Emma Saffery | “The Entry of the Allies into Sebastopol, Grand March” (1855)  
- dedicated to Lady LeMarchant  
“When Snows Descend and Robe the Field” |
| Casseres, Louis G. | “The Sleigh Bell Polka” (ca. 1852–1858) |
| Corbett, Robert † | “Terra Nova Polkas” (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to Lieut. Col. Robert Law of the Royal Newfoundland Company Ship |
| Farrugia, Gaetano Francesco † | “The Agnes Waltzes” (1849)  
- dedicated to Lady Campbell  
“The Kissing Bridge Galop” (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to John Robert Stawell, Esq. (38th Regt.)  
“The Priory Polka” (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to Henry Pryor, Esq., Mayor of Halifax |
| Forbes, Judge | “The Banks of Newfoundland” (ca. 1850s) |
| Hagarty, Joseph P. | “Mayflower Polka” (1849) ‡  
“Sleigh Ride Galop” (1849) ‡ |
- dedicated to Sir John Harvey |
| Lockett, A. H. | “Centenary, or Fancy Fair Polka and Galop” (1849) |
| McNamee, Frederick † | “The Light Infantry Polka”  
- dedicated to Fowler Burton, Esq. (97th Regt.) |
| Robinson, Francis, Junr. | “Terpsichore Waltz” (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to the Misses Gilley |
| Ross, James arr. E.C. Saffery arr. Louis G. Casseres | “Malakoff Polka” (1855)*  
“Dinna Ye Hear It” |
| Saffery, E.C. | “The Odd Fellows’ Polka” (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to the Officers of the Marnbertou Encampment No. IX. I.O. of O.F. |
| Stevens, W. Hunt | “Grande Valse Brilliant,” Op.12 (ca. 1850s)  
- dedicated to Lady LeMarchant |
| West, Henry | “Exhibition Quadrilles” (1854)  
- dedicated to Lady LeMarchant |
| Winterbotham, H. | “Nova Scotia Waltz” (1849) ‡ |

*published as a subsidiary of Oliver Ditson, Boston
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publisher: <strong>H.M. Creighton</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Olivieri, N. †</td>
<td>“Colonel Lockyer’s March” (ca. 1848–1853)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to him in congratulation of his promotion</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“The Emma Galop” (ca. 1848–1853)</td>
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<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to Miss Emma Bartelow</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>Olivieri, N. †</td>
<td>“Innocence Waltz” (ca. 1848–1853)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to Miss Savage</em></td>
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<th>Publisher: <strong>W. Cunnabell</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Haddock, J.G.</td>
<td>“Thames Polka” (1855)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to the Ladies of Halifax</em></td>
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<tr>
<th>Publisher: <strong>Hall &amp; Beamish</strong>*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Lady</td>
<td>“Tick Tack Too, A Song for the Times” (copyright 1862)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to the Gold Miners of Nova Scotia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hagarty, Joseph P.</td>
<td>“The Battalion Quickstep” (copyright 1860)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to the Officers &amp; Men of the Halifax Volunteer Battalion</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower, James †</td>
<td>“Hunting Field Quadrilles” (copyright 1863)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Von Adelung, E.</td>
<td>“The Crowded Ball Room Galop” (copyright 1860)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Fine Dance Polka” (copyright 1860)</td>
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*subsidiary publisher for Russell & Tolman, Boston*

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<tr>
<th>Publisher: <strong>Z. S. Hall</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cameron, Hillyard H.A. †</td>
<td>“The Raveline Waltz” (ca. 1860s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mower, James †</td>
<td>“The Bedfordshire Waltz” (ca. 1860s)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to Col. O.G. Langley &amp; Officers, 2nd Battn. Reg’l. Bedfordshire</em></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Mountain Rivulet Waltz” (ca. 1860s)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Publisher: <strong>R.T. Muir</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Holt, J. †</td>
<td>“Acadian Skater’s Waltz” (ca. 1863)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>dedicated to the Ladies of Halifax</em></td>
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Like Fuller’s centennial publications, many of these subsequent compositions also present or reference a Nova Scotian symbol, suggesting that composers and publishers were creating a consumer product in response to their target audience’s burgeoning patriotic sensibilities. These publications reveal an effort to produce items that appealed to a local market, which was manifested in several ways. First, a significant number of the scores pay homage to members of the local community. Lieutenant-Governors were common dedicatees. Lockett’s “Centenary Polka,” for example, was dedicated to Sir John Harvey, while West’s “Exhibition Quadrilles,” Brent’s “The Entry of the Allies,” and Stevens’ “Grande Valse Brillante” were all dedicated to Lady LeMarchant, wife of Sir John Gaspard LeMarchant. The Lieutenant-Governors and their wives were not only patrons of the music community, but moreover, they were Nova Scotia’s symbolic figures, whose name and presence personified Nova Scotia’s standing as a provincial nation within the British Empire. Other high-ranking public authorities also were honoured as dedicatees, thus investing the score with a symbolic reference to Nova Scotia’s provincial identity. Bandmaster Gaetano Farrugia’s “Pryory Polka” was named for Henry Pryor, Halifax’s mayor at the time of publication. A musically-inclined Nova Scotian himself, Pryor as the mayor was the figurehead of the civic community. Farrugia’s “Agnes Waltzes” were dedicated to Lady Campbell, the wife of Farrugia’s commanding officer, while the title honoured Agnes Stayner, the daughter of a prominent Halifax merchant, whom he eventually married. Rather than honouring just one lady, Haddock’s “The Thames Polka” and Holt’s “Acadian Skater’s Waltz” were dedicated to “the ladies of Halifax.” Such a dedication not only acknowledged a communal identity, but paid homage to the scores’ likely consumers.

