“Managing the Muses”

Musical Performance and Modernity in the Public Schools of Late-Nineteenth Century Toronto

By

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines public school music in the making of a modern middle class in late-Victorian Toronto. Its aim is to show how this subject both shaped and was shaped by the culture of modernity which increasingly pervaded large urban centres such as Toronto during the course of the nineteenth century. In so doing, this study also examines various aspects of the acoustic soundtrack during the period under study—particularly that which witnessed the advent of industrialization—to bring additional context and perspective to the discussion. Using an approach which goes beyond pedagogic and bureaucratic justification, the overall intent is to present the evolution of school music and its public performance within a much broader acoustic framework, that is, to weave it into the increasingly-urban soundtrack of Toronto, to gain some appreciation of how it would have been heard and understood at the time.

In addition to its primary historical discourse, the study also draws meaning and context from a variety of other academic disciplines (musicology, sociology and education, to name but a few). Because of this, it necessarily moves from the general to the specific in terms of its overall focus, not only to provide background, but also to help make sense of the ways in which each of these areas informed and influenced the development of Toronto’s public school system and the
inclusion of music in its classrooms. It then proceeds more or less chronologically through the nineteenth century, placing particular emphasis upon the careers of prominent educators such as Egerton Ryerson and James L. Hughes, to mark significant shifts in context and philosophy. Within each, a thematic approach has been employed to highlight relevant developments that likewise informed the way in which school music was conceived and comprehended. In this way, it is hoped that a fresh perspective will emerge on the history of public school music in Toronto, and prompt further research that employs aural history as a more prominent tool of historical research.
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For my parents, Gordon and Geraldine Booth,

whose love and patience granted me the space to live, learn and listen.
INTRODUCTION

The ability of music to touch our very souls is at once its delight and its danger, the nature of the message wrapped in its seductive glamour can be anything at all. Music doesn’t care. Like any of humanity’s prototypical tools—language, technology—it can be directed to vastly different ends.¹

Music is an ordered pattern of sounds in the midst of a vast range of more or less disorderly aurality. If music is meaningful in emotional terms it is therefore largely as an effect of cultural rather than psychological conditions.²

Making music is an intrinsic part of who we are as humans. The practice has been a part of every known civilization, past and present. And yet, for all this instinctive knowledge, when thought of in an historical context, the significance and meaning of the act eludes objective description. While physics can be employed to reduce it to vibrating patterns of sound, it nevertheless is something in which we invest meaning. Music can be made by one person, or collectively, with or without an audience, with certain intention, but no guaranteed reciprocal reception and response. In short, as noted above, “music doesn’t care.”

At the same time it is difficult to think of music in these terms without ascribing to it an existence free of human sensitivity. In confronting the convention that European symphonic repertoire of the past 300 years is the ultimate expression of human musical achievement, Christopher Small points out that this has occurred partly as a result of a European musical tradition built upon the ancient Greek ideal of music as object. As Small notes,

It is very easy to come to think of the abstraction as more real than

¹ Phil Lesh, Searching for the Sound: My Life With the Grateful Dead (New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005), 166.
the reality it represents, to think, for example, of those abstractions which we call love, hate, good and evil as having an existence apart from the acts of loving, hating, or performing good and evil deeds and even to think of them as being in some way more real than the acts themselves, a kind of universal or ideal lying behind and suffusing the actions. This is the trap of reification, and it has been a besetting fault of Western thinking ever since Plato, who was one of its earliest perpetrators.3

Much of what has been written historically about music, both inside and outside an educational context would suggest that this is the case. The point is underscored by Small when he states: “Music is not a thing at all, but an activity, something that people do. The apparent thing “music” is a figment, an abstraction of the action, whose reality vanishes as soon as we examine it at all closely.”4

Because the capacity to make music remains a fundamental human characteristic, musical activity transcends class boundaries, thus introducing other ideas to the cultural dialogue. In this way, music offers an opportunity to simultaneously reinforce and challenge dominant and subordinate cultural values. Although different values have been assigned to it over the centuries, music, more than any of the other arts, has troubled those empowered to fashion and regulate cultural space, for not only is it a vehicle for the communication of knowledge and emotion, but to borrow a phrase, it is indeed a universal language for such transmission.

Conceptual Framework

1. The Challenge of Sensory History

In drawing upon aural evidence for much of its analysis, this thesis faces a similar challenge, namely, its subject material communicates itself in a form often infused with sensual

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value. Its aesthetic messages come replete with auditory and emotional signifiers that may or may not resonate with present-day scholars, producing unease among mainstream historians accustomed to working in what George H. Roeder Jr. has dubbed the “nearly senseless profession.” Thus, the narrative presented here is intended to encourage the reader to reconsider conventional historical approaches to research by moving aural and aesthetic evidence from the realm of “empirical ornament” to the centre of discursive inquiry.

This presents both challenges and opportunities for the historian. Against an academic tradition that has come to privilege the observable historical record (written and printed documentation as the most prominent examples), aural evidence can be construed as ambiguous, and thus less credible as an empirical tool. Marshall McLuhan’s “great divide” theory, which argues that the visual sense began to eclipse all others with the advent of the printing press, has further legitimated this preconception, contributing to the devaluing of non-visual historical evidence.

In recent years, however, scholars have begun to revisit this premise, opening up new horizons for research. In encouraging greater attention to the sensate in history, Candice Classen reminds us that

“The fundamental premise underlying the concept of an ‘anthropology of the senses’ is that sensory perception is a cultural, as well as a physical act” and that understanding constitutes an epistemic basis of sensory history.... In the West..., “we are accustomed to thinking of perception as a physical act rather than a cultural act” which suggests we need to expose the senses for what they

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6 In elaborating upon this idea, McLuhan proposed that as cultures advanced in the West, their emphasis shifted from oral-aural, to hand-written, to typographical, and ultimately electronic, forms of expression—the result favouring visual over other sensory information. See Marshall McLuhan, The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962), and Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965).
are: historically and culturally generated ways of knowing and understanding.\textsuperscript{7}

Classen’s work is representative of a growing body of scholarship developing around the role and use of the senses in the discipline—what Mark M. Smith refers to as “sensory history.” More than trying to recapture intellectual or biological understandings of the senses themselves, this field of study acknowledges “their meaning and function in a specific historical context.”

It attempts to bring into dialogue historians and scholars from a variety of fields who have attended to the sensate. Sensory history obviously deals with the way that people thought about the senses, the cognitive processing of their sense perceptions, but it takes seriously the full cultural and social context of those experiences. It does not treat the senses as reducible to an intellectual history project or a history of the mind. While it certainly respects that way of understanding the senses, sensory history strives for the broadest possible framing.\textsuperscript{8}

In arguing for this approach, Smith and others have pointed to the academy’s traditional lack of awareness in this regard, thus creating new possibilities for historical scholarship unfettered by McLuhanesque convention. The result, as Smith notes, can serve to enhance, rather than replace, approaches to historical research.

At its most powerful, sensory history is also explanatory, allowing historians to elucidate by reference to both visual and non-visual senses something that makes little or less sense if understood simply as a scopic phenomenon. Sensory history, in short, stresses the role of the senses—including explicit treatments of sight and vision—in shaping peoples’ experiences in the past, shows how they understood their worlds and why, is very careful not to assume that the senses are some sort of “natural” endowment, and strives not to reify the senses, but, rather, locate their meaning and function in specific historical contexts.\textsuperscript{9}

In the historical narrative that follows, it is my hope that readers will come to appreciate its subject matter in this way.

\textsuperscript{8} Smith, \textit{Sensing the Past}, 4.
\textsuperscript{9} Smith, \textit{Sensing the Past}, 4.
2. Social Control and *Civilité*

With regard to the specific time and location chosen for this study, much of the historical background has been furnished by scholars whose writing (particularly during the 1970s and 1980s) constitutes a critical part of the body of research in this area. While there is no question that this dissertation owes much to their efforts, its particular emphasis upon aural history in general and music in particular, makes it necessary to comment briefly on how the historiographical approach favoured in much of this writing applies to the present narrative.

In the field of educational history in recent decades, much attention has been paid to the idea of state schooling as a means of social control, that is, as a way to legitimate and disseminate dominant cultural values among the lower classes. Because of its neo-Marxist underpinnings, this perspective tends to view schools as places where things were done *to* children *by* a bureaucratic system imbuing dominant cultural values. This is evident in much of what has been written about Ontario education during the nineteenth century. Exemplified in the work of Susan Houston, Alison Prentice, Robert Stamp, Bruce Curtis and others, a picture has emerged of late-nineteenth century education as a struggle by the lower orders to adapt to (and occasionally resist) the increasing power wielded over them.10

As will become evident in the early chapters, the application of social control theory to musical culture and activity not only negates its inherently aesthetic meaning, but also erodes its potential to be understood as a manifestation of internally- and opposed to externally-motivated

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cultural expression. Drawing upon this body of work therefore, one must be careful to avoid the temptation to unquestioningly assume, and thus ascribe, darker motives to those involved in the creation and promotion of public education.

This in mind, there are times when it seems all too clear that this may be precisely what school officials had in mind when they thought about school music. Thus, in assessing these events, it is perhaps more useful to augment the idea of social control with the intellectual approach employed by Robert Lanning in his study of character formation and education in Ontario during the period. Pointing directly to the limitation inherent in the use of social control as the sole basis for analysis, Lanning himself highlights the importance of considering the internal aspect of moral education, encouraging a more organic understanding of the process of learning how to become a “good citizen.” Lanning’s approach also complements earlier work by Norbert Elias, who shows how the development of manners in courtly society—what Elias calls c ōvilité—originated with the need to prove the internal presence of such qualities through the external display of proper etiquette and self control.

Elias’ work is also useful, since it considers the similarities and difference between training and performance as aspects of human expression, both of which are present in the public display of school music. Further, this approach also encourages consideration of the subject as a social indicator of individual character. The consideration of school music within a performative, rather than pedagogic context, serves two additional purposes.

12 In arguing that the “social terrain of education” must be understood in its widest possible context, Lanning highlights the work of Alison Prentice to underscores its limits: “The point made by Alison Prentice...that schooling meant for children “their temporary removal from the larger society and education—or re-education—in schools”, does not adequately take into account the range of concerns of educators and other state servants.” Prentice, School Promoters, 46, quoted in Lanning, “Mapping the Moral Self,” 139.
First, the paucity of documentation with regard to what actually occurred in classrooms (as opposed to prescriptive discussions about what ought to take place) from day to day, presents a considerable challenge for historians. Unlike other subjects, school music activity drew public attention and was widely reported in the press and thus, provides insight as to how it and other school-related activities generally were consumed and understood in its contemporary acoustic context. Second, singing in harmony (and when accompanied by drill exercises, “keeping together in time”\textsuperscript{14}) not only demonstrated the capacity for schools to inculcate such values, but also assuaged concerns about the future, brought on by the advent of modernity. In this sense, school music represented more than mere learned application of subject matter: it became an expression of a late-Victorian cultural desire that sought to reconcile innovation with tradition, progress with conservatism, chaos with control.

3. Defining “Modernity” and “Middle Class”

As its title indicates, one of the main purposes of this study (particularly the latter half) is to show how public school music contributed to the development of Toronto and its inhabitants toward the end of the nineteenth century. In so doing, repeated references will be made to the terms “modernity” and “middle class.” The significance of each in this evolution warrants some comment here, not only to clarify meaning, but also to show how the organizations of chapters—from general to specific—makes sense for this particular historiographical analysis.

Describing any historical time period is risky for the historian, for, inherent in any definition is that it has a recognizable beginning and end. Further, making the transition from

\textsuperscript{14} As we will learn in Chapter Five, William McNeill elaborates on the phrase, noting its particular effect as a means of establishing and reinforcing communal values. See William McNeill, \textit{Keeping Together in Time: Dance and Drill in Human History} (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1995).
one epoch to another becomes problematic, since one can never be sure when the change
commences and how, in precise terms, it confronts its successor.

To avoid such difficulties, this study relies upon Marc Raeff’s understanding and use of
the term as a “state of mind,” rather than a fixed chronological space in time. As Raeff observes:

[M]odernization is that attitude of mind and that form of conduct that aim at
maximizing and making full use of the potential resources of a society for an
ongoing increase (whether it be considered an improvement or not) of its
material and cultural creativity, promoted both for the benefit of its members
and for the creativity's own sake.15

This study also takes advantage of complementary work in this area done by Marshall
Berman and Keith Walden, whose applications of the term in a nineteenth-century North
American context lend additional intellectual depth to its meaning by emphasizing the chaos and
consequence of modernity’s arrival in major urban centres across the continent.16

Defining the term “middle class” presents similar challenges, made no less complicated it seems
by denoting a particular chronological and geographic place. A major dilemma for historians in
this regard, as Andrew C. Holman points out, is that the term itself defies easy categorization.

The idea of a Canadian middle class in history is by no means new, but its use
has lacked clarity. The term “middle class” has most often been employed by
historians as a residual category to describe various types of social behaviour
in the past....There is a need in Canadian history to more clearly
conceptualize the structure and ideas of the middle class in the Victorian era
before we can credibly characterized certain types of behaviour as motivated
by a “middle class” perspective.17

15 Marc Raeff, The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change Through Law in the
Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 120, n. 150. The author wishes to
thank David Levine for his assistance in the identification and retrieval of this quotation.
16 Specifically, see Marshall Berman. All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity
(New York: Penguin), 1988; Keith Walden, Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the
Shaping of a Late Victorian Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), and Visions of Order (Toronto:
Butterworths, 1982).
17 Andrew C. Holman, A Sense of Their Duty: Middle-Class Formation in Victorian Ontario Towns
Combining E. P. Thompson’s ideas on class formation and the concept of “structuration” as outlined by Anthony Giddens, Holman reminds us that

class is not only a structure or category, “but...something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened in human relationships). And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs”....“How economic classes come into relationship with one another is called structuration: the process whereby economic classes become social entities.”

This study aims to employ a similar theoretical approach, but in a cultural context, for, as Barbara Lorenzkowski and Simon Frith note, “[i]t is “through cultural activity”...that social groups “get to know themselves as groups.”” In the pages that follow, it will become clear that musical activity formed an integral part of emerging middle-class self-awareness in Victorian Toronto. As an enduring manifestation of cultural expression, it not only served to anchor contemporary ideas in past tradition, but also provided a means by which modern ones could find relevance and legitimacy.

Notes on Sources

Although a fair amount has been written about various aspects concerning the history of music in Canada, relatively little has been written about its presence in the country’s public schools, particularly prior to the First World War. Not surprisingly, even less has been written about the presence and impact of sound in this regard. Thus, much of the material utilized in this

19 Simon Frith, quoted in Barbara Lorenzkowski, Sounds of Ethnicity: Listening to German North America, 1850-1914 (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 104.
study is culled from sources whose concern with music and sound *per se* is at best, incidental, tending to employ it as a way of investing the point being discussed with enhanced meaning and /or emotional significance. Therefore, it has been the author’s task to ‘shake loose’ many of the passing references to the historical soundtrack of the period under study, in hopes that by bringing them front-and-centre, a better understanding of public school music and its context becomes apparent. What follows here is a summary of sources which will hopefully aid those interested in pursuing topics of study related to the history of musical activity in Toronto specifically, and its development elsewhere in Canada.

In terms of gaining an appreciation of the basic trajectory of school music policy in Toronto during the latter half of the nineteenth century, several archival collections proved to be of great value. Most helpful were the minute books of the school board and its management committee and the annual reports of the inspector, housed at the Sesquicentennial Museum and Archives of the Toronto District School Board. Although the collection also contains files on school music, the material therein generally chronicles activity after the First World War, and so was not as useful. Much anecdotal information was also gathered from the Department of Education’s *Journal of Education*.

In an attempt to capture contemporary responses to relevant musical events involving the schools, Toronto newspapers circulating at the time were also consulted. The *Globe* proved most helpful in this regard, as it published throughout the period under study, and also carried regular reports of school board meetings. For purposes of breadth in opinion and content, other papers were also consulted, including the *Mail, World, Telegram* and *Empire*. The two editions of *A Souvenir of Musical Toronto*, published in 1897 and 1898, offer a fairly detailed snapshot of the
state of the city’s established music culture, containing biographies of prominent local musicians, sketches of affiliated musical organizations, as well as a directory.

The Toronto Reference Library’s Baldwin Room Special Collections department was also invaluable in reconstructing the nature and content of the music festival movement in Toronto, as well as providing a wealth of information on concerts and venues of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. It also contains the most complete hard copy collection of the *Musical Journal*, published in Toronto between 1887 and 1893. As a periodical that regularly commented on school music in addition to its regular content, the publication brings together many of the elements that influenced and informed opinions on the subject at the time.

Several sources exist that discuss various aspects of church music in Toronto and although many are denomination-specific, together they provide some indication of the considerable richness and depth of talent among the city’s congregations. A comprehensive overview of choral history is presented in William Lock’s 1972 dissertation on Ontario church choirs. Paul Wilson’s 1996 thesis about Jarvis Street Baptist Church provides several valuable insights about the politics of music in church activity, while Brian Fraser’s 1982 study of Presbyterian reform touches upon many similar themes. Most useful for retracing the trajectory of musical culture among Methodists were files on the Methodist Social Union, available at the United Church of Canada Archives.

A great deal of material is available on the secular musical culture of Toronto, although it is often included with histories of related theatrical activity. John Sale’s Master’s thesis chronicling Toronto’s pre-Confederation music societies is helpful in reconstructing the musical culture of Toronto up to 1867, and Dorith Cooper’s and Gerald Lenton’s dissertations on the city’s opera and vaudeville scenes, respectively, continue the narrative into the twentieth century.
While it offers little in terms of the city’s nineteenth-century musical and educational past, the City of Toronto Archives was of great use in tracking official responses to noises and nuisances, particularly its bylaws and the letters and responses of the Chief Constable to citizen complaints about these matters.

Biographical material related to those personalities most intimately involved in the development of music as a school subject brought another dimension to the discussion. Some documentation covering the career and thought of Alexander Cringan are available at Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa, however, much of it appears to represent Cringan’s activity with the Ontario government in the early twentieth century, after he had left the Toronto school board. The best source on James L. Hughes comes from Bruce Carter’s 1966 dissertation which in exploring his educational thought and philosophy offers many insights about the central importance of music in his pedagogical outlook. Most of what is known about Egerton Ryerson musically speaking, has been gleaned from biographical sources unconcerned with the topic, however, enough of a picture emerges from works by C. B. Sissons, Clara Thomas and J. George Hodgins to suggest that his views mirrored that of his mid-Victorian peers.

A number of dissertations related to school music in Ontario were also consulted. George Campbell Trowsdale’s 1962 thesis on the history of public school music in Ontario offers a sweeping overview of the subject up to 1960, but not surprisingly perhaps, does not address the subject in a critical social format that has become commonplace since its completion. Nonetheless, Trowsdale’s work remains an essential component in the overall subject narrative.

Subsequent studies of note include Diana Brault’s 1971 thesis covering the history of the Ontario Music Teachers’ Association, as well as June Countryman’s 1981 Master’s thesis on the history of song series music textbooks in Ontario, and Eleanor Newman’s 1988 analysis of
Canadian content in these sources during the period. Although less useful, Charlene Morton’s 1996 dissertation on the precarious state of music education in Ontario also contains some interesting insights on the subject’s historical status, illustrating its move from the mainstream to the margins of curricular value.

Outside of the public school milieu, the wealth of research opens up considerably. In terms of the general state of musical activity in Ontario during the period under study, J. Paul Green and Nancy Vogan’s *Music Education in Canada: A Historical Account* includes an analysis of public school music within a broader geographic and institutional context, supplementing the pioneering work in Helmut Kallmann’s *A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914*. Elaine Keillor’s *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity* represents the most recent effort at a comprehensive historical overview, and is useful for its sensitivity to the blending, rather than categorization of, a variety of cultural influences in Canadian music. Finally, any consideration of this topic should begin with a search of the following two reference sources. First, the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada* (now available online), not only as a means of accessing the most current historical research on subjects in this area, but also because of the wealth of bibliographic information contained at the end of each entry. Second, *Music in Canada: A Research and Information Guide*, compiled by Carl Morey, organizes its materials by specific subject categories, including relevant catalogues, directories, biographies and periodicals.

**Purpose of This Study**

This thesis examines public school music in the making of a modern middle class in late-Victorian Toronto. Its aim is to show how this subject both shaped and was shaped by the
culture of modernity which increasingly pervaded large urban centres such as Toronto during the course of the nineteenth century. Using an approach which goes beyond pedagogic and bureaucratic justification, the overall intent is to present the evolution of school music within a much broader acoustic framework, that is, to weave it into the increasingly-urban soundtrack of Toronto, to gain some appreciation of how it would have been heard and understood at the time.

Admittedly, the venture is fraught with many challenges. Because the analysis draws meaning and context from a variety of disciplines (musicology, sociology and education, to name but a few), it necessarily moves from the general to the specific, in terms of its overall focus, not only to provide background, but also to help make sense of the ways in which each of these areas informed and influenced the development of Toronto’s public school system and the inclusion of music in its classrooms. It then proceeds more or less chronologically through the nineteenth century, with particular emphasis upon the careers of educators such as Egerton Ryerson and James L. Hughes, to mark significant shifts in context and philosophy. Within each, a thematic approach has been employed to highlight relevant developments that likewise informed the way in which school music was conceived and comprehended. In this way, the author hopes to provide a fresh perspective on the history of public school music in Toronto, and its sensory significance for further research.

The study begins with an outline of the nature and use of music and education in Western culture, in order to show the extent to which both have become ensconced in its culture and outlook, and to provide an indication of the various uses to which music and education were put in the centuries leading up to the modern era. What becomes apparent through this analysis is that while ubiquitous, musical expression was recognized by those in control and their subjects as a powerful medium through which good and ill might be communicated. A means of
communication accessible to all, its manifestation proved resistant to attempts at control by the upper echelons of society; nevertheless, musical performance remained a central part of Western cultural expression and hence, its place was preserved when systems of universal state schooling took shape during the nineteenth century.

Chapter Two concerns itself with the development of music culture in Upper Canada from the colony’s creation in 1791 through to 1876. The latter year is chosen to coincide with the retirement of Egerton Ryerson, whose career and influence are dealt with at length in the chapter that follows. Chapter Two also offers an overview of the way in which music culture broadly speaking manifested itself in the emergence of a mid-Victorian middle class, whose values and ideas about music provided the social and intellectual framework upon which it developed both in and outside of public education during the period.

Almost entirely dependent upon church and military musicians initially, early settlers brought their understanding of music to the wilderness, as existing native traditions faded from the soundscape. In their attempts to ape European ideals concerning music’s potentially refining qualities, these individuals did their best to replicate salon culture in their homes and within formal societies, as a way of parading social refinement. These practices eventually gave way to more modern forms of passive spectator entertainment, epitomized by the “fashionable night” out. The overall intent of this chapter is to illustrate the manner in which ideas about ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ culture found their way into public discourse about music, and to set the stage for discussion about how these preconceptions informed the advent of a public school system at mid-century.

Chapter Three devotes itself to the thought and influence of Egerton Ryerson, who oversaw the creation and crystallization of a free, universal and ultimately compulsory system of
public schooling in the province of Ontario. Ryerson is of particular interest to the study not only because of his career as an early promoter of state-funded education, but also because he and his family personified many of the qualities imbued by mid-Victorian society. The discussion as it relates to Ryerson also serves to highlight his belief that under the proper conditions, musical activity encouraged “cheerful obedience” among students—a significant matter as it turns out—for it was chiefly his model that set the standard for education generally across the rest of Canada during the closing years of the nineteenth century.

The chapter also challenges the notion that the relative paucity of official correspondence regarding music in the schools is an indication that Ryerson possessed neither the ability nor the desire to properly comprehend the issue. Through a revisiting of available documentation and the several biographies written by and about him, it becomes clear that for his time he was more than familiar with such matters, both personally and professionally. As a member of the mid-Victorian upper middle class in Toronto, Ryerson’s ideas about music and education ultimately reflected a colonial attitude. This approach gradually lost its relevance amid changes being wrought by the forces of modernity, which increasingly confronted Torontonians after mid-century.

In describing the transformation of Toronto from an isolated colonial outpost into a bustling urban centre, Chapter Four attempts to refocus historical analysis of the onset of modernity not just in terms of its effect upon music culture toward the end of the century, but also in terms of its acoustic impact on citizens and their interactions with one another. The arrival of mass entertainments, made available by improved transportation networks furnished access to cultural attractions. These often provoked negative reactions among traditional keepers of culture and religion alike, who questioned their impact upon the rising generation of urban
youth. As the city’s population and industrial output expanded, so too did the volume and complexity of sounds which resulted from such massive growth. Perceived as an indication of progress by some in the city, others decried the change as a threat to traditional values, and as city officials struggled to control and regulate such innovation, new distinctions had to be drawn between sounds that were considered a “nuisance” and those that were not.

Chapter Five examines the continued development of church and military music toward century’s end. Musical activity among the Protestant congregations expanded considerably during this period and as its establishment came to grips with the realities of modern city life, it increasingly found common cause with other dominant cultural institutions. These included the city’s volunteer militia units, whose raison d’être often proved to be more social than martial in outlook. While the continued growth of Protestant churches offered proof of their continued relevance, the arrival of the Salvation Army added fresh fuel to debates about the nature and purpose of music in sacred worship. The pairing of church and militia through musical activity under the philosophical umbrella of muscular Christianity fit well with new ideas about the role of schooling being promoted by school inspector James L. Hughes, who would come to dominate educational matters well into the twentieth century.

In drawing together what precedes them, Chapters Six and Seven show how public school music responded to various aspects of modernity that permeated the cultural fabric of Toronto, as it prepared to enter the twentieth century. By allying themselves with religious and military activity, school officials developed strategies to cope with the change, much of them employing music as their focus.

Against them loomed the prospect of waves of new immigrants and the seemingly endless array of cheap amusements designed to distract and debase citizens. Seen as keepers of
cultural refinement, schools in their role as socializing institutions had to discover ways of embedding dominant middle-class ideals of refined cultural taste into the curriculum, while continuing to demonstrate the worth of public education to an increasingly-sceptical public.

The appointment of James L. Hughes as chief inspector of public schools for Toronto in 1874 thus proved serendipitous. Through his support of progressive educational ideas, Hughes made a point of moving school music from the classroom to the street in the form of public display, a move that not only fed the public appetite for large, spectacle-based entertainment, but also provided definitive proof that schools were, in fact, living up to middle-class expectations.

Hughes’ hiring of music instructor Alexander Thom Cringan in 1887 took the genre to an entirely new level. In combining his talents as a church musical director with those of drill instructor and colleague Captain John Thompson, Cringan built upon previous models of public display by incorporating school choirs into an emerging calendar of events that collectively reinforced middle-class ideals of order, discipline and progress so desired by late Victorians. Emulated by several of its cultural allies, Cringan’s model found its ultimate expression in events planned to commemorate Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee in 1897; however, even by this time, the model itself had in many respects been assimilated into the broader tapestry of a modern city caught up in the ecstasy of celebration, although the schools would continue to use the template for many years after.
CHAPTER ONE

THE PLACE OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION IN WESTERN CULTURE TO 1800

[H]istorians have been too preoccupied with “looking” at the past—itself a leftover conceit of Enlightenment ways of trying to understand the world.¹

[W]e must stress the primacy of context if we are to avoid becoming hostage to the rhetorical sensory hierarchy sponsored by a given class of a particular place and time....[W]e must understand the actual ways in which people understood the senses, their religion, and their social meaning, and to do that demands that we listen to multiple voices from multiple contexts and discourses.²

This chapter examines the historical place of music as an aspect of sound in Western culture, to show how it influenced human interaction, particularly from the late Middle Ages to the beginning of the nineteenth century. It argues that music in particular became ensconced in Western educational practices not only because of its links to ancient Greek tradition, but also because it was widely understood that music possessed affective power that had the dual potential to elevate human virtue, or debase it. Further, not only was this power recognized by the dominant classes, their inability to effectively control it forced them into a constant state of cultural vigilance, which would, in part at least, ultimately manifest itself in public education.

The advent of modernity and the concomitant rise of the Industrial Age brought new dimension to this interaction and, as we will see, simultaneously reinforced and challenged notions of what was considered “acceptable” musical practice, both inside and outside the

modern public school. The irony was that even as those in power sought to make these
distinctions, their aims, outlook and intent were being shaped by such forces which would, in the
end, make their vision obsolete. To establish the context for this discussion, this chapter
explores the relationship between music and education in the Western cultural context. The aim
is to show that although the defining of a musical ideal remained within the purview of dominant
cultural players, others employed it to challenge this hegemony.

The Ancient World – Music and Socialization

Generally speaking, the Western tradition of including music as a subject in the education
of children began at least as far back as ancient Greece. Music education was part of what is
now commonly known as “the seven liberal arts,” but its presence in Greek society was
ubiquitous. The seven arts included grammar, logic (or dialectic), rhetoric, geometry,
arithmetic, astronomy and music. In turn, these were further subdivided, with the first three
subjects comprising the trivium, and the last four the quadrivium. Ancient Greek understanding
of the term “music” embodied several subjects which lie outside modern conceptions. Music
formed part of a larger body of mathematical knowledge that included aspects of geometry and
astronomy; as well as the areas of art and literature. Music and gymnastics constituted a
fundamental part of Greek education, the former being linked to the latter through dancing. The

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3 “The practice of music was prohibited to slaves, as music was considered a distinctive mark of nobility
and of the education reserved for free Athenians.” Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W.
W. Norton, 1941), 13.

4 Well into the twentieth century, this curricular arrangement was taken as a given by those studying this
period, however, more recent scholarship points to a more fluid state of affairs. Paul Abelson has shown that both
the Greeks and Romans had varying opinions on what constituted essential subjects of study. For example, during
the first century, teacher/philosophers Seneca and Quintilian supported differing assortments of the seven subjects,
although music remained a subject in both. Similarly, as late as the third century, logic was commonly understood
as a subject reserved for higher levels of study. See Paul Abelson, “The Development of the Curriculum of the
Seven Liberal Arts”, in Education and Western Civilization: Greece, Rome and the Middle Ages, ed. George C.
balance, discipline and self control that derived from these subjects were seen to help individuals attain true happiness.

Music was also used to differentiate rank, in that different aspects of its nature were deemed appropriate to specific classes. For example, those destined for leadership roles were not encouraged to become accomplished performers; rather, convention held that their education should emphasize rational and intellectual elements, in the overall pursuit of truth. Ordinary citizens would receive a more practical instruction from accomplished music teachers, to encourage the development of good character. Plato summed up music’s role in this process, stating:

The music masters by analogous methods instill self-control and deter the young from evil-doing. And when they have learned to play the lyre, they teach them the works of good poets of another sort, namely the lyrical, which they accompany on the lyre, familiarizing the mind of the children with the rhythms and melodies. By this means, they become more civilized, more balanced, and better adjusted in themselves and so more capable in whatever they say or do, for rhythm and harmonious adjustment are essential to the whole of human life…

Music also had a direct effect on moral character. “It was the ethical power of music to strengthen or weaken character that led Plato to treat music with such prominence and seriousness when considering the proper education for citizens of the ideal state.” Further, knowledge of music was considered a mark of prestige in Greek society; to be musical was to be respectable. “The role of music in the artistic aspects of life was so great that in general an

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5 For example, future leaders would be educated in abstract concepts. These students would be “drawn away from a sensory orientation to music into a purely intellectual realm, which is reason. Because of this, harmonics were considered a science and included in the higher education curriculum.” Michael L. Mark, *Source Readings in Music Education History* (New York: Macmillan, 1982), 6.


educated and distinguished man was called a musical man…, whereas an inferior and uncouth person was simply “unmusical’ or a man without music.”

Along these lines, it was one’s civic duty to encourage forms of artistic philanthropy whereby citizens of means underwrote musical activity for the benefit of the entire polis. Well-to-do citizens were expected to sponsor musical events as a way of paying communal homage to the gods, thereby preserving harmonious relations with the divine. Musical compositions were judged according to the degree that they strengthened character and social values. Competitive choral events promoted excellence in performance, but not just for peer admiration. Musical activities were woven into social rituals and activities that were seen to contribute to the health of the state. Thus, “the training and instruction went beyond the limits of the strictly technical aspects of performance and provided an education in the values and conduct of the polis, as conveyed through its myths and celebrations.”

As well, music provided insight in many other areas of daily life, helping to explain the nature of the individual, as well as the order of the universe. “Archaic Greek culture was a song culture. Poetry, either recited or sung, was the medium through which history was related, political realities and social status were affirmed, social sanctions were taught and upheld, and religious meaning was sought and found.” Greek education thus made music a paramount concern. “The purpose of music in education was to help children develop perception of idealized Hellenic community life and to prepare them to participate actively in it as citizens. The use of improper music, poetry and stories would defeat this purpose.”

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8 Lang, *Music in Western Civilization*, 1.
10 Ingalis, “Traditional Greek Choruses;” 372.
11 This concern led Plato to recommend the censorship of some forms of music, lest they detract from its nobler purposes. See Mark, *Source Readings*, 5.
Original Greek ideas about music subsequently found their way into Roman culture, although more emphasis was placed upon its value as an entertainment, rather than as a means of self-improvement. Unlike the Greek understanding of music as something to be played by an individual, it became common in Roman times to assemble large groups of musicians in public spectacles and pantomimes. The receptiveness of the Roman Empire to new ideas not only spread earlier Greek musical ideas far and wide, but also introduced innovations to domestic practice.

Interestingly, the significance of this interchange became one of the common themes through which modern music historians have inserted narratives of Western cultural superiority. For instance, in his ambitious work on the place of music in Western civilization Paul Lang confidently argues that “[t]he Roman felt himself called to share his intellectual treasures with other peoples and hence, he converted the achievements of the Greeks into boons of humanity.”

Nevertheless, it is true that Roman music also introduced a number of foreign influences into the original Greek form, due in large part to the expanse of its empire, and in the act of sharing many attributes were no doubt transferred back and forth. As with its Greek counterpart, Roman culture made no distinction between secular and sacred music, but its musical appetite was different. Initially, “the Roman public was still so vulgar and uneducated that the foremost Greek musicians could not interest them unless their musical performance was associated with some scrimmage or wrestling.” Still, Greek musical ideas came to be recognized as the standard against which subsequent cultural tastes were measured. In time, “the public

exercised critical scrutiny over artists and gave vent to its disapproval if the singer or player made mistakes.”\textsuperscript{14}

Musical practices and traditions introduced by cultures that came under Roman rule further augmented the Greco-Roman form, producing differing ideas about its purpose and place,\textsuperscript{15} but throughout, music formed an integral part of the cultural life of the Ancient World, and while distinctions of taste seem common, its presence remained unquestioned.

Christianity—Music and Morality

The ascendance of Christianity recast many earlier beliefs, transforming them to suit its worldview. The function of education reflected this paradigm shift.

For centuries (after) it was almost unquestioningly accepted that the main aim of education was to bring men closer to God. For educational purposes, man was perceived first and foremost as the Son of God and the function of education was directly derived from this perception. It was commonly agreed that the central role of education was to make man pious in this world and to prepare him for a happy life in the next.\textsuperscript{16}

Whereas religious worship had comprised part of a larger musical experience in the Greco-Roman era, early Church fathers drew a moral distinction between sacred and secular music that would endure well into the next millennium. Adapting earlier traditions of reification, ‘pure’ music became associated with the sacred, while all other forms were demonized. Good and bad music was henceforth to be associated with the sacred and the secular, respectively. Its potential value had to be weighed against its equal potential for spiritual harm. “Christians

\textsuperscript{14} By “Cicero’s time, there were connoisseurs who were able to identify a composition after “the first flute tone”, and Cicero was duly impressed by such ability.” See Lang, \textit{Music in Western Civilization}, 33.

\textsuperscript{15} Music’s “emancipation from ancient simplicity led to a quick artistic downfall, promoted especially by the dominant popularity of the pantomime, the music of which was characterized by contemporary writers as weak, void of dignity, lascivious, and full of frills and fanfares.” See Lang, \textit{Music in Western Civilization}, 32.

considered the music practiced [sic] by heathens to be diabolic music. It had to be opposed, and people, especially young people, had to be protected from its effects."17 The dichotomy made it difficult to reconcile ancient and Christian traditions in this regard. Augustine, who wrote treatises on six of the seven liberal arts, including music, underscored the dilemma. In one instance, he extols the divine inspiration of music, stating

The mental agility gained through a study of the liberal arts—and music especially—should show the road to salvation to those who, by indulging too much in worldly learning, erred on the wrong path, while the truly faithful will win their purification not through reason but through the fire of divine love.18

The passage reflects Augustine’s preference for musical over rational knowledge, as a means of achieving spiritual authenticity. Put simply, in terms of divine inspiration, music trumped reason. At the same time, even Augustine remained wary of the power of music to evoke feelings outside strict religious devotion.

The pleasure of the ear did indeed draw me and hold me more tenaciously, but You have set me free. Yet, still when I hear those airs, in which Your words breathe life, sung with sweet and measured voice, I do, I admit, find a certain satisfaction in them, yet not such as to grip me too close, for I can depart when I will.19

There is the sense that he cannot dismiss entirely the lure of secular music, even as he shuns it. Although subsequent contributions would be made to music’s appropriate social and cultural place, this Christian-inspired distinction would come to colour all discussion regarding the function of music as a vehicle for education.

No direct evidence exists to define or identify whether or how non-sacred music differed from sacred music until well into the ninth century, however, one detects its presence through the lamentations of those warning of the corrupting influence of the former. “That secular music did

17 Lang, Music in Western Civilization, 57.
18 Augustine, quoted in Lang, Music in Western Civilization, 57.
19 Augustine, quoted in Lang, Music in Western Civilization, 61.
flourish, even though every trace of it has been erased, is clear from the many ecclesiastic
censures against musicians other than the *magistri* of the church choir.”