Other publications commemorated Nova Scotian places and institutions. Holt’s “Acadian Skater’s Waltz” commemorated Halifax’s new skating rink, officially opened on 3 January 1863. The acquisition of a public rink was a sign of Halifax’s urban progress, while the rink itself promised to provide a site of communal bonding. Saffery’s “The Odd Fellows Polka” was titled after one of Halifax’s numerous voluntary societies – an institution that would have helped to promote fraternity and common citizenship. J.P. Hagarty’s “Battalion Quickstep” commemorated the formation of the Halifax Volunteer Battalion in 1860, and was dedicated to the officers and men of that unit. As part of the British militia movement, volunteer militia companies were organized in communities throughout the province in the late 1850s and early 1860s. Halifax had several militia companies, all of which were organized according to ethnicity, religion, and race. The Halifax Volunteer Battalion brought all of these individual units into one corps. The battalion had its first drill on 30 May, and on 31 July it was presented for review before the Prince of Wales during his official visit to Halifax. His Royal Highness was pleased with the battalion and expressed satisfaction with both their military proficiency and their loyal spirit. Hagarty’s quickstep, then, commemorated an institution that not only promoted communal bonding among its members, but had brought together factional units into a civic unity. The quickstep also celebrated an institution that distinguished the community before royalty, and thus had earned the community’s pride. Moreover, the forming of a militia also

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89 As evidence of the interest the rink held to Nova Scotians, the Liverpool Transcript took note of the construction and the cost of building a rink (11 November 1862), and also of the rink’s opening ceremony (8 January 1863).

represented Nova Scotia’s coming-of-age, and so “The Battalion Quickstep” commemorated not only a Nova Scotian institution, but Nova Scotia’s progress.  

Several other publications similarly encapsulated Nova Scotia’s progress by commemorating important events. For the opening of the provincial railway, Louis Casseres composed “The Nova Scotia Railway Galop,” which was published by J. Andrew Graham. Similarly, “Tick Tack Too: A Song for the Times,” dedicated to Nova Scotia’s gold miners, celebrated the recent discoveries of gold deposits in several parts of the province. Gold was first found at Tangier in 1858 – causing “every Halifax shop clerk [to have] visions of sudden wealth,” according to Thomas Raddall – and later at the Ovens (in Lunenburg County). These discoveries caused a miniature gold “rush,” and although none of the mines proved productive, they temporarily created a surge of optimism. The text of the anonymous lady’s song expressed the eager hope that the gold being mined at Tangiers and the Ovens would bring the long-struggling province prosperity: “The doleful rhymes of the hard times, long enough have told their story. We’ll merrily sing while our axes ring, the golden harvest’s glory.” Likewise, Casseres’ “Railway Galop” was a musical celebration of a significant event that had helped to inspire the collective consciousness as it had simultaneously raised confidence in Nova Scotia’s potential to achieve progress and prosperity.

Finally, three of the locally-composed scores commemorated significant military conflicts: Ross and Saffery’s “Malakoff Polka” and Emma Saffery Brent’s “Entry of the Allies

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91 E.C. Saffery composed the music to “The Acadia Volunteers,” a song which similarly refers to one of Nova Scotia’s militia units. The song’s text was written by Nova Scotian author, James Ross. “The Acadia Volunteers” was dedicated to Earl of Mulgrave, Nova Scotia’s Lieutenant-Governor between 1858 and 1863. It was published by Russell & Tolman of Boston. See Chapter 3.

92 E.C. Saffery also composed a piece in honour of the opening of the provincial railway. Entitled “The Railroad Quick Step,” it was dedicated to Joseph Howe and was published by Oliver Ditson (see Chapter 3).

into Sebastopol” were written in honour of victories in the Crimean War of 1854–56, while Ross and Casseres’ “Dinna You Hear It” was inspired by events of the Indian Mutiny of 1857–58. Both of these military conflicts inspired a large outpouring of sheet music from publishers throughout the Atlantic World, and these three Nova Scotian publications should be considered as part of that movement. Both the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny also fuelled patriotism as Nova Scotians rallied in support of their Empire. Nova Scotians followed the international news closely, as military units once stationed in their midst were sent overseas, and also as their provincial countrymen enlisted to serve in the army and navy. Moreover, both conflicts represented historic moments in which Nova Scotians distinguished themselves on the world stage. Saffery and Brent’s scores likely capitalized on the local pride incited by Sir William Fenwick Williams’ lionization as a result of the Crimean War. Born in Annapolis Royal, Williams served in the British Army during the Crimean War and was promoted to major-general and awarded the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour from France for his heroic actions during the defence of the Turkish town of Kars. Ross and Casseres’ “Dinna You Hear It” had an even more explicit Nova Scotian connection. The text of the song was from a poem by Scottish poet Alexander MacLagan that had been published in Edinburgh’s The Scotsman and reprinted in Halifax’s British Colonist. MacLagan’s poem recounted the story of a young Scottish woman named Jessie Brown, who had been trapped among the British garrison during

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96 MacLagan’s “Dinna Ye Hear It” was printed in the British Colonist on 27 February 1858.
the siege of Lucknow. The details of the story were eventually proven false, but Jessie Brown nonetheless captivated the popular imagination throughout the English-speaking world and inspired a multitude of plays, stories, and songs. Jessie may have been fictitious, but the siege of Lucknow was otherwise real, and the success of the garrison at warding off the rebel Indian army until relief came was considered one of the first British triumphs in the conflict’s early stages. The acting commander of the besieged army was Sir John Inglis, the grandson of Nova Scotia’s first Anglican bishop. Inglis had spent his boyhood in Halifax and attended King’s University in Windsor before joining the British army. His actions earned him a promotion to Major-General, and his Nova Scotian connection was noted by the international press. Inglis’ role in the relief of Lucknow inspired significant local pride; Halifax named Lucknow Street in his honour. Consequently, the text of the closing verse – “The heroes of Lucknow fame crowns you with glory; Love welcomes you home with glad songs in your praise” – had a distinctive and proud connection for Nova Scotian audiences. “Dinna You Hear It,” like many of the other Nova Scotian-published scores, thus created both a print and musical embodiment of a symbolic event that had helped to foster the collective consciousness.

Music and Memory

From a musical perspective, none of the Nova Scotian-published works presented anything original or distinctly “Nova Scotian,” but are simply typical representatives of the

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97 Alison Blunt observes that Inglis along with his wife and children (who were also trapped in Lucknow) became the “poster-family” of Lucknow, embodying the endurance and fortitude the Britons displayed during the siege. See Blunt, “Embodying War: British Women and Domestic Defilement in the Indian ‘Mutiny,’ 1857–8,” *Journal of Historical Geography* 26/3 (2000): 420–421.

98 The *British Colonist*, for example, wrote on 22 December 1857, “Nova Scotians may indulge in feelings of just pride in the reflection that Colonel Inglis is one of themselves.”
countless compositions published throughout the nineteenth century for the transatlantic domestic music market. Most are in major keys and are firmly rooted in fundamental chord progressions, with the occasional use of secondary dominants. Modulations, when they occur, are to closely related keys; sectional works may feature a trio or similar section written in the dominant or subdominant. Overall, the melodies are simple, tuneful, and predictably diatonic. Chromaticism is used sparingly, and only as passing tones. In short, there is nothing to distinguish these scores from the crate loads shipped to Nova Scotia from British and American publishers, other than the “Nova Scotianness” embedded in the works through titular implication and extra-musical reference. To the purchasers and performers of these scores, though, their “ordinariness” may have been part of what made them significant. They demonstrated that Nova Scotia’s musicians could compose music comparable to that which Britain and the United States produced. By commemorating Nova Scotia’s progress through a musical setting that otherwise resembled that of an internationally-renowned composer, these scores were a testament to Nova Scotia’s immersion in cultivated, cosmopolitan culture.

In some cases, the music may have been known to its audiences before they purchased the score. The *Morning Journal*’s advertisement for Casseres’ “Railway Galop,” for example, indicates that Halifax’s ladies were already familiar with the work. Casseres may have debuted the “Railway Galop” at a public performance; he may also have taught the piece to some of his students. Some of these compositions may have been written for public performance by one of the military bands, and then arranged as a saleable work for home consumption at the piano. This scenario is certainly the case for Emma Saffery Brent’s “Entry of the Allies,” which states on the front cover that it was “as performed by the band of the 76th Regiment.” Hagarty’s “Battalion Quickstep” may also have been written for, and performed first by a band. At the beginning of the quickstep’s trio, “corni” is marked on the score, and “trombones” is similarly
marked at the point where the trio melody is reprised (see Figure 6.16). While it is possible that Hagarty is implying that the performer should imagine the timbre of the specified instruments, more than likely these designations are reminders of the instrumentation used during performance. It is also likely that Holt’s “Acadian Skater’s Waltz” was first performed by the band at the opening ceremony for Halifax’s skating rink. The 17th Regiment band, of which Holt was the bandmaster, attended the ceremony, and according to the press, “played several select pieces of music adapted to the occasion.” In the case of these compositions, the transcription made available to home musicians in the form of piano sheet music enabled its purchasers to re-experience a performance that they had first enjoyed in the company of their fellow community members. In other words, these works not only symbolized a common sense of citizenship, but were an aural reminder of a community-shared celebration.

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99 *Liverpool Transcript*, 8 January 1863. The *Transcript* excerpted this notice from the *Christian Messenger*. 
Ultimately, regardless of whether composers were preparing arrangements of public works that could be sold to home consumers or creating original compositions for the domestic parlour, the method by which they and their publishers identified to gain access to a market dominated by foreign companies was to present a product that distinctly appealed to their target audience. At the same time, the fact that this general strategy was employed repeatedly suggests that there was a desire – and a demand – for experiences, as well as products, that could create and celebrate a common identity. Sheet music could satisfy this desire in several ways. The printed score itself was a tangible symbol of Nova Scotian identity: a physical object that could be handled and looked at to remind the owner of his/her citizenship in the provincial community. Buying the score, and then displaying it on the parlour piano or including it into a personal album, was a means of demonstrating one’s patriotism. At the same time, commemorating Nova Scotian people, places, and moments through those scores reified what Nova Scotia was, and what being Nova Scotian entailed. Performing those scores could be an expression of patriotism, an expression which the music could intensify. As Nicholas Tawa writes,
Because of its indefiniteness and, paradoxically, its perceived emotional and aesthetic beauty, music helped the listener probe into himself, and added vast extra significances to the listener’s perception of the words. ... Owing to its imprecision, [music] stimulated the imagination and suggested far more than the verbal message.¹⁰⁰

While the music may not have been intrinsically “Nova Scotian,” its application to these acts of commemoration intensified the expression, and transformed a symbol into an experience that could conjure the collective consciousness and rouse communal pride.