Many aspects of pagan culture endured and coexisted with newer ideas. The Greek belief
that mood could be altered according to the choice of musical scale was grafted to Christian
morality, ascribing these values to each mode. Writing at approximately the same time as
Augustine, Boethius captured many Greek musical traditions in his writing, much of which later
came to represent the orthodox historical version of ancient Western musical tradition. His work
was widely quoted during the Renaissance, and was used well into the eighteenth century by
English educators. By describing music and its place in educating the young, Boethius preserved
many of the Greek approaches to music, in the new light of Christianity:

> Thus, Plato held that we should be extremely cautious in this matter,
lest some change in music of good moral character should occur.
He also said that there is no greater ruin for the morals of a community
than the gradual perversion of a prudent and modest music. For the
minds of those hearing the perverted music immediately submit to
it, little by little depart from their character, and return no vestige of
justice or honesty. This will occur if either the lascivious modes
bring something immodest into the minds of the people or if the more
violent modes implant something warlike and savage. For there is
no greater path whereby instruction comes to the mind than through
the ear.\(^2^1\)

There is also evidence from the Carolingian era that alludes to desired musical taste. It
shows that the distinctions between “good” and “bad” music had became even more closely
suffused with Christianity and what constituted a proper Christian life. In their ambition to
safeguard ‘true’ Christianity, Carolingian monks copied, and thus, preserved many of the ancient
and early Christian texts. These included Greek ideas about education in general and music in
particular, although pagan practices had to be adapted to newer Christian ideas. These, in turn,

encouraged the standardization of Church rituals, to ensure that only sacred music was performed, and that local Church officials did not stray from orthodoxy.

For example, Charlemagne’s attention to standardization of religious practice required that “the Gloria Patri be sung with all honor [sic] by everyone”, and that “the priest himself, together with the holy angels, and the people of God, sing the Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus all together…”\(^\text{22}\) The need for such an edict hints at what must have been a common problem, that is, varying interpretations and practices at the local level. This possibility is made more likely by the existence of official decrees alluding to the presence of music not used in religious worship.

Despite the paucity of direct historical evidence during this period, it is safe to conclude that secular music flourished alongside the sacred because of the comparisons being made between the latter and the former. As Lang notes, “[secular] music had to be suppressed and proscribed because it ran completely counter to the dictates of the Church”.\(^\text{23}\) And, as was the case with so many other areas of Church doctrine, scholars struggled to define and interpret these proscriptions, sometimes to the point of absurdity.\(^\text{24}\) As with so many other aspects of day-to-day life, however, musical ideas and practices could not be confined or controlled by decree, or even faith. Islamic writing on the subject from the thirteenth century attributes certain modal phrases of composition to Greek musical traditions, suggesting that there was common ground, if not religiously, then at least culturally, between the Christian and Islamic worlds, escaping official scrutiny and control.\(^\text{25}\)

\(^{22}\) Charlemagne, “Admonitio Generalis, 70,” quoted in Mark, Source Readings, 69.

\(^{23}\) Lang, History and Music, 12.

\(^{24}\) In one instance, a ninth-century master complained that a colleague had defined music as “the mystery of number.” The apparent problem was that the word “mystery” suggested “that music and the other arts could not be taught. If they could not be taught, they could not be learned, but rather had to be believed on faith.” See John J. Contreni, Carolingian Learning, Masters and Manuscripts (Hampshire: Variorum, 1992), 19.

\(^{25}\) Recent scholarship has demonstrated that even as late as the thirteenth century, Muslim scholars wrote about the debt owed to the ancient Greek tradition of using “borrowed notes” in musical scores. See Nancy Sultan,
Because the Western historical record is so dependent upon materials preserved by the Catholic Church until well into the second millennium, we must continue to rely upon the echoes left by those with whom it came into contact. The emergence of medieval universities and the increasing ascendance of temporal over religious authority not only helped spread music and musical ideas across Europe, but also encouraged the development of a homogeneous musical culture, increasingly free of religious censure. Emerging from the socially debilitating effects of the Black Death during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, Europeans entered an era of cultural rebirth that affixed new ideas about, and prominence to, music in society.

The Renaissance – Music, Order and Disorder

Amid the plethora of social and cultural ideas which informed the Renaissance in Europe, the arts took on a new importance. Aesthetically, art forms became more nuanced and complex, as did the social order which informed inspired and produced them. Much of this occurred as a result of what Norbert Elias has described as the “civilizing process,” whereby public violence and diffuse military power were gradually supplanted by civil order, overseen by a central authority, but ultimately policed through the internal, self-control of individuals through displays of social etiquette.

Through the formation of monopolies of force, the threat which one person represents for another is subject to stricter control and becomes more calculable. Everyday life is freer of sudden reversals of fortune. Physical violence is confined to barracks and from this store-house it breaks out only in severe cases, in times of war or social upheaval, into individual life…[Thus,] the concentration of arms and armed troops under one authority makes the use of violence more or less calculable and forces unarmed people in the pacified social spaces to restrain their own violence through foresight or

reflection; in other words it imposes on people a greater or lesser degree of self-control.\textsuperscript{26}

This monopoly of force by monarchs weakened the coercive autonomy of the aristocracy and forced nobles to compete for power within a system of courtly life that increasingly emphasized self-comportment, manners and a knowledge of the arts as an outward indication of one’s inner goodness.

This continual assessment of one’s personal behavior \textit{[sic]} was one mechanism by which the civilizing process came to instill obedience in countries….But we must also remember that \textit{civilite} taught its lessons in a second way—by controlling the outward signs by which one displayed moral uprightness to the outer world. And not only did good behavior \textit{(sic)} confirm inner goodness, but learning to perform well mechanically—to control one’s body in order to write well, walk, sing, dance, and fence—taught the basics of honor \textit{(sic)} and morality and, by standardizing behavior \textit{(sic)}, refined the gearing of social interactions.\textsuperscript{27}

Musical refinement became an important medium through which nobles demonstrated good moral character and thus, social status. The proliferation of universities in Europe after the twelfth century, which based their curriculum around the Greek \textit{quadrivium}, meant that music had a central part in the education of all those in the privileged classes who attended. As well, the continued affiliation of music with religious devotion ensured that it would remain part of the core curriculum in religious schooling, the forerunner of the public school.

Technological and intellectual innovation also contributed to the spread of musical knowledge, most notably, the rapid development of a standard musical language and the development of the printing press in Europe. New music theories introduced the idea that music could be understood as chordal, rather than as merely layers of individual tones. As well, the


\textsuperscript{27} Kate van Orden, \textit{Music, Discipline and Arms in Early Modern France} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 172-173.
creation in the 1480s of musical scores henceforth permitted composers to “express the whole range of human experience by allowing its texture to be determined by the meaning of words.”

Spurred on by mechanical printing, this innovation created a fertile creative environment that freed music from established cultural patterns, just as European society was rediscovering Greek and Roman ideas. Secular musical activity blossomed, and the rediscovery and adaptation of educational ideas from Antiquity weakened the authority of religious sanctions against its non-devotional use.

All of this innovation also presented challenges for those in positions of authority. Like so many other pursuits, musical activity also highlighted a more general cultural-religious tension that characterized the period and despite religious and temporal sanction, it became a powerful vehicle through which subversive messages could be communicated. Recent research based upon Inquisition proceedings and related documentation of the time offer some indication about what was happening. One case from the sixteenth century revolved around the distribution of a song condemning Augsburg officials for endorsing a papal decree that advanced the calendar ahead by 10 days, in order to restore the vernal equinox to March 21st, essential to the calculation of Easter. Augsburg was a free Imperial city, tolerating Protestants and Catholics, hence officials were anxious to avoid any sectarian conflict within its boundaries.

Many Protestant preachers in Augsburg, including one George Muller, interpreted Gregory XVIII’s papal bull as blatant Catholic hegemony and publicly advocated resistance. City authorities expelled Muller on 4 June 1583, not long after which a song began circulating

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29 For a detailed discussion of the many innovations which occurred in Europe during the period and their social implications, see Stewart Isacoff, Temperament: How Music Became a Battleground for the Great Minds of Western Civilization (New York: Random House, 2003).
about the incident. Seeking to prevent its further distribution and performance, officials arrested several people over the next two years who were in some way connected with these acts. What becomes readily apparent in the trial records is that songs were frequently shared among a variety of individuals and that the distribution network facilitating this interaction was informal, yet complex. When the song’s author, a weaver by the name of Abraham Schadlin, appeared before city officials in April 1584, he told his inquisitors that his song simply reflected “what everyone else was saying.” Schadlin had used a Lutheran psalm tune as the melody for his song, a piece of music that would have been familiar to most 16th-century Protestants, a common practice at the time.  

This makes sense, for one only needed to know how to read to sing it, and not even that, if he or she could memorize it after hearing it a few times. Hence, even if learned for the purpose of exaltation initially, the music could nevertheless be turned to serve nefarious purposes.

Court cases in Augsburg related to this one continued for years afterward, revealing that popular musical pieces and original compositions were not only commonplace, but also that performers regularly invented tunes for lyrics to songs they did not know. Further, the trade in illicit music made for good business. In June 1586, a book dealer and his wife were arrested and tried for selling illegal images and songs, among them copies of Schadlin’s original composition. Both testified that “they felt justified in selling these things, since others had been selling them openly without consequence…. Between them they admitted to having sold close to 200 songs and images about George Muller,” constituting “a healthy market for materials about the

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31 As Fisher notes: “Given that the spread of song texts, provocative or otherwise, was facilitated by the reuse of popular existing melodies, musical “composition” as such is rarely a factor.” See Fisher, “Song, Confession and Criminality:” 622. This point is supported by van Orden, who notes that in sixteenth-century France, “the practice of fitting new texts to well-known tunes was extremely common at the time. See van Orden, Music, Discipline and Arms, 163.

32 As Fisher suggests, “one must assume that Schadlin deliberately sought to link the two songs in the audience’s mind, thus reinforcing the political message while providing a ready memory aid.” See Fisher, “Song, Confession and Criminality:” 628.
preacher” long after the incident had occurred.” Protestant also used familiar Catholic melodies as a way of mocking rituals in battle. For example, “Charles de Saictes relates how those who sacked Catholic churches in 1562 took pleasure in dressing one of their ranks as a priest and making a triumphal procession through town, “singing the Te Deum laudamus or Requiem in derision’’ and such tunes were so emblematic of their faith that even Catholics themselves parodied them.  

Another indication of popular musical taste is illustrated in Inquisition records, regarding Francesco Scudieri, a sixteenth-century Italian music teacher. In 1560, Scudieri was sentenced to three years in prison for heresy, and in preparation for auction, was required to compile an inventory of his possessions, which included 23 music books—considered a sizeable library for a person of his social rank. Although nothing surprising or subversive appears on the list of materials, the presence of several popular collections and retrospectives suggests that what his students wanted to learn tended to be older folk-based melodies familiar to the lower classes. The library’s contents and the fact that Scudieri lived in proximity to a number of printers suggests that popular tunes were what people wanted to hear and play. Relatedly, the fact that the copies were ordinary print runs indicates that publishers must have recognized that there was a market for this type of material. 

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34 For related examples of this in early modern France, see van Orden, Music, Discipline and Arms, 161-163.
35 “Although it is often difficult to assess with precision how many of the books listed in other inventories are music books, when such information is available in Venetian sources, the size of the collection rarely reaches that of Francesco’s.” See Giulio M. Ongaro, “The Library of a Sixteenth-Century Music Teacher,” Journal of Musicology, 12 (1994): 360.
36 “The copyist of a manuscript did not need to worry about the success of the pieces he was copying. Publishers and printers, however, depended on the success of their ordinary editions to stay in business and thus, were compelled to provide what the public wanted, even when this music was rather conservative.” See Ongaro, “Library:” 374.
Taken together, these sources point to a thriving popular musical culture and suggest that even in the face of official attempts to define a place for music as a higher calling it could and did serve both as harmless entertainment and as a vehicle for communicating subversive ideas and fomenting social protest. With the advent of the printing press, these ideas could be spread rapidly, largely undetected and thus, without consequence. The printing press did this in a format that was affordable to even those of modest means. These sources also point to a nascent sensibility among many in the subordinate classes of a use for music distinct from official dictates, music as expression rather than reified ideal. This is not meant to suggest that music became less important in official circles; rather, it demonstrates that there could exist no single musical ideal and that those attempting such a task would have to justify their positions on the subject.

One had seen this dialogue in the writings of religious reformers such as Martin Luther and John Calvin. Luther, himself an accomplished musician, strongly advocated the use of music in private and public religious worship, so long as it met imbued morally-uplifting qualities. In his preface to a musical work by friend George Rhau, Luther outlined this potential:

Satan is a great enemy to music. It is a good antidote against temptation and evil thoughts. The devil does not stay long where it is practiced [sic]…. Music is a semi-disciplinarian and school-master; it makes men more gentle and tender-hearted, more modest and discreet. I have always loved music. He that is skilled in the art is possessed of good qualities and can be employed in anything. Music must of necessity be retained in the schools. A school-master must be able to sing, otherwise I will hear nothing of him…..With those that despise music as all fanatics are wont to do, I am not pleased; for music is a gift bestowed by God and not by man.\(^\text{37}\)

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\(^\text{37}\) Martin Luther, “Preface to George Rhaus’s Symphoniae incundae,” in Mark, *Source Readings*, 74.
Yet, in the same correspondence, he is also quick to caution Rhau to guard against its spiritual misuse:

Take special care to shun perverted minds who prostitute this lovely gift of nature and of art with their erotic rantings; and be quite assured that none but the devil goad them on to defy their very nature which would and should praise God its Maker with this gift, so that these bastards purloin the gift of God and use it to worship the foe of God, the enemy of nature and of this lovely art.

Similarly, John Calvin recognized the importance of music in education, provided that it served some religious purpose. As with Luther, Calvin cautioned that although music was predisposed to godliness, it remained vulnerable to spiritual corruption:

Although the invention of the lyre and of other musical instruments serves our enjoyment and our pleasure rather than our needs, it ought not on that account to be judged of no value, still less should it be condemned. Pleasure is to be condemned only when it is not combined with reverence for God and not related to the common welfare of society. But music by its nature is adapted to rouse our devotion to God and aid the well-being of man; we need only avoid entertainments to shame, and empty entertainments which keep men from better employments and are simply a waste of time.  

Although Calvin and Luther give no specifics as to what they mean when referring to “erotic rantings” and “empty entertainments,” one may surmise that the music in question was secular in nature. There would be little reason for them to make the distinction in the first place if this were not so. However, the fact that religious music was increasingly adopted by the monarchy to justify its position of authority may have encouraged them to, in a manner of speaking, stake their ground. This may have had something to do with the increasingly common tendency on the part of state authorities to employ music associated with divine worship in their courtly rituals.

As was stated above, the Renaissance witnessed the final consolidation of political power in the hands of a central authority, through the gradual supplanting of physical violence with

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courtly manners and standards of public behaviour. But it is also interesting to note that even as this process got underway, music already played a pivotal role in linking divine power with that wielded by the crown. In his analysis of musical accompaniment used in Edward II of England’s coronation ceremony, Andrew Hughes concludes that monarchs came increasingly to rely upon liturgical music and verse, in order to buttress royal authority against competing power.

At home, Edward II was forced to respond to an increasingly militant aristocracy that had emerged under the autocratic rule of his father, Edward I. A change in the coronation oath was one result. A revival of popular recognition, which was of course shouted not by the people, but by the aristocracy assembled at the coronation, was another. Yet by repeating that acclamation in Unxerant to music resembling that of the Exultet, the coronation subtly strengthened the king’s authority by reinforcing the parallel between his anointing and Christ’s baptism.\(^\text{39}\)

Similarly, Kate van Orden has drawn upon the work of Norbert Elias\(^\text{40}\) to demonstrate how this shift manifested itself with regard to music. In her study of military traditions and music in early modern France, she describes the renewed association between music and mathematics as objective explanations for a logically ordered universe—what van Orden refers to as the “order and force of musical number.”\(^\text{41}\) She also contends that royal power relied in large part on political and philosophical arguments showing the logical relationship between universal harmony and the king’s rule. These assertions were based in musical principles proving that all French nobles owed fealty to the king. Thus, not only did musical knowledge become one of the ways for nobles to demonstrate their civility, it also became ensconced in the natural order.


\(^{40}\) Elias’ original argument was that the social transformation was part of a larger social paradigm shift that lifted nation above nobility, with the monarch at its apex. “Ceremony and etiquette gives this situation clear expression.” Quoted from Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, vol. 2, *Power and Civility*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), 258.

\(^{41}\) van Orden, *Music, Discipline and Arms*, 79.
Manners promoted self censorship in the form of a ceaseless attention to style, to politeness, and to the minutiae of self fashioning, and by encouraging gentler, considered behaviour, the practice of *civilite* essentially policed society from the inside out, bringing with it the benefit of keeping subjects in check.\textsuperscript{42}

An appreciation of music became one of the most obvious ways to make these traits apparent to others. A tantalizing glimpse of this comes from the linking of the Winchester Part Books to a suitor of Queen Elizabeth I of England. In his numerous proposals of marriage to the young Queen, King Erik XIV of Sweden sent a number of betrothal gifts, among them a collection of musical scores, in four part books. The volumes were “copied on costly vellum…and sumptuously bound in red calfskin tooled in gold and silver with the royal coat of arms hand-painted on the front and back covers, encircled by the Order of the Garter and encircled with a crown.” The books constituted an important (and expensive) part of the King’s 10-year quest to win the Queen’s hand.

In many ways, Erik typified Renaissance nobility, “with a taste for extravagance, display and a passion for the fine arts. A music lover, he was himself a singer, lutenist and composer whose court was teeming with foreign artists and musicians.”\textsuperscript{43} The fact that he employed music as part of his strategy may not seem surprising at first glance; however, when one considers the prominent role the Part Books played in such an important, although unsuccessful, alliance—and the fact that they were deemed worthy of such an honour in the first place—it is probable that this was not considered a trivial gesture. At the very least, “the incident reveals the negotiating power that musicians—and musical scores—were accorded in this turbulent era of history.”\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{42} van Orden, *Music, Discipline and Arms*, 7.
\textsuperscript{44} Forney, “A Gift of Madrigals:” 73.
this way, music could serve as a kind of ‘character currency,’ communicating one’s refinement and virtue in their personal absence.

As the Renaissance gave way to the Enlightenment, ideas began to emerge about human nature and how individual potential could be realized. Education took on new significance in this transformation, and in the process, modified many established conventions regarding the social and cultural function of music. Academically, the concept of music had to this point been understood as either a mathematical science, or as an art, the latter concept having been granted wide acceptance during the Renaissance itself. “At the same time, there was a growing recognition that music had expressive powers of its own—perhaps even more powerful than speech.”

The transition is captured in large part through the works of John Amos Comenius, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Through their work, education came to be understood as a means through which all individuals might reach their full potential, to the general benefit of society. The end result would transform both its means and ends.

The Enlightenment – Music and Individual Development

Initially the idea that education should be made available to even the poorest people led to questions about what should be taught, in order to counterbalance innate desire with reason.

“[P]ious preparation for the next life, once the exclusive and overriding aim of education, now had to accommodate the more immediate desire for personal happiness beforehand.”

John Amos Comenius saw music as a natural way of bridging this gap, arguing that through an

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46 Known as the “private/public dilemma,” earlier philosophers saw education as a way to change human nature itself, while later ones took selfish human nature as a given and proposed educational strategies to work around the premise. In short, the debate revolved around “harmonizing the personal with the social good.” See Gilead, “Reconsidering the Roots;” 431-439.

47 Gilead, “Reconsidering the Roots;” 428.
acquaintance with and an appreciation of the arts—especially music—one acquired many practical and spiritual benefits.

Singing, as an example, was good physical exercise for young children, and as a tool of self-discipline among older children. Singing and playing music encouraged memory and promoted self-esteem, all of which could be used ultimately in the service of personal piety. What distinguished Comenius from earlier writers was that his approach could be employed at home, or in a more formal setting such as school. In addition, he conceived a much broader definition of music, believing that “a propensity for music existed as an integral part of human nature.” Hence, even the first cries of a newborn child constituted musical expression:

Music is especially natural to us, for as soon as we see the light we immediately sing the song of paradise, thus recalling to our memory our fall, A, a! E, e! I maintain that complaint and wailing are our first music, from which it is impossible to restrain infants, and if it were possible, it would be inexpedient since it contributes to their health; for as long as other exercises and amusements are wanting, by this way means their chests and other internal parts relieve themselves of their superfluities.

As well, Comenius contended that music reinforced both spiritual and practical aspects of education, making it an ideal candidate for inclusion in structured curriculum. In the Great Dialectic, he outlined his pedagogic vision in sketches of the ideal Mother, Vernacular, and finally, Latin Schools, all of which emphasized the use of music as a means of producing well-rounded, self-disciplined adults. Initially, children were to “take their first steps in music by learning easy hymns and psalms. This exercise should form part of their daily devotions.” At the next level, they should be taught to “sing well-known melodies, and in the case of those who display especial aptitude, to learn the elements of advanced music.” The goal at the final stage should be “to learn four languages, and acquire an encyclopaedic knowledge of the arts. Those

49 From Comenius, “School of Infancy,” quoted in Mark, Source Readings, 80-81.
youths who have completed its whole should have had a training as…[m]usicians, both practical and theoretical.”

Throughout, Comenius underlined the critical importance of competent instruction:

> If the foundation is firm, a solid edifice can be constructed upon it, but if it be weak, this is impossible….For this reason Timotheus the musician used to demand twice as large a fee from those pupils who had learned the rudiments of their art elsewhere, saying that his labour was twofold, as he had first to get them out of the bad habits that they had acquired, and then to teach them correctly. Those, therefore who are learning any art should take care to make themselves masters of the rudiments…

John Locke expressed a similar sentiment with regard to teaching dancing, and lauded the benefits of the arts in shaping character. Although much less enamored with music as an educative tool, he did concede its relation to dancing presupposed music’s inclusion in the education of a gentleman; otherwise, it should be relegated to recreational pursuits, once the serious academic study of more “use and consequence had been completed.” Locke contended that musical activity invited “odd Company” and wasted time that could be spent more usefully, concluding “that amongst all those things that ever came into the List of Accomplishments, I think I may give it the last place.” While these comments reflect Locke’s views on what he considered appropriate to teach young men, they foreshadow arguments that would arise over music’s continued inclusion in the curriculum of private and public education, particularly toward the end of the nineteenth century. The ‘scientific’ arguments both for and against this inclusion often echoed the thoughts of Jean-Jacques Rousseau on this subject.

Like Comenius, Rousseau recognized the value of educating children from an early age. Many of his ideas about music and education came from his book, *Emile*, which included advice

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on what and how music should be taught at various stages during childhood, and the benefits that would thus accrue from such attention. Rousseau also proposed a much more flexible system for teaching sight reading (similar to what later became known popularly as the ‘moveable doh’ system), but never bothered to promote it. Nevertheless, his inclusion of music as an essential part of formal curriculum provided a direction for future school promoters to follow. “Educators reading his treatises were at least brought into contact with the idea of school music as a possible subject and his ideas on method opened the way for more detailed work in the preparation of textbooks incorporating a workable plan for the classroom.”

Modernity – Music and an Emerging Middle Class

The scientific and industrial revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Europe proved fertile ground for many of the educational ideas that had been proposed a century earlier. One of the first practitioners to employ them systematically was Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, whose methods gained widespread acceptance during the first decades of the nineteenth century. Pestalozzi operated several schools in Germany and Switzerland dedicated to the education of poor and orphaned children, and was the first to make music a regular part of the curriculum for the underclass. Through education, Pestalozzi sought to “elevate the lowly condition of the common people,” thus bestowing dignity and self-respect, ultimately leading to self improvement and a better life.

Though the ancients have said that “to study those arts which are suited to a free-born mind soothes the character, and takes away the roughness of exterior manners,” yet little has been done to give free access to those enjoyments or accomplishments to all, or even a majority of the people. If it is not possible for them to give much

55 Commentary by Mark, in Source Readings, 91.
of their attention to subordinate or ornamental pursuits, while so much of their time is taken up by providing for their first and necessary wants, still this does not furnish a conclusive reason why they should be shut out altogether from every pursuit above the toil of their ordinary avocations.  

Pestalozzi’s philosophy, exemplified in such books as *How Gertrude Teaches Her Children*, emphasized a child-centred approach to learning based upon exploration, self-discovery and physical activity. With regard to developing the senses, if the child wasn’t actively engaged and having fun while learning, the entire effort was worthless:

For it is desirable that everything of this kind should be treated as an amusement rather than as anything else. The greatest liberty must prevail, and the whole must be done with a certain cheerfulness, without which all these exercises…would become dull, pedantic and ridiculous.  

The Pestalozzian method of education became highly influential during the first half of the nineteenth century, particularly in North America, yet struggled initially for official acceptance in the fledgling public school system in England. Part of the reason may have been that established ideas about what constituted appropriate schooling precluded a Pestalozzian approach. For example, attempts at including singing in the charity schools of the early eighteenth century had failed and it wasn’t until 1816 that singing appeared as a regular activity in an English infant school—and this experiment was short-lived. It may also have been that music as a subject did not enjoy the same kind of prestige in the Anglican Church, in contrast to

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58 According to Trowsdale, the school was run by social reformer Robert Owen and two partners, one Quaker, the other a Baptist. Not surprisingly, both objected to singing, as well as dancing and military drill, with the result that all were eventually dropped from the curriculum. See Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 19.
that of the Catholic and Lutheran faiths. Pestalozzi himself puzzled over this apparent lack of enthusiasm in a letter to J. P. Greaves, an English friend and disciple of his teaching, stating:

there is scarcely a village throughout Switzerland, and perhaps there is none throughout Germany or Prussia, in which something is not done for an acquirement of at least the elements of music on the new and more appropriate plan…. [T]his fact will not be overlooked in a country which has never been backward in suggesting or adopting improvements, when founded on facts and continued by experience.

In some ways, the Pestalozzian method represented a return to attitudes and values regarding music’s role in education not fully appreciated since ancient times. For one thing, music was permitted to officially reclaim its position as a universal expression accessible to all people. Further, it was once again recognized as an integral part of a well-rounded education. In truth, however, Pestalozzi had rekindled a familiar use for music as a mark of distinction among one’s peers, in much the same way as had religious and temporal authorities before him. The difference was that this time its expressive potential was to be available to the masses. The prospect delighted some and frightened others.

When Egerton Ryerson, first Chief Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, toured Europe and the United States in 1844, he would witness firsthand the educational legacy left by Pestalozzi. Upon his return, it would be Ryerson’s recommendation to include music as a core subject in the schools of Upper Canada. As circumstance would have it, he would on more than one occasion draw upon the many historical justifications for it to remain there over the course of his tenure.

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59 An abortive attempt was made by the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge to teach poor children to sing in regular services, but in spite of enthusiastic local support, it was discontinued by senior church officials, because “so much ‘fine singing’ undermined social discipline, for the children who ‘sang singly’ acquired a pride in themselves.” M. A. Jones, quoted in Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 12.

60 Pestalozzi, “Letter to Greaves”, in Mark, Source Readings, 94.
CHAPTER TWO
MUSIC CULTURE AND THE FORMATION OF A MIDDLE CLASS
IN UPPER CANADA

Music history is, among other things, a discourse of myth through which “Western civilization” contemplates and presents itself. This is said, not in order to question truth value of music-historical narratives, but to emphasize their aspect as stories of traditional form that the culture tells in its desire to affirm its identity and values.¹

The middle class in Victorian Ontario defined themselves privately with reference to two standards: family life and proper deportment. The middle class was distinctive for the function and sentiment of its families and for the ways in which its members cultivated their persons and performance. In living up to these ideals, they developed common ways of living and thinking and gave cultural form to their status and authority in local society. The ideals of domestic retreat and cultivation were, in these ways, as important to the congealing of a middle-class identity as were the public crucible of the local state and voluntary activity.²

This chapter examines the ways in which musical expression contributed to the emergence of a middle-class culture in Upper Canada during the mid-Victorian era. Drawing upon the idea of “invented tradition,”³ the chapter also looks at how music informed and influenced middle-class culture, arguing that the institutions which became prominent in the standardization and regulation of musical knowledge evolved out of a bourgeois desire to

³ What is meant here is the ideas that ‘traditions’ can be “invented, constructed and actively maintained, and those emerging in a less easily traceable manner within a brief and detectable period—a matter of a few years perhaps—and establishing themselves with great rapidity.” See Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.
emulate European ‘traditions’ that had themselves only recently been codified into recognizable standards. Early champions of music culture would come to rely upon these practices to shape and guide the establishment of formal musical institutions in Upper Canada, as a way of drawing distinctions between ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ culture. While some standards could be easily grafted to the existing cultural fabric, others had to be modified to suit the realities of colonial life. Likewise, the creative expression they embodied, during a period of changing popular tastes fed by technological transformation, made them simultaneously saintly and suspect, a trend which would only intensify with the onset of modernity. As subsequent chapters will show, these ideas would both complement and compete with bureaucratic policies designed to define a useful place for music in the schools of Toronto.

The chapter begins with a general historical overview of music and performance in Canadian history, noting recent developments in scholarship and analysis. It then examines military and church-based musical activities, to determine how each influenced the colony’s music culture and to contextualize later developments. The chapter ends with a consideration of how earlier musical practices (both foreign and domestic) helped to shape emerging middle-class attitudes concerning music’s proper place in a rapidly-urbanizing environment, for it is against this tapestry that public school music educators had to define a culturally-meaningful place for their discipline.

Background

Musical activity in what today would be understood as southern Ontario represents a layering of several cultures, all of which influenced to varying degrees tastes and attitudes of that
society during the nineteenth century. The term “rubbaboo”\(^4\) has been used to describe the product of this musical inter-mingling and scholars have employed it to demonstrate how people from differing backgrounds absorbed, adopted and reflected what they heard, based upon their own particular interpretation. Within this Canadian context, Elaine Keillor has shown how successive waves of exploration, trade and settlement have altered patterns of singing, dancing and instrumental music, from pre-Contact to the present.

Different cultures created forms of musicking that varied greatly, and this variety has continued to grow as members of almost every culture in the world chose to make Canada their home. Inevitably, Canadians partake of many musical experiences, and through their relationships with one another, they participate in and blend different forms. As early as 1862, the term “rubbaboo” was applied to this form of musical blending. \(^5\)

More recent scholarship in Canadian history reveals that musical interaction formed an integral part of aboriginal culture both pre- and post-Contact, \(^6\) and there are several examples in primary sources of it having been employed as a means of communication. At Hochelaga (present-day Montreal) on his second voyage to the continent in 1535, Jacques Cartier records that he had called for “trumpets and other musical instruments to be sounded, whereat the Indians were much delighted.”\(^7\) We have no way of knowing what precise meaning Cartier’s fanfare had upon the village, but he thought to do it—and that his hosts appeared to enjoy it—offers some indication about the power of music to serve as a substitute for language. The fact that it was considered such an effective tool of education for Jesuit missionaries among native peoples reinforces this assertion. “While language and reasoning presented difficulties, the

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\(^4\) Originally used to describe a pemmican-based soup, “rubbaboo” became associated with music that resulted from the mixing of two or more cultural influences. See Elaine Keillor, *Music in Canada: Capturing Landscape and Diversity* (McGill-Queen’s, 2006), 12.


\(^6\) “With regards to the rubbaboo thesis, there is considerable evidence of borrowing and mixing of traditions....Yet there are also commonalities among these musickings that set them apart from music heard in other parts of the world.” Keillor, *Music in Canada*, 46.

missionaries soon discovered one key to their ambitions and employed it to great advantage: the Indians’ strong inclination and receptiveness toward music.” This is not surprising, given that music formed such an integral part of aboriginal cultures. Musical practices—most often in the form of singing accompanied by dancing—is mentioned time and again by ethno historians studying aboriginal culture, underpinning some of the most important events in a community’s life cycle. For example, in his study of the Huron, Bruce Trigger notes its use in the Confederacy’s most significant celebrations, which incorporated feasts.

Jesuit instructors quickly took advantage of this shared cultural trait. As Roger Magnuson notes in his history of education in New France:

Music was a frequently used device for communicating the Christian religion, perhaps because the melodic form was common to both cultures. The Indians loved singing and sung well; of course, hymns, chants, and prayers were an integral part of the Christian liturgy. The missionaries exploited the Indians’ fascination for music by composing hymns in their own dialect.

Colonial French contact with native cultures continued and following the capture and eventual cession of New France to Britain in 1763, established trade routes were increasingly frequented by English and Scottish entrepreneurs. Anxious to capitalize on the newly-acquired territory, traders pushed further north and west; thus, by the time Quebec was divided into Lower and Upper Canada by the Constitutional Act of 1791, contact had been made with many of the

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8 Kallmann, History of Music, 10.
9 The largest feasts were those that accompanied the annual meeting of the confederacy council and the investiture of new chiefs. Lesser ones were to celebrate good fortune or victories over the enemy, to solemnize life crises, such as marriage and death, and for the curing of the sick…Dancing was important to any such occasion. It was led by two older men who shook rattles and sang, while the rest of the guests danced round them in an oval formation and joined in the refrain. Dancers did not hold hands, but each was expected to move vigorously and to make appropriate facial expressions. See Bruce Trigger, Children of Aataentsic: A History of the Huron People to 1660 (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s, 1976), 85.
native bands in the latter territory. Records left by these early British traders indicate that music continued to be used in a variety of circumstances.  

Daniel Harmon worked for the North West Company and documented his travels from Lachine into the Northwest during the years 1800-1819 and his entries make frequent mention of activities incorporating music. These include war dances, mourning, leisure and story-telling. One entry is of particular note, as it suggests that music could also be used as an emotional salve to restore dignity following an admitted humiliation. Following a disagreement over credit for goods, Harmon reported that he had beaten a village chief, who a couple of days hence invited Harmon to a feast after receiving medicine from the latter for wounds suffered. After being served boiled beaver by two village chiefs (including the one wounded by Harmon),

the Men & Women joined in singing a few Songs—the airs of which were not altogether unpleasant to the ears of Civilized People… Before the Chief began to go round with his Beaver, he stood up in the middle of the Hut and in an audible voice made an harangue… he thanked me for what I had done to him for he said I had given him sense—but he told the Indians that if he heard of any of them laughing at him for having got a beating, he should repent of his untimely mirth—and a braver Indian than he is I do not know of having seen.

Harmon’s reference to “Civilized People” is telling not only for the distinction it draws, but also because it alludes to an objective (read “European”) standard against which all other music might be measured. While this observation may simply reflect Harmon’s subjective recollection, it underscores how musical expression and ideas of cultural refinement and moral character formed part of an inseparable world view, even in remote settlements.

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11 For example, see Keillor, Music in Canada, 34-37.
In her study of voyageur lifestyle and customs, Carolyn Podruchny demonstrates that music formed an integral part of work and leisure among native and non-native traders, often combining elements of both culture in its expression and meaning.\(^{14}\) This notwithstanding, the preoccupation to recreate European cultural space on the frontier diminished and marginalized aboriginal musical expression; nevertheless, its impact surfaced from time to time, and was eventually to be transformed entirely when it reappeared later in the century manifested in Wild West shows and pulp fiction.\(^{15}\) Although difficult to quantify, we cannot altogether discount its influence and effect. As Keillor notes, the changes may be subtle, but they represent something different:

Substitutions of Canadian terms and place names gradually occurred in oral texts of songs. Probably the tunes also changed slightly in the new surroundings due to Aboriginal and French influences. It seems likely that if the voyageur style of singing with a final Aboriginal ‘whoop’ was being used by an English-speaking Canadian signing a song in the French language, these vocal characteristics were possibly used in English-language songs as well. The rubbaboo was occurring in the intermingling of dance forms and the tunes that accompanied them.\(^{16}\)

Non-native music came to Upper Canada through many channels, including military bands, religious practices and folk traditions carried by those who settled in the colony. Earlier scholarship relies heavily upon military and religious contributions; however, as we shall see, social and cultural historians have added much to this discussion. Through musical activity, communities might demonstrate some aspects of cultural refinement and repose, when not pre-

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\(^{16}\) Keillor, *Music in Canada*, 91.
occupied with the primary tasks of clearing land, building homes, planting, and harvesting crops.\textsuperscript{17}

Initially, the greatest cultural challenge faced by early Upper Canadian settlers was access to any type of formal cultural activity. The great bulk of these new immigrants would have come by way of British colonies closer to the Atlantic seaboard, where older more established urban centres offered a variety of cultural activities, thanks in large part to denser, more diverse populations. This environment encouraged a flourishing public demand for concerts, theatrical productions and other popular entertainments, apart from religious worship.\textsuperscript{18}

Sparse, geographically isolated pockets of settlement in the interior could not easily support such luxuries.

Despite these hardships, government officials and many early pioneers who could afford it took any opportunity they had to incorporate musical activity into their routines. The diaries of Elizabeth Simcoe, wife of Upper Canada’s first Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe, provide numerous references to musical performance and its effect. Within two weeks of their arrival at Quebec, she noted on 27 November 1791: “I went to a subscription concert of Prince Edward’s Band of the 7\textsuperscript{th} Fusiliers. The music was thought excellent. The band costs the Prince eight hundred a year.” At Niagara the following spring, she commented:

Immediately after I have dined I rise [from] the table, one of the officers attends me home and the Band plays on the parade before the house till six o’clock. The music adds cheerfulness to this retired spot and we feel much indebted to the Marquis of Buckingham for the number of instruments he presented to the Regiment. The bugles sound at five every

\textsuperscript{17} One notable exception was the work bee, where neighbours worked communally to raise buildings, process farm products or aid one another in harvesting. See Cathy Wilson, “Reciprocal Work Bees and the Meaning of Neighbourhood,” \textit{Canadian Historical Review}, 82:3 (2001): 431-464.