**Music, Pride, and Progress**

Comprised of page after page of British- and American-published parlour songs and piano dances, the Nova Scotian music albums that still survive in archives today demonstrate quite clearly that the sheet music consumed in Nova Scotian homes was primarily that composed by foreign composers working in distant places. Even the compositions that were published locally were essentially foreign-dominated, since the majority of those composers were resident professionals who came to Nova Scotia from elsewhere, and lived there only temporarily. Nova Scotia’s piano builders may have established a firmer grasp on the local domestic music market than sheet music publishers, but while they may have succeeded in wresting some customers away from the British and American companies, they did not succeed in releasing Nova Scotia from dependence on foreign industry. Likewise, Nova Scotia’s concert stage remained primarily the domain of foreign professional musicians – when they came. The Nova Scotian music students that immigrant teachers trained seldom developed sufficient skill to compete with the

performers of Europe or the United States; the institutions Nova Scotians founded to foster and encourage native amateurs usually faltered due to insufficient support. While boosters occasionally expressed great hopes for the development of Nova Scotia’s music institutions and music businesses, these were usually – to borrow the title of Julian Gwyn’s book describing the nineteenth-century Nova Scotian economy – “excessive expectations.”

Pre-Confederation Nova Scotia was a small, struggling colony with limited resources, and its musical life was constrained by these circumstances.

Nonetheless, a core group of Nova Scotians continued to advocate for the development of music institutions, and the training of themselves and their peers in the musical arts. The interest in music they generated was significant enough to sustain regular importations of musical goods, and to inspire entrepreneurs to invest in the production of Nova Scotian-made music and instruments. While music was seldom a priority of colonial development, to certain members of the public it was still important, and necessary, if Nova Scotia was to progress and keep pace with the rest of the civilized world. To such Nova Scotians, a successful concert given by an amateur society, the formation of a community band, or the exhibition of a Nova Scotian-built piano were all signs of the talent of the Nova Scotian people, signs of the province’s potential for future achievement, and signs that the Nova Scotian society was awakening from its colonial state. Boosters used these achievements to inspire their fellow citizens, and to encourage them to take pride in what the Nova Scotian people had achieved and could yet accomplish.

Boosters championed music institutions as vehicles for progress because they were a step towards replacing the savagery of colonial living with the culture of civilization, and also

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because, as the previous chapter argued, they helped to forge the bonds of community. By joining their voices or instruments in harmony, Nova Scotia’s musicians united in a common identity that could symbolize and inspire the collective consciousness. As Paul Martell posits, a marching band concretized a community’s shared citizenship to both its participants and onlookers, through sight and sound; the band, in uniform and marching in file, was a visual embodiment of the community, while the music they performed was an aural declaration of their community’s unity. A choir, such as the Harmonic Society, could also embody the collective consciousness, at the same time as the repertoire they chose could reflect the state of that collective’s progress.

Composers and other musical entrepreneurs responded to the emerging Nova Scotian consciousness by creating musical products that symbolized a common identity, and that could invoke the patriotism of listeners in the concert hall and performers at home. The products they sold supported Nova Scotia’s musical life, and furthermore, were tangible signs of the Nova Scotian people’s talent, creativity, and innovation. The piano, made of Nova Scotian maple, was the musical manifestation of the province’s colonial progress: the Nova Scotian wilderness tamed and transformed to become the ultimate instrument of civilized culture. Sheet music, too, testified to the province’s capability, and to its cosmopolitan, rather than colonial, outlook. Nova Scotian consumers, in turn, could affirm their membership in the provincial community, and express their pride of place by purchasing “The Nova Scotia Waltz” or “The Battalion Quickstep,” and performing at home on a Nova Scotian-made piano.

Musical progress, in short, represented Nova Scotian progress. While Nova Scotia’s musical life may have been limited it nonetheless served to support the collective consciousness, and inspire provincial patriotism. Thus, when Nova Scotia placed itself in world view in 1851, a piano made of bird’s-eye maple countered the traditional Atlantic crossing made by instruments to represent the province at the London World’s Fair. When Nova Scotians attempted to strengthen the bonds of their collective consciousness with a celebration of industrial achievement, a choir of Nova Scotians singing European classical music inaugurated the opening of the Industrial Exhibition. When Nova Scotia welcomed the Prince of Wales, under the watchful eyes of the Anglo world community, Nova Scotia’s amateur bandsmen marched forward, to demonstrate through music Nova Scotia’s pride and progress.
CONCLUSION:

MUSIC AND THE CIVILIZATION OF COLONIAL NOVA SCOTIA

The idle jest, the vacant mind,
Let others freely share;
In Music’s spells I still can find,
Delights more rich and rare.