\textsuperscript{18} As noted by Keillor, “British bureaucrats and tradesmen who had arrived in Canada were accustomed to having the occasional concert and theatrical presentation to attend. Under the New France regime such activities had been frowned upon by the Roman Catholic clergy, but the new order of Britain quickly had its effect as a public theatrical presentation was advertised in Quebec City in November 1765.” Keillor, Music in Canada, 93-99.
morning.\textsuperscript{19}

The musical critique offered by Lady Simcoe provides some idea of what the new aristocracy hoped to implant into Upper Canadian society.

As is indicated by a newspaper piece below, commentary on musical taste was very much in evidence a decade earlier, albeit of a slightly different character. Appearing in Gazette de Montreal in 1786, this excerpt is notable for its allusion to a thriving folk music culture, as well as for its tongue-in-cheek moralizing:

few days ago one zealous overmuch, reprobated his neighbour for being at a dancing assembly. The neighbour plead the example of King David in excuse: But, replied the other, David only danced a minuet, to a divine tune, played on the harp; whereas ye now dance jigs, reels, hornpipes, and country-dances, to profane tunes, played on guitars, violins, flutes, hautboys and fiddles; nay ye even dance pantomimes to the tunes Orpheus played for the devil, when he claimed back his wife.\textsuperscript{20}

Population increase in the new colony of Upper Canada would in time produce debates similar to this, as well as demand for a much wider variety of entertainments. And, it would be these individuals, sharing similar cultural values and tastes, who would attempt to set public standards in this regard and in the process, fashion a distinct middle-class perspective.\textsuperscript{21}

Early Influences

In setting the stage for a discussion of the evolution of theatre in Ontario, J. M. S.

Careless highlights three major pre-requisites for the development of a viable theatrical scene in


\textsuperscript{20} Quoted in Keillor, Music in Canada, 79.

\textsuperscript{21} This pattern has been used to distinguish Canadian from American development in this area. “In Canada, settlers of one culture tended to remain in groups, and areas of settlement were further defined by geography.” See Keillor, Music in Canada, 12.
the province: “sufficient concentration of population to offer potential audiences, adequate means of communication so that players could reach them, and enough public demand to bring actors to perform—and at times be paid.” Building on this thesis, Careless continues:

[F]our major, interrelated processes worked to shape an Ontario society in which the theatre could root and thrive: the growth of settlement itself, the rise of towns and cities, constant improvement in communications by land and water, and the sweep of technological advance which brought industrialization, along with mounting wealth for some, and increased amenities of life and leisure for many more.22

It is fair to say that in general, the emergence of what might be called an Upper Canadian music culture was contingent upon the same pre-requisites. And, in fact, many of the events and venues in which they were presented freely mixed the two performing arts. As we shall see, groups and individuals serving in the military were more often than not engaged in both.23

On this subject, some critical distinctions need to be addressed. First, theatre requires, or pre-supposes at least, an audience other than those involved in the actual performance. Making music may be accomplished alone, with others, or in front of spectators, or any combination thereof. Second, theatrical presentation tends to rely upon entertainment as its primary source of attraction, regardless of what it hopes to communicate. This is not to suggest that it is by nature less provocative or compelling in terms of its ability to deliver a particular message; rather, it is simply to point out that a theatre audience chooses to attend an event—it is not thrust upon the group. Musical expression is not bound to this end. For example, military music may terrify the enemy, religious music may embody spiritual devotion, etc. Third, music’s inclusion as a school subject in Ryerson’s blueprint for public education provides a unique opportunity to study developments in this area, both in and outside the classroom. It is worth keeping these

23 For examples of other domestic theatrical amusements, see Christopher Ernst, “The Transgressive Stage: The Culture of Public Entertainment in Late Victorian Toronto” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2011).
distinctions in mind, as we consider the development of musical culture in Upper Canada during the period.

1. Military Music

One of the most significant contributions to musical activity in early Upper Canada was made by military bands. These bands helped alleviate the boredom and monotony of pioneer life and provided an ongoing supply of formally-trained musicians. By their presence, military bands reinforced British authority by embodying notions of patriotism, loyalty and nationalism, providing a sense of stability and tradition in frontier settlements.

By the early nineteenth century, the practice of accompanying military force with the precision of musical refinement had become commonplace (as discussed in the opening chapter, music had been used in military training), but the regular inclusion of trained musicians within British ranks had begun in earnest only a decade prior to the colony’s establishment. Although musical instrumentation had constituted part of British military exercises and ceremonies for centuries, it wasn’t until the 1780s that organized military bands began to appear.

According to Kopstein and Pearson, their sudden rise in popularity at this time was due in large measure to the actions of the Duke of York, who upon his return from a visit to Germany where military bands were fashionable, received a letter from his officers in the Coldstream Guards requesting the establishment of a full-time band of enlisted men. The request was meant to avoid the current custom of employing civilian musicians who, the officers complained, could decline to perform. Following the approval of the King, consent was given to raise a band

24 "In colloquial British usage a group of wind instruments combined with strings and percussion was referred to as a “band” rather than an orchestra, and this terminology became common in Canada where regimental band string and wind players joined local instrumentalists to provide music for dancing, church services, concerts, theatrical events, and even circuses." Keillor, Music in Canada, 69.
25 See, for example, the works of Norbert Elias and Kate van Orden, cited in the previous chapter.
consisting of 24 players, providing all costs would be borne by the officers.\textsuperscript{26} The novelty caught on, leading to fierce rivalries between regiments, as competition encouraged officers to spend increasingly lavish sums on instruments, uniforms and sheet music for their bands. While this no doubt contributed to the overall improvement of musicianship, the quality and longevity of bands nevertheless “depended entirely on the enthusiasm and pockets of the officers of the regiments.”\textsuperscript{27}

This is not to suggest that prior to 1780, music had no presence in military conflict. Indeed, there are several instances in early Canadian colonial history where it seems to have occurred spontaneously. During the British siege of Louisbourg in 1745, for example, there were “celebrations, with violin, flute, and vocal music, plus a generous allowance of rum in honour of the birthday of King George II.” Ten years later, the same source reports, 141 Acadians facing expulsion “sang Faux plaisirs, vains honneurs…as they were marched to a British ship on 10 September 1755.”\textsuperscript{28}

British troops garrisoned at Quebec following the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759 also brought established musical practices along with them, particularly those involving fifes, drums and trumpets and, after 1783, many regiments were accompanied by their newly-minted military bands. According to the Articles of Agreement of the Royal Artillery, each regiment was supposed to include a 10-piece band, although it remains doubtful that all units

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\textsuperscript{26}This arrangement, “including clarinets, horns, bassoons, trumpets, trombones, serpent and drums”, set the standard for later compositions of English and Commonwealth arrangements. See Kopstein and Pearson, Heritage, 16.

\textsuperscript{27}Kopstein and Pearson, Heritage, 16.

\textsuperscript{28}Quoted in Keillor, Music in Canada, 67.}
could or did meet this standard.\textsuperscript{29} As well, at this time many of the instruments, particularly brass and woodwinds, were of a comparatively crude nature, limiting their use and range.\textsuperscript{30}

Degrees of musicianship also appear to have varied widely among early colonial bands. While the presence of musicians in the garrison communities was hailed as a symbol of civility and order, British regimental records suggest that quality and professionalism were neither uniform, nor consistent.\textsuperscript{31} Because they were descended directly from the British practice of officer sponsorship, training for musicians remained erratic for some time, occasionally with aesthetically disastrous consequences.\textsuperscript{32}

Often, musicians were also involved in theatrical performances and this association may provide some insight into the matter. Evidence from theatrical performances put on by regiments suggests that the quality of the production may have had as much to do with who was involved, as it did with what was being attempted. As Leslie O’Dell notes:

Some regiments performed no theatre, some performed a great deal, and some performed only occasionally. Moreover, regiments that were active in one city sometimes contributed no theatre at a subsequent posting. As in all amateur theatre, these variations would be due to the presence or absence of an individual, or perhaps individuals, with a strong interest in theatre, and no little determination to entice fellow officers to participate.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{29} The ensemble was to include trumpets, French horns, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, as well as fife and drums. See Keillor, Music in Canada, 77.

\textsuperscript{30} “The clarinets [for example] were five-keyed instruments and the flutes (open-hole type) were associated with fifes. Valved brass instruments were not invented until much later in the nineteenth century, and, as a result, the horns and trumpets relied exclusively on playing notes of the natural notes of the harmonic scale.” See Kopstein and Pearson, Heritage, 17.

\textsuperscript{31} For example, see Kallmann, History of Music, and George Campbell Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music in Ontario” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1962).

\textsuperscript{32} For example, in what became known as the ‘Scutari Incident’ during the Crimean War, several military bands struck up God Save the Queen in a variety of keys. Upon the subsequent suggestion of the Duke of Cambridge, commander-in-chief of the British army, military music classes were set up to establish and teach standards. The first classes took place at Kneller Hall, Twickenham, to “train bandmasters and young instrumentalists.” See Kopstein and Pearson, Heritage, 16.

Nonetheless, in Upper Canada their presence represented a way for the fledgling elite and general populace to assert and celebrate British authority and civility, while providing a consistent source for secular instrumental music well into the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{34} In Toronto, for example, “they had multiplied to such an extent that in 1857 there were at least four military bands” performing in the city.\textsuperscript{35} In addition to regular duties, military bands became a regular feature of civic occasions such as parades, dances and concerts.\textsuperscript{36} Their presence also provided a source of musical instruments and competent musicians who might teach in the community where regiments were stationed. Although most of these events followed a standard continental format, local influences did appear. Musicians were also called to private social affairs hosted by the gentry, who wished to entertain guests and make an overt display of status and cultural refinement.

With all their involvement in civilian activity, it is easy to forget that military bands ultimately served the purposes of the state. They were, first and foremost, extensions of military power. Military bands could just as easily arouse feelings of patriotic fervor, or stir militaristic spirit. Noting deference to French Canadian folk songs in the 1820s, one observer wrote that “military bands in Canada pay much attention to these airs, a thing which charms the Canadians. In case of war they will be doubly valuable; although none of them are of a martial nature, they will nevertheless serve to rouse some of the noblest faculties of the mind.”\textsuperscript{37} Following the outbreak of rebellion in Upper Canada in 1837, troops stationed in London entertained locals

\textsuperscript{34} As well, “the presence of military bands added momentum to cultural growth in general and to the development of secular music in particular.” See J. Paul Green and Nancy Vogan, Music Education in Canada: A Historical Account (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 45. Keillor asserts that “regimental bands dominated musical performance up to 1900 and beyond.” Keillor, Music in Canada, 69.


\textsuperscript{36} Kallmann, History of Music, 88.

\textsuperscript{37} “As early as 1797, a band of musicians played for the guests at a dinner held on Major Shanks’ farm lot.” Quoted in Keillor, Music in Canada, 70.
with productions that prompted one observer to state: “the drab life of the backwoods was given a gaiety and sparkle that it had never before known.”

By mid-century, military bands were playing a major role in shaping Upper Canadian music culture. In supplying instruments and trained musicians, British regiments infused a particular brand of musical culture into recently-settled areas of the province, one that proved inseparable from its association with soldierly life and custom. As we will see later on, with the departure of British troops in 1871, it would be the musical aspect of their legacy that would persist, often to the detriment of an authentic military discipline.

2. Church Music

Along with military bands, churches made major contributions to formal musical activity in Upper Canada. Looking back in 1912 at this development of music and theatre, one observer assigned them a pioneering role, stating:

Musical development in the cities began with church music….In general, a high standard has been achieved. In many cases, choir training has proved an excellent preliminary for larger choral work, and many choral societies can trace their inception to a successful beginning in some particular church.

Many denominations openly embraced vocal and instrumental music in their services and their practices fostered musical activity both in sacred and secular settings. Primary among these was the Church of England. For much of the first half of the century, it was considered the de facto state religion of Upper Canada, and its parishioners transplanted and encouraged traditions

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of including instrumental and vocal music in religious worship, particularly in urban areas of the colony. Following the Catholic tradition, Anglican parishes trained musicians for their service and members created a variety of opportunities for musical activity “by forming choirs and sponsoring oratorio performances and even concerts of both sacred and secular music.”

And, as the colony grew, religious music came to form a central part of standard repertoires at public and private events.

Sacred music might be heard at band concerts in the parks on a summer evening or at theatrical or musical programs. Before 1870, if an average household owned any printed music, it was likely a compilation of hymn tunes that were sung in three- or four-part harmony or played on the piano or parlour organ instrument found in many Canadian homes.

Among the earliest Anglican churches promoting musical activity in Toronto was St. James Cathedral. Founded in 1807, its leaders encouraged the formation of choirs and the inclusion of instruments, particularly organs, in religious worship. St. James set the standard for both vocal and instrumental music early on. It was the first church in Upper Canada to make an attempt at forming a devotional choir, under the direction of George Hetherington, who accompanied both choral and congregational singing on bassoon.

Following the construction of a new church building in 1833, a permanent choir was established. The building’s organ was replaced in 1837 “with a fine new organ” donated by J. H. Dunn, Receiver General for Upper Canada. St. James attracted several notable choirmasters and musicians, including organist Edward Hodges and James Paton Clarke. The latter became music instructor at King’s College and was the first person to receive a music degree in Canada.

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40 Kallmann, History of Music, 39.
41 Keillor, Music in Canada, 98. This is also borne out in Sale’s study of pre-Confederation Toronto musical societies and their repertoire.
43 Hodges and his family only stayed in Toronto for six weeks, then moved to the United States, where he gained recognition as “the founder and illustrious representative of Anglican Cathedral Music.” See Lock, “Church Choirs,” 22. Also, see Kallmann, History of Music, 89.
In 1847, the Methodist Ryerson would be happy to recruit the Anglican Clarke to provide music instruction at the new provincial normal school.

As other Anglican churches appeared during the first half of the century, congregants established choirs and raised money to purchase musical instruments, especially organs. Little Trinity and St. John’s churches opened in 1844, the latter of which formed a choir for its inauguration and had acquired a barrel organ by 1850. Opening ceremonies at the Church of St. George the Martyr in 1845 featured the choir of St. James, under the direction of J. P. Clarke.

St. George’s first music director F. W. Barron, who was also the principal of Upper Canada College, specialized in leading the boys’ choir. The group drew praise following a consecration service in 1853, from an observer who noted: “We have heard many of the best Cathedral and other choirs of Great Britain and Ireland, and can truly say that the singing of last Wednesday was the nearest approach to the English style of Church music we have heard on this continent.”

The Church of the Holy Trinity was established in 1847, and celebrated the arrival of an organ only two years later. W. S. Vail arrived in 1857 from England, and introduced aspects of the Chapel Revival, which had become popular in Anglican Church practice in Britain. Many parishioners at Holy Trinity reacted negatively to the introduction of such practices as robed choirs and unaccompanied singing, charging that the parish should not “ape the cathedral.”

Unlike Anglicanism, which lifted and translated into English many Roman Catholic musical traditions, many other denominations were slow to employ music in their worship.

\[44\] Quoted in Lock, “Church Choirs,” 36.
\[45\] The Chapel Revival in the Anglican Church began with the Oxford Movement of 1833, lasting until the early 1870s. See Bernarr Rainbow, The Chapel Revival in the Anglican Church 1839-1872 (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1970).
\[46\] The irony was that in so doing, Vail was, in fact, paying homage to a true tradition of the Church of England. Nineteenth-century descriptions of Toronto as “the most English city in Canada” were commonplace. See Lock, “Church Choirs,” 5.
Those based on Calvinist thought frowned upon musical presentations in worship, except perhaps for singing. The frontier setting simply reinforced many of the philosophical underpinnings it espoused:

It was hard-working, self-reliant and determined. It could also be rigorous, dour, and puritanical. Card playing, dancing and unedifying music, and certainly theatrical amusements, were illicit, dangerous indulgences to staunch Calvinists and Methodists—not that some might not succumb to sin to varying degrees. Hence in a society that was both severely practical in interests and considerably disposed against sensual, immoral entertainment, the development of an art form and public recreation…could be severely affected.\(^47\)

This doctrinal conundrum played itself out in many ways. Some supported music in a nominal way, hoping of course that the level of congregational singing might be elevated to the point where it would be more conducive to worship; otherwise, there was little effort to attain purely musical or aesthetic goals."\(^48\) As noted by Kallmann, the intellectual terrain for these justifications was, at best, uneven:

> [P]owerful opposition towards “ungodly” songs and dancing came from certain religious denominations, especially fundamentalist sects such as the Quakers and Methodists. These put popular music on par with drinking, cursing and card-playing. The fiddle was condemned outright as a sinful instrument because it was the frequent associate of dance music. Only psalms, hymns (such as those of Isaac Watts and the Wesley brothers), and religious folk songs were recognized as legitimate music by these sects.\(^49\)

Such sectarian idiosyncrasies stunted what might otherwise have been steady progress in the spread of sacred music, although some groups appeared willing to accept a certain minimum standard early on. For example, some Methodist and Presbyterian congregations employed the


\(^{48}\) Green and Vogan, Music Education, 45.

\(^{49}\) This attitude prevailed for most of the nineteenth century and was described by one observer as “rustic simplicity”. See Kallmann, History of Music, 38-39. More recent scholarship has challenged the notion that the Calvinism of the frontier commanded such cultural authority. For example, see Cecilia Morgan, “Turning Strangers Into Sisters? Missionaries and Colonization in Upper Canada,” in 'Sisters or Strangers? Immigrant, Ethnic and Racialized Women in Canadian History', eds. Marlene Epp, Franca Iacovetta and Frances Swyripa: 23-48.
technique of “lining out”—where each song phrase was first sung by a precentor, then repeated by parishioners—or singing schools, to teach music.

Singing schools represented the most common form of religious musical expression, especially in the earlier part of the century. But even then, choice of material remained heavily proscribed. The result was that many congregations sang only metrical renditions of the Psalms in translation: “Because only a few tunes would work with the English psalm texts that had been translated from the French, the range of music was very limited indeed in their services.”

Even as the twentieth century was getting underway, there remained strong echoes of this sensibility. As one observer commented, “[t]he child who dallied with the forbidden sweets of Lucy Lee or other ‘devilish’ melodies, brought to the farm perhaps by an itinerant tinker, was likely to regret it.”

As exemplified by two editorials in the Methodist Christian Guardian newspaper, positions eventually softened over time. In the August 1842 edition, it warned: “Let this itching for the magic of music be encouraged in Wesleyan churches and the spiritual glory of our solemn assemblies is seen no more…Maintain your Methodistic standing: maintain your simplicity: maintain your spirituality.” Two decades later, an editorial defended the use of choirs, as opposed to a single voice leading in worship, reasoning that:

(1) People are encouraged to sing with a powerful choir.
(2) Choirs take a greater interest in the improvement in church music than the rest of the people.
(3) Choirs feel under a sort of responsibility and are more enthusiastic.

Unlike the gradual acceptance that appears to have taken place in Methodism, some Presbyterian sects resisted the inclusion of music in religious worship until 1875, with the union

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50 Keillor, Music in Canada, 91.
52 Quoted in Lock, “Church Choirs,” 43.
53 Quoted in Lock, “Church Choirs,” 44.
of Presbyterian churches in Canada. As the nineteenth century wore on, however, the trend for all denominations was to include music as part of their devotional services.

While many church-based musical groups and choirs formed and disbanded over the period, one is notable for its rural setting and the high standard it achieved. The Children of Peace, as the band and its spiritual community became known, grew out of a Quaker-related religious sect led by David Willson. Willson came to Upper Canada in 1801 from New York State, and after a number of years, began a religious sect based on Quaker principles called the Children of Peace. Located for a time in York, the sect eventually moved to town of Hope (now Sharon), Ontario, just south of Lake Simcoe.

Unlike many similar Protestant sects, Willson’s group embraced musical forms of worship, and over the years, developed a reputation as one of the best bands and choirs in the county at the time. Because of its political leanings, The Children of Peace soon attracted the attention of radicals such as William Lyon Mackenzie, whose reports below provide some indication of the band’s impact in the area during the 1820s and 1830s. In terms of quality, Mackenzie commented that what he witnessed was “unparalleled in any part of the Upper, and scarcely surpassed even by the Catholics in the Lower province.”

54 Prior to this, some churches did include music in their services. Lock describes one such church in Toronto, which set up a choir in 1851 and brought in a melodeon the following year. See Lock, “Church Choirs,” 45. Also, see Keillor, Music in Canada, 101.

55 At one point, the Children used the first court house in York (ca. 1815-1826) as their place of worship. See Lucy Booth Martyn, The Face of Early Toronto: An Architectural Record, 1797-1936 (Santa Barbara: Paget Press, 1982), 52.

56 “Whereas many Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist clergymen in 19th-century Canada bitterly opposed secular music and even instrumental accompaniment of church singing, the Children of Peace cultivated music wholeheartedly both in and outside their Temple, recognizing its educational and community-building value.” Helmut Kallmann, “Children of Peace,” in Encyclopedia of Music in Canada, http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com/index.cfm?PgNm=TCE&Params=U1ARTU0000692. Elsewhere, Kallmann describes the musical activity at Sharon as “an exception to the rule that urban music was superior to that of the country.” See Kallmann, History of Music, 73-77.

57 Quoted in Kallmann, History of Music, 75.
increasingly extreme in his political views, he found many supportive community members and used their talents to promote his cause. In July 1831, he reported that

The meeting in East Gwillimbury, to petition the king for a redress of grievances, was followed in the evening by many demonstrations of joy; and the spiritual young men of the volunteer amateur musicians, composing the powerful band of the militia regiment, marched up and down the streets of Hope, playing cheerful and enlivening airs. I had the curiosity to count their instruments and there were three or four clarionets, two French horns, two bassoons, besides two German octave flutes, flageolets, &. They also have violins and violoncellos and are masters of their delightful art.  

The Children of Peace band continued to expand through the 1840s and 1850s, attracting an impressive number of well-trained musician teachers, and the results did not go unnoticed by local inhabitants. As Green and Vogan observe, “[t]he surrounding country (often) joined with the Davidites in the school exercises,” providing a unique form of music education for an isolated pioneer settlement. During the 1860s, band members acquired a set of silver instruments and matching blue uniforms, and were touring as far away as Philadelphia.

By this time, the band was performing secular material, including many popular American melodies, prompting one observer to comment that many of these tunes “were whistled in Sharon a year before first heard in Old Toronto.” On the decline during the latter decades of the nineteenth century, the Children of Peace, while an exception to the rule, proved that music of a high calibre was possible to achieve outside large urban centres, such as Toronto. The fact that it stands as an isolated example testifies to the difficulties faced in achieving this accomplishment. Finally, the example left by the Children of Peace illustrates the critical

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58 The argument has been made that Mackenzie’s positive opinion of the band may have been coloured, since the Children of Peace in particular and the local community in general were known to have been sympathetic to his cause. However, as Kallmann points out, even political and religious critics applauded its merits. See Kallmann, History of Music, 74-75.
59 Green and Vogan, Music Education, 46.
60 According to one source, the band won first prize as the best band in North America at the 1876 World’s Fair in that city. See Kallmann, History of Music, 76.
61 Quoted in Kallmann, History of Music, 77.
importance of leadership in the success of an organized musical endeavour. Through the gifted
musicianship and dedication of Willson and others, many peoples’ musical talent was
recognized, organized and refined. As we shall see, it was to be leadership of this nature that
would move public school music to new heights by the turn of the century.

3. ‘Society’ Music

While military bands and church-affiliated organizations activities played major roles in
shaping the musical culture of Upper Canada, people arriving in the colony brought a host of
ideas, values and attitudes on the subject that had to accommodate themselves not only to these
two influences, but also to the reality of their pioneer environment. By mid-century, this
interaction had produced many resident musicians, orchestras and choirs, which provided
entertainment and engagement for citizens. These attitudes often manifested themselves in the
types of musical organizations and their respective choices of repertoire.

Following passage of the Constitutional Act of 1791, which divided the province of
Quebec into Upper and Lower Canada, Loyalist and European settlers began to move into
present-day Ontario, clearing land and carving homesteads out of the wilderness. In addition to
acquiring material goods, these pioneers sought to establish social customs and habits familiar to
them, and as most were of British origin, the overwhelming desire was to recreate as much as
possible British customs and ideas of order and civility.62

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62 This is not meant to suggest that what it meant to be “British” was commonly understood and accepted.
Several competing views co-existed—and sometimes came into conflict. See for example, Cecil J. Houston and
William J. Smyth, _The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada_ (Toronto:
As we saw illustrated in the diary entries of Elizabeth Simcoe, music played a central role in this recreation. And, as the colony evolved during the nineteenth century, there emerged an increasing urgency to reify, reproduce and regulate European musical standards. This was seen as one way to reaffirm these social values and buttress them against unfamiliar and/or contradictory ideas. The desire to transplant musical tastes of the Old World for use as benchmarks for cultural suitability in North America may point to a certain insecurity among the elite with regard to music, but the practice was well-understood by the time it reached this continent. Thus, British preferences served as guideposts for those charged with assigning value to music education.

It is worth pausing briefly to consider some larger cultural and historical aspects of European musicology for it is here we discover the seeds for many of these ideals so important to the emerging middle class of Upper Canada. Up to the beginning of the 1800s, little scholarly attention had been paid to music as a formal academic discipline. However, as bourgeois culture increasingly supplanted the courtly aristocracy as the main patron base of musical performance, general musical knowledge and appreciation became critical benchmarks of status and prestige. Thus, musicology blossomed as a discipline, and came to form a central part of what became known as Romanticism. “It was the first period systematically to study and preserve the music of the past….Whereas previous eras had wanted to hear the newest music and little else, now began the idea of “classical music” as, to a large extent, a museum.”

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63 In his examination of the experience of Britons in India during the 18th and 19th centuries, Richard Leppert illustrates the increasing need on the part of non-Indians to overtly display cultural attributes, to reinforce the idea of racial superiority. See Richard Leppert, “Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India,” in Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance and Reception, eds. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 63-104. For an example of similar motivation to preserve this cultural value in an Upper Canadians, see Keillor, Music in Canada, 128-129.

The desire to become proficient in this area created a market for household instruments and music during the period. Technological advances in printing and metallurgy made sheet music and musical instruments much more widely available and affordable. It now became possible for many more people to conspicuously display cultural refinement.65

As the appreciation of music became more tightly connected to middle-class values, a body of literature sprang up to meet this need, the collective effect of which was to lay the foundation for a Euro-centric history of music that even today remains widely accepted.66

Christopher Small has drawn attention to the enduring legacy of nineteenth-century music scholarship, asserting that its preferences have come to represent an objective standard, “regarded as the paradigm for all musical experience.”67 Austin Caswell goes further, arguing that these ideas stem from “a conceit invented by nineteenth-century criticism for the purpose of asserting a composition’s ability to speak to all cultures and all times.”

Grafting this cultural invention to a colonial North American context enabled the rising middle class to “establish the cultural trappings of a refined (and thus respectable) Western culture no longer totally engaged in survival and expansion.”68 While these changes informed the habits and preferences of the dominant classes and by extension, the rest of the population in Upper Canada, their transfer and acceptance was at best, partial. As with earlier musical habits,

65 The cultural contradiction is, in hindsight, somewhat ironic. “In the Romantic era, no middle-class parlor was complete without a piano on which to play Beethoven or Chopin (or easier composers), and to provide background for songs by, say, Schubert and Schumann. There was a strong current of bourgeois sentimentality in much music, almost a straining toward sweetness and light, even amidst “revolutionary” works.” See Swafford, Classical Music, 201-202.

66 For example, the period around the turn of the nineteenth century is understood as one of transition between the Baroque and Classical styles. There is some debate about the chronological relationship between the two periods, however, it is generally accepted that the Baroque period ran from about 1720-1770, the Classical from 1770-1820, and the Romantic from about 1820 to the turn of the twentieth century.


these aspirations would come up against other traditions, and ideas, setting the stage for debates about the cultural value of music, both inside and outside the classroom.

The association between overt displays of material wealth and cultured behaviour had a particular resonance in nineteenth-century Upper Canada and those in pursuit of them took their cues from foreign archetypes of haute couture. As Kristina Guiguet points out, “nineteenth-century Canada was in the process of adapting the transplanted cultures of Europe and Britain to its particular geography and circumstance as a British colony with a dominant continental neighbour.” Under these conditions, cultural status, quite literally, had to be bought. “Education and refinement were the consumer goods of choice for those who wished to rise socially;” and competence in music, played or otherwise, could not be overlooked.  

In part, reference points for such musical comportment had developed during the previous century out of concerns about how best to prepare children of the dominant class for adulthood. Richard Leppert has explored this topic in his analysis of eighteenth-century depictions of music in England. He finds that much attention was paid to assigning gender-specific roles to music education and that these expectations increasingly came to reflect idealized cultural roles for both sexes. He notes that manuals used in the home to teach upper class children how to behave reinforced such stereotypes:

Given that education was perceived as a family responsibility, it is not surprising that the closest and most self-conscious concerns of education centred around “family” issues, the dominant among which were gender identity and gender responsibility—in part, the sexuality of power. These were the microcosmic parameters within which developed the larger extra-family issues of socio-cultural definition and formation: from the family the nation, so to speak.

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For men, music becomes a “waste of time” in the Lockean sense, but nevertheless necessary as a way of demonstrating one’s ability to partake in leisure. For most, it could be observed, consumed and enjoyed, but ultimately had little value. Put tritely, “music is paid homage for what it said about one’s position.”\(^{71}\) In this scene, the iconic female becomes the perfect illustration of this material well-being. For her to be endowed with time and tutelage to learn an instrument indicated to others that she need not attend to the physical necessities of life for her family. As Leppert observes, representation of “the ideal woman was inherently oxymoronic, in that she should simultaneously be represented as accomplished, yet as physically inactive as possible.”\(^{72}\)

To varying degrees, similar expressions of gender-specific characteristics expressed themselves in Upper Canadian society. In her analysis of pre-Rebellion debates in Upper Canada, Cecilia Morgan demonstrates that these distinctions were understood and employed by both sides in their respective arguments for legitimacy:

In colonial society of the 1820s and 1830s, debates over political reform were grounded in conceptions of public and private and were couched in language suffused with gendered imagery and symbols. These symbols relied heavily on claims of “true manhood” to validate and legitimate claims to political power, while using images of women and the feminine to undermine their opponents’ points.\(^{73}\)

Building on Morgan’s research, Guiguet uses the example of an 1844 Soirée Musicale to illustrate idealized codes of masculine and feminine conduct, within a larger class structure that was coming increasingly under threat. The Soirée Musicale blended pre-Revolutionary French salon culture with British ballad traditions to create an “atmosphere of elite, musical leisure” that

\(^{71}\) Leppert, Music and Image 146.  
^{72} Leppert, Music and Image,171.  
harkened back to Old World aristocratic ideals. Concerts typically featured a variety of vocal and instrumental numbers, performed by amateurs and professionals from the community. “The practice of the domestic Soirée Musicale came to Ontario from Britain in the baggage of wealthy émigrés and professional musicians, but local politics and history were quickly incorporated into what it meant to local participants.”

Practically speaking, the Soirée Musicale provided an opportunity to strengthen social bonds and business connections, and above all, reinforce notions of class and status at a time of increasing social change. According to Guiguet, it represented “a concert format embodying the idea of a natural hierarchy in which people, distinguished by gender and class, occupied distinct but cooperative niches. It performed a vision of social stability during a period of political and economic upheaval.”

Further, because aspiring amateur talent was mixed with competent professional musicianship, the resulting presentation could claim a musical legitimacy that went beyond conventional parlour entertainment. Invitations to such affairs came to signify one’s admittance to a select group of the city’s rising elite, thus guest lists had to be drawn up carefully, to reinforce class privilege, while avoiding unintentional offence or exclusion. In so doing, it sought to “ensure an atmosphere of sanctified, elite domesticity of the most educational sort…”

The Soirée Musicale as described above had all but disappeared by the end of the 19th century, as ideals of domesticity sharpened divisions between private and public spheres, and these activities moved out of the home and into public venues. Part of its legacy was the improvement in the standard of musical talent in the colony, as well as the creation of a thriving industry built around private music education.

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74 Guiguet, Ideal World, 112.  
75 Guiguet, Ideal World, xv, 11.  
76 Guiguet, Ideal World, 88.
The demand for musical training fuelled significant growth in the number of individuals promising such skills. Ladies’ Academies, providing private education for daughters of the well-to-do traditionally had featured musical training as a core subject in the colony and there had existed a small retinue of musician-educators who had catered to this set.\textsuperscript{77} As the accomplishment became more popular in the bustling colony, a cottage industry grew up to satisfy the demand. Some individuals even “took up residence over the winter in whatever city offered the best opportunity and earned their living by giving music and elocution lessons and hiring out their various services to whatever companies mounted productions in the local theatres.”\textsuperscript{78}

In searching for a ‘genuine’ European standard of musical education, privileged Upper Canadians in essence became the vanguard in a movement to introduce more formal oversight and standardization to the overall field of music education. First, their demand highlighted the inadequacy of the fledgling public school system to competently teach music. As we shall see, public school music, although introduced in Ryerson’s School Act of 1846, was focused around vocal music, and even though some schools did venture into instrumental music teaching, the enterprise remained at best an uneven and rare enterprise.\textsuperscript{79}

Second, the questionable abilities of some practitioners produced a rising tide of complaints from competent music teachers about the lack of regulation in the field. Their grievances were increasingly echoed by parents, who had no way to judge credentials. Some teachers were in fact well trained, but a lack of standardized accreditation, combined with

\textsuperscript{77} As the nineteenth century progressed, gender roles became more polarized, in reaction to changing social circumstances. “Men had to be ‘manly’ and women very female.” See Mark Howard Moss, “Manliness and Militarism: Educating Young Men for War in the Province of Ontario, 1867-1914” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1998), 41-42.


\textsuperscript{79} “The plan of studies (in public education) usually concentrated on rote- or sight-singing and on the elements of notation, but rarely on instrumental music.” Kallmann, History of Music, 186-187.
naiveté, led some families to hire “charlatans, frequently adopting foreign-sounding names to impress their pupils’ parents.”

Along with them were “a variety of well-intentioned but poorly-trained instructors,” attempting to supplement meagre incomes by offering lessons to neighbourhood children. As public dissatisfaction intensified, an increasing number of properly qualified music teachers began to call for a way to standardize and regulate their profession. In step with current European practices, some critics argued that these problems could be resolved by establishing a music conservatory that would properly train and examine both students and teachers.

The idea of an institution for this purpose was barely 50 years old by the time Upper Canadians began making this demand. As will be discussed later, this pressure would eventually result in the founding of the Canadian Conservatory of Music in 1876 in Toronto, and more importantly, the Toronto College of Music and Toronto Conservatory of Music (now Royal Conservatory of Music), in the 1880s. In their turn, these institutions would not only triumph in setting and regulating national standards, but would also fuse musical training to public education.

4. Music Societies

The growth in musical activity, particularly in urban centres like Toronto, occurred at a time when cultural values began to form around a growing sense of what it meant to be middle

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80 Kallmann, History of Music, 187.
81 For centuries up to almost 1800, common practice in Europe had been for musicians to apprentice under the tutelage of a skilled teacher and orchestra, who in turn, relied upon the patronage of an aristocrat for their livelihood. But the general shift toward liberal democratic forms of government led to growing expectations for fiscal accountability on the part of the governing classes, restricting their ability to fund such luxuries. The first government-sponsored music conservatory was set up in Paris in 1795, less than a decade after the French Revolution.
In attempting to craft a definition for this group in nineteenth-century Ontario, Andrew Holman employs the social humanism of E. P. Thompson to remind us that class is not only a structure or a category, “but...something which in fact, happens (and can be shown to have happened in human relationships)... And class happens when some men, as a result of common experiences (inherited or shared), feel and articulate the identity of their interests as between themselves, and as against other men whose interests are different from (and usually opposed to) theirs...[C]lass is a relationship and not a thing.”

Characterized to a large extent by urban expansion and economic diversification which began to take hold in British North America at mid-century, the change, as Morgan notes, was already underway by the 1840s:

While capitalist relations in commerce, manufacturing, or agriculture were by no means the dominant forms of economic production, the growth of urban centres, the development of some forms of state-regulated institutions, the consolidation of various professional associations, and the formation of a [sic] increasing number of voluntary societies point to the growing social, political, and cultural importance of middle-class values and practices.

It can be argued that the appearance of a number of music societies during this period also contributed to this process. The gradual proliferation of formal musical skill created a fertile environment for the development of organized performance.

In his study of pre-Confederation music societies, David Sale documents no less than 20 such entities forming during the period 1845-1867, representing a variety of interests and tastes. These sometimes appeared as appendages to existing institutions, or became stand-alone clubs and organizations. Prior to the completion of the Grand Trunk Railway in 1855, they provided a local source of entertainment, as lack of rail access made it difficult for travelling

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82 E. P. Thompson, quoted in Holman, A Sense of Their Duty, 12-13.
performers to visit Toronto, particularly in winter. The societies also helped to fill this cultural void by providing an outlet for ‘serious’ musical activity and encouraged cooperation among members that greatly expanded the choices of pieces to perform.

Initially, many societies grew out of less formal musical activities, usually involving military and/or church musicians. At York in the 1820s, for example, a community band formed to supplement the military band. By 1835, a group of amateur musicians calling itself the Toronto Musical Society was putting together concerts featuring piano, flute solos and singing, some of it in three-part harmony. In 1845, the Toronto Choral Society was organized under the tutelage of Upper Canada College, later merging with the Toronto Philharmonic Society, which formed the following year. The latter drew upon both military and church musicians for its performances, as can be seen in the following announcement of a Society concert, to be given 23 April 1847:

The Members will be assisted in the vocal and Instrumental departments by several Amateurs and by the Band of the 81st Regiment under the direction of Mr. Crozier. The Choruses will be accompanied on a new Organ of great power and richness of tone, which has been lent for the occasion, and erected in the hall, by the builder, Mr. Thomas, of the city. J. P. Clarke, the conductor, will preside at the Organ.