Thus wrote Joseph Howe in a poem written circa 1836, tellingly entitled “Tom’s Apology.”¹ In a short preface, Howe explains that the poem was written for Thomas Haliburton, Jr., the musically-inclined son of Nova Scotia’s famous author, Thomas Chandler Haliburton. As a boy growing up in Windsor, Tom preferred to play piano rather than sports and spent his spare time composing. “This decided bias towards a pursuit but little-adapted to the circumstances of a new country, occasioned much parental anxiety,” explained Howe – hence, the “apology.”²

Music may have been ill-suited to the conditions of a new country; however, this incongruity did not prevent Nova Scotians from pursuing music as a pastime, and in a few cases – including that of young Tom Haliburton – as a career. It did not prevent, for instance, Lord Dalhousie from acquiring a Broadwood spinet for Mary Ross, daughter of his friend Captain William Ross – an arduous task that required the instrument to be first shipped from London to Halifax, and then to Chester Basin, and finally transported across approximately twenty-five

¹ Joseph Howe, Poems and Essays, introduction by M.G. Parks (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), 176, emphasis mine. The poem is undated, but I expect it was composed around 1836. The preface states that the poem was written in return for a composition Tom had dedicated to Howe. In letter to his wife, Susan Ann, dated 1836, Howe indicated that Tom was writing a march for him at that time. See M.G. Parks, ed., My Dear Susan Ann: Letters of Joseph Howe to his Wife, 1829–1836 (St. John’s: Jesperson Press, 1985), 185.
² Ibid., 176. Tom’s story is discussed in Chapter 3, n. 102.
kilometres of woodland terrain on the backs of soldiers to the rural settlement of New Ross.\(^3\) Nor did it deter Mrs. Wells from acquiring a piano for her home in the similarly rural Sherbrooke settlement, also in Lunenburg County. Dalhousie wrote in his journal on 1 August 1818, “Now [Mrs. Wells] has her little garden, her poultry yard, a piano forte, & two sweet little children, she says, that occupy her whole time from morning till night.”\(^4\) Dalhousie himself was relieved to find that, “among many acts of goodness,” his aid Sir John Louis had procured one of the untamed colony’s rare pianos for the Dalhousie family.\(^5\)

The fact that music was “little-adapted” to the rugged conditions of a pioneer society also did not prevent touring artists travelling along the eastern Atlantic seaboard from stopping in the province and trying their luck before Haligonian audiences with concert performances. It did not prevent military musicians stationed at the Halifax garrison from carrying on with their craft, providing the entertainment for their Haligonian peers in touring artists’ absence. It did not prevent Nova Scotia’s entrepreneurs from importing more pianos, or other families from purchasing those instruments and hiring teachers to instruct their children. While it may have hindered the number of people who attended concerts, and shortened the lifespan of music institutions, it still did not prevent a core group of Nova Scotian musicians from trying to foster appreciation for music through the formation of music societies and bands.

By the eve of Confederation, Nova Scotia’s musical circumstances had changed significantly from those Lord Dalhousie had encountered when he arrived to take charge of Britain’s struggling colony in 1816. While some Nova Scotians, like Howe once did, like Howe once did, still may

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\(^5\) Ibid., 22.
have believed that music had little application to the Nova Scotian experience, for many others music had become part of their daily life. By 1867, Nova Scotians had had the opportunity to hear Henry Russell and Anna Bishop perform, as well as to attend numerous concerts given by lesser-known musicians. Nova Scotians themselves mounted their own concerts in community halls, singing choruses from *Messiah* and *The Creation*, and playing transcriptions of the popular operas to which they had been exposed by the touring artists, military musicians, and resident professionals working in their midst. They also performed this music at home, on pianos that were no longer rare luxuries but commodities shipped regularly to the province from Britain and the United States, and even crafted locally in Halifax. By 1867, Nova Scotia’s capital city had two active piano manufacturers and a store, J.P. Hagarty’s Musical Warehouse, dedicated to the sale of print music and instruments. The patrons of these establishments included professional musicians, who earned their livelihood through teaching, performing, and composing, and also young Nova Scotian women, who developed their musical skills as part of the domestic training they acquired at ladies’ seminaries. Meanwhile, the future husbands of these women learned wind instruments and joined the bands forming in a growing number of Nova Scotian communities. Together with Britain’s military musicians, these men marched and played as the occasion required, their music providing the sonic celebration for a century-old province that was part of a proud Empire. In short, Nova Scotia may not have been able to approximate the musical life of London or even Boston, but by the eve of Confederation, music of the European literate tradition had been firmly established as part of Nova Scotia’s culture.
Music as Colonial Progress

By 1867, the province of Nova Scotia as a whole had also changed significantly from that which Dalhousie encountered when he first landed in the frontier city of Halifax over half a century earlier. In June 1856, the 62nd and 63rd Regiments replaced the 76th at the Halifax garrison. The speech given by Colonel Hill (commander of the 63rd) on this occasion summarized some of these changes:

We look around with great pleasure on the marks of progress and advancing civilization, which arrest the eye on all sides; – and although in a young country – for what are 107 years in a people’s life – the energies and talents of its inhabitants are for the most part engaged in developing its resources, in constructing Railways and Docks, – in reducing the forest to cultivated ground; yet we know this land has produced men highly distinguished in literature, in arts, and in arms. 6

Hill’s speech encapsulated the prevailing spirit of Nova Scotia’s mid-century: the belief that Nova Scotia had left behind the dark days of its early colonial past and had made significant strides toward becoming the progressive, prosperous, and modern province it aspired to be.