In 1856, a year after the last performance of the Toronto Philharmonic Society, newly-arrived St. James organist John Carter helped organize the first complete oratorio concert in Upper Canada, held on 17 December 1857. In 1858, a rival company formed, calling itself the

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85 The evolution of the railway system in and around Toronto during this period is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Four.
86 The establishment of the first musical societies in 1845 drew these disparate groups together and with the help of various musically-interested amateurs made possible the exploration of a repertoire that no one group could previously attempt.” Sale, “Pre-Confederation Music Societies,” 2.
87 Quoted in Keillor, Music in Canada, 104. For a description of the Toronto Musical Society, see Lock, “Church Choirs,” 15-16, 48-60.
88 Financially assisted by Governor General Edmund Head and Chief Justice John Beverley Robinson, Carter conducted more than 125 players and singers in a performance of Handel’s Messiah, which took place at St.
Metropolitan Choral Society. Its de facto leader, the Reverend G. Onions and his “Onionites”, as his supporters became known, led a performance of Judas Macaebus, featuring 160 voices and dozens of musicians, some borrowed from local military bands. Not to be outdone, Carter formed the Sacred Harmonic Choir and later that year performed The Creation, only to be trumped once more by Onions’ version of the same, but with 300 participants.

The rivalry between the two groups continued, even after Onions left Toronto in November 1858, but by late the following year, both societies were spent forces, owing in large part to the prolonged economic downturn that had befallen the city after the seat of government was moved to Kingston in 1857. Carter re-emerged in 1861 to launch the Toronto Musical Union and opened a musical academy the following year, but unlike the previous decade, the concerts he oversaw became less frequent and grandiose.

Sale contends that in spite of their lofty aims, what appears to have kept most of these musical societies afloat was their willingness to perform popular, rather than serious pieces in their repertoire. His assertion is that “[t]he inclusion of popular songs seemed necessary to obtain public support, and every succeeding society…succumbed in part to this influence.” While this may be true, Sale’s statement reflects a fairly rigid cultural distinction that his subjects may not have understood. The other major limitation of his research is that he has deliberately chosen to exclude musical events that took place in hotels, regardless of their content. In spite of

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Lawrence Hall. See Lock, “Church Choirs,” 62. Kallmann asserts that Carter may have conducted the same work in Quebec two years earlier. See Kallmann, History of Music, 100.

89 Kallmann notes that after this point, “musical societies ran into bad times.” Kallmann, History of Music, 100.

80 Sale, “Pre-Confederation Music Societies,” 40.

91 Sale’s thesis was written in the late 1960, pre-dating much of the analysis that today might leave his conclusion open to criticism. Among other things, more recent scholarship in the area of cultural history suggests “a more open and fluid set of divisions,” in order to avoid accusation of presentism. See Lawrence W. Levine, High Brow/Low Brow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), 7. For historiographical context, see Keith Walden, Becoming Modern in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late-Victorian Culture (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), ix-xvii.
these limitations, what is not in dispute is that the number and range of musical choices continued to expand, both within and outside of the societies.

Class Awareness

As social entertainment moved from the parlour into the public domain, the range and demand for music and other forms of entertainment also increased. At the same time, performance spaces began to appear, offering publicly-accessible venues in which to present concerts and the like. Although we will deal with these issues in more detail in Chapter Four, it is useful to put together at least a partial picture of what contributed to the changes, in order to provide more insight and context.

Most of the information compiled for this period comes from two sources: David Sale’s study of pre-Confederation Toronto music societies and Richard Plant’s chronology of theatrical entertainments. Space and time do not allow for a detailed listing of all venues and activities, but some general observations can be made when both sources are combined.

First, military personnel are omnipresent throughout the period. As individual musicians and in full bands, military performers appear across virtually every aspect of locally-based entertainment, playing a variety of styles. This would suggest that for British regulars, this was an expected role for those so artistically inclined. Perhaps, as noted by Guiguet, by participating in these activities, members showed that “the garrison’s role as an agency of cultural refinement came close to equalling its role as protector and aid to civil power.”

Second, the number and the types of entertainments on offer expands dramatically, particularly during the 1850s. There is a marked increase in the number of performers claiming

93 Elinor Kyte Senior, quoted in Guiguet, Ideal World, 52.
foreign credentials, particularly those from the British Isles and the United States. This is, no doubt, due to the completion of a rail link to Toronto during this period, along with the advent of touring companies and syndicates that moved along these rail links from town to town.

Finally, the number and variety of venues in which these activities are offered also increases dramatically. In the colony’s early history, more formal events had usually taken place at an individual’s home or at a public building such as Government House, City Hall, or at an educational institution (usually King’s College/University of Toronto, or the Normal School). However, there are reports of theatre space in York as far back as 1820 and, as we will see, as the century progressed, buildings began to appear that were erected specifically for the purpose of musical, theatrical and other entertainments. The records studied reveal that there was a core of venues that regularly hosted musical and other entertainments, although many were listed, some only once.

The embarrassment of riches presented a moral dilemma because character and reputation became inseparable from entertainment choices i.e. what one chose to experience, and where one chose to experience it. It also points to the beginnings of a gradual shift in the way Upper Canadians were choosing to experience entertainment, to take it in as passive consumers, rather than active participants. This transformation was already underway in Britain and the United States, and as we will see, it would have profound consequences for the field of entertainment and its larger social context.

For those in, or aspiring to, middle class status, attendance at select events gradually granted access to established social networks, without overtly challenging their integrity. True,

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94 There is wide agreement that the first building designated specifically for theatrical purpose was at Frank’s Hotel. See Robert Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” in Early Stages: Theatre in Ontario, 1800-1914, ed. Ann Saddlemyer (University of Toronto Press, 1990), 218.

95 Sale’s thesis, by far the most extensive record of this activity, lists no less than 37 separate locations.
musical and theatrical presentations had been presented (often together) wherever it was possible
to do so, but as a sense of cultural self-awareness developed among the middle class, it became
fashionable to display cultural refinement by attending such activities in more formal settings—
what Richard Plant refers to as “fashionable nights.” Attendance by this select group

was determined equally as much by what is suggested in the term
“fashionable nights”—the idea that social prestige, imagined or
otherwise, is attached to theatre-going. On fashionable nights audiences
were larger because going to the theatre allowed people to enter the world
of high society, joining Lady and Sir Charles Chichester, the Mayor of
Toronto, and whatever other dignitaries and Upper Canada aristocrats
travelled in high society circles. To many people, attending at the theatre
was a ritual through which one became part of life’s charmed circle,
opened only to those who were intellectually and socially superior—
cultured and sophisticated.96

The majority of Upper Canadians would have been excluded from these types of social
rituals, however, as Plant points out, most probably wouldn’t have wanted to attend them
anyway. “For many reasons—lack of time and money, a Puritan anti-theatre bias, and a distrust
of those things apparently “intellectual”—the lower classes chose not to go to the theatre.”97
Their entertainments were to be found in taverns, on the street and later, in the growing number
of music halls and public exhibitions.98 Although popular taste had formed an integral part of
the musical repertoire for decades, the rubbaboo that had characterized this activity came under
increasing suspicion and scrutiny, particularly in large cities such as Toronto. In his study of
buskers in Toronto, Murray Smith describes numerous street musicians, many of which made
their livings exclusively at this pursuit. His study points to growing public awareness and
concern with such activities among Toronto’s emerging middle class, suggesting that public

97 Plant, “Toronto Lyceum,” 75.
98 The popularity of these venues and the concern they caused will be addressed in the next chapter.
codes of behaviour were hardening about which types of music were acceptable and where each should and should not be played.99

These class differences offer some insight as to the way in which cultural activity would subsequently be scrutinized, regulated and ultimately, controlled. “Struggles over the development of manners and mores, the delineation of virtues and vices, and the coding of certain kinds of behaviours as respectable and others as improper were central to (the) bourgeois process of self definition.”100 Concern intensified over moral standards, promoting the growth of voluntary and state organizations to police private and public behaviour. Not surprisingly, the expansion of musical activity, and the venues where it took place, provoked increasing public debates about its proper place and form.

From very humble beginnings, Upper Canadians had, by mid-century, established a thriving musical culture which would provide fertile ground for subsequent growth. With the onset of modern innovations in transportation, industrialization and urbanization, this culture, along with the emerging middle class that created it, would be utterly transformed. Among many places, school music would provide a focal point for this change.

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100 Morgan, Public Men and Virtuous Women, 20.
CHAPTER THREE

EGERTON RYERSON AND MUSIC EDUCATION IN UPPER CANADA

The interplay between personal absorption into music and the sense that it is, nevertheless, something out there, something public, is what makes music so important in the cultural placing of the individual in the social...[M]usic can stand for, symbolize, and offer the immediate experience of collective identity. Other cultural forms—painting, literature, design—can articulate and show off shared values and pride, but only music can make you feel them.¹

As we learned in the last chapter, musical activity became widespread in Upper Canada during the course of the nineteenth century. This chapter traces the development of public school music in Upper Canada to 1876, within the larger cultural context as already described. Much of this chapter necessarily focuses upon the aims and actions of Egerton Ryerson, who was responsible for overseeing the development of a system of public education in the colony. In a report² which laid out his vision for a system of public education, Ryerson included vocal music as part of the core curriculum. While this recommendation has been described as “enormously progressive”³ for its time, scholars have tended to be critical of Ryerson’s subsequent record with regard to vocal music in schools.⁴ Pointing to a relative lack of bureaucratic support for the

² Ryerson’s report was adopted in its entirety by the legislature, forming the basis of the colony’s 1846 school act.
⁴ In large part, this idea stems from two pioneering works in the field, namely, Helmut Kallmann, A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), and George Campbell Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music in Ontario” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1962). These views have been echoed in later studies, such as J. Paul Green and Nancy Vogan, Music Education in Canada: A Historical Account (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991).
subject, a general consensus has emerged that he possessed neither the ability nor the desire to address the matter. Consequently, Ryerson has been vilified for his perceived failure to actively promote it as a subject, both in teacher training and in the classroom.\(^5\)

Further, critics argue that when forced to defend vocal music, Ryerson’s justifications are cast as ill-informed, vague pronouncements that say precious little about its intrinsic value and purpose. This assertion not only has tended to minimize the importance of school music in Ontario education history, but has also left its narrative open to appropriation by other disciplines whose primary aims are other than historical.\(^6\)

While this chapter draws upon themes and issues raised by these studies, it moves the focus back to music as it developed in the public school system during the Ryerson era, to show how it evolved within the larger social context described in the previous chapter. Specifically, its aim is to provide a broader perspective from which to consider the Victorian Ryerson and his conduct vis-a-vis school music. Through a reconsideration of such influences as Methodism, parenthood and social convention, a portrait of Ryerson emerges which suggests that not only was he familiar with music as a pastime, but he also understood the part it played in defining cultural expectations in mid-Victorian Upper Canadian society. In this respect, he was typical of his age.

\(^5\) See for example, Kallmann, *Music in Canada*.

Introduction

Reviewing Egerton Ryerson’s overall accomplishments as an early champion of public schooling in Upper Canada, one is struck by how few direct references are actually made to music. This is understandable since Ryerson had much to attend to, as he sought to persuade Upper Canadians of the wisdom of implementing free, universal and compulsory state education for their children. Generally speaking, it is his persona as a public school promoter that has tended to overshadow other aspects of Ryerson’s life, not only as a devout Methodist, but more generally as a member of the rising middle class in mid-Victorian British North America. This notwithstanding, Ryerson’s background, training and character brought him into frequent contact with musical culture. In fact, his activity in this environment would not have been considered unusual for a man in his position at the time. As Clara Thomas has observed, “Egerton Ryerson can be seen as a representative Upper Canadian of the nineteenth century, embodying both the strengths and limitations of a host of men whose talents and whose opportunities were fewer.”

With the benefit of a broader perspective, it becomes apparent that Ryerson lived in a world rich in musical activity and that he, like so many of his peers, understood it not only as an intrinsic part of a person’s character, but also as a powerful force capable of communicating moral values essential to good citizenship. A life steeped in religion underwrote, complemented and confirmed these ideas. Thus, we begin with an overview of Ryerson’s early life and career as a Methodist minister, followed by his appointment and subsequent 32-year career as chief superintendent of schools in Upper Canada.

Methodist belief in the conversion experience and the doctrine’s heavy reliance upon music to communicate its message became thoroughly embedded in Ryerson’s ideas and actions.

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7 Thomas, Ryerson, vii.
throughout his life. As we will see, these experiences formed part of a character profile that would have been recognizable to most of his mid-Victorian peers and, although, in the face of changes being wrought by modernity, they appeared increasingly out of place, their influence upon public schooling remained evident after his tenure as chief superintendent.

Ryerson’s Early Life and Career

Egerton Ryerson was born on 24 March 1803, near Long Point at the eastern end of Lake Erie. His parents, Joseph and Mehetabel, had settled there in 1800, following Joseph’s brother Samuel. Both men had served with British forces in the New Jersey militia. Facing persecution after the American Revolution, they had relocated, first to New Brunswick, and then to Lake Erie.8 Joseph’s Loyalist attachment and his membership in the Church of England became marks of status among early Upper Canadian settlers, making it easier to obtain official appointments, including that of High Sheriff for the area.

Despite this initial advantage in the new colony of Upper Canada, the Church and its membership were quickly outnumbered by other Protestant denominations, especially Methodists. Although English in origin, Methodism took root in Upper Canada through the influence of its followers from the United States. The British movement had been led by brothers Charles and John Wesley, the latter of whom had undergone a religious conversion in 1738, “when for the first time he found what he had been seeking in Christianity and felt his heart “strangely warmed.””9 The brothers were already ordained ministers of the Church of England, but its ritual and hierarchy led them to search for a more religiously meaningful experience. While at Oxford University, they and several other students formed small societies

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8 Samuel had attempted to return from New Brunswick to New York after the war, but renewed persecution forced him and his family to relocate, this time on Lake Erie. See Thomas, Ryerson, 5.
9 Thomas, Ryerson, 16.
devoted to intensive study, prayer and good works. The epithet “Methodism” was applied by fellow students, who took note of their strict adherence to rule and method in religious practice.

Unlike its Anglican counterpart which relied upon ideas of a rational universe and natural order, Methodism emphasized emotional experience in its religious worship. In his study of nineteenth-century Protestantism in Ontario, William Westfall dichotomizes these views, characterizing the difference as one of nature versus feelings. According to Westfall, Anglican principles were “based on a distinctive interpretation of “nature” as a highly rational and systematic force, appealing “to the values of order and reason.”

The second pattern turned over the cultural coin and appealed to the other side of early nineteenth century psychology—the feelings—by reworking the Bible into a religion of intense personal experience. From the story of the resurrection it drew the paramount doctrine that to be saved one must directly experience the saving grace of God.\(^\text{10}\)

Because it relied upon emotion rather than intellect, Methodism presupposed no formal education to fully embrace and appreciate its message. Members merely recognized their fallen nature and resolved to follow Jesus. Religious conversion became part of this spiritual awakening, and was considered “a very real and definite and indeed essential experience to the early Methodists.”\(^\text{11}\) It might occur anywhere, but was actively promoted in revivals and camp meetings, both of which became hallmarks of early Canadian Methodism. Music formed an integral part of these gatherings, where preachers used a barrage of prayer and songs to whip up the crowd and encourage an intense emotional experience, designed to facilitate conversion.\(^\text{12}\) “As preacher followed preacher, as exhorters moved through the crowds, as the converted turned

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\(^{10}\) William Westfall, Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario (McGill Queen’s University Press, 1989), 30.


\(^{12}\) It is estimated that Charles Wesley alone penned 6,000 hymns. See Thomas, Ryerson, 20.
upon the unrepentant but wavering sinner, individuals would finally break under the weight of
the revival, acknowledge their sinfulness and accept God’s saving grace.”13

Upper Canada proved fertile ground for Methodism. It had first come from England to
America through Wesleyan appointees and lay preachers, whose itinerants in turn brought it to
the new colony to the north. Uneducated for the most part, early preachers usually made their
way from settlement to settlement on horseback, preaching when and where they could. At a
time when most settlers were still pre-occupied with simple survival, their presence conjured the
vision of a world rooted in steadfast Christian principles and purpose. In effect, “when there was
little or no social stability, Methodism seemed to constitute the only order.”14 Writing of the
eyreer’s cousin Amelia Harris recalled:

[T]hey bore every privation and fatigue, praying and preaching in every
house where the doors were not closed against them—receiving the
smallest pittance for their labour....Their sermons and prayers were very
loud, forcible and energetic, and if they had been printed verbatim, would
have looked a sad jumble of words. They encouraged an open
demonstration of feeling amongst their hearers—the louder, the more
satisfactory.15

Another strategy employed by travelling preachers for drawing attention to their cause
was to sing as they entered a community. If blessed with a powerful voice, a preacher could
attract a considerable crowd of onlookers, who might then be saved. One notable example from
eyreer’s cousin Amelia Harris recalled:

Among the people in general, especially the young people, Case “took” at
once, and on account of his youth and beauty, his amiable spirit and
winning manners, but especially his powers of song, in which he excelled,
and which he made to subserve the great object of his ministry. He was

13 Arthur E. Kewley, “Mass Evangelism in Upper Canada Before 1830” (D. Th. diss., Victoria College,
1960), quoted in Westfall, Two Worlds, 40.
14 Thomas, Ryerson, 24.
wont then, and for many years after, when he finished his sermon, which was always persuasive, to break out in one of his melodious strains, by which he first spell bound and then melted his audience. Next, he would pass around the room, shaking hands and speaking a word to each, perhaps throwing his arms around the necks of the young men, and entreating them with tears to give their hearts to God.\textsuperscript{16}

However, success was never assured and in some cases, onlookers actively undermined the effort, as occurred in Kingston in 1824 to Case and fellow preacher Henry Ryan:

\textit{[They] made a bold push to arouse the people. Sometimes they went together. Ryan was a powerful singer, too, with a voice less sweet, but stronger. They would ride into town, put their horses at an inn, lock arms, and go singing down the street a stirring ode, beginning with \textit{Come let us march to Zion’s hill}. By the time they had reached the market place, they usually had collected a large assembly....Ryan’s stentorian voice resounded through the town and was heard across the adjacent waters to the neighbouring points of land. They suffered no particular opposition, excepting a little annoyance from some of the baser sort, who sometimes tried to trip them off the butcher’s block which constituted their rostrum, set fire to their hair and then blow out their candle, if it were in the night season. This was accomplished one evening by a wicked sailor, who then sung out, “Come on, boys and see the Devil dance on a butcher’s block!”\textsuperscript{17}

In similar fashion, camp meetings presented opportunities for independent action, both from outsiders and participants. In 1833, a Scottish traveller reported that at one camp meeting he witnessed, the preacher became embroiled in a long argument with a young man who was ridiculing the proceedings. He also observed that the youth was part of a larger group of onlookers who were poking fun at the spectacle, regarding it as “simply an opportunity for harmless but interesting sport.”\textsuperscript{18} On another occasion, “the singing of a beautiful young woman interrupted [a preacher’s] sermon, and much to his dismay, the crowd ...followed her voice rather than his own as she changed the course of the revival without warning.”\textsuperscript{19} Still another, who attended a camp meeting in 1839 recorded that its leader, “a fine but dirty looking fellow acting

\textsuperscript{16} Quoted in Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 1, 55-56.  
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 1, 56  
\textsuperscript{18} Quoted in Westfall, \textit{Two Worlds}, 60.  
\textsuperscript{19} Quoted in Westfall, \textit{Two Worlds}, 59.
“rather out of tune as a precentor,” stirred the crowd to such a fever pitch that some participants
“poured forth their effusions with all sorts of gestures and in time so loud, and apparently so
heart-wrenching as completely to put a stop to all the rest, and to cause a great sensation among
the female part, who now exchanging sobs for screams, began to howl and cry in a most pitiable
manner...Several were obliged to leave the place screaming or be carried out in hysterics.”

These anecdotes offer some interesting insights into the nature and control of sound space
and the quintessential performer/audience dilemma as explored by Christopher Small. In every
instance, music was used to alter peoples’ everyday experience, whether it be to interrupt the
regular rural soundtrack of a village, or to promote heightened emotional responses in the more
contrived setting of the camp meeting. Each person was free to interpret and respond to the
circumstance created by the activity, and as the foregoing indicates, this could and did produce
unintended consequences.

Not long after the Ryersons moved to Long Point the first Methodist circuit riders began
visiting the settlement. Egerton’s mother was a Methodist already, but his father expected their
children would subscribe to Anglican doctrine. In 1815, three of Ryerson’s older brothers,
George, John and William, all became deeply religious. In that year, William joined the
Methodists and was ordered by his father to leave the family home. Around the same time,
Egerton underwent the first of two profoundly spiritual experiences. This strengthened his
attachment to Methodism, but he refrained from openly declaring his inclination, in order to
avoid drawing the ire of his father.

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20 Quoted in Westfall, Two Worlds, 61-62.
21 Among other things, Small argues that it is difficult for either party to predict with certainty what the
ultimate outcome will be to what is happening in a given performance situation. See in particular Christopher
Small, Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), and
Music, Society and Education: An Examination of the Function of Music in Western, Eastern and African Cultures
At age 18, he declared his intention to become a member of the Methodist church. His father informed him that either he would have to leave it or leave home. The younger Ryerson chose the latter and left the next day, becoming first an usher then a student-teacher at the London District Grammar School. He worked for two years, before returning home at his father’s pleading. He set out once more in August, 1824, to attend the Gore District Grammar School in Hamilton, where he hoped to position himself academically for further studies in law.

It is in the diary Ryerson kept during this period that he first mentions playing a musical instrument. On August 24th, he comments on the rapid pace of his studies, writing:

Through the mercy of God I have been enabled in a good degree to overcome my besetments, and have this day maintained more consistency in conversation and conduct....My mind improves and I feel much encouraged. My labour is uniform and constant, from the dawn of day till near eleven at night. I have not a moment to play on the flute.\(^{22}\)

No earlier references than this one appear in what is preserved of Ryerson’s early writing, thus, we may never know how he learned to play the flute, or whether he was familiar with other instruments. However, that he would think to mention it at all indicates its importance to him; perhaps this is something that would have constituted part of his regular routine. The diaries, which cover the period 1824-1832, were not preserved. Since Hodgins\(^{23}\) offers only brief extracts from some of the daily entries, we do not know whether Ryerson made other comments concerning music during this time.

In Hamilton, Ryerson applied himself with much vigour, so much so it appears that his brother George cautioned him against over-exerting himself. This did in fact occur, as indicated


\(^{23}\) Although author credit is given to Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life* was actually compiled posthumously by his long-time colleague and friend, J. George Hodgins. It has been criticized for in many respects falling short of current acceptable autobiographical standards, but nevertheless remains a key source for scholarship in this area. See also, C. B. Sissons, ed., *My Dearest Sophie: Letters From Egerton Ryerson to His Daughter*, ed. C. B. Sissons (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955), xxvii, and Thomas, *Ryerson*, 9.
by a lapse in his diary from November 1824 to February 1825. While convalescing back at his parents’ home, he experienced his second religious conversion which not only strengthened his Methodist faith, but also confirmed his calling by its members. The episode, quoted below in its entirety, is notable for its narrative pattern and moral message:

In that extremity, while I felt even a desire to depart and be with Christ, I was oppressed with the consciousness that I should have yielded to the counsels of the chief ministers of my Church as I could have made nearly as much progress in my classical studies, and at the same time been doing some good to the souls of men, instead of refusing to speak in public as I had done. I then and there vowed that if I should be restored to life and health, I would not follow my own counsels, but would yield to the openings and calls which might be made in the Church by its chief ministers. That very moment the cloud was removed; the light of the glory of God shone into my mind and heart with a splendour and power that I had never before experienced. My Mother, entering the room a few moments after, exclaimed: “Egerton, your countenance is changed, you are getting better!”

Whether intended or otherwise, the scene evokes a familiar evangelical narrative and may offer some insight into Ryerson’s interpretation of the power of a Methodist God to overcome all worldly limitations, death included. This type of conversion—and that witnessed at camp meetings—bear striking resemblances in their pattern and character. Ryerson would most certainly have witnessed this type of spiritual transformation at the emotional crescendo of a camp meeting, where music played such a pivotal role as a catalyst for this state of mind.

Ryerson began his career as a Methodist preacher, commencing as a junior on the Niagara Circuit and eventually replacing his brother William, after the latter fell ill in November 1825. As a circuit rider, Ryerson experienced firsthand all the privations faced by itinerant preachers, including the constant threat from “brutalized scoffers” who sought to impede

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25 Commonly, this took the form of defiance, punishment, acknowledgement and redemption. See for example, Westfall, 54-55, 59.
travelling Methodist clergy by maiming their horses. After being formally licensed as a local preacher in August 1825, he was assigned the York and Yonge Street Circuit at the annual Methodist Conference a month later. The following year, he was also appointed missionary to the Credit River Indians, still having to continue his circuit at York two Sundays out of four.

It is during this time that we once more catch a glimpse of Ryerson the musician. As part of his ministry, he had accompanied Peter Jones, a Mississauga convert and preacher, to Holland Landing, where several bands had assembled for the government’s annual distribution of presents. Following the meeting, Ryerson travelled with the Yellowhead Anishinabe on Lake Simcoe to assist in choosing sites for a church and school. On this voyage, Ryerson not only indicates that he still possessed the skill to play, but is proficient enough to ‘pick it up’, as it were, where others falter. He tells of an encounter between himself and some sailors during a mission trip. Noting previously that he had given “great offence to the French Roman Catholic Indian traders” for proclaiming the superiority of Protestant over Catholic faiths, two days later he found himself among the same, sailing across Lake Simcoe:

The wind was light, and the sailors amused themselves with music—one of them playing on a fife. He was attempting to play a tune which he had not properly learned. I was walking the deck, and told him to give me the fife, when I played the tune. The Frenchmen gathered around my feet, and looked with astonishment and delight. From that hour, they were my warm friends, and offered to paddle me in their canoes among the islands and along the shore wherever I wished to go.  

Although this anecdote represents the second of only two extant references Ryerson makes to actually playing music, the ease with which he relates this incident suggests that he must have been comfortable and confident enough to assume that he still possessed the required skill to perform competently in public. Ryerson offers no clue as to the name of the song itself.

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26 In fact, Ryerson’s did stray away at one point, as he recorded in his diary entry of 20 July 1825. See My Life, vol. 1. See also Thomas, Ryerson, 32.
27 Ryerson, My Life, vol. 1, 54.
but as it is a sailor who first attempts it among his fellows, it is tempting to speculate about its
tone and temperament.

Regardless, if we take Ryerson at his word, his performance was sufficiently entertaining
to win over those present without reigniting religious antagonisms. In general, the casual nature
of his comments about musical activity also suggests that playing the flute was not out of place
for such a man of Ryerson’s social rank. At the very least, these circumstances fit with
Guiguet’s analysis of the soirée musicale, discussed in the last chapter.

In 1827, Ryerson was appointed to the Cobourg Circuit. At the Conference of 1829,
members voted to establish a newspaper, to be called the Christian Guardian, in part to promote
the “defence of Methodist institutions and character....” The Conference selected Ryerson as its
first editor and it soon became widely recognized as one of the leading newspapers in Upper
Canada. During the 1830s, Ryerson established himself as a public spokesman for Methodism
in Upper Canada and it is here that we catch another glimpse of the musical culture which
surrounded him both within and outside of this role. While the preceding description of camp
meetings makes it abundantly clear that Methodists incorporated singing into their religious
worship, instruments such as organs remained a cause for concern among some. Writing to his
brother from England in 1831, George Ryerson lamented what he perceived as the erosion of
Methodist principles there, saying

[t]he whole morning service of the Church of England is now read in most of the
Weslyan chapels and with as much formality as in the Church. Many of the
members when they become wealthy, and rise in the world, join the Church, and

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28 During its first three years with Ryerson at the helm, its subscription list increased from 500 to 3,000.
Ryerson, *My Life*, vol. 1, 100. By 1836, Ryerson could confidently boast to the Colonial Office in London that the
Guardian “is the most extensively circulated paper in either of the Canadas, paying nearly one-half more to the post
office than any other publication, a circumstance that speaks strongly in favour of the religious taste and feeling of
the country.” Sissons, *Life and Letters*, vol. 1, 335.
their wealth and influence are lost to the Society. Organs are also introduced into many of their Chapels.²⁹

The observation is telling, for it was at about this time that the more established Upper Canadian towns and cities began to prosper materially. However, they remained a far cry from what George had experienced in England.³⁰

If George Ryerson’s fears were to be assuaged, then the Methodist community he envisioned back home would have to remain close to its roots. There was little reason to doubt that prosperity in Upper Canada would pose similar challenges. Somehow, earlier Methodist ideals would have to adapt themselves to changing circumstances, perhaps through a new hierarchy of enlightened leadership, ultimately free of British oversight.³¹

Upper Canadians who travelled outside the colony became witness to these changes. George’s brother Egerton began to expand his horizons, travelling to New York in 1829 as editor of the Guardian, and then in 1832 to England as a delegate to discuss union with the British Wesleyans. He visited England again in 1835 to solicit funds and a charter for his denomination’s Upper Canada Academy school. On this trip, Ryerson attended a service at which the Methodist renewal of the covenant took place. Describing it as “that most solemn and important service,” he goes on to describe its liturgy, replete with singing:

After singing, the whole congregation knelt down, remaining some time in silent prayer. After Dr. Bunting, as their mouthpiece, read the covenant, all then rose and sang “The covenant we this moment make,” etc. The Lord’s Supper was

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²⁹ Ryerson, My Life, vol. 1, 120.
³⁰ “In the oldest and the most secure, the most populated of them—in Kingston, Niagara-on-the-Lake, York and even in London—there were people already who had built and were building beyond subsistence-security to comfort and dignified, civilized standards of living and behaving. But by any cosmopolitan standards, even these were at best, tight little towns where a very few people found some illusion of society and social security within rigid little walls of sect and class.” Thomas, Ryerson, 34.
³¹ In 1833, union took place between the Canadian Methodist Conference and the British Wesleyans, however, it proved divisive, particularly in Upper Canadian congregations. In Kingston, during Ryerson’s appointment there, two opposing branches of the denomination reflected the schism. The union finally lapsed in 1840.
administered to several hundred persons, and the service concluded with singing and prayer.\textsuperscript{32} 

Two weeks later, Ryerson visited a church in London, noting that a “large number of school children were present; the little girls all dressed alike; they all had prayer and hymn books; they read the responses and sung with utmost correctness.”\textsuperscript{33} What he meant by “correct” is not clear. However, as we will see, his opinion about musical quality and taste expanded to other venues over time.

After a year-and-a-half in England, Ryerson was ultimately successful in obtaining a Royal charter for Upper Canada Academy, plus approval for a legislative grant of £4,100. However, the Rebellion of 1837 threw the colony into political turmoil and it was some time before the entire amount materialized.\textsuperscript{34} At the Conference of 1838, he was once more elected Secretary, as well as editor of the Guardian, holding the latter post until 1840. That year, Upper Canada Academy was granted status as a college, enabling it to confer degrees, and the Canadian Conference union with its British counterpart ended. After attending the American Conference in May, brothers William and Egerton returned to England in July 1840 to attend the British Conference and settle outstanding disputes, leading to the formal separation of the Canadian and British Methodist branches. In the fall of that year, Ryerson returned to his charge at the Adelaide St. Church, and was then appointed as the first principal of the newly-named Victoria College, assuming that position in June 1842. In August, he received a doctorate from the Wesleyan University of Middletown, Connecticut.

\textsuperscript{32} Ryerson, \textit{My Life}, vol. 1, 194.
\textsuperscript{33} Ryerson, \textit{My Life}, vol. 1, 195.
\textsuperscript{34} The first instalment was paid on 11 November 1837, but as a consequence of the Rebellion of 1837 and Governor Bond-Head’s obstinacy, the remainder was not paid until later. For Ryerson’s views on the Rebellion, see Ryerson, \textit{My Life}, vol. 1, 220-225.
At this point, Ryerson removed himself from public affairs, concentrating on his duties in Conference and at Victoria College. He was drawn again into the political arena in November 1843, when in a series of published letters, he defended the right of Governor Metcalfe to reject the advice of his Council, whose members were drawn from the elected assembly. The government, led by Robert Baldwin, resigned in protest, setting the stage for parliamentary elections. In January 1844, Metcalfe offered Ryerson the position of superintendent of schools, which Ryerson eventually accepted, pending the outcome of the fall elections. In October, voters returned a sound majority to the House in support of Metcalfe, vindicating both Ryerson and his cause, and embarking him upon a course to oversee development of a system of public schooling for Upper Canada.

Thus, at age 41, Egerton Ryerson assumed the duties of Chief Superintendent, as it turns out, just past the halfway mark in his life. His cultural sensibilities, musical and otherwise, had been steeped in Methodism, which itself was adapting to larger changes occurring in the emerging Victorian society of Upper Canada. These influences must be kept in mind, as we examine Ryerson’s official record with regard to school music in the province.

As part of his acceptance, Ryerson stipulated that he be afforded some time, and at his own expense, to study other school systems in the United States and overseas.35 The tour lasted from November 1844 until December 1845, after which he wrote a proposal for public schooling in Upper Canada. It is usually at this point where conventional music education histories begin to focus upon his ideas for the inclusion of vocal music as a school subject.36 Most prominent in

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35 According to Hodgins, the tour encompassed visits to “Belgium, France, Italy, Bavaria, Austria, the German states and Switzerland.” He also made stops in Britain, Ireland and the United States. See introduction by Hodgins in Ryerson, *My Life*, vol. 2, 36.

36 Adopting this approach, it becomes much easier to dismiss Ryerson’s efforts in this area. See, for example, Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music in Ontario,” 71-72; Green and Vogan, *Music Education in Canada*, 52.
this narrative is the assumption that Ryerson came upon the idea to include vocal music as a core subject based upon his impressions of the same in Prussian schools. As we have seen, however, at middle age he already had ideas of his own on the matter. The Prussian schools provided but one of several examples of how vocal music might benefit public education.

Furthermore, in virtually all of the countries toured by Ryerson, some form of singing was already underway as part of a more general concern with schooling for the masses. Much of what Ryerson witnessed in these places had been inspired by Pestalozzian teaching principles. Although Pestalozzi himself never detailed a course of study to teach the subject, it was given substance by two of his disciples, Michael Pfeiffer and Hans Naegeli. Based on the approach of his mentor, the former had devised a program for teaching school music, while the latter had compiled and published an account of the method in 1809 in Switzerland.

The manual gained wide popularity there and spread quickly to other German-speaking regions. Through another odd cross-fertilization, the approach had made its way to the United States through American William C. Woodbridge, who in 1830 had returned from London with a report extolling the virtues of Pestalozzian teaching. 37 Many of its tenets found their way into the emerging school systems of the northeastern United States, but, as James Keene notes in his history of American music education, like Upper Canada, they were often met with suspicion, particularly in less-settled areas:

The frontier was the region least sympathetic to the problems of education. The rough life of the frontiersman “nourished an indifference and an amused disdain of the school....[T]eaching was a job for him who had failed elsewhere, or who had time on his hands.” The “three R’s” were taken for granted, but anything further smacked of aristocracy. 38

In urban areas, there was less resistance. In 1837, Massachusetts enacted legislation to create its first effective State Board of Education, appointing Horace Mann as its secretary. A social reformer, Mann became a tireless advocate for free education and school reform. As part of this innovation, local music teacher Lowell Mason was hired on to teach an experimental course in vocal music at the Hawes School in Boston. It proved so successful that in August of 1838, vocal music was made part of the city’s public school curriculum. Mason had toured Europe in 1831 to study music education, and his acquaintance with William Woodbridge led him to adopt teaching methods based on Pestalozzian principles. Mason’s program of study proved so popular in Boston that no significant changes were made to it until 1849. 39 As indicated subsequently in his report, what Ryerson saw there deeply impressed him. 40 In several respects, Ryerson experienced a similar social situation overseas. He arrived in England during a period of renewed interest in public education and music generally, and school music in particular. Earlier in the century, debate there had focused upon whether to educate the lower orders, an issue which had arisen as a consequence of the economic depression that followed Napoleon’s defeat.

As children became wage earners to supplement losses in family income, truancy rates spiked in charity and church schools. Complicating matters were ruling class concerns regarding the impact education might have on this group. As Bernarr Rainbow points out in his history of the subject’s evolution in British education, “[f]or every voice raised in its support, at least two would declare it prone to render them factious, refractory, discontented, and insolent to their

40 In his biography of Ryerson, Burwash notes the impact of Horace Mann and the Massachusetts system on Ryerson’s pedagogic philosophy. See Nathaniel Burwash, *Egerton Ryerson*, vol. 8, *The Makers of Canada* (Toronto: Morang, 1912), 168, 186. Sissons claims that of all the educational authorities cited to support his ideas, Ryerson quoted Mann more than any other. In 1866 while touring the province, in support of educational improvement, Ryerson requested that his secretary send him Mann’s Lectures on Education, noting that he had “read them many years ago.” See Sissons, *Life and Letters*, vol. 2, 95, 520.
superiors; or liable to equip them to read seditious, vicious, and anti-Christian literature.”

The same might well be said of music in this context. In London in 1832, George Ryerson had written Egerton, lamenting the display of uncouth manners he witnessed from “the infidel population of the city.” Noting the judgment of God in such matters, he nonetheless reported seeing “gangs of men traversing the streets and singing songs in ridicule of the cholera,” adding that he saw “caricatures of it in the windows.”

Early British public school promoters saw school music as a way to model what they understood to be proper moral behaviour. Lord Brougham, who had pioneered the first public school act through Parliament in 1833, lauded John Turner’s Manual of Instruction in Vocal Music, published the same year, for its professed ability to meet this challenge. In it, Turner claimed that “music would be found to exert a distinctly civilizing influence upon the youth of the working classes.”

The publication was reprinted in 1844, the same year Ryerson arrived to study education systems on the continent. Behind these debates lurked questions about what the effect of music might be upon the sexes, particularly with regard to males. Popularized in published letters written by Lord Chesterfield to his son in 1749, at issue was music’s effect upon character and habits. Many of the arguments echoed those of John Locke, discussed in Chapter One, and as we have seen, their enduring cultural resonance persisted well into the nineteenth century. This may be one of the reasons why singing was not introduced into the English school system until 1851.

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41 Rainbow, Land Without Music, 29.
42 Ryerson, My Life, vol. 1, 121.
43 Quoted in Rainbow, Land Without Music, 30.
44 Rainbow, Land Without Music, 24-25.
Ryerson also visited Holland, touring schools and other facilities, and meeting with officials. Most of his correspondence is bureaucratic in tone however, the subject of music occasionally appears in his observations. For example, he notes that as part of a meeting with a school master, he “heard the organ,” while at a nearby church he is struck by the “amphi-theatrical” set-up of pulpit and congregation. In Paris, he observed “music and chanting excellent beyond description,” while at another he finds “the singing peculiarly touching.”

Music education in France had been greatly influenced by the ideas of Rousseau, particularly as described in his book, Emile, although the method of musical notation he created had not been adopted. The Society for Elementary Instruction had formed in Paris in 1815, in an effort “to bring moral and intellectual training within the reach of as many as possible of the poorer classes....” Its members had approved the teaching of vocal music in July 1819, appointing G. Bocquillon Wilhem to adapt his method of teaching vocal music to the existing monitorial system of instruction.

By 1830, Wilhem was put in charge of the city’s new Normal School of Music and in 1835 he organized music classes to teach adults. By year’s end, he and his assistants were holding 10 classes a week, “where hundreds of singers—mechanics and labourers, together with their employers, assembled to unravel the mysteries of musical notation....” Along similar lines, Joseph Mainzer set up free singing classes in Paris during the 1830s, attracting students “from all classes of the community...The philanthropic purpose of his singing classes and the unusual spectacle of hundreds of artisans assembled for so improbable a purpose as the study of vocal music caused a sensation in Paris.” Although Mainzer’s venture had fizzled by the early

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45 Ryerson, My Life, vol. 2, 42, 43.
46 The approach emphasized learning through experience, what Rainbow describes as a “nature school.” For a summary of Rousseau’s impact in this area, see Rainbow, Land Without Music, 63-64.
47 Quoted in Rainbow, Land Without Music, 95.
48 Rainbow, Land Without Music, 103.
1840s, Wilhem’s influence continued in spite of his death in 1841, thanks to the English music teacher John Hullah, who published Wilhem’s Method of Teaching Singing. It became the first text to be adopted for teaching vocal music in the schools of Upper Canada. Ryerson makes no official mention of these classes during his stay in Paris, although it is highly likely that he witnessed the results of Wilhem’s work firsthand, for by the time of his visit, the latter’s contribution had been widely recognized. Paris also offered a glimpse of urban culture. Alongside the more bureaucratic observations made during his stay there, Ryerson also commented on the culture of the city itself:

[C]rowds were everywhere, streets for miles were filled with three and sometimes four lines of carriages...the broad sidewalks were literally crowded with pedestrians forming solid masses from twenty to fifty feet wide and extending two miles...I never saw such a moving mass of people, embracing no doubt, every nation in Europe and America. The attractions of the harlequins, the jugglers, hucksters, etc. of all descriptions, surpass imagination...

Returning in December 1845, Ryerson compiled the results into a report which he submitted in March 1846 on which new education legislation was to be based. The resulting school act of 1846 laid out a general philosophy for elementary education, as well as recommendations for implementation. In the report, “Ryerson cited both American and European authorities on the value of music in the common schools, all of whom, he argued, agreed it had great powers to “humanize, refine and elevate” whole communities.” Having made this assertion, he offered no fixed program of study for vocal music. The following year, Ryerson toured Upper Canada, promoting the act and its vision. As part of this lecture, entitled

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49 Rainbow reports that by this time, “some twelve thousand children were receiving singing lessons from his method in the schools in Paris, and the number of adults—nearly all workmen—in his adult classes, amounted to fifteen hundred.” Rainbow, Land Without Music, 104.

50 Ryerson, My Life, vol. 2, 42, 43, 44.


“The Importance of Education to an Agricultural, a Manufacturing, and a Free People”, he declared:

I may mention what I hope to see taught to the sons and daughters of our entire population, - vocal music, - an art and accomplishment which often converts the domestic fireside into a paradise, refines and promotes social feelings and enjoyments, and blesses the Churches of the land.53

In many respects, what was being presented was a mid-Victorian recipe for middle-class harmony. It is also interesting to note that Ryerson chose the fall of the year in which to embark upon the tour, to take advantage of the agricultural repose and “festival air” of area fall fair celebrations. As has been noted previously, singing, dancing and other musical activity formed a regular part of the celebration. In this way, local musicians of all talents might provide entertainment and a brief respite from the realities of pioneer life, lending support for the presence of music in the community.54 The school system Ryerson envisioned for his listeners would not only educate and elevate their children, but would bring order and dignity both inside and outside the home. The promise of tidy, respectable communities built around Christian principles fit neatly into Ryerson’s vision for education in Upper Canada.

His visits to the larger cities also provided him with an indication for what urban industrial growth might bring. The concept of morality, as Ryerson would have thought of it, was a universal ideal of which all were capable, if not culpable. But the word itself connoted social and cultural values that were inextricably woven into the social fabric of Upper Canada. Ryerson, like other early defenders of public education, viewed their task as part of a larger goal to develop what Robert Lanning calls a national sense, “welded” to British culture.55 To his mind, mass education promised a bureaucratic platform from which education officials could

54 See Keillor’s Music of Canada, 105-106.
disseminate model definitions of the “moral self” and its place in state formation to an area undergoing rapid social and economic changes. As Lanning points out, the challenge was to design a practical ideal, to be used as the standard measure against which to compare student achievement in this realm.56

For guidance, Ryerson drew upon the tenets of Scottish moral philosophy then in vogue among his contemporaries. This view, with its notions of “common sense” and “divine design,” emphasized “a general philosophical outlook that could be used in the experience of everyday living.”57 Behind this pragmatic approach lay the interdependent worlds of religion, nature and humanity. The spiritual and natural worlds complemented a specific social order and outlook that presupposed a proper place for everything and everyone. Naturally, these ideas informed and influenced Ryerson, manifesting themselves in various other aspects of his life. Ryerson did not cease to express these views, once he became chief superintendent of education for the province. Rather, they became the context within which subsequent policy and action were understood and justified. Viewed in this light, vocal music in schools represented one among several mediums through which to inculcate respectable habits among all classes.

By the time he returned from his fall tour of 1847, Egerton Ryerson was almost a decade-and-a-half into his second marriage and was well-known to his fellow citizens in Toronto. With his second wife, Mary Armstrong, he had three children—Sophia, John and Charles, although John died at age six months.58 The family were settled in Toronto, where Ryerson set about the daunting task of making his vision of public schooling a reality. Opening the Normal School in

56 See Lanning, “Mapping the Moral Self,” 126.
57 A. B. McKillop, A Disciplined Intelligence (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s, 1979), quoted in Lanning, 88. As examples of this branch of philosophy, Lanning points to the work of John Miller, Adam Ferguson and Adam Smith. See Lanning, “Mapping the Moral Self,” 88-92.
58 His first wife, Hannah Aikman, died in July 1833. The couple had two children, John and Lucilla. The former died at age six, the latter at age 17. Sophia was born in 1836, John, who died at six months, in 1842, and Charles, in 1847.
1847, he hired James Peton Clarke the following year, to teach singing to normal school students outside of regular school hours. Clarke had come from Scotland in the 1830s and had become a driving force in Toronto’s musical life, most notably as a founding member of the Toronto Choral Society, and as conductor of the Toronto Philharmonic Society.\footnote{Clarke was the first person to receive a B. Mus. from a Canadian university (King’s College, 1846). See Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (henceforth, EMC), 1st ed., s. v. “Clarke, James P.”}

Ryerson’s initial effort appears to have produced positive results. Among the achievements listed in his Annual Report of 1849, he announced confidently that “[i]t is also gratifying to observe that the teaching of Vocal Music is beginning to be introduced into the schools – one of the early fruits of the present system of Elementary Instruction in Upper Canada.”\footnote{Annual Report of the Chief Superintendent, (1850), quoted in Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 129.} However, aside from the collection of some rudimentary statistics, little in the way of bureaucratic direction was offered by Ryerson or his department.

The apparent lack of official attention accorded to vocal music at this early stage has led some commentators to surmise that Ryerson was ill-equipped to defend and support it later in his career.\footnote{The most vocal among them is Trowsdale, whose conclusions have become conventional assumptions in the literature. See Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 127, 130, 511.} The music teaching position at the Normal School had changed hands eight times during its first decade of classes, but the blame for this misfortune cannot be wholly attributed to Ryerson. For instance, James Clarke appears to have had a falling out with the musical community in the early 1850s that had nothing to do with his employment at the Normal School. Whether this became the cause for his ceasing to teach there is a matter for speculation, but there is no mention of his incompetence as a music teacher, and given his impressive record, it is doubtful that this was the case.\footnote{See EMC, s. v. “Clarke, James P.”}
Another likely reason may have been that the system itself was in its bureaucratic infancy, and simply lacked the administrative wherewithal to attend to such matters. In Toronto for example, jurisdictional disputes between the new school board and the city council in 1848 resulted in the closure of the entire school system. Even after passage of the 1850 school act confirmed the power of school boards to dictate budgetary requirement over the heads of municipal politicians, the former owned no property or buildings and depended upon rented space to hold classes. By the end of the decade, however, modest progress had been achieved, with eight schools being built, employing 38 teachers and a total enrolment of 4,776 pupils. Of these, 2,909 were taking vocal music, one hour a week on Friday afternoons, when the sexes were separated, boys “singing and...reciting...poetry” and girls “singing and sewing.”

But overall, the actual number of children attending school during the 1850s remained far below the number of children living there. Toronto school inspector George Barber, who held the position from 1844 until 1858, blamed the situation on poverty, illness and indifference, however, little was done to remedy the situation, since so few facilities were available to accommodate any increase. The repeated association between idle youth and crime brought the matter increasingly into the public spotlight, confirming among many in the middle class that indeed, “Toronto was the worst centre in Ontario for juvenile crime.” Former school trustee Justice J. H. Hagerty underscored the connection in an 1858 charge, stating:

Any person acquainted with the lower classes of our poor is aware of the extreme difficulty in inducing them to let their children attend school. They will keep them from school, to gather wood for fuel, to beg from door to door, in short to do anything, in preference to sending them to school to have the advantage of

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the free education so liberally provided. Now...it is from this class that our young
criminals spring...it is this class we are chiefly interested in humanizing by
education.....

Indeed, the association between indolence and crime had been underscored a decade
earlier when Toronto school trustees had pointed to what would in later years become a pre-
occupation of social reformers, arguing that

a perfectly free education in the Common Schools of this City would prove
to be productive in a short time of the most beneficial results in withdrawing
from idleness and dissipation a large number of children who now loiter
about the streets, or frequent the haunts of vice, creating the most painful
emotions in every well-regulated mind, and in some degree involving the
imputation that the social conditions of the body corporate of which they
form a part cannot be of the highest order.

Similar arguments emphasizing self-discipline and social harmony found their way into
the justifications put forth by Ryerson in regard to school music. Trowsdale’s study of school
music in Ontario cites eighty-five statements on the subject during Ryerson’s tenure in office,
virtually all of which reinforce ideals commonly associated with the Victorian middle class, but
often echoing earlier ideas.

For the individual, vocal music offered a range of positive physiological effects, and
medical authorities were usually quoted to support such claims. One such Journal article
extolled its virtues in this regard, stating “...the exercise of the organs of the breast, by singing,
contribute very much to defend them from those diseases to which the climate and other causes
expose them.” Mentally and emotionally, music ranked among “one of the most powerful

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65 Quoted in Cochrane, *Centennial Story*, 52.
68 As we have noted, many of these arguments were used by others, in given historical periods. In
particular, see examples cited from Ancient Greece and early modern Europe, especially details on “the civilizing
process,” described in sources by Kate van Orden and Norbert Elias.
69 Dr. Rush, “Physiological Facts in Regard to Vocal Music in Schools, *Journal of Education*, (henceforth,
“JE”) 13 (1860), 12.
influences on the human mind.” 70 This was, many believed, particularly true in the realm of emotion.

Echoing classical arguments, an American author pointed to its calming effect, observing: “It soothes and softens the passions; affects and refines the feelings; and rouses the laggard into life. Are the children’s spirits high, noisy? A soft melody will prove as effectual as oil to a troubled sea.” 71 Another praised the power it possessed for “cultivating the gentler feelings of our nature, and in soothing the fiercer and more rugged dispositions.” 72 Others pointed to the benefits school music could have on character development. Borrowing from the precepts of Comenius and Pestalozzi, English school music pioneer John Hullah stated: “The sentiments appropriate to childhood and youth find expression in the music taught in elementary schools; and lessons calculated to make a deep impression on the character of the children, and to influence their future conduct, are linked with the most pleasing associations....” 73 In deference to ancient Greek thought, music had the power to control emotion and feeling.

According to Trowsdale, classroom discipline was the most common reason put forth during Ryerson’s time for the inclusion of music in school curriculum. “Its practice, according to a number of different writers, affected in a positive way not only the individual moods of pupils and teachers but the relationship existing between them and the general classroom atmosphere.” 74 Interestingly, most of this advice came from practising teachers, who employed it not only as a way to focus student attention, but also aid themselves. In one article, a teacher advised that “[a] teacher who sings often will not often scold. Mark that. I believe he can expend much of his over-wrought nervousness in this way; and, instead of sharp tones piercing

71 Quoted in Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 82.
72 Quoted in Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 82.
73 Quoted in Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 84.
74 Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 75.
the heart, his words will fall in soft and gentle accents.”75 This, of course, assumed musical competence on the part of the teacher, and as one observer noted, “those who can employ this aid to discipline are only few comparatively speaking, and the increase in the number so gifted will, we fear, be only slow.”76 Temperance provided yet another social good to be derived from teaching vocal music in the schools. Having visited taverns early in his preaching career, Ryerson would have been familiar with the various types of taprooms in the colony, and the activities therein.77

One would expect that participation in religious worship would also form a central core of Ryerson’s arguments. In the first issue of the Journal, Ryerson drew upon what he had seen during his educational tour of Europe, stating:

In Germany, every child is taught to use its voice while young. In their schools, all join in singing as a regular exercise, as much as they attend to the study of geography; and in their churches the singing is not confined to a choir, who sit apart from the others…but there is a vast tide of incense going forth to God from every heart which can give utterance to this language from the soul…Children sing!…and always when angry feelings rise in your hearts, curb and check them by singing sweet and cheerful songs.78

According to Trowsdale, official references in support of school music to improve religious worship were the least likely to be used. Given Ryerson’s background, it seems odd that this is the case. While Trowsdale offers no opinion on this subject, Ryerson may have wished to avoid discussing details related to the overt mingling of sectarian motives and state

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75 Quoted in Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 76.
76 Trowsdale, “School Music in Ontario,” 77.
78 JE, 1 (1848), 216.
Another reason might have been that private musical training and church-related musical activity such as choirs already existed in the colony, and on that basis it might be difficult to convince the pragmatic citizens of Upper Canada to make a place for it in public schools.

Taken together, these characteristics accommodated music into a general social framework of desirable moral signposts for proper Victorian decorum and self comportment. As with music in earlier periods, its place in public schools became part of a larger, state-sanctioned “civilizing process,” internalized and manifested as cheerful obedience. In any event, music itself represented more than the sum total of bureaucratic reasoning—it was a worthy Victorian virtue, intricately woven into a broader cultural fabric that informed gender roles, social status and public character. One needs look no further than Guiguet’s description of Mrs. Widder’s Soirée Musicale, discussed in Chapter Two, to recognize its trappings.80

In 1857, Ryerson took his daughter Sophie overseas with him a second time, where among other things, he recruited Henry Sefton, an English music teacher, to work at the Normal and model schools. Sefton’s arrival in 1858 marked the beginning of nearly a quarter century of stability in normal school music teaching. He also taught in public schools and the City’s Mechanics’ Institute, and his name appears sporadically in Sale’s research on pre-Confederation music societies.81 Sefton was a supporter of Hullah’s ‘fixed doh’ sight-singing method, a system

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79 As we have seen, music, particularly singing, formed a central part of Methodist evangelism, hence hymns became a familiar part of the denomination’s public image. During his tenure in office, Ryerson was often accused of being “the Pope of Methodism” by his detractors, and given the fact that he had to deal head-on with issues such as the Clergy Reserves and separate schools, this may well have been the case.


which Ryerson had endorsed from the outset, promoting its use in school books and teaching manuals.  

The same year Sefton began teaching in Toronto, the Council of Public Instruction introduced major revisions to the courses of study for Upper Canadian schools. Of the three divisions now created, only in the third was music required, described in the curriculum with a single statement: “Hullah’s vocal music.” Each year figures were given for the number of students enrolled in vocal music. In Toronto, boys and girls were separated for this subject, where space warranted, in keeping with the practice early on of organizing each school into Male and Female departments. Each Friday afternoon, following the review of the past four days’ work, “the last hour...was thrown open to singing and the reciting of poetry for the boys, singing and sewing for the girls....” Nothing is said about whether different songs were sung by each group, or to what end. Given what we already know about the period, it is interesting to speculate about this aspect of mid-Victorian school culture. As a school subject, there is no evidence to suggest that it might adversely affect the character of either sex, especially that of males. This in itself may seem somewhat surprising in light of subsequent arguments regarding its status in education, but the available evidence does not make any mention of it. During the 1860s, there was occasional criticism of music in the curriculum, but public indifference and chronic overcrowding of existing facilities pre-occupied local officials. In his 1868 report, Inspector James Porter lamented:

I am almost weary of writing and speaking from year to year, respecting the many neglected, idle children whom we meet with on the streets, who are

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82 In 1869, Sefton published *Three-part Songs*, for use in public schools, which was reprinted in 1879. He also published *A Manual of Vocal Music*, based on the ‘fixed doh’ method. See EMC, s. v. “Sefton, Henry.”
84 See Cochrane, *Centennial Story*, 42.
85 Quoted in Cochrane, *Centennial Story*, 43.
86 In particular, see Charlene Anne Morton, “‘The Status Problem’: The Feminized Location of School Music and the Burden of Justification” (EdD diss., University of Toronto, 1996).
mutually educating each other; and I fear; in many instances, are being educated by their parents and many others in uncleanliness, profanity and dishonesty.\textsuperscript{87}

The following year, he highlighted the ambivalence of parents in the matter, stating:

“Some have said that they send their children to school “to keep them out of the way,” and a few have added that “they care not what they learn, if they are only kept off the street.”\textsuperscript{88}

Thus, music may have been used as one way to put a more positive face on the grim reality of attending school. During his tenure at the Toronto Normal School, Sefton wrote a number of manuals for teaching music, including a text for teacher training, but like Hullah’s approach, the latter tended to treat music as more of a science than an art. The increasing popularity of the tonic solfa method espoused by John Curwen after mid century made it an even harder sell.\textsuperscript{89} In spite of Sefton’s long career at the Normal, the number of Toronto school children taking vocal music varied from year to year during the latter half of Ryerson’s tenure, and little mention was made of its presence in city schools, except on special occasions, such as the visit of Edward, the Prince of Wales in 1860 and his younger brother Prince Arthur in 1869. On the former occasion, girls and boys from the city model school has been assembled to sing the school song, Hurrah for Canada “to fine effect.”\textsuperscript{90}

The latter occasion initiated a practice which, as we shall see, would come to symbolize public displays of school music in the city. On the day of Prince Arthur’s arrival in Toronto, “some three hundred pupils selected from the City Schools, together with about one hundred other children, welcomed His Royal Highness by singing the National Anthem, being placed on

\textsuperscript{87} SMA, \textit{TBEAR}\ (1868), 14.
\textsuperscript{88} SMA, \textit{TBEAR}\ (1869), 10-11.
\textsuperscript{89} Curwen’s system utilized the “flexible doh” method, which proved much easier to explain and teach. With the arrival of Alexander Cringan in Toronto in the mid-1880s, Curwen’s method would gain the upper hand (see Chapter Seven).
\textsuperscript{90} The song was written by Sefton. For details about the visit, see Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 2, 455.
platforms on the north and south sides King Street, erected for that purpose by the City
Council.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Student Enrolment</th>
<th># of Students in Vocal Music</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1859</td>
<td>4,776</td>
<td>2,909</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td>4,911</td>
<td>2,984</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1861</td>
<td>4,888</td>
<td>2,320</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1862</td>
<td>4,894</td>
<td>850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>5,298</td>
<td>1,467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>5,550</td>
<td>1,421</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>5,725</td>
<td>1,789</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1866</td>
<td>5,488</td>
<td>1,354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1867</td>
<td>5,611</td>
<td>2,184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>6,108</td>
<td>2,592</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1869</td>
<td>6,434</td>
<td>2,592</td>
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<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>7,098</td>
<td>5,063</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>8,018</td>
<td>4,433</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other than these scattered references, the only other official mention regarding public
school music in Toronto during this period comes to us from the 1872 report of Inspector James
Porter, who in his opening remarks, comments:

The special instruction imparted in the several schools in Vocal Music and
Linear Drawing, from early in March, and throughout the remainder of the
year, had been generally regarded as a means of promoting the culture of
our pupils with an equal reference to refinement and utility. The education
of the ear, the voice, the eye and the hand, is not a mere matter of taste,
but also of unquestionable practical importance.

In the same report, Porter also notes that when Lord Dufferin visited the city’s model
school on October 25, Sefton was part of the official welcome, and “[a]s His Excellency entered

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91 Toronto District School Board Sequi-Centennial Museum and Archives, Annual Reports of the Inspector of Public Schools for the City of Toronto (hereafter, “TBEAR”), 1869, 51.
92 Figures taken from SMA, TBEAR,1859-1871.
93 SMA, TBEAR (1872), 11.
the boys’ school-room, all rose, and, the children sang “God Save the Queen.” And, an address to His Excellency, school board member Dr. Wright noted that

>a daily average of 5,000 children, boys and girls of various ages, receive regular instruction in those useful branches of knowledge required to prepare them for industrial pursuits after leaving school, while in addition to these more practical studies, the rudiments of drawing and vocal music form a part of each day’s occupation.

Thus, it appears that despite the scant attention paid it in bureaucratic documentation and the apparent distinction between it and “more practical studies,” vocal music was central to the conservative identity of city schools. The reality was, however, that rapid industrialization and urbanization were introducing new ideas about music’s place in the modern city.

The changes were, no doubt, apparent to Ryerson. And, while he was able to counter their effects to a certain degree in his professional capacity, such was not the case in his personal life. Through an exploration of his interactions outside of his role as chief superintendent for the province’s schools, a fuller picture emerges, revealing not only his views on the subject, but also that the rising generation had different—and sometimes conflicting—views about its purpose and place. The two main areas consulted here are Ryerson’s continuing affiliation with the Canadian Methodist Conference, and his personal correspondence, particularly with his daughter Sophia. Of course, one must be cautious about ascribing motives to what might be dismissed as trivial notes and observations, but cumulatively they reinforce the assertion that Ryerson’s acquaintance with music culture went beyond bureaucratic intent.

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94 SMA, TBEAR (1872), 11.
95 SMA, TBEAR (1872), 11.
Ryerson’s second daughter, Sophia Howard, was born in England in 1836, where he was lobbying (successfully) to obtain a Royal Charter for the Upper Canada Academy. Of her early years little is known, except that like her older sister Lucilla, she attended private school. The information is preserved only because Ryerson was forced to defend himself on more than one occasion against accusations that he had sent them to “a school where dancing was taught.” It is not clear whether this was, in fact, the case. The two prominent schools for young women present at this time—the Burlington Academy for Young Ladies in Hamilton, and the Adelaide Academy for Young Ladies in Toronto—were both run by the wives of former Victoria College faculty. As Sissons notes with regard to the former, and surmises by extension with the latter, it is highly unlikely that “dancing, or other frivolity of the sort was permitted to these young ladies.”

Nevertheless, the incident illustrates a characteristic distinction made by some denominations at the time, including Methodism, regarding the proper use of music. We need not concern ourselves with the underlying reasons for this proscription; suffice to say, it was deemed to be serious at the time. In fact, the accusation caused such consternation among Ryerson’s Methodist colleagues that at their annual Conference in 1847, a resolution was passed, stating: “[t]hat it is the judgment of our Conference that the general Rules of the Church prohibit the employing of dancing masters to teach their children to dance, sending or allowing their children to attend dancing Schools or parties in which that amusement is indulged.”

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96 “Sophie”, as she affectionately became known to her father in his correspondence, was the first child of Ryerson’s marriage to Mary Armstrong, following the death of his first wife. See C. B. Sissons, My Dearest Sophie: Letters From Egerton Ryerson to His Daughter (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955), xxvii.
To complicate matters, at the same Conference, Ryerson also had come under fire from some members for having the civil position of chief superintendent, without relinquishing his ministerial duties. The seriousness of the breach is revealed a year later in a letter from his brother Edwy, who informs him:

I found upon my return from Conference to Brantford that the general topic of conversation was your dismissal from your present office. When I told them it was not the case, some rejoiced, while silent grief and disappointment were visible on the countenance of others.\textsuperscript{100}

Eight years later at the annual gathering, Ryerson was once more forced to defend his actions, but on a much more personal level. Embroiled in a dispute over voluntary attendance at weekly class meetings, which he favoured in order not to alienate the young, one of his foes questioned his fitness as a parental role model, saying “[t]he Doctor ought to be the last person to talk about the care of youth and the duty we owe to our children after his own withering example of sending his daughters to a nunnery and a Governor’s ball.”\textsuperscript{101} The “nunnery” reference pointed to the fact that Ryerson had sent both girls away to study French, although only Lucilla had done so at a Catholic convent, as this accoutrement was unavailable locally at the time. Reminiscent of the “dancing school” controversy, the “Governor’s ball” comment was no doubt intended to renew suspicions that the event involved activities that would be unacceptable to devout Methodists. As Ryerson himself revealed in his own defence, the celebration had taken place when Sophia was 11, and was merely a Christmas party that had been hosted by Lady Elgin and her eight-year-old daughter.\textsuperscript{102}

Although sectarian in origin, these events illustrate the interconnectedness of Ryerson’s public and private life. As a Methodist, a senior bureaucrat and a leading citizen of mid-

\textsuperscript{100} Ryerson, \textit{My Life}, vol. 1, 127.
\textsuperscript{101} Quoted in Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 2, 320. For earlier “convent” references, see same source, 155, 161.
\textsuperscript{102} For details on these accusations, and Ryerson’s response, see Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 2, 320-323.
nineteenth century Upper Canada, Ryerson had to remain ever-mindful of how one role affected the other. In this respect, balance and consistency were not always easily obtainable. As the colony grew and cultural options expanded, opportunities for differences of opinion also increased, assigning conflicting value to musical activity, according to genre, performance location and audience. As asserted by Richard Plant and others in the previous chapter, the movement of musical performance out of the private and into the public sphere granted much wider access to public scrutiny of these activities, and the resulting consequences which might arise from them. It is not surprising then that this might be cause for parental concern and advice.

This is exemplified in the conversations and commentaries contained in letters sent by Ryerson to his daughter Sophia, as she moved into adulthood. Unlike their father, she and her younger brother Charles had grown up in comparatively comfortable surroundings and had enjoyed the social benefits accruing to a family of means in mid-nineteenth century Toronto. Both children had accompanied Ryerson on educational tours of Europe, including Paris, where he hoped to infuse into them “a proper idea of the various tastes, amusements, as well as the various characters of French society.” But this did not guarantee that their opinions would mirror his. Still, he was not afraid to point out moral mis-steps when he saw them, and never hesitated to proffer advice.

Most commonly, this came in response to Sophia’s rather active social life, which appears to have blossomed following her return to Toronto from Europe with her father in 1856. The transition would have been easy for her, as she possessed many of the accomplishments necessary for such occasions. From a young age, she was well-liked by the

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social elite with whom she interacted, often warranting particular mention in her father’s correspondence. As we have seen, both sexes were assigned specific roles at these gatherings, made manifest in musical performance. Whether described as an “at home,” or a more formal-sounding “ball,” a portion of the evening was set aside for this ritual. Usually, the hosting matron and her daughter(s) sang and/or played an instrument, while the gentlemen looked on.

Ryerson describes one such instance in a letter to Sophie, sent from Quebec in March 1863:

Afterward, Lady Monck had a “Home.” The party was very large and brilliant. Lady Monck made herself very agreeable. She played on the piano & afterwards on the harp, accompanied on the piano by one of her daughters. I believe there was some dancing in the course of the evening, but I left about half past ten and the party broke up a quarter before twelve.

Although there is no mention of lessons or training, we also know that Sophia played the piano, for as Sissons tells us, following her marriage to Edward Harris, she “took her piano with her in 1860, so that the house in Toronto was not only bereft of her presence but of the music which meant so much to Ryerson.” That she continued her interest is evident from occasional references by him regarding music stands and advice on purchasing a piano himself. Thanks to her earlier education and time in Paris with her father, she was also fluent in French—a refinement normally reserved for the privileged—placing her firmly within the ranks of the small circle of Upper Canadian elites.

Her ease in this environment was initially a great source of pride for her father, who already held a respectable place among them. As Thomas notes:

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105 En route to Europe, they dined in Quebec with the Governor. As Ryerson notes, “Lady Head showed a mother’s attention and kindness to Sophia.” Meeting the Widders (the subjects of Guiguet’s research, discussed earlier) in Paris while on tour, he records that “Sophia seems to be quite a favourite with Mrs. Widder and her daughters.” A parent’s pride may certainly have been at work here, but given the company and the context, it is probably not unwarranted. See Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, xxx, xxxi.

106 Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, 51.

107 Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, xxxv.

108 These are given casual mention by Ryerson, in the context of other subjects. See, for example, Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, 64, 134.
In his life, Egerton Ryerson had many moments of achievement, but socially he had never had moments as sweet as these, when Sophie shone in his eyes before distinguished company, and he enjoyed the kind of literate, heterogeneous civilization to which one large and largely stifled, part of his nature had always aspired.\textsuperscript{109}

In many respects, she epitomized the ideal upper middle-class Victorian woman, as described by Guiguet.

At length however, her active social pursuits increasingly put her at odds with her father, as well as others. Early indications of this surface in an exchange of letters between Pastor John Borland and Ryerson, arising out of Borland’s concern over the Ryersons’ absence at Methodist gatherings. Borland opens his letter of 11 February 1858 by stating:

I have much pleasure in acknowledging receipt of your note of Saturday last, especially because of the assurance it contained that neither Mrs. Ryerson or yourself were at the Gov. Genls. Ball. Had the assurance contained the name of Miss Ryerson, also, it would have been still more valuable. The use which many, without as well as within, the Church, are making of such things, you may rest assured, is injurious to parents who tolerate in their children that which our Church has so often and emphatically pronounced to be sinful.\textsuperscript{110}

The social engagements continued, however, to the point where they threatened the break-up of her marriage. Particularly upsetting for her father was the public knowledge that she was accused of “giving offence” by her husband Edward Harris, who had “thought himself neglected in favour of her social frivolities.”\textsuperscript{111} She moved back to her parents’ home in 1862, where it appears, she was able to carry on as before, although with some restrictions. In a letter written to her from Quebec in 1863, Ryerson distances himself both figuratively and literally, from the matter, advising that if an event must occur: “you had better have your evening party

\textsuperscript{109} Thomas, \textit{Ryerson}, 119.

\textsuperscript{110} Quoted in Sissons, \textit{Life and Letters}, vol. 2, 366.

\textsuperscript{111} At this point, legal separation seemed inevitable, however Sophia had moved back to London by 1865 by which time, presumably, the couple had reconciled their differences. See Thomas, \textit{Ryerson}, 126, 129.
without delay. Let it be musical, but do not have any dancing. I would rather you would have it before my return.”

Ryerson’s anxiety persisted over the issue, even after the couple reconciled, but he resigned himself to spiritual appeals, rather than outright condemnation. From Ottawa in 1866, he wrote:

I am afraid, my dearest Sophie, that your endless gaieties are not the best way of “renouncing the pomps and vanities of this world,” & the best method of “denying oneself, taking up one’s cross & following and Blessed Saviour.” I have always leaned to the side, perhaps to the extreme, of indulgence, but I am deeply impressed—and deeper impressed of late than ever—that our only true happiness, & real safety, is the possession of the favour, the friendship, the image of God, & the indwelling of His Spirit—which will always be characterized by hearty earnestness in seeking first the Kingdom of God & His righteousness, & in cordial sympathies with suffering humanity & charities for its relief.

The fact that Sophie persisted in her ways, despite all the familial discord it caused, may indicate a wilful personality on her part, but in hindsight her actions also reflect a change in the social temper of the times. As Toronto increasingly took on a metropolitan sensibility, entertainment of this sort was gradually gaining acceptance in the mainstream. Although many of the ‘rules of the game’ remained intact well after mid-century, they were reluctantly giving way to those more in step with the modern age. In this respect, Sophie represents the vanguard of the late-Victorian middle class attitude, embodying a more relaxed approach toward leisure activity and material wealth. As we shall see in the next chapter, this change would manifest itself in many ways, eventually altering the way in which Torontonians comprehended and consumed entertainment in general, and public school music in particular.

112 Quoted in Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, 51.
113 Quoted in Sissons, My Dearest Sophie, 83.
“The day will come when man will have to fight noise as inexorably as cholera and the plague.”¹

“Modernity generally was as much about trying to control sound as producing it and industrialization and urbanization upped the ante in this regard.”²

This chapter focuses on the development of the soundscape³ in Toronto during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It was during this period that Toronto underwent incredible change, as the synergistic forces of technological and industrial innovations brought people to the city. As a result, its character was transformed from a colonial backwater, to what D. C. Masters has described as “a budding metropolis.”⁴ Massive immigration and urbanization altered peoples’ experience of everyday life, requiring them to re-interpret what they heard and saw, tasted and touched.

As the city’s population grew and commercial and industrial production intensified, so too did the volume and complexity of sounds emanating from such activity. Some were familiar, some utterly new, but collectively they served to remind all who heard them that great change was afoot. Perceived as an indication of “progress” to some citizens, others decried various

³ This is defined as the “sonic environment.” See R. Murray Schafer, The Soundscape: Our Sonic Environment and the Turning of the World (Rochester: Destiny Books, 1984), 274. For the purposes of this chapter, a further distinction is made. “Popular entertainment” is used here to denote sources of music outside of the established institutions such as conservatories, churches and military organizations. These will be dealt with specifically in a subsequent chapter.
elements of the modern soundtrack as intrusive and a threat to traditional values. In responding to the disagreements, Toronto city officials found themselves crafting legal definitions for what constituted “noise,” and how it might be regulated and controlled. These attempts were not always universally endorsed. Indeed, individual interpretations of, and responses to the changing sounds of the city often differed, and as more layers were added to the soundtrack, it became increasingly challenging to draw distinctions.

The rise of mass entertainment in urban centres such as Toronto during the latter half of the nineteenth century represents one of the defining aspects distinguishing the modern city from its early nineteenth-century predecessor. Often employed to epitomize the modern age, mass consumer entertainments were, in many respects, by-products of the revolutions in transportation, technology and communication that created the modern city. Improved transportation made it easier to bring in a greater variety of performers throughout the year. It also facilitated the introduction of new forms of amusement, which were fast becoming staples of British and American theatrical circuits.5

As an intrinsic part of the shift to modernity, mass entertainments presented another challenge. Because of the association with the new urban environment, popular forms of leisure such as music hall, vaudeville and an assortment of other cheap amusements fuelled public debate concerning their purpose and effect, particularly upon children. In this way, deciding what should be heard became contested ground in the battle between some who wished to recreate and preserve traditional cultural ideals and others whose aims appeared to threaten the status quo. What emerged from this dialogue added new dimensions to the music culture of late-Victorian Toronto and its public schools. The debate was not new, nor was it unique to the

5 For an in-depth study of the impacts and influence of these types of entertainment, see Christopher Ernst, “The Transgressive Stage: The Culture of Public Entertainment in Late Victorian Toronto” (Ph D diss., University of Toronto, 2011).
city. The adjustment to modernity did, though, result in various attempts by local authorities to come up with solutions to the dilemma.

At the same time technological improvements in factories and other places of business were creating more leisure time for the working classes, permitting such affordable indulgences. Newcomers in search of employment opportunities were flooding cities and proved receptive to such distractions. This caused concern among some community leaders, who often associated the spectacle itself with the changes being wrought by modernity. This led to increasing calls from among those in Toronto’s middle and upper classes for oversight, restriction, or outright bans, particularly with respect to children.

As active state agents, public schools provided one point from which to counter the increasing presence of such activities in the city. The moral unease generated by the advent of mass entertainment brought it to the attention of public educators, and thus made it an inseparable part of larger debates about the purpose and aim of education. In the ensuing battle to inoculate Toronto’s school children against perceived evils emanating from such places, school music was enlisted as one of the moral vaccines. As background, it is the purpose of this chapter to explore the larger acoustic context being created by the forces of modernity in mid- and late-Victorian Toronto.