Indeed, the province would take several more strides over the remaining decade before Confederation was to launch a new era, such that historians would eventually reflect back and argue that Nova Scotia had experienced, by 1867, a “Golden Age.”

It is fitting that a speech commending Nova Scotia’s progress was delivered to the people by a British army commander, since the very “achievements” he described were ultimately the result of the colonization project Britain had commenced in Halifax over a hundred years earlier in 1749. As Daniel Samson argues, progress was part of the larger program of colonization – a

6 Acadian Recorder, 14 June 1856.
program which sought to replace the “savagery” of the colonial frontier with civilized order.\(^7\)

The success of the colonial project in Nova Scotia was a matter of some debate. According to Jeffrey McNairn, Halifax was treated as a testing-ground for the feasibility of colonialism by British travellers visiting the city during the nineteenth century. While travellers largely felt “at home” in Halifax, the social disorder they encountered on city streets was a sign that the Nova Scotian colonial project had not completely succeeded in replicating Britain abroad.\(^8\) Nova Scotia had also not fully achieved the progress that its own people had hoped. Underdevelopment was still rampant, primarily in the rural parts of the province, but even in the capital city. Life remained precarious for many Nova Scotians, and the province still had many strides to make before it could rightfully claim to be keeping pace with the mother country, or the neighbouring states. Nonetheless, from the province’s developing travelways to its growing middle class, signs of Nova Scotia’s “progress” were also evident to its colonizers:

One Hundred years ago this Country presented to the eye of the beholder nothing but an uncultivated tract of land, stretching in every direction as far as the eye could reach, covered with dense forests through which roamed the untaught Mic-Mac – undisputed monarch of its merry green woods. Here the red man followed the inclinations of his own mind, undisturbed by the onward march of civilization. ... but a new scene is soon to be enacted, and its undisturbed and quiet repose is soon to be broken by the onward march of civilization and improvement. ... Cities, towns and villages have sprung up over the graves of the red man. Temples of Worship now mark the spot where the Mic Mac once tortured his unhappy victims. His voice is heard no more in Council, and its place the Church bell peals forth its tones upon the passing breeze. Institutions for learning and improvement have sprung up, giving new life and energy to the scene; the dense forests have fast melted away before the keen edged axe of the hardy woodman,

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\(^8\) Jeffrey L. McNairn, ““Everything Was New, Yet Familiar”: British Travellers, Halifax and the Ambiguities of Empire,” *Acadiensis* 26/2 (2007): 28–54. McNairn’s article is, in part, a call for scholars to pay more attention to Nova Scotia and the other North American colonies within studies of the British Empire. Such scholarship tends to address North America only during the pre-Revolutionary era; nineteenth-century studies have been primarily concerned with the colonies of conquest, where a small contingent of white Britons governed a majority racial “Other.”
the fields of waving grain and gold corn, now mark the spot he once occupied. Upon the placid surface of our own harbour now float majestic steamers and lofty ships, fit emblems of the power and ingenuity of man. And we shall soon record the achievements of the ironhorse running with giant speed over the face of our country. Much as been accomplished in the past. We hope success will crown our efforts in the future.

As the above excerpt from an article printed in the *Morning Journal* in 1854 indicates, Nova Scotians by mid-century were confident that civilization had firmly taken hold of their province. Like other British travellers, the British gentleman – whose letters describing his visit in Halifax to his niece were published in the *Halifax Journal* in 1820 – also compared his experiences in the Nova Scotian city to the life he knew back in England. Knowing that Charlotte would be curious to learn how “Musick fares in this wild Country,” he devoted two letters to the topic of the musical life he encountered in Halifax. Music consequently served as one of his measures for evaluating Nova Scotia’s progress and for communicating his “findings” to a lady living thousands of kilometres away on the other side of the Atlantic. Although he did not believe that Halifax’s musical life was as active as that of British provincial towns of similar size, he was nonetheless pleasantly surprised, since he did not expect music to be cultivated to the extent that it was in such a young and rugged city.

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9 *Morning Journal*, 9 June 1854. This comment highlights the strident racism of nineteenth-century Nova Scotian society. The Mi’kmaq, however, occupied a paradoxical position in Nova Scotia’s provincial identity: their society and cultural were regarded as antithetic to Western notions of civilization and progress, yet in the 1851 a selection of Mi’kmaq artifacts were sent to the World Fair to represent Nova Scotia in the province’s exhibit. See Ian Ross Robertson, “The 1850s: Maturity and Reform,” in *The Atlantic Region to Confederation: A History*, ed. Philip A. Buckner and John G. Reid (Toronto and Fredericton: University of Toronto Press and Acadiensis Press, 1994; repr. 2005), 346–347. Members of the Mi’kmaq community were also featured prominently in the ceremony and pageantry surrounding the Prince of Wales’ visit to Halifax in 1860. Bonnie Huskins writes, “The identity of the colony was so infused with the image of the ‘indian,’ that, although locals frequently ridiculed them, the local press was very offended when a visiting correspondent described Mi’kmaq women as ‘splay-footed squaws’.” See Huskins, “A Tale of Two Cities’: Boosterism and the Imagination of Community During the Visit of the Prince of Wales to Saint John and Halifax in 1860,” *Urban History Review* 28/1 (1999):38–39.

10 *Halifax Journal*, 6 March 1820 and 15 May 1820. The gentleman’s experiences in Halifax are described in Chapter 3, beginning on page 157.

Music was part of Nova Scotia’s colonial progress. As Ania Loomba argues, one of the main mechanisms of colonialism was to “un-form” the “savage” communities of the colony and “re-form” them according to the colonizer’s model. Transplanting the colonizer’s “civilized” culture within the new world was integral to this process of community “re-formation.” Through importing and adapting the musical practices of their colonizers, Nova Scotians were advancing the project of replacing their savage frontier with civilization. While Dalhousie’s description of the cozy scene at Mrs. Wells’ cottage lacks the racist overtones, in many ways it foreshadows the Morning Journal author’s description of Nova Scotia’s progress in replacing the culture of the Mi’kmaq with civilization. Mrs. Wells’ “progress” can ultimately be regarded as a microcosm of the colonial project underpinning Nova Scotia’s development throughout the pre-Confederation era. Standing where ancient trees had once grown, her cottage had tamed the wilderness and replaced it with domestic order. Epitomizing civilization’s victory through both sight and sound was her parlour piano. Now the music of European culture – national airs, parlour ballads, and perhaps even opera arias – resounded through the wilderness, claiming a sonic space for progress.

In February 1829, a correspondent wrote to the editor of the Acadian Recorder,

The more civilized a country becomes, the more numerous are its wants; and the ingenuity of man is put to requisition, to supply the deficiency occasioned by a progressive improvement from a state of nature, whether those wants arise from a scarcity of the conveniences of life, or its pleasures; and as bodily support is most requisite, accordingly we find it the first supplied. But no sooner has the invention of man reached this desideratum, when he can command a sufficient supply of the necessaries of life, than he finds there is something wanting, and intellectual amusement is necessary, to counteract the effects that would be produced by his hours of idleness.13

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13 Acadian Recorder, 7 February 1829.
While the author’s purpose in writing was to advocate for support for the theatre, his letter ultimately highlights the reciprocal relationship of civilization and culture: as wilderness was replaced by cities and towns, the desire for culture grew; at the same time, culture and cultural institutions were a gauge of a society’s civilization. In his study of nineteenth-century frontier towns, David Hamer argues that culture was essential to a society’s image of itself as “civilized.” For this reason, he writes, “Mechanics institutes, libraries, opera houses, schools of art, and a wide range of other cultural institutions usually occupied some of the finest premises in town and were greatly valued as conspicuous embodiments of the roles of towns as centres and sources of ‘civilization’ on the frontier.” As Rachel Milestone demonstrates, though, even in British towns where civilization had a centuries-old history, a community’s cultural institutions were symbolic of its modern development and prosperity. In other words, culture constituted progress.

As the march of progress gradually claimed Nova Scotia’s wilderness for civilization, music was among the Nova Scotian peoples’ many wants. Music helped settlers like Lord Dalhousie adapt to life in their new homes. Music alleviated boredom, and provided Nova Scotians with a form of entertainment that was morally-sound and edifying. Music was a means of celebrating the good times, and a source of nostalgia and comfort during the bad. Moreover, the musical life that developed in Nova Scotia’s communities was a gauge of the province’s colonial progress. The military bands that had accompanied Nova Scotia’s settlers since 1749


\[15\] Ibid., 212.

were both cultural arbiters and harbingers of civilization, planting the seedlings of musical culture to tame the wild colony. The touring artists, teachers, and other professional musicians who joined the military bandsmen likewise introduced civilized culture to Nova Scotians, and their very presence was a sign of the province’s progress. Under their guidance Nova Scotians cultivated their musical taste, and learned to perform the music of Western civilization for themselves; in doing so, Nova Scotia’s music-makers helped to cast aside the savagery of their colonial past. Each time they attended a concert by one of Europe’s prima donnas, sang the “Hallelujah” chorus, or seated themselves at a piano or in a band, Nova Scotians came one step closer to fulfilling the vision of replicating Western civilization on the Atlantic frontier.

The music that sounded Nova Scotia’s civilizing achievement came from many sources. The national airs so beloved by both performers and audiences were a symbol of Nova Scotia’s British connection and reinforced the provincial colony’s nationhood within the British Empire. Much of the music heard in Nova Scotia’s public and private musical sites, though, was not distinctly British, but representative of what was enjoyed by Anglo people living throughout the Atlantic World. Even national airs, in terms of their popularity, were an international phenomenon rather than a specifically British one. The music that accompanied Nova Scotia’s progress was part of the cosmopolitan culture of Western civilization, and by listening to and performing this music Nova Scotians were able to sample the cultural experiences of their friends and relatives living in London, Boston, and other metropolitan centres. Consequently, the music that Nova Scotians imported, and the musical life they adapted integrated Nova Scotia within an international community – an “imagined” community that spanned both sides of the Atlantic and beyond. In this sense, Nova Scotia’s musical life was yet another manifestation of the colony’s progress, for by listening to concerts of national airs, playing transcriptions of opera
overtures, and singing in choruses by Handel and Haydn, Nova Scotia drew one step closer to keeping pace with the progressive nations of the civilized world.