Toronto and Modernity

Peter Goheen has observed that “the last decades of the nineteenth century were, in Toronto, a period in which the scale of the city and the texture of its life were radically
transformed." The city dramatically increased in size and population and became a regional centre of commercial and industrial activity. As a result, it had by century’s end assumed many of the features of the modern city, establishing itself both as an economic and cultural centre for English Canada. At mid century, the onset of change remained invisible to many observers. Robert Russell wrote of Toronto in 1857 that it was “merely the exporter of produce of the district that lies between Ontario and Lake Simcoe, and the importer of the necessities and luxuries that the settlers require.” Prior to the 1850s, Toronto’s dependence on Montreal as a trade route made it difficult for local businesses to develop manufacturing and access outside markets. However, the proliferation of railways (discussed in more detail below) and a growing commercial and industrial base attracted a steadily increasing flow of immigrants to the city and surrounding area, spurring urban development.

Like most cities in North America, Toronto’s population grew rapidly during the last half of the nineteenth century. In 1850, its citizens numbered 30,755; by 1870 that number had increased to 56,000. Only twenty years later, it had more than tripled to 181,220 and by 1901 it stood at 208,040. Economic activity grew apace. During the century, Toronto’s economy evolved from being based on agriculture into a commercial and, then, increasingly industrial orientation, and the size and productivity of the workforce increased. The transformation was slow at first, but gathered momentum and had taken off by century’s end. Boosted initially by steam and iron technologies, firms such as the Toronto Locomotive Works and the Toronto Car Wheel Works fed an expanding network of railways, which in turn opened markets in the

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7 Quoted in Masters, *Rise of Toronto*, 56.
8 Even after taking into account the annexations that took place during this time, the city’s population more than doubled between 1880 and 1890. Figures from the *Census of Canada*, quoted in Masters, *Rise of Toronto*, 11, 97, 164.
hinterland to the city’s manufacturers, lessening the need for imports and encouraging new investment.

Family-owned workshops and small operations gradually gave way to large-scale production in more economically efficient factories. This change is illustrated by census records showing the number of workplaces during the period, total employment and total value of goods produced. In 1870, there were 497 establishments, employing 9,400 workers, whose productive output totalled $13,686,093. In 1890, the numbers of establishments had increased to 2,100, employing 24,480 workers, yielding a total output of $42,489,352. By 1901, the number of establishments had shrunk to 847, but both the number of workers and output increased, to 42,515 and $58,415,498, respectively.9

The rise of heavy industry no doubt had a profound effect on the character of the city. The roar of furnaces belching smoke and steam, the whine and whir of machinery in motion, and the melee of trains moving raw and finished materials marked an abrupt departure from the calmer, relatively quiet workshop required for small-scale production. As R. Murray Schafer has observed, the shift was both immediate and strange to many people. “The Industrial Revolution introduced a multitude of new sounds, with unhappy consequences for many of the natural and human sounds which they tended to obscure....”10 Things were changing. The forces of modernity were transforming the physical and sensory landscape, and altering peoples’ experience of daily life.

For one thing, getting around in the city was easier. In 1860, a company began offering horse-drawn street car service up Yonge Street. As the population grew, service expanded moving beyond traditional city boundaries to nearby communities. Total running track in 1861

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measured about six miles; by 1880 this had increased to 19 and by 1891 it had reached 68.5 miles. In addition to providing quick and efficient transportation, street cars modified patterns of land use, spawning new neighbourhoods and altering the character of established districts. Their proximity increased property values and encouraged speculative development, particularly residential construction. As well, streetcars facilitated the flight of the upper middle class out of the city core, underscoring the distinction between workplace and home, and leaving the less well-to-do to cope with the surrounding commercial and industrial activity. Rumbing along city streets, they also contributed a new, uniquely urban sound to the acoustic environment.

As more people arrived and industries expanded, demand for land increased. Outlying areas were absorbed or annexed, knitting once-independent villages such as Yorkville and Parkdale into the larger patchwork of communities and neighbourhoods across the burgeoning municipality. At its incorporation as a city in 1834, Toronto had been divided into five wards. By 1875 there were nine; by century’s end this number had increased to 13. This push-pull relationship of streetcars and settlement continued, particularly after the system was electrified in 1894. By this time, 50,000 to 60,000 riders per working day of each week were riding streetcars. They had, in effect, become an “economic necessity” for all classes.

Yet underlying this change were elements that went beyond mere physical transformation. The forces of modernity reverberated through the moral and intellectual fabric of the Victorian world, resulting in a transformation that Keith Walden has described as nothing short of “staggering.”

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12 St. Paul’s (Yorkville) and St. Alban’s (Parkdale) became wards of the City in 1883 and 1889, respectively.
13 Once the 30-year lease had expired in 1891, the City of Toronto reclaimed ownership of the system. See Goheen, *Victorian Toronto*, 60, 74. It is interesting to note that formal codes of conduct also evolved for those who used the system. For example two bylaws passed in 1914 to prohibit smoking and spitting on trains and streetcars. Both were passed in July of that year. See City of Toronto Archives (henceforth “CTA”), “Bylaw 7046, Bylaws 7021 to 7100,” Fonds 200 Series 755, File 86; Bylaw 7110, Bylaws 7101 to 7185,” Fonds 200, Series 755, File 87.
None of it materialized abruptly out of thin air, nor was there any
dramatic turning point that marked the arrival of modernity, but
by the closing years of the century even those most insulated from
overt effects and most determined to resist intrusions could sense
that Western society was shifting its axis. The world seemed to
have speeded up, to have become more complex. Change itself
was in the saddle. Nothing, it seemed, was immutable. As so
much gave way, as so much was pushed together, people were
required to re-establish the comprehensibility of their physical
and intellectual environments. The necessity was obvious, though
precise meanings to ascribe were not.\footnote{14}

This new age held much promise, yet simultaneously produced unease about what the
ultimate outcome of such innovation might be. Proceeding slowly at first, the process gradually
built momentum, and its cumulative effect soon overwhelmed older coping mechanisms.

The shift was both profound and unnerving. In describing what he calls “the maelstrom
of modern life,” Marshall Bermann offers some indication of its capacity to effect such elemental
intellectual disorientation. For him, this force derives its power from
great discoveries in the physical sciences, changing our images of the universe
and our place in it; the industrialization of production, which transforms scientific
knowledge into technology, creates new human environments and destroys old
ones, speeds up the whole tempo of life, generates new forms of corporate power
and class struggle; immense demographic upheavals, severing millions of people
from their ancestral habitats, hurling them halfway across the world into new lives;
rapid and often cataclysmic urban growth; systems of mass communication,
dynamic in their development, enveloping and binding together the most diverse
people and societies; increasingly powerful national states, bureaucratically
structured and operated, constantly striving to expand their powers; mass social
movements of people and peoples challenging their political and economic rulers,
striving to gain some control over their lives; finally, bearing and driving all these
people and institutions along, an ever-expanding, drastically fluctuating capitalist
world market.\footnote{15}

\footnote{14} A further dimension of this transformation involved growing distinctions between rural and urban
sensibilities, along with a growing interest in, and concern with, the ‘other.’ See Keith Walden, \textit{Becoming Modern
in Toronto: The Industrial Exhibition and the Shaping of a Late-Victorian Culture} (Toronto: University of Toronto

\footnote{15} Marshall Berman, \textit{All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity} (New York: Penguin,
1982), 16.
All the more profound is that this transformation is taking place within a single human lifetime. As Bermann reminds us, “the nineteenth-century modern public can remember what it is like to live, materially and spiritually, in worlds that are not modern at all. From this inner dichotomy, this sense of living in two worlds simultaneously, the idea of modernization and modernism emerge and unfold.”

In undermining traditional beliefs, modernity thus presented the Victorian world with contradictory messages about what was considered “appropriate,” and consequently encouraged a climate for debate about such things.

The changes it brought on also had other social implications. The massive influx of newcomers to Toronto, lured by the prospect of employment and a better life, challenged existing social structures that had enabled pre-industrial communities to assign meaning and place to each individual. Hitherto, this had been rooted in the familiarity of human relationship:

In most places, smallness of scale provided stable foundations of individual identity. Face-to-face dealings in markets, churches, and political and social meetings continually reinforced knowledge about those beyond the family circle. Who others were, where they lived, what they did, what they thought, who had to be shown respect, who would provide assistance—such things were simply known....Strangers were quickly identified and integrated if they stayed. This was a world in which privacy was a luxury and secrets were hard to keep....Here for older residents and newcomers alike, massive influxes created social worlds much bigger than anything most of them had ever known, worlds that kept getting more and more complex.

Without the social template provided by steadying influences such as one’s family and community, citizens were left with little to guide their character judgments. “[M]ajor centres, almost bursting with activity presented such ‘compressed, tangled, contrasting, chaotic and often opaque surfaces as to be simply unintelligible in terms of any earlier consistent system of

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signs.”

The resulting discomfort this caused among Toronto’s middle class would lead to calls for ever-increasing bureaucratic surveillance over people and places deemed to be suspect in the new order.

While the foregoing analysis provides some sense of the challenge wrought by the coming of modernity, less scholarly attention has been devoted to exploring how its arrival modified the acoustic environment of Toronto. Indeed, urban spaces would have experienced this change most directly. The relative volume and intensity of so many people amid so much commercial and industrial activity makes this self-evident. Gauging this change proves to be a more difficult task for historians, since the sonic vibrations emanating out of the nineteenth century are lost to us, as is the context of a pre-industrial soundtrack against which to measure such change.

While it is impossible to recapture them from the ether, one can at least conjure a sense of how they were understood and accommodated in early Toronto through an examination of the numerous city bylaws which were crafted in response to them. The discussion is also noteworthy for ultimately, it would be this body of legislation to which officials would have to resort, in response to the sensory experience produced by the arrival of mass entertainment.

Sounds in the Streets: Differentiating Noise, Nuisance and Necessity

Although economic activity only really took off after mid-century, as early as the 1840s there were signs that citizens were becoming aware of its effects. The sounds arising from

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20 The works of Schafer, Smith and Hempton are exceptional in this regard, although only Smith can claim history as his primary vocation.
Toronto’s growing commercial activity were already disconcerting enough to draw the ire of some of its inhabitants. The manner in which these complaints were handled not only demonstrates the novelty of such occurrences, but also suggests that they were initially understood as singular incidents, that is, they were discernable from a relatively-quiet and largely-natural soundtrack. Hence, as complaints came before city council, they were treated as isolated events that could be easily defined and, thus, regulated.

At its incorporation in 1834, one of the first acts passed by council established guidelines governing “nuisances and the good Government of the City.” The law encompassed a number of broad areas, including sanitation, street use and Sabbath-breaking. The only reference concerning sound was contained in Section 13:

No steam-boat or other vessel sailing on the lake shall receive any freight or discharge any part of the cargo on the Sabbath day at or near any of the wharves of this city, except the baggage of passengers, nor shall any bell be rung in the manner of a fire bell on any day or night except in cases of fire, under a penalty of five pounds for each offence.\(^{21}\)

Additionally, of the six sections and nineteen subsections contained in the ordinance, the fine for breaching fire bell regulations was among the stiffest, one presumes for the seriousness attached to fire, rather than the annoyance it might cause.\(^{22}\)

Seven years later, the growing commotion associated with burgeoning commercial business practices brought the matter to the attention of Toronto’s city council. At its meeting of July 19, 1841, Alderman Alex Dixon informed colleagues that he intended to introduce a bill “for the suppression of the sale of Horses Carriages and other property in the public Streets and

\(^{21}\) CTA, “Bylaw 4, Toronto Bylaws 1 to 60, 1834 to 1842,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 329685, File 1.

\(^{22}\) It is interesting to note that although “steam-boats” were already common enough to warrant identification, no mention was made in regard to “steam whistles,” which would later come to be viewed as a “noise” requiring city regulation. By 1884, there appears to have been enough of an increase in the use of steam whistles to have them included under a separate city bylaw. See CTA, “Bylaw 1514, Toronto Bylaws 1406-1665,” Fonds 200, Series 755, File 23.
for the prevention of ringing Auctioneers (sic) bells.”

At its next meeting on July 26, Dixon read a petition of George Harrison and others, “praying to the council to prevent the ringing of bells &c.” He then proposed to expand the earlier list of prohibited activities to “prevent the sale of furniture and other articles on the public streets and to suppress nuisances.”

Dixon’s presentation appears to have prompted some consideration, for a committee was struck, with Dixon as its chair, to investigate whether existing legislation was sufficient to address the issue. Reporting back on August 30 on “the various Laws at present in force in the City for the suppression of nuisances and the good government of the City,” the committee noted that although “what was already in force in the City” might suffice, “the main object of the said Bill (was) to render more explicit and concise various Acts now in force in the City.” Thus, any new legislation should achieve the following:

1st the abolition of Public Sales on the streets of the said City of Horses, Furniture, and other Articles which cannot be but acknowledged as a public nuisance
2nd The continuous and annoying practice of ringing large Bells in the Streets at all hours in the day and particularly until unreasonable hours at night for the purpose of advertising sales by auction and other matters

In reference to the second clause, the text of the resulting bill read: “That no person shall advertise any sale of furniture, or any other article, or any other matters, by the ringing of any bell, blowing of any horn, crying, hallooing or creating any other discordant noise, in any of the streets of the said City or liberties.”

Distinguishing between commerce and the “continuous and annoying practices” that might accompany it appears to have caused some friction. At the bill’s final reading on October 11 disagreement erupted over the complete abolition of street auctions, although no reference

23 CTA, Minutes of City Council Meetings (hereafter MCCM), 19 July 1841.
24 CTA, MCCM, 26 July 1841.
25 CTA, MCCM, 26 July 1841.
26 CTA, “By-law 56, Toronto Bylaws 1 to 60, 1834 to 1842,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 329685, File 1.
was made regarding their auditory consequence. Some members opposed a blanket prohibition of street auctions, proposing that King Street—the main commercial thoroughfare of the city—should be exempt from the ban. It was lost by a margin of one vote.

In spite of the 1841 legislation, matters continued much as before, and two years later Council was forced to articulate a more specific policy on the subject. The law, quite literally, was being sidestepped through the use of areas directly adjacent to the street. In its preamble, the amended bill pointed out that existing provisions:

> are constantly being evaded in the true intent and meaning of the same, by ringing of bells and making other discordant noises, on the steps and in the halls, and other open parts of certain houses and premises of the said City, whereby the public are subjected to inconvenience and annoyance quite as great as they were or would be by the ringing of bells, and making discordant noises in the public streets....

It is not clear to what extent street tradition or the desire to continue business in this manner may have contributed to the flouting of the earlier legislation. What was becoming apparent however was that Council felt increasingly compelled to differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable “discordant” sounds in Toronto, pointing to a louder and more diverse urban environment.

Along these lines, the proliferation of steamship and rail transportation introduced new sound dimensions to Toronto that once more challenged city officials as they continued to come to grips with the city’s burgeoning industrial activity. The opening of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the Welland Canal four years later spurred economic activity along Toronto’s waterfront. With Britain’s move to free trade through such actions as the repeal of the Corn Laws and the Navigation Act in the latter 1840s, city merchants could now bypass Montreal and ship goods through New York via the Erie Canal – a cheaper route than that through Montreal. A further

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27 CTA, “By-law 72, Toronto Bylaws 61 to 129, 1842 to 1847,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 329687, File 2.
incentive to do so came with the passage of the Reciprocity Treaty in 1854, accentuated by a boom of railway construction beginning in the 1850s that further altered older trade patterns.

Chartered in 1849, the Toronto-Simcoe-Huron Railway (later known as the Northern Railway) had, by 1855, established a rail connection to the Lake Huron port of Collingwood, travelling through Aurora, Holland Landing, Bradford and Barrie. The company also set up steamer services on Lake Simcoe and at Collingwood, the latter eventually resulting in tri-weekly trips to Lake Michigan and weekly service to Green Bay. In December of the same year, the Great Western rail line was extended from Hamilton to Toronto, providing access to Buffalo and Detroit, almost a year before a link had been established from Montreal to Toronto.

Because of its relative size and commercial influence, Toronto not only eclipsed Hamilton as the dominant economic force on Lake Ontario, but also was positioned to take advantage of regional trade and subsequent expansion further west. Through the establishment of other regional lines such as the Toronto Grey and Bruce (to Owen Sound by 1873), and the Toronto and Nipissing Railway (connecting it to the timber trade north and east of Lake Simcoe after 1877), Toronto had become, by the 1880s, the hub of a central Canadian transportation network providing access to the immediate hinterland and to international markets. The increasing volume and intensity of its train traffic exemplified its predominance as the leading metropolitan municipality in the country.

As more acoustic layers were added to the city’s soundtrack, city officials found it necessary to make new distinctions. Previous legislation in the area of “nuisances” in which “noise” had been included gave way to stand-alone bylaws to define each. This occurred during

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28 Both steamer services were discontinued in 1863. See Masters, Rise of Toronto, 66.
the fall of 1884, when Council turned its attention to the uses of steam whistles within the city.

While there was general agreement that they were an annoyance, it was decided that some exceptions should be allowed for their use in marking the commencement and cessation of work. Consequently, at its meeting of November 3, Council passed Bylaw 1514, “A Bylaw to prevent certain noises calculated to disturb the inhabitants,” noting in its preamble that it was “expedient and necessary to prevent the unnecessary use of steam whistles within the limits of the City of Toronto.” The first clause stated:

No person shall blow, or cause to be blown, sound, or cause to be sounded, the steam whistle of any steamer while lying at any wharf in the City of Toronto, or when approaching or leaving such wharf, except when absolutely necessary as a signal of danger, or in the case and under the circumstances prescribed by the Laws and Statutes of the Dominion of Canada, and the orders-in-council (if any) passed in pursuance thereof requiring the use of such whistles.”

A similar clause followed, placing the same restrictions on “the steam whistle of any steam locomotive,” with the remainder exempting such actions when related to fire, collision or “imminent danger.”

While steam boat and locomotive whistles had become ubiquitous enough to warrant such control, Council was prepared to make allowances with regard to their use in the regulation of the work day. During discussion of the above legislation, an amendment was introduced and approved striking out the clause “having reference to the use of steam whistles of stationary engines as signals for commencing or suspending work.” Steam whistles were considered useful in aurally segmenting time into distinct, predictable periods of work and leisure, and thus, could be regarded as either noise or necessity. Whether this is an indication of deference to

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31 CTA, MCCM, 3 November 1884, section 1013, 297-298.
employers is not clear; however, it does show that the same device creating the same sound could be acceptable—or not—according to intent and circumstance.

In 1890, the noise bylaw was amended once more to incorporate provisions forbidding street selling that had formerly been part of the nuisance bylaw, along with increased penalties for infringement. An individual convicted of contravening the bylaw was now not only subject to a fine of $50 for each offence, but also might face six months in jail, “with or without hard labour,” up from the 21 days proposed initially, for non-payment.32 Nearer century’s end, other changes in the type and manner of employment also began to show up in city noise bylaws. Reflecting the increasingly common practice of milk delivery in Toronto neighbourhoods, it became necessary to exempt milk delivery from prohibitions related to advertisement and the use of bells. An 1892 amendment to Bylaw 2452 exempted “any duly licensed milk dealer upon any day in the week other than Sunday, ringing a bell in front of a house where he is delivering, or about to deliver milk.”33 In 1904, it was amended again, to extend the exemption to “any duly licensed hawker or pedlar moderately crying his wares.”34

Thus, by century’s end, the people of Toronto had grown accustomed to ambient sounds that were part of living in a modern industrial city. Additionally, officials may have realized the futility of fighting a rear-guard action to address such rapid changes in the city’s workplace activity. Nonetheless, the intent and trajectory of legislation targeted at noise and nuisances does suggest that city officials were attempting to strike a balance between older, if fading, expectations of a frontier colonial settlement with those of Masters’ “budding metropolis.” On a broader scale, it also illustrates the quintessential late-nineteenth century anxiety underlying the

32 CTA, “By-law 2452, Toronto Bylaws 2411 to 2490, 1890,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 402381, File 35.
33 CTA, “By-law 3013, Toronto Bylaws 3001 to 3090, 1892,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 402389, File 43.
34 CTA, “By-law 4308, Toronto Bylaws 4284 to 4370, 1903 to 1904,” Fonds 200, Series 755, Box 402403, File 57.
material prosperity promised by the modern industrial city, and the way in which it was understood by the parties involved. As Peter Goheen has observed in his examination of the management of nuisances and other street-centred activities in mid-Victorian Toronto, such management required “continuing negotiation to effect an accommodation of what the public regarded as acceptable behaviour in public space.”

While bylaws governing noise were crafted in response to sounds generated by Toronto’s commercial and industrial activity, they in effect became the de facto framework against which all subsequent official judgments were rendered in the realm of sound. Distinguishing unacceptable nuisances from tolerable ones eventually went beyond mere amplitude. Could, for example, the noise bylaw be used to silence whistling peanut vendors? What about “loud” piano playing? In the latter instance, at least, the city’s Chief Constable informed the complainant that “[w]hether such music could be “noise” was not clear because the city bylaw specified the combination of annoyance and “discordance.”” In this respect, employing their nomenclature to assess cultural, rather than mechanical annoyances proved to be a much more challenging task.

Like so many other cities experiencing rapid urbanization, Toronto also had to come to grips with an increasing volume of people sharing a finite public space. Historically, crowds were a relatively rare occurrence, commonly associated with special occasions. In bringing so many individuals together on a daily basis, the city routinized this interaction, making it virtually impossible for people to avoid one another. As noted by Keith Walden in his exploration of the

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36 In the matter of the piano playing, the Chief Constable “recommended the complainant apply for a summons to test the case in court.” See Paul S. Moore, *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun* (Albany: State University of New York, 2008), 62, 67.
37 These events formed an integral part of street culture, and could range from orderly civic processions to unbridled violence.
Toronto Industrial Fair, encounters with so many strangers could be an unnerving experience for some. “[W]hen large numbers gathered in a relatively restricted space, the potential for mob behaviour was never absent.” The hypersensitivity to such situations even prompted some enterprising businesses to offer a form of ‘crowd insurance,’ at fair time, to guard against possible dangers associated with such interactions.\(^\text{38}\)

Robert Park and others have argued that newspapers helped city dwellers adjust to some of the more discomforting manifestations of modernity. In his analysis of American urban experience, Park argues that the newspaper acted as “an integrator and educator...and agent of sophistry, or sophistication at least, in the modern world....A newspaper makes a city habitable, makes it feel local and coherent, makes vast metropolitan regions seem like sensible entities with knowable orders of place and histories.”\(^\text{39}\)

Newspapers also provided a platform from which to observe and comment upon the consequences of having so many people interacting on a daily basis. Collectively, citizens were adding new, and sometimes unwelcome, layers to the city soundtrack. Newspapers complained of activities that while not in contravention of any bylaws, were, nonetheless, bothersome. In one instance, an editorial appearing in the Globe lamented the use of firecrackers to celebrate Queen Victoria’s birthday in 1877, pointing out that the disturbance they caused only served to “frighten into hysteria timid girls or delicate ladies,” and that other less-raucous ways should be found to publicly commemorate such occasions.\(^\text{40}\)

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\(^\text{38}\) “‘There is no way of knowing what may happen in a crowd,’” warned the Accident Insurance Company in an 1879 advertisement for special policies covering a day at the Fair.” Quoted in Walden, \textit{Becoming Modern}, 93.

\(^\text{39}\) This summary of Parks’ impact on urban studies and the evolution of the Chicago School of sociology are found in Moore, \textit{Now Playing}, 159. See also Paul Rutherford, \textit{A Victorian Authority: The Daily Press in Late Nineteenth-Century Canada}. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982.

\(^\text{40}\) “More Than Questionable Displays of Loyalty,” \textit{Globe}, 28 May 1877.
In addition, the availability of such explosives made it possible to employ them for other purposes. An 1897 letter from the city’s Chief Constable indicates that their effect went beyond mere indignation. Responding to a complaint of “alleged rowdyism on Mt. Stephen St.,” Chief Constable Henry Grasset informed W. Gillespie of the Building and Loan Association that the initial complaint originated from a Frenchman who has recently moved into the house at the corner of Hamilton and Mt. Stephen Streets. He states the boys from the Boy’s Brigade and the Salvation Army annoy him in the evenings. It would also appear that the infernal machine alluded to was a large firecracker placed under a tin can by boys. The attempt to set fire to the premises was made when they were vacant.41

A Mail editorial of May 30, 1879 expressed a similar frustration with urban life, but its target was more amorphous. In a piece targeting “noisy preachers” who delivered sermons in Queen’s Park on Sundays, the item noted:

The real difficulty about this Sunday preaching in the park is that it leads to what frequently amounts to a disturbance of the peace, producing spectacles which are not calculated to impress favourably the younger people assembled in the locality. We are disposed to think that it would be well to try the effects of prohibition, and keep the park for the quiet enjoyment of those whose entire holiday consists of their Sunday afternoon.42

The urban soundtrack was accentuated in other, less obvious but nonetheless significant intrusive ways. When asked about poor attendance at Centre Street School during the summer, teacher Miss McBride blamed in part the unbearable school house conditions, caused by the wafting stench emanating from the playground, which could not be alleviated by opening the doors or windows “because of the annoyance of rude boys from the street.”43 One presumes that

41 CTA, Letters of the Chief Constable (henceforth “LCC”), Fonds 38, Series 90, Box  106147, 6 May 1897, 951.
42 “Sundays in the Park,” Mail, 30 May 1879.
43 Quoted in Cochrane, Centennial Story, 55.
the “annoyance” was primarily auditory, since closing doors and windows appeared to be the most effective solution proposed.

Scattered excerpts from the school diary of Samuel McAllister, the first principal of Ryerson School, also provide a glimpse into the auditory encroachment of modernity into the school day:

Jan. 21 1877  A clock put up in the First Boys’ Division room for the use of the school, 2 hand bells
Nov. 20 1883  By instruction from the Inspector, the standard time, which is the true time for the 75th Meridian, and therefore 17 min. and 34 sec. ahead of the local time, was adopted in this school
Sept. 8 1887  Miss Coyne, without permission, permitted her class to go out to St. Patrick St. at 11:30 to see the circus pass along Bathurst St. 44

Taken together, the evolution of Toronto city noise and nuisance bylaws during the nineteenth century complemented the larger Victorian yearning for ordered progress and certainty amid such innovation. By defining what sounds were and were not appropriate, city officials ascribed meaning and value to various aspects of the auditory spectrum associated with the modern city. For instance, the annoyance of too many steam whistles blowing at indiscriminate times of the day was deemed unacceptable, while the same given at regular intervals, say, to signify the commencement and cessation of work, was viewed as an aid in improving the efficiency of the workplace.

Other sounds posed more of a challenge. Firecrackers and noisy preachers represent just two examples of the emerging dilemma. Torontonians during the period were creating and being enveloped by an increasingly loud urban soundtrack that was endemic to a city undergoing a radical transformation wrought by modernity. In hindsight, the distinction may appear obvious, but if we are to comprehend these developments as more than mere teleological certainties, they

44 Excerpts taken from those selected in Cochrane, Centennial Story, 100-104.
must be understood as part of a larger acoustic montage. No less significant than its physical counterpart, the auditory dimension of urban space was being remade by the forces of modernity.

The Rise of Mass Entertainment

Although commonly used in historical discourse about the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the term “mass entertainment” eludes easy definition and categorization. First, the size and intent of the activities associated with it varied widely. Further, contemporary sources would not have utilized, nor understood the term as it has subsequently come to be employed. Thus, historians are left with little more than lists of events and occasional insights from newspaper reporters as to how and why amusements of this sort came to prominence during this period.

These challenges notwithstanding, an attempt has been made here to highlight the symbiotic relationship between mass entertainment and modernity, as a way of illustrating its role in, to quote Mary Ingraham, “articulating contemporaneous cultural, social and political values.” Through an examination of available records, presentation formats and the advent of purpose-built venues, one can trace many of the elements that underscored the birth of a modern city. The dialogue and debate stirred by such change ultimately informed discussions about the role and function of the city’s schools.

Reconstructing an historically-comprehensible picture of musical activity in the post-Confederation period poses a particular challenge. As with the pre-Confederation period, it is impossible to know how much activity went undocumented, and what records remain are subject to stylistic interpretation. In her analysis of performance traditions and repertoire in Montreal

and Toronto, Dorith Cooper underscores this ambiguity in terminology, noting that “opera” as a performance style might denote one or more of the following:

opera as “afterpiece” to a play; opera in truncated version to accommodate the evening’s fare normally comprising a play, farce, vaudeville or concert; opera as “mainpiece” to a play, pantomime or ballet; costumed concerts; unstaged opera in isolation with piano accompaniment and with or without costumes and scenic effects; fully staged performances of grand and/or light opera with modest and later complete production accessories.46

Similarly, in her chronology of American musical theatre, Edith Boroff acknowledges the cultural “cross-fertilization” which resulted from such eclecticism, including among her analysis “melodrama and pantomime, operetta (of all descriptions), minstrel shows, vaudeville and variety programs, farces, burlesques and revues.”47 Mary Ingraham’s 2007 compilation of Canadian staged dramatic music seeks to avoid such distinctions by limiting categorization to works which involve a “sustained plot line or musical connectivity characteristic of staged dramatic musical works,” however this limitation risks omission and inclusion based on presentist definitions of suitability.48

These analyses also cannot account for less-obvious musical activity cloaked by other cultural forms popular during the period. Because music was regularly employed both as a central element and/or a means of attracting attention, it is often difficult to isolate it for analytical purposes, particularly when considering its intended use and effect.49 What is clear,

48 As Ingraham points out, “genre ambiguity continues to be a significant challenge to compilation of a list of works to the present day, and at present this study and the accompanying list of compositions includes works that might be considered by some as not in an operatic vein, including works presented by organisations or production companies and labeled (*sic*) as “opera” that might be defined more clearly as parodies and compilations, and operas that incorporate folk or popular musical styles.” Ingraham, “Something to Sing About:” 16. Similarly, Ernst chooses to exclude “musical concerts” from his definition of theatrical performances. See Ernst, “The Transgressive Stage,” 8.
49 Dime museums provide a pertinent example. Popular in the late 1800s, they offered visitors a variety of panoramas, exhibits and live acts. The Musée Theatre opened in Toronto in 1890 featured “an art gallery, wax
however, is that music played an integral part in the shift from earlier entertainment forms to those spawned by the forces of modernity. For the purposes of the ensuing discussion, therefore, references to mass entertainment as such must be taken in this context. In addition, beyond contemporary reaction, no attempt is made to affix definitions and assign cultural value to these activities in their various forms. Their presence is noted here primarily as contributing to the ever-more complex acoustic environment being wrought by modernity.

In A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914, Helmut Kallmann states that the early 1870s marked a period in Toronto when “musical life in the city had been very quiet for a decade.” While Kallmann’s comments may reflect a lull in the operation of formal music organizations, it is evident that many other types of musical activities were taking place. By broadening Kallmann’s definition to include informal and popular expressions, and by moving the scope of analysis beyond strictly musical fare, one gains a greater appreciation of the role music played in the city at the time. It also reveals how popular forms of entertainment influenced and ultimately changed public preferences in this regard, without affixing cultural value to one or the other. Examining dramatic productions and the construction of new facilities offer some fresh perspectives in this regard.

Richard Plant has observed that “[b]y 1870, theatrical activity was flourishing in large and small centres throughout Ontario, particularly Toronto.” Although his survey of theatre history in Ontario proves to be of limited use in assessing the level of musical activity in the city,

museum, menagerie, aviary, chamber of horrors, lecture hall, and theatre where a program of performing animals, contortionists, singers, dancers, clowns and other variety acts was continuous from ten in the morning until ten at night.” See Walden, Becoming Modern, 252-254.


it does furnish some general observations which are useful in setting the stage. First, it illustrates Toronto’s continued prominence in the province as a centre of cultural engagement. Out of the 182 city-specific events and announcements listed in his findings, Toronto is listed as the location in 113. Although the data reveal little in the way of specific music content, when combined with other sources, they do offer some indication of the volume and variety of content.

This becomes apparent when one compares Plant’s research with purpose-built venues constructed during the same period. In the years following Confederation, larger venues began to appear to accommodate this growing variety of entertainment. Toronto’s status as a major rail centre, itself connected to a network of tracks spanning the entire continent, made it a regular destination for many of the touring companies whose organizers ran “circuits,” using trains to move their productions from place to place. They also enabled lesser-known individual performers to make their way from city to city, where they might find work in a local taproom or as part of a larger production in town.

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52 The compilation focuses on theatrical activity and represents what he describes as “an example of the entertainments available,” since, by Plant’s own admission, the total number “are far too numerous.” For example, between 1800 and 1867, Plant lists 287 total entries. The period 1867-1914 represents a time of massive expansion in the size, number and variety of venues, presumably to support a concomitant rise in activity. Plant’s chronology offers 182 total entries. See Plant, “Chronology,” 288-354.

53 Figures compiled from Plant’s “Chronology.”

54 Only one event during the period 1867 to 1914 presents music as the stated centrepiece. It is from May 13, 1867 at the Royal Lyceum, where “Joseph C. Myers produced sensational music.” Myers is mentioned elsewhere with reference to the Royal Lyceum. See entries for 3 October 1864 and 23 April 1866. The only other mention of music is made in reference to the opening of a “Second Academy of Music” in Toronto. See entry for 23 February 1887, in Plant, “Chronology,” 333.

55 The nature and evolution of this continental rail network also facilitated the dissemination of these cultural forms along these routes, a pattern that perpetuated itself in other ways. In his study of early moviegoing, Paul S. Moore notes that “in the amusement and theatre trade press (of the late nineteenth century), Canada is the only foreign country treated as part of the U.S. domestic circuit, just another region on the continent.” See Moore, Now Playing, 5.

56 Scant evidence remains to recount to comings and goings of these musicians, however, Plant’s research suggests that this may have been the case, since there is a marked increase in the number of performers appearing year-round across the province, both as headliners and as part of a larger company. See Plant, “Chronology.”
The types of entertainment which became popular in Toronto at this time drew much of their inspiration from what was happening in Britain and the United States, and while they did not wholly replace existing musical forms, their emphasis on excitement and showmanship stood in stark contrast to what at the time would have been understood locally as conventional formats. Although distinct in their own right, the older British music hall and the newer American-based vaudeville shared many elements associated with modernity, and even as the former gradually gave way to the latter, several common elements remained. These included quicker, shorter acts, more emphasis upon the spectacular, and the promotion of a ‘star system’ of known performers, to anchor each presentation. The gradual incorporation of these innovative techniques into conventional itineraries ultimately changed the nature of popular entertainment in the city.

The British-inspired music hall format found fertile ground in Toronto. As a performance style, English music hall had its beginnings in the small taverns and “song and supper rooms” of London during the early nineteenth-century. Building on earlier traditions of pub singing, a number of establishments began offering a regular program of singing, to accompany eating and drinking. “The songs were, in the beginning, sung by the landlord or the patrons of the house, but gradually semi-professional and then fully professional singers were introduced,” to establish a repertoire and attract regular audiences.57

Bringing together several elements of mid-nineteenth century male sporting culture, and honed in establishments such as the Cave of Harmony, the Coal Hole and the Cider Cellar, music hall evolved into a distinct, recognizable institution by the 1860s. “By then,” as Peter Bailey notes, “the traditional localised amateur entertainment of the pub, the ‘free and easy,’ was becoming a more specialized function catering to the public. The back-room get-together gave

57 George Speaight, Bawdy Songs of the Music Hall (Devon: Redwood Burn, 1975), 5.
way to the ‘singing saloon’ with its expanded premises and professional performers.” What was on offer varied, depending upon the venue, and could include anything from refined theatrical renderings to bawdy songs and minstrel shows.59

In its classic form, a music hall program would be overseen by a ‘chairman’ who introduced acts, and in some cases, might perform in his own right. More akin to enlarged taprooms initially, by century’s end music halls had morphed into middle-class “palaces of entertainment,” complete with in-house rules of behaviour and tip-up seating. Much of the transformation had to do with attempts on the part of entrepreneurs to “elevate the popular taste” of visitors and provide “rational recreation” for self-improvement.60

In a similar vein, vaudeville used much of the music hall format in terms of organization and approach, promising a wide array of entertainment, catering to the diverse demographics inherent in the modern city. In his analysis of vaudeville’s evolution in New York City, Robert Snyder underscores the necessity of such an approach:

Vaudeville, like most successful things, was based on a simple idea: stage shows with something for everyone....Each show had to have enough rough fun for workingmen, enough glamour for middle-class women, and enough old country sentiment for immigrants far from home. A complete bill was a synchronized succession of daredevils, comics, tearjerkers and crooners. The combination made vaudeville the most widely enjoyed form of turn-of-the-century theatre.61

The combination proved to be a potent mixture. Plant traces the first mention of the term in Toronto to 1874, when T. J. Hendon employed it to describe his season’s offerings.62

59 Despite this variety, Anthony Bennett argues that the music hall format became a central feature of late-Victorian popular culture because “it had at its centre an endless procession of songs, united above all by a common musical language.” This, according to Bennett, arose out of a “conjunction of traditional with sophisticated musical culture; of group with solo singing; and of song features with those of the dance.” See Anthony Bennett, “Music in the Halls,” in Music Hall: Performance and Style, ed. J. S. Bratton (Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1986), 1.
60 Bailey, “Making Sense of Music Hall,” x.
Vaudeville remained the most popular entertainment form well into the first decades of the twentieth century and became widely understood as the main attraction, even at places where moving pictures were being introduced.\textsuperscript{63}

As we have already noted, the lack of leisure time and disposable income, coupled with a Puritan sentiment and lingering mistrust of the ‘frivolous’ had kept many Upper Canadians away from such amusements. However, after mid-century, these monetary and moral barriers began to weaken, as people adjusted perceptions and tastes to reflect modern urban lifestyles. This did not make the shift any less profound. In keeping with prevalent attitudes, it had to be monitored, to ensure it did not violate middle class mores. As Walden observes, “[t]hough undoubtedly viewed by Victorians as peripheral to the central concerns of life, entertainment was for them no insignificant matter....Entertainment embodied power and therefore produced contestation.” In this situation, the lower classes could not be trusted to act appropriately.

Both music hall and vaudeville represented a radical shift away from earlier forms of amusement, effectively undermining established codes guiding class preferences and tastes. In Toronto in the 1840s, it would have been unusual to experience any entertainment in a working-class haunt. Even a decade later, many of the saloons of the city “were in general little more than miserable dens of dissipation, vulgarity and fighting.”\textsuperscript{64} Gradually however, taprooms and other drinking establishments began offering variety entertainment to hold patrons for longer periods of time, introducing aspects of music hall and vaudeville formats into their programs along the way. The practice continued to infiltrate the city, thanks to the proliferation of taverns and grog shops. Political favouritism and selective enforcement of existing legislation made it

\textsuperscript{62} See entry for 18 July 1874, in Plant, “Chronology,” 323.
\textsuperscript{63} See Moore, \textit{Now Playing}, 91.
easy to run such operations, and attempts at licensing during the 1850s only exacerbated the problem. Because only a fee was required, businesses proliferated. As Goheen observes, even “[t]he removal, by colonial legislation, in 1859 of the discretionary powers of municipal councils to license taverns failed to stop the old practice of favouritism or to limit the number of places selling liquor.” By the 1870s, there was enough demand for such amusements to spur a building boom to accommodate bigger events.

A brief examination of the new venues and the types of entertainment offered therein provides yet another vantage point from which to gauge the changing nature of popular entertainment in Toronto during this period. As we know, a large proportion of the musical activity in Toronto during the first half of the nineteenth century was conducted on a small scale, often blending audience members and participants. Additionally, performances regularly combined amateur and professional musicians. As new transportation networks connected Toronto to a greater number of players and influences, however, private engagements gave way increasingly to spectator-focused events featuring a largely professional cadre of performance, housed in buildings constructed especially for that purpose. This trend became particularly pronounced during the 1870s.

These buildings differed from their predecessors in many respects. The new facades were often impressive in size and grandeur, introducing new aspects of architecture to the city’s streetscapes. Many were situated around a few blocks of the downtown, forming what might be described as Toronto’s first entertainment district.

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65 For a statistical analysis of tavern licenses during the 1850s, see Goheen, “Negotiating Access:” 438.
67 Roughly speaking, this area was bounded east and west by Yonge and York Streets, and by Queen and King Streets on the north and south, respectively.
As the volume and variety of amusements on offer multiplied, so too did the sights and sounds experienced by Torontonians each day. Some venues constructed grand entrances, complete with columns and arches, while less-ostentatious spaces stationed musicians and barkers outside of entrances, to entice passersby inside. As highlighted in Plant’s research, several types of entertainment might occur at the same venue, but over time, particular venues became associated with specific cultural tastes, designed to cater to a particular class expectation.

It is not surprising then that the newer forms of entertainment added fuel to larger debates concerning the changing face of the city. Some critics even equated some amusements with the very social ills they perceived to be associated with modernity itself. As will be indicated below, this resulted in the construction of a number of facilities whose express purpose it was to provide space for respectable and culturally uplifting activities for the masses. Some private theatre operators also attempted to lay claim to such pursuits, marrying elements of the private home soirée with the ‘fashionable night,’ discussed earlier, to assure both patrons and casual observers that what they offered posed no threat to late-Victorian codes of behaviour. Lavish interiors, coupled with culturally-refined musical and theatrical works were one way to demonstrate such worth. Another was to secure the attendance, or at least the endorsement, of local dignitaries at a venue’s formal opening.

As the number of popular attractions increased, so too did public unease over what was on offer and who was in the audience. More intense scrutiny, provided initially by sensational newspaper accounts, provoked alarm and occasionally led to calls for more legislation and stricter enforcement. Others argued that existing bylaws such as those addressing noise and nuisances would suffice. All in all, the dialogue helped to reshape social distinctions between ‘rough’ and ‘respectable’ forms of cultural expression in the modern city.
One of the first large purpose-built entertainment spaces to be erected in the 1870s was the Grand Opera House, which was located on Adelaide Street, west of Yonge Street. It opened on September 21, 1874, with the blessing of Lord and Lady Dufferin (in absentia for the actual event) and “great numbers of the most prominent and influential” residents of the city. One contemporary account also indicated that “large parties had come from London, Hamilton, Montreal, Ottawa and other cities to take their share in an event of so much interest and importance.”

Popularly known as Mrs. Morrison’s Grand Opera House, after its proprietor and local actor Charlotte Morrison, the building measured 91 feet by 208 feet, with a proscenium arch rising fifty feet above the stage. It had a seating capacity of 1,323, with “campstool and standing room for 500 more.”

According to Plant’s research, Charlotte Nickinson had married Daniel Morrison, who began reviewing Toronto’s theatre scene in the early 1850s and subsequently became editor of the Toronto Leader and British Colonist newspapers. Under the leadership of John Nickinson (Charlotte’s father), a company comprised of family members was created in 1851 and performed regularly in Toronto during the decade. The elder Nickinson died in Cincinnati in 1864 and Plant records that Charlotte returned to perform in Toronto in 1872.

Following a fire on November 29, 1879, the Grand was rebuilt, and opened for business again on February 9, 1880. During its heyday, the Grand featured such internationally-recognized personalities as Sarah Bernhardt (1881) and Oscar Wilde (1882), as well as playing host to operatic touring companies such as the Strakosch Grand Italian Opera Company (1876,

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68 Mail, 22 September 1874.
1879, 1881, 1882), and Her Majesty’s Opera Company (1883). It also featured a large number of vaudeville acts, but with the construction of the Princess Theatre (discussed below), it eventually lost its position as the premier venue in Toronto.\footnote{See Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” 225. See also Joan Parkhill Baillie, \textit{Look At the Record: An Album of Toronto’s Lyric Theatres, 1825-1984} (Oakville: Mosaic, 1984), 71-83.}

Similar in name, the Toronto Opera House had been a roller skating rink prior to its purchase by businessmen H. R. Jacob and J. R. Sparrow. Opened on August 30, 1886, it became known popularly as Jacob and Sparrow’s Opera House, and was located just west of the Grand, on the south side of Adelaide Street, between Bay and Yonge Streets. The building’s large orchestra pit made it “an excellent house for operatic purposes,” rivalling its neighbour as the city’s premiere entertainment space.\footnote{Companies that performed at the Toronto Opera House during the first half-decade of its existence included the McCaull Opera Comique Company (1886), the American-based National Opera Company (1887, 1888), and the Kimball Opera Company (1888). See Baillie, \textit{Look at the Record}, 127.} At its opening, Jacob and Sparrow’s featured a touring production of Dellinger’s Don Caesar. It also hosted the first complete performances of Wagner’s The Flying Dutchman and Lubengen.\footnote{Baillie, \textit{Look at the Record}, 124.} Over time, however, the venue appears to have developed a reputation for featuring lighter fare and “lurid melodramas,” possibly due to its purchase in 1889 by showman Ambrose Small, who made minor renovations to the theatre, but continued the trend toward more popular tastes.\footnote{Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” 226. The reputation seems to have been firmly established by the 1890s, for as Baillie observes, when the Princess Theatre opened in 1895, “[i]t was doubt in many minds as to whether Toronto could accommodate a second theatre like the Grand Opera House (the Toronto Opera House was apparently not considered in the same class.)...” See Baillie, \textit{Look at the Record}, 152.} The Toronto Opera House was gutted by fire in 1903, emerging seven months later as the Regent Theatre.\footnote{Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” 226.}

In response to the ever-increasing availability to the masses of ‘less-desirable’ amusements, the Young Men’s Christian Association (YMCA) incorporated a performance hall into its premises at the corner of Queen and James Streets. The building had been erected in
1871-72 and contained a free reading room and information bureau for those new to Toronto. Complete with a double gallery, Shaftesbury Hall was located on the ground floor and opened directly to the street, making it easily accessible to the public. Intended chiefly as a space in which to actively promote temperance, it seated at least 1,500 and regularly hosted lectures and concerts. The hall also served as the home for a number of musical organizations, including the Mendelssohn Quartette (1877), the Queen’s Own Rifles Band (1878), and the Toronto Philharmonic Society (until 1879). The building was sold to the Sons of England in 1886, and demolished in 1901.

Massey Music Hall had its genesis in a $100,000 donation from Hart Massey to the city of Toronto, for a modern purpose-built music hall capable of housing large audiences, in culturally suitable surroundings. According to the deed of gift, the hall was to be made available for the “musical, educational and industrial advancement of the people, the cultivation of good citizenship and patriotism, the promotion of philanthropy, religion and temperance, and for holding meetings and entertainments consistent with any of the above purposes.”

The venue officially opened on June 14, 1894 amid great fanfare, boasting a seating capacity of approximately 4,000, with construction costs totalling $150,000. Its performance space soon acquired a reputation for fine acoustics and for many years remained unchallenged as the only building in Canada designed expressly for musical concerts. Among many attributes, it

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76 Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (henceforth, “EMC”) data peg the seating capacity at 1,500 but Baillie estimates it was closer to 1,700. See EMC, s.v. “Shaftesbury Hall,” and Baillie, Look at the Record, 94.
77 In its collection of concert programs, the Toronto Reference Library contains 22 programs of the events which took place at the hall during the period 1873 to 1879. The majority relate to the Toronto Philharmonic Society and its conductor, F. H. Torrington. See Toronto Reference Library (henceforth “TRL”), “Concert Programs, Shaftesbury Hall.”
78 See EMC, s.v. “Shaftesbury Hall.”
79 As will become clear in Chapter Seven, the construction of Massey Music Hall had special significance for the public schools of Toronto, both at its opening and afterward. What follows here is a general overview similar in scope to the other venues noted here.
80 Quoted in William Kilborn, Intimate Grandeur: One Hundred Years at Massey Hall (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), 29.
was instrumental in having “provided the facilities for Toronto’s growth as a major choral centre and gave the city a (cultural) window on the world.”

Regular visitors to the end of the century included the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir, under the leadership of A. S. Vogt, the Toronto Festival Chorus, led by F. H. Torrington, and the Band of the Royal Grenadiers. Even as its reputation grew, the facility was not above hosting lighter fare. In the fall of 1907, for example, crowds came to see “Spiritualism Exposed,” a pseudo-scientific conjuring act.

The Princess Theatre grew out of renovations which were made to the Academy of Music, which had been built in 1889 on the south side of King Street between York and Simcoe Streets. The original theatre was the first public building to be illuminated by electricity and prior to the opening of Massey Music Hall, had helped meet the need for refined concert space in the city. Following the official program on opening night, theatre proprietor Frank Connelly held what the Mail and Empire described as a “little social soiree” with a select group of personal friends and others...where many cigars were smoked, various compliments paid, and several bottles of appolinaris were opened.”

While these major venues commanded much of the high-profile entertainers and touring companies that came to Toronto, several smaller (and often transient) outlets appeared, offering a mixture of operatic, burlesque and comic fare. The Queen’s Theatre opened on May 11, 1874, consisted of a large one-level room with capacity for 1,000 patrons. Perfectly suited to the music

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81 EMC, s.v. “Massey Hall.”
82 Information taken from TRL, “Concert Programs, Massey Hall.”
83 The show pitted the husband and wife spiritualist team of Mr. and Mrs. Howland against one Professor Walton who claimed he could duplicate any of their so-called “magic.” See Moore, Now Playing, 69.
84 Fairfield and Plant list the inaugural date as 6 November 1889, noting the occasion as the opening of the “second Academy of Music” None of the sources consulted contains information regarding the existence of a venue with the same name. See Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” 226, and entry for 6 November 1889, in Plant, “Chronology,” 333.
hall format, it “catered to an abundant taste for the more popular forms of theatrical entertainment.” The theatre was gutted by fire on April 23, 1883.\textsuperscript{85} There were other multi-purpose spaces in the city where musical events were hosted occasionally. Old St. Andrew’s Hall was located on Richmond Street West, and appears to have been part of a larger market area designated by the City in 1837. By the 1880s, it was functioning as a space for charitable events and rehearsals. An advertisement in the Globe of February 1, 1886 lists the Hall as a centre of recruitment for public school students interested in performing at the Toronto Music Festival of 1886.\textsuperscript{86} Another was Toronto’s Zoological Gardens. Before moving to official quarters at Exhibition Place in 1885, it had been located on the northeast corner of Front and York Streets. Opened in 1872 by Harry Piper as a warm-weather attraction exhibiting a variety of wild animals, the operation was turned over to the newly-formed Toronto Zoological and Acclimatization Society in 1881, and continued to feature light opera, minstrelsy and conjuring acts.\textsuperscript{87} The Society’s move to the Industrial Fairgrounds in the mid-1880s may have curtailed the impetus to offer regular musical entertainment, with the animals themselves drawing large crowds during the city’s annual Industrial Exhibition.\textsuperscript{88}

The Adelaide Street Rink, located at the northwest corner of Adelaide and Widmer Streets, played host to many events in addition to skating and curling. This included a one-season engagement of the opera troupe of George Holman. He had opened an opera house in London, Ontario, following the destruction of Toronto’s Royal Lyceum where his troupe had resided, and may have intended to start a chain of venues under the name “Holman Opera

\textsuperscript{85} Fairfield, “Theatres and Performance Halls,” 222. The opening is also recorded in the entry for 11 May 1874, in Plant, “Chronology,” 323.
\textsuperscript{86} See Baillie, \textit{Look at the Record}, 98.
\textsuperscript{87} According to Plant, Piper opened a “Zoological Garden Theatre” in June 1883, presumably on the site of the existing business. See entries for 6 June and 9 August 1883 in Plant, “Chronology,” 330.
\textsuperscript{88} Baillie, \textit{Look at the Record}, 101. For background on the relationship between the Society and exhibition management, see Walden, \textit{Becoming Modern}, 257-258.
The troupe performed there during the season of 1883-1884. As Baillie notes, rinks often doubled as “public halls for large events such as carnivals, masquerades and concerts, particularly band concerts,” thanks, in large part to their availability during the summer months.90

Beyond these more prominent places, there is scattered evidence of the rougher sort of entertainment which was also becoming increasingly prevalent in the city. Often housed in tawdry premises, some adopted fancy names like “opera house” and “variety theatre” to suggest that what they offered was of a refined character, although this was seldom the case. Nevertheless, many Torontonians appear to have preferred these places, much to the chagrin of the supporters of superior cultural pursuits. On occasion, this sentiment even manifested itself in the pages of the popular press. One newspaper complained for example “that Toronto was in danger of delivering the stage altogether into the hands of fifth-rate dramatic companies and vulgar variety hall performers.”91

The increasing prevalence of urban amusements of this sort added new urgency to debates about what might be their collective consequence for the inhabitants of Toronto. Taprooms and saloons had long catered to sporting male culture and despite the attempts of other establishments to distance themselves from such accusations, the association lingered, colouring public attitudes regarding commercial entertainments of all kinds. As Walden points out, the cumulative effect was that “a given entertainment form could not be penetrated very deeply before at least suspicions of disreputable behaviour” surfaced.92

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89 Baillie, Look at the Record, 104.
90 Baillie, Look at the Record, 104. In 1884, Holman is reported to have opened another venue called the Theatre Royal. See entry for 23 June 1884, in Plant, “Chronology,” 330.
91 Week, 4 December 1884, quoted in D. C. Masters, Rise of Toronto, 205.
92 Walden, Becoming Modern, 250.
One reason for this might have been the close proximity of so many of these venues to one another, making it more difficult for newcomers and casual observers to discriminate. As well, sounds emanating into the streets from any or all of these places might acoustically ascribe characteristics of the less favourable haunts with their more wholesome counterparts. Complained one observer in 1879, “[t]he noise of music and dancing feet proceeding from a number of dives was a normal part of the evening experience on York Street,” a thoroughfare located within the city’s burgeoning entertainment district.93

The comment also calls to mind another immeasurable, but nevertheless real, auditory reality of street life in the city—that of the people themselves, particularly noises made by the so-called ‘drunk and disorderly’ type. Crime statistics from the period tell us that these offences constituted the majority of arrests during much of the period, but the manner by which culprits were deemed to have disturbed the peace and order of the city remains unclear. Barroom brawls spilling into the street, or soused souls singing as they staggered home represent but two plausible examples.94

While simple statistics appeared occasionally in newspapers outlining such details, the ‘story’ behind such behaviour proved more interesting to readers. In spite of their professed indignation, press accounts such as those noted above nevertheless provided polite society with a titillating peek at the darker side of leisure, from a safe and morally secure distance. Insider tours of some of the city’s most notorious establishments no doubt piqued public curiosity, and must have alarmed some who read them. How representative these stories were is unclear, however, they do illustrate at least one aspect of what was on offer. One report in particular is

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93 From *Mail*, 1 October 1879, quoted in Walden, *Becoming Modern*, 250.
94 For an analysis of crime statistics in Toronto during the nineteenth century, see Boritch, “The Making of Toronto the Good,” pp. 76-161.
worth quoting at length, for it reveals how events such as this were packaged and presented to readers, most of whom might never risk an actual visit to such places.

The piece appears in the October 13, 1879 edition of the Mail and describes a surreptitious visit to the Lyceum Theatre on the north side of King Street, between Bay and York Streets, in close proximity to many of the more fashionable entertainment houses just discussed:

Over the entrance leading to the place is nightly stationed what is supposed to be a band of musicians who, so to speak, ‘make Rome howl’ with the unearthly music blown from their trumpets. The visitor makes his way along an arched alleyway to the place of amusement (!) where an admission ticket is purchased from a masculine-looking female attendant at a wicket. The building, a very small one, is filled with spectators, foul air, and tobacco smoke. In the rear of the ‘pit’ rises a gallery, its principal occupants being boot-blacks and street arabs. Following the example set by their elders seated in front, the lads sit with head uncovered, blowing clouds of smoke from cigar ‘stubbs’ or clay pipes, and ever and anon expectorating tobacco juice. The music of the orchestra, consisting of a piano, violin, and coronet is drowned amid the noise of the boisterous youths who clamor (sic) for the ‘rag’ to be hoisted. In due time, the rag is rung up and the ‘beautiful minstrels’ are presented to view....Jokes—save the mark—of the vilest and most pernicious character are bandied between the end and the middle men. These are received with loud shouts from the ‘gods’ who attempt to improve on them, ‘just’ as they say, ‘to help the thing along.’ This encourages the performers and they redouble their efforts to make their filthy saying, if possible, plainer. A female (one of the beautiful) attempts to sing but she is recognized by some of the lads, who cry out, ‘Bella McDonald, go home. Your mother wants you.’ At the conclusion of the minstrel part of the program, the specialty performers are introduced. Bad singing and worse dancing appear to be the leading features of this portion of the entertainment.

The description continues, as the observer recounts to readers a raucous boxing match featuring a man and a woman, after which the night is concluded:

The performance is brought to a close with as scandalous afterpiece as was ever produced in the lowest ‘free and easy’ of London or New York. ‘Paris By Moonlight,’ in which ‘living statuary’ is introduced,
is an appropriate finale to the night’s performance, and to which the earlier part of the entertainment appears tame and innocent. The ‘can-can’ dance, with all the improvements and flourishes is gone through. So utterly low and debasing was it, that frequent cries of ‘shame’ were heard from different parts of the house during the progress of the dance. Amid the hooting, yells and cheers of the spectators, the curtain descends—it could be hoped forever—on one of the vilest performances ever witnessed in this city.  

Articles such as this may have provoked a mixture of shock, curiosity and excitement, but they also reinforced larger Victorian concerns about the place and types of leisure which were becoming increasingly available and accessible for widespread consumption. The observations made by the reporter offer some indication of what might have threatened such a moral worldview: a “masculine-looking female attendant,” an unsupervised mob of “boot-blacks and street arabs,” and the open ridicule of poor Bella McDon. Where else might these spectacles be taking place? The exponential growth of the city created many more spaces for a wider variety of leisure activities, multiplying the potential for moral depravity. There were simply too many venues to police and a seemingly infinite variety of entertainment therein to consider. Further, moral clarity eluded those attempting to draw distinctions among them. As Walden observes, “[m]arking boundaries between reputable and disreputable distractions was not always easy.”  

This concern about the effects of urban amusements began to appear in official school records during the 1860s. In the Toronto school board’s annual report of 1861, steps were outlined to address the increasing distraction to students caused by “public exhibitions and entertainments.”

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96 Walden, Becoming Modern, 248.
The business of the City schools having become liable to frequent interruptions by means of the proprietors and agents of various kinds of Exhibitions and Entertainments, who through the inducement of low prices for the admission of School children, announced sometimes on pretended authority, in the Schools themselves, tempted the pupils of our Schools to break off the regularity of their attendance and to otherwise neglect their duties; the Local Superintendent felt it necessary especially to bring the matter before the notice of the Committee on School Management as an evil which required prompt and decided treatment.

The Committee accordingly, in their Report No. 3 (adopted June 18) observe “that it having been reported to them that the City Schools have been annoyed by calls from parties travelling about with exhibitions &c., recommend the following resolution for adoption, namely; Resolved—that the Head Masters and Head Mistresses of the City Public Schools be instructed to prevent the announcement in their respective Schools of any public exhibition and entertainments, and that the Local Superintendent be authorized to decline official intercourse with the managers or agents of such speculations.”

Throughout the latter part of the century, school boards were repeatedly faced with the task of deciding which ‘public’ activities taking place during school hours were worthy, and to this end, began to put together a regular program of annual events that met such standards, and invested its officials with the power to influence where and how these entertainments were take place. This is evident in the regular correspondence between Toronto School Inspector James L. Hughes and Chief Constable Henry Grassett, concerning a variety of matters involving these issues.

The moral panic raised by new forms of entertainment proved to be relatively short-lived. As mass entertainments became mainstream, concern gave way to curiosity. Part of the reason was due to the modernization of church organizations themselves. Beginning in 1894, The

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97 SMA, TBEAR (1861), 33-34.
98 These include the presence of popcorn and ice cream vendors near schools, theatre handbill advertisements and the selling of theatre tickets off premises. See Moore, Now Playing, 124. The unauthorized dismissal of Miss Coyne’s class, (noted above) to watch a passing circus provides another example. One of the earliest accommodations of ‘official’ events was Toronto’s annual Industrial Exhibition. The construction of annual school calendar of events will be dealt with in detail in Chapter Seven.
Methodist Social Council had commissioned reports on social issues, with the Baptist Church of Canada following suit less than a decade later. In this way, “church groups studied issues sociologically and economically and also based decisions on economic and social understandings of the cause and contexts of immorality.”

Opinions softened and these amusements were by and large viewed with bemused indifference by many. Even the prudish Methodist General Conference ultimately had to abandon its position on the issue, lifting its blanket ban on amusements in 1910. Two years later, a Star Weekly editorial advised city clergy to visit amusements “to see what kind of attraction it holds for young people.” In some ways, the shift underscored the gradual, if somewhat reluctant acknowledgement of modernity itself.

Assigning cultural value thus became “a matter of pragmatic accommodation rather than strident or idealistic positioning.” Commenting on an audience of theatre-goers in 1908, a reporter observed: “No one came to learn. It was the fruitless craving for amusement, something that would kill time....Careless, good-natured, indiscriminate, indolent and bored...The folks with the least to do are always the busiest.”

Still, the perceived need for moral vigilance aroused by the advent of modern amusements did not fade entirely from view. With respect to the rising generation and the social institutions charged with their oversight, scrutiny and surveillance was intensified. Toronto’s school system, equipped with the professional skill and bureaucratic machinery to meet such a need, provided an ideal foundation upon which to marshal such efforts.

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100 The organization did however advocate banning moving pictures and prize fighting. See Moore, *Now Playing*, 114.
101 *Star Weekly*, 8 June 1912, quoted in Moore, 124, 145.
The proliferation of mass entertainment in Toronto in the closing decades of the nineteenth century represented a real, if somewhat ambiguous, challenge to older cultural forms, which had been embedded into a predictable social hierarchy that had established itself earlier in the century. The forces of modernity that had transformed Toronto from an isolated colonial outpost into a centre of commercial and industrial power had also introduced new and sometimes strange experiences to daily life. Toronto was larger, more crowded and busier. It was also louder.

Many layers had been added to the soundtrack of the city, creating new auditory environments that could not always easily be identified, categorized and controlled, especially when the sounds generated were of a cultural nature. City politicians could regulate steam whistle use, but preaching and piano-playing were altogether a different matter. In terms of music, the sheer volume of popular amusements threatened to drown out older forms, making it plain that mass audience tastes, not elite preferences, were becoming the predominant influence in deciding what was on offer. Preserving what were deemed to be ‘essential’ values thus became entwined in larger debates regarding the best way to address and manage the forces of modernity. Schools offered one such space from which to mount a cultural counter offensive.
CHAPTER FIVE

CHURCH AND MILITARY MUSIC IN LATE-NINETEENTH CENTURY TORONTO

...the fifty years following Confederation, the churches were the guiding influences in shaping and maintaining Canadian culture.\(^1\)

...historians and social theorists, like psychologists and physiologists, have paid little attention to muscular manifestations of group solidarity. We are captives of language for our explanations, and words do not capture the visceral emotions aroused by keeping together in time.\(^2\)

This chapter considers in more detail the context of church and military music in Toronto during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Because of their central roles in helping define a middle-class musical consciousness, these institutions quickly intertwined themselves into the fabric of an evolving school system, and the musical activity which emanated from it. As Toronto’s metropolitan status grew, so too did concerns over how this rapid urbanization was affecting citizens, particularly its youth. As we have seen, the rising tide of modern entertainment was often made a cultural scapegoat for this angst and despite attempts by several purveyors to promote its wholesome qualities, critics remained sceptical and suspicious of its presence and impact for the remainder of the century.

This middle-class alarm prompted reforms in public education which, toward the century’s end built much of its philosophy around the ideas of order, self-discipline and muscular Christianity as a way of morally inoculating children against such present and future temptation.

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The reintroduction of military drill in Toronto schools in 1877 and the musical program which developed alongside it came to form a central part of this strategy. Together, they provided the raw materials required to assemble the ‘muscular Christian’ identity, which seemed capable of combating the darker forces of modernity.

While not entirely free of criticism, this course of action appears to have enjoyed wide support, particularly when all the strands were synthesized into public displays such as church parades and commemorative ceremonies. Both sacred and military music were ubiquitous at these gatherings, and the increasing inclusion of school children, in choirs and/or drill formation contributed yet further proof that through such experiences it was possible to inculcate discipline, order and refinement in an urban environment teeming with people whose habits were often perceived as strange and unfamiliar. In this sense, the resulting musical experience acted as a kind of aesthetic binding agent that simultaneously justified and legitimated the portrayals of middle class culture as the one, best way to comprehend the modern world.

In complementing and enhancing the attractive illusion described above, music in the schools owed much to churches and military organizations in Toronto at the time. Thus, the latter represent a critical context in making sense of the nature and intent of the former, as it evolved to the end of the nineteenth century. In combination, it was this force that would be marshalled as part of the cultural arsenal constructed to teach youth the rudiments of refinement, as dictated by the middle class. This chapter explores that context.

CHURCHES

As this chapter’s opening quote suggests, churches in post-Confederation Canada constituted a dominant cultural force in the nation’s emerging self identity. This observation was
certainly evident in the case of music in Toronto. During the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Toronto churches benefited greatly from the arrival of many professionally-trained musicians. Their activities not only helped cultivate a taste for sacred performance, but also set a consistent standard of quality which had been difficult to maintain earlier in the century. The synergy of so many capable professionals resulted in an intricate network of choir and concert masters, organists and others whose talents were shared and traded among a variety of denominations in the city.

Because of the prominence of this cultural sector in the development of school music, this section, in addition to examining the activity of those individuals directly involved in this process, also provides supplemental information about some of their contemporaries who loomed large in Toronto’s sacred music community. In so doing, the hope is to not only offer a group biography, but also to better capture the depth and richness of this group and its immense talent.

In addition, this web of musical interaction also spawned the development of new music societies and the establishment of three formal academies, offering training in vocal and instrumental music. Before discussing some examples of church activity, it is worthwhile providing a brief outline of the major private institutions, as they not only helped deepen further the reservoir of available performers, but many of their faculty were already ensconced in the church music of Toronto. The three most prominent of these were the Toronto Conservatory of Music, the Toronto College of Music, and the Metropolitan School of Music.

The Toronto Conservatory of Music was incorporated in 1886 and opened the following year. Its inception had been the result of efforts made by local musician-entrepreneur Edward Fisher and businessman George W. Allan. The latter was already a well-known philanthropist

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3 The school held this name until 1947, when it was renamed the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto.
4 Fisher’s musical background will be discussed in more detail below.
who among other things had previously donated land for Toronto’s first civic park, Allan Gardens. The men formed a company, and issued shares at $100 each to raise the required capital. The desire to affiliate themselves with such a noble cultural endeavour attracted many other prominent citizens to the project. Among them were banker George A. Cox, both former and incumbent Globe newspaper presidents James Maclenna and Robert Jaffrey, as well as Toronto Electric Light Company head Henry Pellatt, who would go on to build Toronto’s iconic Casa Loma residence a decade later. Also part of the enterprise were area piano manufacturers Heintzman and Co., Octavius Newcombe and A. and S. Nordheimer, and Toronto music publisher I. Suckling.⁵ In its first year, a faculty of fifty instructors taught 200 students a range of musical subjects, including lessons in languages and elocution, as well as instruction in the teaching of public school music. The Conservatory affiliated with Trinity College in 1888, and the University of Toronto eight years later.⁶

The two other large private institutions offering formal musical instruction constituted more personal ventures. The Toronto College of Music was founded in 1888 by F. H. Torrington, who was by then a familiar personality in Toronto’s cultured musical community.⁷ By 1890, it employed fifty faculty and boasted an enrolment of 400. In the same year, the College became affiliated with the University of Toronto, granting certificates and diplomas in conjunction with degree programs being offered there.⁸ The newest of the three, the Metropolitan College of Music, opened in 1893, and was renamed the Metropolitan School of Music.

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⁵ See Ezra Schabas, There’s Music In These Walls: A History of the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto: Dundurn, 2005), 19.
⁷ As will be discussed in the next chapter, Torrington was responsible for launching several musical initiatives, including the first large-scale music festival in Toronto, in 1886. See Godfrey, Musical Toronto, vols. 1 and 2, 9-10 and 12-13, respectively.
⁸ See EMC, s. v. “Toronto College of Music.” See also, Godfrey, Musical Toronto, vols. 1 and 2, 9-10 and 12-13, respectively.
Music two years later, under the direction of musician W. O. Forsyth. Located in the city’s west end, the School offered a similar program of instruction as its competitors. 9 Both of these organizations were eventually taken over in turn by the Canadian Academy of Music, which itself became part of the Toronto Conservatory in 1924. 10

A number of “ladies’ academies” also persisted in and around the city, combining academic training with the accoutrements of cultural refinement so desired for the daughters of the upper-middle class. As Ezra Schabas has observed, by this time these colleges of repute “usually had thriving music departments that were much like mini conservatories” and the fact that seven were in operation at the end of the century testifies to their continued popularity. 11

The availability of such a rich pool of musical talent had been made possible, in large part, by a concomitant rise in the number and activity connected with Toronto’s religious community. As discussed in Chapter Two, churches had always loomed large in the cultural life of the city, and growth remained vigorous in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Church expansion in the city between 1881 and 1890 offers some indication of the situation. During this period, 56 new churches appeared, while 24 were rebuilt. 12

At the same time, the pressures of urbanization prompted many to search for new ways to deal with its social consequences. Because of their longstanding familiarity with the social fabric of day-to-day life in their neighbourhoods, urban churches were especially sensitive to the

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9 See Godfrey, *Musical Toronto*, vols. 1 and 2, 13 and 17, respectively.
10 The Metropolitan School became a part of the Academy in 1912, a year after its founding. The Toronto College of Music followed suit in 1918. See *EMC*, s. v. “Canadian Academy of Music;” “Metropolitan School of Music;” “Toronto College of Music;” “Royal Conservatory of Music."
12 Total breaks down as follows: Church of England, 14 new, 4 rebuilt; Presbyterian, 17 new, 5 rebuilt; Methodist, 13 new, 7 rebuilt; Baptist, 10 new, 5 rebuilt; Roman Catholic 2 new, 3 rebuilt. Data summarized from D. C. Masters, *The Rise of Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1947), 213-216.
changes being brought about by modernity. Although some denominations struggled to come to grips with the rapid changes, a consensus began to emerge which employed the ideas of muscular Christianity and social reform as moral bulwarks against the perceived erosion of spiritual values. Along the way many found that they had more in common with one another than once thought. The emerging consensus took on a life of its own, resulting in what William Westfall describes as “the common meeting ground of Ontario Protestantism,” expressed to varying degrees in larger philosophical premises such as the Social Gospel and other reform movements. 13 These ideas eventually found their way into government policy and action through the burgeoning middle class, many of whom worked in the bureaucracy, and/or expected it behave accordingly.

As with other church activities, musical practices became an important part of this change and, despite lingering suspicions about its presence in some Protestant congregations, it became increasingly common in virtually all churches. The resulting crop of highly-talented musicians who oversaw this aspect of religious worship not only improved the musical content of their respective churches, but also reinforced rigorous standards of pedagogy and performance that were widely understood and appreciated as marks of cultural refinement.

Through shared celebrations and formal affiliations, several of these professionals came into contact with Toronto’s schools, and while their interactions varied from year to year, the collective impact of these collaborations in many ways laid out a model for public performance which endured well into the twentieth century. When we turn to examine public school music in more detail in the chapters that follow, several of the names catalogued below will come to prominence. The present discussion seeks to provide some examples of musical activity in the

Protestant church communities of Toronto, not only as a means to further illustrate its richness and complexity, but also to highlight how modern influences were making their way into what was understood to represent its antithesis. As we will see, this could range from the relatively-benign (as in the case of weekday “Services of Praise”), to highly controversial public “bombardments” of the Salvation Army.

MUSIC IN THE CHURCHES

1. Anglican Churches

Anglicans were still the predominant religious group in Toronto during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In 1870, 37% of Torontonians listed their religious affiliation as Anglican and, in spite of increasing competition from the other major Protestant denominations, by the turn of the century, they still represented about 30% of the total population. St. James Cathedral and Trinity College remained at the centre of official church affairs, but many other Anglican churches flourished at century’s end, whose musicians and choirs were considered among the best in the city. Pressure to adapt to modern conditions led to the emergence of two factions during the 1870s, the former representing the established hierarchy, the latter a more active evangelical wing. Musical practice constituted one of the ways in which this dispute manifested itself. When, for example, St. James’ musical director Stocks Hammond died unexpectedly in 1897, his replacement Albert Ham insisted upon a return to traditional musical practices which had come back into vogue within the High Church in England. According to

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14 As noted at the outset, the paper focuses upon this denomination because of its overwhelming numerical superiority among what can be understood as the “middle class,” and the fact that, more than any other, was employed in the modelling of school music, and arguably was understood at the time as representing an objective measure for such purposes.


16 Known more commonly as “high” and “low”, these factions battled for local control of church affairs for much of the period. See Masters, Rise of Toronto, 133-35.
William Lock, Ham felt that too much of his predecessor’s material smacked of works emphasizing “sensational, sentimental and meretricious” elements.\textsuperscript{17} Citing tradition, Ham also banished women from the choir.\textsuperscript{18} Under his direction, the now all-male choir “followed the “plain Cathedral style” and sang the traditional repertoire of English cathedral composers....All florid charts were discarded as were organ solos of a semi-secular character.”\textsuperscript{19} Such was not the case in other Anglican congregations. The Church of the Redeemer, established at the corner of Avenue Road and Bloor Street in 1871, was rebuilt in 1879 and by 1904, had installed a Casavant organ comparable to that housed at St. James.\textsuperscript{20}

About the same time, Edward Washington Schuch became choirmaster. Although born in Manchester, England, he had been educated at Upper Canada College, and it was during his tenure at the Redeemer that Schuch became widely known for his “Services of Praise,” involving choirs ranging in size from 30 to 50 voices for paid-admission concerts. These featured choral and instrumental pieces played by local musicians and proved so popular that at one point they were run during the week, in essence becoming part of Toronto’s mainstream entertainments.\textsuperscript{21} As we will discover, it would be Schuch who would pioneer public school choral concerts and to whom organizers of the 1886 Toronto Musical Festival would turn to for assistance with similar duties.\textsuperscript{22}

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\textsuperscript{17} EM C, s. v. “Anglican church music.”
\textsuperscript{18} According to the 1898 edition of Musical Toronto, Ham was born in Bath, England, and had come from Taunton, where he had been organist and choir master at St. John Evangelist church for five years. Schooled at Trinity College, Dublin, he had also conducted the Taunton Choral Society, the Taunton Madrigal Society and served as a local scholarship examiner for the Royal College and Royal Academy of Music, before leaving England. See H. H. Godfrey, A Souvenir of Musical Toronto (Toronto: Minister of Agriculture, 1898), 35.
\textsuperscript{21} Schuch also served as music critic for the Globe and Toronto Saturday Night publications, and had a hand in editing and managing and editing the Musical Journal. He moved to St. James in 1896, succeeding W. H. Haslem, with whom he had edited the Music Journal. See Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 124.
\textsuperscript{22} The event ran from June 16 through 18 and was by far the largest of its kind the city had ever hosted. As an occasion involving the city’s schools, it is discussed in more detail as part of Chapter Six.
\end{flushright}
The Church of the Ascension, built along Richmond Street in the mid-1870s, also adopted a similar policy of holding services during the week. Its English-born organist Edgar R. Doward was, like Schuch, interested in using well-performed music to connect the sacred with the secular. In 1888, only two years after his arrival there, he had put together monthly concerts, held during the week, providing what Doward called “equisite (read “exquisite”) productions of musical art intended for use in the services and offices of the Church....” Through this musical offering he hoped that people might come to appreciate not only its intrinsic beauty, but also overcome possible prejudice toward it. Doward resigned in 1894 to direct the music of the Broadway Tabernacle (formerly the Spadina Avenue Methodist Church).