At the same time as it strengthened the province’s membership within the Atlantic World, music also formed a community within Nova Scotia. Music bridged the factions and divisions within Nova Scotia’s heterogeneous society. United by their appreciation of the music they imported, Nova Scotians banded together to improve their society through the cultivation of its musical institutions, and the refinement of their musical taste. As Nova Scotia progressed from a disparate string of settlements to a mature and cohesive province, music was among the cultural agents that fostered a distinctive Nova Scotian identity. The musical community became a symbol of Nova Scotia’s achievement, and its accomplishments a source of provincial pride. The music they made celebrated Nova Scotia’s progress, provided symbols of its identity, and ultimately, helped to form a Nova Scotian culture.

Musical Life in Nova Scotia: Beyond the “Golden Age”

On 1 July 1867, the city of Halifax celebrated Dominion Day with a ceremony, a military review, an afternoon of games, and fireworks. Many Nova Scotians, though, were opposed to Confederation, and consequently the celebration was not as large or as enthusiastic as the Unionists had hoped. Nonetheless, a procession of approximately six hundred persons made its way through the city streets in honour of Nova Scotia’s new nationhood in the Dominion of
Canada. Leading the parade was Halifax’s Volunteer Band, which also led the crowd in a rendition of the National Anthem.\footnote{Morning Chronicle, 2 July 1867. Presumably the author means the band played “God Save the Queen.”}

Meanwhile – as Adolphus Gaetz wrote in his diary – in the coastal town of Lunenburg Dominion Day began with the boom of cannon fire and the merry peal of church bells. As in Halifax, a ceremonial procession also paraded through Lunenburg’s streets, led by the town’s volunteer band. Following a fifty gun salute, the children of the Lunenburg Academy sang the Queen’s anthem “in good style,” and then the band played “God Save the Queen.” According to Gaetz, “everybody seemed to enjoy themselves” and “all wished Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity to the Dominion of Canada.” Adding much to enjoyment was the band, which “discoursed good music through the streets” for much of the day.\footnote{Charles Bruce Ferguson, The Diary of Adolphus Gaetz (Halifax: Public Archives of Nova Scotia, 1965), 94.}

Further south along the Atlantic coast in the anti-Confederation town of Liverpool, however, a much quieter scene transpired. The day also began with the ringing of bells, but according to the Liverpool Transcript, this sonic celebration was an accident:

At 9 o’clock in the morning the Trinity Church bell was rung for a Parish meeting, and the sextons of the other churches supposing that it was ushering in the new Dominion, commenced chiming the different bells and a merry peal was rung out to the amusement of some, and annoyance of others. A few flags were thrown to the breeze, and one [flew] at half-mast, union down.

If the Liverpool Brass Band did lead the town in celebration, the Transcript’s editor did not acknowledge their playing.\footnote{Liverpool Transcript, 4 July 1867.}

While Dominion Day ushered in a new era in Nova Scotia’s history, its short-term effects had little impact on Nova Scotia’s musical life. Touring artists continued to visit the province
occasionally, performing concerts of cosmopolitan repertoire for the audiences they were able to attract. Crates of sheet music continued to arrive at provincial docks, and in Halifax in 1871 a third piano company began to compete for the local market. The British army remained stationed in Nova Scotia, and so the garrison bands continued to provide the capital city with music for both ceremony and pleasure. Throughout the province, bands played and choirs sang to celebrate as the occasion required. While some bands may have remained silent in protest to Confederation, they soon resumed their marching. Indoors, women continued to play national airs and opera transcriptions as well as pieces like Jones’ “Halifax Quick March” on Nova Scotian-made pianos, while in concert halls the men and women of choirs joined their voices in harmony to sing “Rule Britannia.”

In 1951, Phyllis Blakeley ended the first historical account of Nova Scotia’s musical life by suggesting that the “small beginnings” she had described might have eventually yielded for Nova Scotia a musical culture rooted in its European heritage. “It would be interesting to enquire,” she concluded,

why this musical flowering failed to take place; how far this failure was due to the depression following the American Civil War and to Confederation for upsetting the economic and political basis of this experiment, or how far it was due to defects in the character of Nova Scotians themselves.  

In making this dismal assessment, Blakeley was likely influenced by the then-prevalent historiographical idea of Nova Scotia’s “Golden Age,” as well as by the tendency within musicological historiography to privilege professional musicianship and to develop genealogies of great composers and their works. Her second article, on music in the nineteenth-century, after all, had begun, “In the Golden Age of Nova Scotia...” and continued by describing the competent

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European musicians who had been attracted to the province.\textsuperscript{21} Or, perhaps Blakeley, like other Nova Scotians, suffered from “excessive expectations,” believing that the prosperity of the mid-nineteenth century should have poised Nova Scotia to become a leading centre for art-music culture – and then was disappointed when it did not.

What is clear is that music of the literate tradition is, and was part of Nova Scotia’s socio-cultural history. The beginnings of this tradition may have been small, but to its practitioners, the imported musical culture of the Atlantic World held great value and they consequently struggled to retain this tradition. What is also clear is that the “music-loving culture” celebrated in twenty-first century Nova Scotia has historically comprised many voices, and that throughout the province’s colonial past, opera singers, piano girls, and marching men have played a formative role in shaping the Nova Scotian experience.

\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 223.
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