Doward was replaced by Joseph Humfrey Anger, who the previous year had been appointed head of the theory department at the Toronto Conservatory of Music. Born in Berkshire, England in 1862, Anger earned his musical degree at Oxford and held several positions as choirmaster and organist in England before his arrival in Toronto in the early 1890s. Anger took a position as a professor of harmony and counterpoint at the Conservatory in 1893 and shortly after, also became a music examiner at Trinity College. He served as organist-choirmaster at the Church of the Ascension from 1894 to 1896, moving to Old St. Andrew’s Presbyterian until 1902, when he moved once more to Central Methodist. Anger’s activities in Toronto also included conducting the Toronto Philharmonic Society (1896-1898), and a year as president of the Canadian Society of Musicians (1895-1896), which had formed in 1885.

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23 Quoted in Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 133.
25 Originally known as the Ontario Music Teachers’ Association, the organization changed its name in 1886. Rivalry with other similar groups appears to have contributed to its demise (see next footnote). Also, see EMC, s. v. “Canadian Society of Musicians.”
Among his other accomplishments, Anger became a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, and was president of the Clef Club, another musical organization in the city.\footnote{Anger was president of the Society from 1895 to 1896. Ironically, the establishment of the Clef Club in 1894, as well as the Musical Art Club in the same year, may have contributed to the demise of the Society, which appears to have folded at the end of Anger’s term. \textit{EMC}, s. v. “Canadian Society of Musicians.”}

Another Anglican place of worship noted for its music was the Church of the Holy Trinity, located in Trinity Square. Built in 1847, it was originally intended to serve the city’s poorer inhabitants—“the seats to be free and unappropriated forever.” As early as the 1860s, however, Holy Trinity had become the parish of choice for many members of Toronto’s upper crust.\footnote{This was, no doubt, helped along by the church’s rector, Henry Scadding, who enjoyed many connections with this exclusive group. See Masters, \textit{Rise of Toronto}, 34, 77, 125.} According to Lock, the choir had by the 1890s gained a reputation as “one of the finest church choirs in the country.”\footnote{Blackburn’s father had taken the position 1872. Quote taken from Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 131.}

As the above examples illustrate, vocal and instrumental musical activity thrived at most Anglican churches, and several began to move outside of established traditions, in both selections and schedules of service. As was noted in regard to St. James, some musical directors clung to, or reclaimed earlier traditions. It appears that such was the case at St. George’s. As J. Ross Robertson reported:

> The music is Anglican in character, and no operatic or sensational selections are used for the purpose of catching the curiosity of the public. The sole aim of the service seems to be the effort to reach an ideal form of worship, stripped of barren negation on the one side, and florid exercises on the other. The style of the English Church in the mother country is closely adhered to, much to the edification of the great mass of worshippers at the church.\footnote{John Ross Robertson, \textit{The Landmarks of Toronto}, vol. 4 (Toronto: John Ross Robertson, 1904), 6-7.}

In spite of the differences, some internal cross-pollination did occur closer to the end of the century. A number of Anglican churches began to organize coordinated musical events, a few of which developed into annual gatherings. In celebration of the Diocesan Jubilee, several
Anglican choirs were combined in late 1889, to form a 150-voice chorus.\textsuperscript{30} Two years later, the Church Choir Association was established, bringing together Anglican clergy and choirmasters, who organized a multi-choir festival entitled “The United Service of Song.” Taking place on May 20, 1892, the event featured a 700-voice chorus of men, women and boys. Similar services were held in 1893 and 1894, with choirs of approximately 500 voices.\textsuperscript{31}

2. Methodist Churches

While the Church of England could still claim the highest membership in Toronto at the end of the nineteenth century, Methodism had by that time firmly established itself in second place. According to census data, in 1870, 17\% of Torontonians were Methodists, a figure which increased to 23.3\% by 1901.\textsuperscript{32} Its public recognition as a mainstream denomination was symbolized by the opening of the Metropolitan Church in April 1872, two years after Egerton Ryerson had laid the cornerstone. Known popularly as the “Cathedral of Methodism,” it sat on three-and-one-quarter acres on Queen Street, just two blocks east of Yonge, and was celebrated as the world’s largest Methodist church at the time.\textsuperscript{33}

The Metropolitan’s first director of music left after just one year, but the arrival of Frederick Herbert Torrington in 1873 marked the beginning of a 34-year affiliation which would not only enhance the church’s reputation, but also facilitate the establishment of an enduring connection between the city’s public schools and its musical community. For this reason, it is

\textsuperscript{30} The event excluded “mixed” choirs of men and women, which were common in the evangelical churches, even though congregations of the latter were asked to take up collections in support of the event. See Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 138.

\textsuperscript{31} Given their composition, it appears that High Church restrictions that banned women had been relaxed.

\textsuperscript{32} See Goheen, \textit{Victorian Toronto}, 76.

\textsuperscript{33} See Masters, \textit{Rise of Toronto}, 97, 99.
useful to provide some background on Torrington’s other musical achievements, as a prelude to later developments in this regard.

As organist and choirmaster at the Metropolitan Church, Torrington initiated several changes, including the recruitment of local singers to whom he offered voice lessons free of charge. Under his tutelage, the choir blossomed and by the early 1890s was putting on monthly concerts, as well as one or two special concerts each year.\(^{34}\) Like many of his contemporaries, Torrington did not limit his musical endeavours exclusively to church-related activities. Over the course of his long career, he blended sacred and secular compositions, using both professional and amateur participants in public performances that often relied on spectacular forms of presentation. As conductor of the Philharmonic Society, Torrington also introduced Toronto audiences to artistic works such as Mendelssohn’s Elijah (1874) and St. Paul (1876).

Torrington was also the driving force behind the Toronto College of Music and made it the first private musical organization in the city to affiliate with the University of Toronto. Throughout his career he conducted several amateur orchestras and, with the College of Music, set up an orchestral school and organized public concerts to provide playing experience for its students. Of his time with the Metropolitan choir, one music critic wrote: “It was the biggest and best choir in Canada. People went to hear the choir and organ as much as to hear the sermons which were seldom poor.”\(^{35}\)

Carlton Street Methodist Church provides another example of the blending of sacred and secular music. When fire destroyed its Alice Street location in 1874, the congregation built a new church on Carlton Street.\(^{36}\) By 1890, the church was being led by the Reverend William John Hunter, described in a survey of the city’s public men as “a strong temperance man, and an

\(^{34}\) Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 73.


earnest and fearless advocate of every moral reform.”\textsuperscript{37} In the fall of the same year, W. Edgar Buck, who had just become director of the Toronto Vocal Society, was appointed choirmaster. That same year, Buck had organized a new branch of the TVS in the city’s west end, increasing its total choir to 160. Sharing musical duties at the church with organist W. H. Hewlett, Buck stayed two years, leaving in 1892 to form a male chorus called the Apollo Club.\textsuperscript{38} By 1899, under the leadership of J. M. Sherlock, the choir was “singing a varied repertoire of choral compositions with the aid of two paid quartets,” rehearsing weekly and singing at more than 100 services.\textsuperscript{39}

Other Methodist congregations throughout the city also supported music programs. Although initially suffering from a high turnover rate among its musical directors, Sherbourne Street Methodist eventually gained some consistency with the appointment of choirmaster Fred Warrington in 1886. Elm Street Methodist featured the husband-and-wife team of Mr. and Mrs. Henry M. Blight as choirmaster and organist respectively. Blight was also a member of the Philharmonic Society and the Metropolitan Church choir at this time, but the pair left in 1894, eventually being replaced by W. J. A. Carnahan and Miss Jessie Perry assisting on organ.\textsuperscript{40}

3. Presbyterian Churches

Although small in comparison with the total representation of Anglicans and Methodists in the city, Toronto’s Presbyterian community increased during the last three decades of the

\textsuperscript{37} Adam, \textit{Toronto: Old and New}, 77.

\textsuperscript{38} There is no indication as to the type of music the group played. See Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 150.

\textsuperscript{39} The quartets became known as “Sherlock Male Quartet” and the “Carlton Quartet.” At some occasions, singers donned robes and were accompanied by an orchestra. See Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 151.

\textsuperscript{40} Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs, 152.
century from 3.5% to 5.7% of the city’s total population. As the number of congregations grew, music gradually gained acceptance, but the evolution was slow and uneven. Some were progressive, while others continued to struggle with the issue of music in worship, particularly over the tradition of unaccompanied psalm singing. For example, Old St. Andrew’s had introduced choral and instrumental music into its services in the mid-nineteenth century, installing a pipe organ in 1855. By contrast, at about the same time, the introduction of a reed organ in Cooke’s Presbyterian Church resulted in its forcible removal by a group of men who claimed that the congregation had not granted its approval to the action.

Given music’s somewhat tenuous place in devotional exercises, it took some time before a recognizable pool of musical talent materialized among Presbyterian congregations. By the century’s end, however, several of Toronto’s most prominent musicians spent time working in Presbyterian churches. Among them was Joseph Humfrey Anger, who directed music at Old St. Andrew’s from 1898 to 1902. He was replaced by T. C. Jeffers, who had completed all of his musical training in Toronto, including a period of study under Torrington’s guidance. Jeffers was a member of the Canadian Society of Musicians and lectured on music history and theory at the Toronto College of Music.

“New” St. Andrew’s employed Toronto Conservatory founder Edward Fisher, who quickly became one of the city’s most prominent advocates in support of professional training and support. Fisher was the church’s organist from 1870 to 1899, during which time he organized the St. Andrew’s Choral Society, subsequently renamed the Toronto Choral Society. St. Andrew’s also became a focal point for the activities of the 48th Highlanders militia unit.

41 Goheen, Victorian Toronto, 76.
42 G. Mercer Adam, Toronto, Old and New (Toronto: The Mail Printing Co., 1891), 70.
43 Robertson, Landmarks of Toronto, 120-124.
formed in 1891. In 1885, Fisher co-founded the Ontario Music Teachers’ Association (later to become the Canadian Society of Musicians) and was its president during the years 1889-90. For his musical efforts, Fisher was awarded an honorary doctorate by the University of Toronto in 1898.\footnote{See EMC, s. v. “Fisher, Edward.” As a further tribute the university’s Faculty of Music building is named in his honour.}

While Fisher’s efforts were directed at the university, another Presbyterian church choir master chose public school music as his focus. As we will see in the chapters that follow, more than any other musical personality, it would be Alexander Thom Cringan who would transform music in the public schools from a largely pedantic classroom activity to a public spectacle that would come to represent the very image of public schools in Toronto.

4. Baptist Churches

Like Presbyterian congregations during the latter half of the nineteenth century, many Baptist churches continued to struggle with the issue of music in their religious worship. As before, the issue usually revolved around the perceived purpose and power of music to either help or hinder devotional services.\footnote{In 1857, for example, some members of the Bond Street Baptist Church were so outraged by the introduction of an organ that they set up an entirely separate service in another building. See Paul R. Wilson, “Baptists and Business: Central Canadian Baptists and the Secularization of the Businessman at Toronto’s Jarvis Street Baptist Church, 1848-1921” (PhD diss., University of Western Ontario, 1996), 308.} However, closer to century’s end, a new dimension was introduced to the debate among Baptists, namely music’s association with worldliness. As suggested by Paul R. Wilson, the dilemma had just as much to do with materialism, as it did doctrinal, differences. “The spirituality of those Baptists who accepted musical innovation was questioned by other counter-cultural Baptists who condemned new forms of musical expression as worldly “atrocities.”” On the other hand, “cultural liberals, who desired social integration and
respectability, remained convinced that musical innovation brought spiritual and temporal rewards that Canadian Baptists could ill-afford to miss.\textsuperscript{47}

The controversy came to a head in 1875, with the gift of an organ by Susan Moulton McMaster to the new Jarvis Street Baptist Church. An American by birth and the second wife of noted financier William McMaster, her donation was characterized by one former member as hateful and self-serving. “Here then was a case of a wealthy Jarvis Street businessman and his wife displaying their commitment to effect change that would make their church socially respectable,” at the expense of pure spiritual piety.\textsuperscript{48} The publication of unofficial songbooks designed especially for Baptist services did blunt criticism somewhat. Nevertheless, it took some time for matters to cool once more.\textsuperscript{49}

In spite of all the intra-denominational controversy, these new musical ideas, as expressed by the likes of the McMasters, continued to gather strength. In so doing, more attention was being paid to its secular and professional aspects. Proof of this lay in the appointment at Jarvis in 1888 of Augustus Stephen Vogt, who replaced J. F. W. Harrison as organist-choirmaster. Vogt not only significantly improved the choir, but used many of its members to assemble what eventually became the Toronto Mendelssohn Choir.\textsuperscript{50} Outside of church, Vogt taught piano and organ at the Toronto College of Music, and after 1892, at the Toronto Conservatory of Music.

Vogt was also active in several of the city’s musical societies, serving as secretary of the Canadian College of Organists from 1889-1892 and as president of the Canadian Society of Musicians from 1893-1895. He was also instrumental in establishing closer ties between the

\textsuperscript{47} Wilson, “Baptists and Business,” 307-308.
\textsuperscript{48} Wilson, “Baptists and Business,” 310.
\textsuperscript{49} The first was \textit{The Canadian Baptist Church Hymn Book}, published by Copp Clark in 1873, followed by H. H. Buchan’s \textit{Our Service of Song}, in 1877. See Wilson, “Baptists and Business,” 306-307.
\textsuperscript{50} Lock, “Ontario Church Choirs,” 158.
Toronto College of Music and the University of Toronto, becoming the first dean of its Faculty of Music in 1918.\textsuperscript{51}

Such was Vogt’s reputation that when he retired in 1906, music had, in the opinion of some, literally overwhelmed other elements of the service. His replacement, Edward Broome, followed Vogt’s musical program, eventually drawing the ire of church’s pastor who in 1910 noted the proportion of music to sermon time and complained “that what was designed to be an ‘opening sentence’ sometimes turned out to be an anthem that required ten minutes to complete. The result was that, do as one would, the Jarvis Street preacher would begin to preach about the time other congregations were hearing the benediction.”\textsuperscript{52}

As this debate illustrates, even as modernity brought new wealth to Toronto it also heightened concern in some circles about what might be the consequence for the moral wellbeing of the city’s inhabitants. The introduction of musical instruments such as organs, the hiring of professionally-trained musicians and the linking of the Mendelssohn Choir with Jarvis Street Baptist cumulatively testified to the shift taking place. With the arrival of the Salvation Army in Toronto, the debate took on an entirely new—and much more controversial—dimension.

5. The Salvation Army

Thus far, we have considered the place of music within what might be referred to as the “mainstream” Protestant churches in Toronto. The choice has been deliberate, for these communities tended to reflect back to their congregations values and attitudes associated with late-Victorian middle-class society. In addition, it was exclusively musicians affiliated with

\textsuperscript{51} Vogt was also music critic for \textit{Saturday Night} magazine during the early 1890s, and was the only Canadian organist to play at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair. See \textit{EMC}, s. v. “Vogt, A. S.,”

\textsuperscript{52} T. T. Shields, quoted in Wilson, “Baptists and Business,” 311-312.
mainstream Protestant churches who participated in the development of Toronto’s school music program in its formative years.

While they certainly occupied the commanding heights of late-nineteenth century Toronto religious life, their dominance was by no means absolute. One of the greatest challenges to this musical primacy came, ironically, from within the Protestant faith itself, in the evangelical work of the Salvation Army. The arrival of this organization in Toronto during the closing decades of the nineteenth century presented an utterly new and unorthodox style of religious worship that utilized music-infused modern entertainment genres to attract attention and win converts.

It is because of these two factors that the Army is of particular interest here. In tailoring strategies to suit its modern, working-class surroundings, it freely drew upon many of the popular entertainment formats that at the time were eschewed by its more conventional counterparts. The debates sparked by this disagreement not only challenged existing musical models but also forced the larger Protestant community to confront and re-examine many of its assumptions about popular culture in general and musical activity in particular. The discussion also helped to shape emerging ideas regarding the tone and tenure of public school music in Toronto. It is for this reason that it deserves such detailed analysis here.

The Salvation Army movement evolved out of mission work being carried out by Methodist preacher William Booth and his wife Catherine in the burgeoning slums of mid-nineteenth century London. The environment, as Robert Collins notes, was both difficult and daunting:

East London in those years was the cesspool of England. The American Civil War had disrupted British trade, making unemployment proportionately worse. The workhouses, ghastly places where sometimes men and women slept in a naked mass on the floor, were filled. Nearly 25,000 were on relief. Men,
women and children often starved to death in the streets. “A region of narrow, filthy streets and yards,” reported a writer of the day, “and alas, many of them occupied by thieves’ dens, receptacles of stolen property, gin-spinning dogholes, low brothels and putrescent lodging houses, a district unwholesome to approach and unsafe for a decent person to traverse, even in the daytime.”

Booth, who had been heavily influenced by the revivalist and holiness movements espoused by American Methodists such as Charles Finney and James Caughey, opened the East London Christian Revival Society in 1865, later changing its name to the East London Christian Mission. In recalling those days, Booth attested to what he saw as a dire spiritual void then before him:

In every direction were multitudes totally ignorant of the gospel, and given up to all kinds of wickedness—infidels, drunkards, thieves, harlots, gamblers, blasphemers and pleasure seekers without number....The strangest and falsest notions of God, religion and the future state prevailed; and thus, consequently, misery and vice were rampant everywhere.

Booth’s strategy was to meet these people on their own terms, in a manner they would understand in order to connect them to his evangelical message, and he soon realized that the spectacular formats employed by music halls and other contemporary forms of entertainment achieved this end. In 1878, Booth recast his evangelical efforts under the name of the Salvation Army, adopting a military-style bureaucratic framework that, through the emigration of his “corps,” soon spread worldwide.

In all these places, it was among the poor and working class that the Army had its greatest appeal. As Pamela Walker points out, the pitch was both old and new:

The Salvation Army was a neighborhood (sic) religion. It invented a battle plan that especially suited to urban working-class geography and cultural life.

54 Quoted in Pamela J. Walker, Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down: The Salvation Army in Victorian Britain (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 41-42.
Religious words were sung to music hall tunes; circus posters and theatre hall announcements were copied so closely that observers often failed to distinguish them; preachers imitated the idiom of street vendors; and congregations were encouraged to shout out responses to the preachers, much as they might in the music halls. Salvationists culled techniques from contemporary advertising and revivalism. Their military language aptly expressed Salvationists’ command to do battle with the enemy. The Army regarded pubs, music halls, sports and betting as its principal rivals, yet its ability to use popular leisure activities as its inspiration was a major factor in its success. Equally important was Salvationists’ ability to mine an older Nonconformist radicalism through which they were able to express their spiritual vision and respond to their opponents.  

From its earliest days, music played a critical role in the Salvation Army’s evangelical arsenal, and its brass bands and singing preachers soon became a familiar sight on city streets. Flouting the theological concerns of his more conservative Protestant counterparts, Booth insisted that there was far more to be gained in employing its emotive power to bring about genuine conversion. In a letter published in the 1880 Christmas edition of the Army’s War Cry newspaper, he expounded at length to justify the tactic:

Music has a divine effect upon divinely influenced and directed souls. Music is to the soul what wind is to the ship, blowing her onwards in the direction in which she is steered....Not allowed to sing that tune or this tune? Indeed! Secular music, do you say? Belongs to the devil, does it? Well, if it did, I would plunder him of it, for he has no right to a single note of the whole gamut. He’s the thief:...Every note and every strain and every harmony is divine and belongs to us....So now and for all time consecrate your voices and your instruments. Bring out your cornets and harps and organs and flutes and violins and pianos and drums and everything else that can make melody! Offer them to God and use them to make all hearts about you merry before the Lord!  

As with the Methodist camp meeting, here again was musical activity being employed to induce heightened emotional states. “Songs were used to sustain a sinner’s conviction of sin, or to give voice to a convert’s hallelujahs.” The introduction of bands early on added yet another

acoustic weapon to the Salvationists’ arsenal. At a time when cities such as London were being entirely transformed by industrialization, and the noise of urban life continually intensified, it became increasingly difficult to command public attention. As Walker notes, their advent proved both serendipitous and savvy:

Salvation Army brass bands were another response to the noise and hustle of the streets. The first brass band (in Britain) was started by William and Fred Fry “because the music seemed to take the devil out of the rowdies at the open air meetings.” Brass bands were already popular. The volunteer forces had brass bands that performed frequently in parks for public occasions as well as in churches, chapels and temperance societies. The Salvation Army stood out, however, because it “absorbed bands to such an extent that they became one of the features that characterized it,” and its bands included women. The bands were valued because they drew a crowd and effectively drowned out the shouts and ridicule with religious music.59

In 1886, the organization in Britain began publishing The Musical Salvationist, which provided sheet music for this purpose, and also encouraged members to pen songs for publication. The result was that the Salvation Army very quickly acquired a sacred song tradition distinct from other denominations. This grassroots approach to composition found fertile ground in Toronto and other Canadian cities, since bands were free to adapt familiar tunes to attract attention. In an age when mass entertainment was beginning to take hold, “Salvationists’ practice of setting ‘heavenly words to secular tunes’ gave their music a popular appeal which drew large crowds and attracted many converts.”60

Like the slums of London, the burgeoning cities of the new Dominion of Canada presented ideal environments for the antics of Booth’s Army. Official Army histories usually credit London, Ontario as the first place in Canada where a Salvation Army meeting was held,

59 Walker, Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down, 122.
60 EMC, s. v. “Salvation Army.” This entry includes a list of several Canadians whose songs were published.
but it was in Toronto where the movement truly took off.⁶¹ There, the poor and working-class men and women who had flocked to the city in search of employment were experiencing many of the same hardships as their counterparts in Britain and the United States, encouraging a similar attraction to the Army’s promise of “soup and salvation.”

In July of 1882, “Toronto No. 1 Corps,” was officially created, although according to R. G. Moyles the organization had been conducting unofficial meetings since February.⁶² In describing the July meeting, the Mail noted: “The members who, so far, number about thirty, are all Toronto people, but many of them have belonged to the English organization, and are hence familiar with the methods of the Army. They are chiefly working people, who give what leisure they have to helping the cause along.”⁶³ From this nucleus, the organization quickly took shape. By the end of that year, 12 corps had been established in Ontario; by 1884, this had increased to 73, overseen by 142 “officers,” and by 1887 the Army had representatives from Victoria to St. John’s.⁶⁴

The sudden presence of the Salvation Army provoked reaction and criticism from a number of quarters. Shocked by its boisterous spectacles and disregard for conservative church tradition—including the active participation of women and the singing of hymns set to popular melodies—many Protestant clergy clucked their disdain with such antics. Scolded one, “If I were to go into the lanes of the city beating a big drum, with one of my elders beating a little

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⁶¹ Earlier sources credit British immigrants John Addie and Joseph Ludgate with holding a meeting in London in May, 1882, but more recent accounts suggest that Booth’s influence may have inspired gatherings as early as 1869 in Toronto. For earlier documentation, see Herbert P. Wood, They Blazed the Trail: An Account of the Adventures of Seven Early-day Officers of the Salvation Army in the Canadian Territory From 1882 to 1910 (Canada and Bermuda: Salvation Army, 1962), 7-17. Collins contends that meetings of this sort had taken place in Toronto as early as 1869. See Collins, Holy War of Sally Ann, 37. See also, Moyles, Blood and Fire in Canada, 7.

⁶² He cites a Mail article from February 3, describing a Salvation Army “open air sacred concert on the corner of Brock and Queen Streets....” See Moyles, Blood and Fire, 6.

⁶³ Moyles, Blood and Fire, 8-9.

⁶⁴ When the Army first appeared in St. John’s in 1886, a mob attacked its members, including women with knitting needles. A year later, in June of 1887, a corps was also established in Victoria. See Collins, Holy War of Sally Ann 42. See also, Moyles, Blood and Fire, 93.
one, accompanied with several of the women of the congregation, playing tambourines and fiddles, what would be thought of us?”  

The Christian Guardian sniffed that the entire enterprise was “objectionable” complaining: “[t]hey depend too largely on noisy parades and claptrap methods, which have no moral element in them, to keep up the interest of their cause. They encourage and practice, by act and speech, coarseness and vulgarity, that has no tendency to promote piety.”

Booth and his followers revelled in the public stir. His adage that “all publicity is good publicity” was proving itself to be true. As Diane Winston points out, his organization had tapped into the psyche of the modern working class. “The unchurched needed a “happy” religion, whose spark and sizzle were more akin to commercial entertainment than a staid Sunday service. Thus the Army prized “red-hot” preachers over erudite theologians and taught that its “practical religion” should make a difference in everyday life.”

However, attacks on Army members, particularly early on, could just as easily occur. Preaching outside saloons and music halls, members were often targets for owners and patrons, who might pour beer on their head, throw rotten vegetables, or break instruments. Some groups even organized themselves into “skeleton armies,” that disrupted meetings, mocked Army mannerisms and occasionally resorted to physical violence to intimidate followers.

While incidents of this sort tended to be carried out by the rougher elements of society, they were not alone in attempting to thwart the Army in its mission. Many people in the rising middle class also perceived it as a threat. As Winston notes:

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68 See, for example, Walker, *Pulling the Devil’s Kingdom Down*, 225-227.
Here were Christians who flouted traditional pieties to gain attention, and, as their movement spread, critics again questioned whether such antics were a legitimate means to an end....Secular elites were more concerned with civilizing, that is controlling, the masses. The flamboyant improprieties of the Salvationists subverted civil order and mocked genteel decorum, the bulwarks of Victorian society.\footnote{Winston, \textit{Red Hot and Righteous}, 37.}

Dealing with this unwelcome phenomenon proved problematic. Some jurisdictions either drew up or tried to invoke existing noise bylaws to deprive Army gatherings of one of their chief weapons in attracting attention. Authorities in London, Ontario, used this tactic in July of 1882. There, pioneer Salvationist Jack Addie was arrested for being “in violation of by-law 179, which prohibited the causing of a nuisance in the public streets....” Soon after, twenty others, including two women, Bella Nunn and Tessie Hall, were charged with a number of offences, including “beating a drum in a public street,” “playing a tambourine,” and otherwise “causing a public disturbance.” The Army appealed the women’s convictions and in overturning the lower court’s decision, the presiding judge wrote:

\begin{quote}
...the by-law, so far as it seeks to prohibit the beating of drums simply, without evidence of the noise being unusual and calculated to disturb is ultra vires and invalid....The evidence does not state that there was a beating of drums. It is ‘playing a drum.’ Am I judicially to know that beating a drum and playing a drum are the same? This order must go for the prisoner’s discharge.\footnote{Quoted from the \textit{Christian Guardian}, 30 July 1884. See Moyles, \textit{Blood and Fire}, 49-50.}
\end{quote}

Not only did the ruling establish a precedent that effectively ended further attempts to discourage such Salvationist activities, but it forced their Protestant middle-class adversaries to acknowledge that, legally at least, they and their children would have to abide the presence of yet another acoustic intrusion in the rapidly intensifying layers of sound which were informing the modern soundtrack.

As with many of the popular entertainments that initially provoked similar negative reactions, the Salvation Army and its activities gradually gained acceptance and in many ways
became part of the mainstream itself, especially once people became more aware of its charitable work. Nevertheless, the emotional spontaneity and seeming disregard for social convention encouraged by its promoters flew in the face of the late-Victorian desire for self control and ordered progress. The fact that public schools were attempting to promote the latter ideals meant that there would be little room for Salvation Army-style music in the system of public education.

MILITARY MUSIC

As was noted in Chapter Two, bands affiliated with the military constituted a major source of musical talent during the first half of the nineteenth century. Until 1871 when British forces left Canada, their military bands had contributed significantly to the development of the colony’s musical culture, and had supplied an ongoing source of professionally-trained musicians and instruments. During the course of the nineteenth century a number of colonial volunteer militia units had also been created, as an adjunct to British troops. While they often amounted to nothing more than social clubs for a privileged few in local communities, they nevertheless insisted on acquiring for themselves all the ornamental trappings of the professional soldierly class, including the formation of military bands.

While today this may appear as rather disingenuous, we should keep in mind that at some very basic human level, marching together in time represented more than mere military manoeuvre. In researching this phenomenon, William McNeill argues that “muscular bonding” creates a sense of community that is virtually impossible to attain and sustain in any other way. Describing it as “the euphoric fellow feeling that prolonged and rhythmic muscular movement arouses among nearly all participants in such exercises,” McNeill shows how through dance and drill, both civilian and military organizations alike have crafted community identity, and there is
no reason to assume that this was not also a factor in the desire of volunteer militia units to want to do likewise.\textsuperscript{71}

In Toronto, several bands were in operation during the last quarter of the century. Their de facto monopoly on the genre contributed to the impression inherent in the volunteer militia that, far from its grim reality, success in war could be achieved through the practice of precise drill exercises, orderly marching and the aping of military custom.\textsuperscript{72} These bands provided much of the ‘official’ music at city occasions and, as we shall see in the next chapter, presented a model that was well-fitted to innovations in school curriculum. These changes would resonate in Toronto schools in the decades that followed.

This section highlights the development of the volunteer militia in Canada. In so doing, it also explains why this type of military organization became the mainstay of the country’s defence policy, rather than the creation of a professional standing army. As we will see, the decision had consequences for the public presentation of military culture during the period. For one thing, it failed to produce a reliable source of citizen-soldiers, but the pomp and pageantry embodied in its militia bands and ceremonial regalia did meet the desire of Torontonians. Many sought reassurance through presentations such as these, promoting visions of order, discipline and control that could be used to counter the seeming chaos of the modern urban environment. What also becomes clear is that many of the myths which underpinned the Canadian military ethos and identity also found their way into schools via military drill, the consequence of which would become all too apparent in time of actual war.

\textsuperscript{71} As will be shown in the chapters that follow, the argument also makes sense for its adoption into the school curriculum during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. See McNeill, Keeping Together, 2-3.

\textsuperscript{72} “The first full-time army band was that of the Royal Canadian Garrison Artillery formed in 1899 at Quebec Citadel with Joseph Vezina as bandmaster.” The first air force band formed at Camp Borden in 1929, while the first permanent force navy band was created at Toronto in 1939. See EMC, s. v. “bands,” subsection “regular armed forces bands.”
Beginnings of the Canadian Volunteer Militia

The idea behind the creation of a Canadian volunteer militia originated in frontier strategies for civil order and local self defence that had been necessary during the early years of British North America. In truth, however, most of their defensive requirements had been provided by the British army, which as part of its overall colonial strategy had troops stationed in virtually all of its territories. By mid-century, however, Britain’s move to free trade and growing financial concerns caused a growing number of its politicians to call for reductions in its overseas commitments.

This argument had particular resonance when it came to colonies that had been granted responsible government since, in all matters save foreign policy, the will of the domestic government now lay first with its own people. In assuming all of the rights associated with self-determination, so the argument went, colonies should also take on responsibility for their own defence. As one British politician bluntly observed in 1849, “it seemed to him as absurd to pay for troops in the virtually independent colony of the Canadas, as it would be to pay for the military establishments in the independent colony of the United States.”

In spite of this line of reasoning, Canadians proved unwilling to invest the money and resources necessary to make the change. Several factors contributed to this inertia. For one, the presence of British troops had been a fact of life in the colony since its inception. As C. P. Stacey notes, “[t]he long period of Imperial protection had its effect—not so much perhaps in a conscious casting of the burden of defence upon Great Britain as in a failure to recognize the

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need for defensive preparation.” They had, in essence, become part of British North America’s self identity.

Accompanying this comforting reassurance was the self-serving myth that in past battles such as the War of 1812, volunteers had proven themselves every bit as capable as trained soldiers. In truth, it was largely through “the pre-eminence of the British regular” that had ultimately decided matters in that conflict, but colonists appeared to prefer the romantic notion that the sheer ‘pluck’ of local countrymen, imbued with a robust pioneer spirit, had won the day.75

During the Crimean War, which required the reallocation of some British regulars away from British North America, the myth consolidated its hold on the colonial imagination, further gathering strength with the outbreak of the American civil war and the re-stoking of militarism among its adherents.76 Not surprisingly, the ideal volunteer also imbued many Victorian virtues, including manliness and personal integrity:

The Canadian Volunteer, particularly if he belonged to one of the highly visible city regiments, was viewed by many of his contemporaries as an icon of hardy, northern virility. His patriotism was irreproachable. His military bearing was singled out to youth as worthy of emulation, and the physical exercise that citizens associated with military drill was seen as basic to the formation of good character. He was a Christian, self-disciplined and triumphant in his control over sexual urges and erotic

74 Stacey, Canada and the British Army, 115.
75 Stacey, Canada and the British Army, 12. Toronto’s Denison family and Sam Hughes championed this idea. See Desmond Morton, The Canadian General: Sir William Otter (Toronto: Hakkert, 1974), 81.
76 The first major change in Canadian military policy came as a result of the outbreak of the Crimean War in late 1853. The sudden need for British troops and the burst of patriotism spurred the colonial government to update its military policy, in order to offset what it hoped would be a temporary loss. The resulting Militia Act of 1855 laid the groundwork for a reserve force of up to 5,000, at a cost of $100,000—no small feat for a colony whose entire defence budget had previously amounted to just $8,000. The circumstances were fortuitous. “It is doubtful whether, without the patriotic enthusiasm engendered by the existing war, the Militia Bill of 1855 could have passed.” See Stacey, Canada and the British Army, 94. One of its most vociferous proponents, George T. Denison, took the opportunity to write a pamphlet entitled “Canada: Is She Prepared for War?” See Carl Berger, The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867–1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 15.
thoughts. Above all, he was a man of action, combining patriotic responsibilities with his profession or employment.\textsuperscript{77}

The volunteer myth was also enhanced by its fusion with the “cult of the Loyalist”—promoted by those claiming to descend from the original settlers of British North America who sought to associate the original loyalists, and, by implication, their living descendants, with the fount of national greatness.”\textsuperscript{78} Celebrated by such British-Canadian outfits as the Canada First Association and the Imperial Federation League, the image of these individuals as “true Canadians” became even more tightly fused to that of volunteer militia units.

The myth also had a darker side, however. As Desmond Morton points out, among some citizens “there was strong suspicion that men became militia officers to gain a “little brief authority,” to order about their fellow citizens and to preen themselves in gold lace and feathers.”\textsuperscript{79} Their scepticism was not without foundation. Regulations laid out for the volunteer militia provided for annual training exercises, but beyond this stipulation, little was done to instil the rudiments of soldiering. Because volunteer units lacked the ongoing discipline and rigour associated with a professionalized military, it was often difficult to maintain proper decorum and the fact that admission fees, annual membership dues and uniforms had to be paid for out of one’s own pocket prevented most of the population from participating. Those who could afford the trappings often saw it as a hobby or club, to enhance social status and to be inconvenienced as little as possible by military matters. Thus, even as pressures for reform were mounting in Britain, domestically there existed little incentive for Canadian authorities to take on the arduous and expensive task of building a professional standing army, especially in a time of peace.

\textsuperscript{77} Gerry J. Burke, “Good for the Boy and the Nation: Military Drill and the Cadet Movement in Ontario Public Schools, 1865-1911 (EdD diss., University of Toronto, 1996),” 32.
\textsuperscript{78} Berger, \textit{Sense of Power}, 84.
\textsuperscript{79} Morton, \textit{Canadian General}, 47.
By the early 1860s, it appeared that the volunteer scheme would disintegrate for lack of funds and enthusiasm. The effect could be seen even in loyal Toronto, where over the years a number of volunteer units had been cobbled together, as circumstances warranted. By the end of the preceding decade, their role had been reduced to that of being “reviewed, inspected and praised” at official ceremonies. Among them were included “a battery of artillery under Major R. B. Denison, a cavalry troop under his younger brother George, and most of the companies of the 2nd Battalion, Volunteer Militia Rifles of Canada—a unit formed on April 26, 1860, largely to facilitate preparations for the Prince of Wales’ visit.”

In addition to fulfilling military functions, British regulars also continued to play a critical role in supplementing musical activity in Upper Canada. Indeed, it can be argued that without their assistance, some grand pageants could not have taken place at all. In Toronto in 1862, half of one orchestra was made up of regimental band members. Three years later, the largest choir ever assembled in the city was backed by three regimental bands. This further stimulated public demand for theatrical and musical performance.

The outbreak of the American Civil War and the subsequent Trent affair reignited patriotic enthusiasm and re-opened government coffers. As British regulars poured back into British North America, several new units were formed, including the Queen’s Own Rifles and the 10th Battalion Royal Grenadiers in Toronto, both of which were gazetted in 1862. But even these gestures could not hide the fact that colonial legislation proposed that year came under severe criticism and an election had to be held before it was finally passed. British taxpayers

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80 Morton, Canadian General, 15.
82 The newly-formed government of John Sandfield Macdonald met in August and passed two bills for domestic defence. The proposed budget of $500,000 was attacked by the Globe for being “too cumbersome and too costly.” See Stacey, Canada and the British Army 135, 149-150.
were still picking up the tab for a professional army of 18,000 men costing $4 million annually that, to their mind, Canadians should be paying their fair share to support.

While the colonial government could point to its support for the volunteer militia as its contribution to civil defence, what remained conveniently unspoken by Canadians was the fact that it was much cheaper to fund a volunteer militia than a standing army, and even at that, domestic critics regularly complained that appropriations for this purpose were too costly. The year after Confederation, Britain was still paying $6 million—more than 80%—toward Canadian defence, but by this time plans were already afoot to remove Imperial troops, and three years later, on November 11, 1871, the last British regulars stationed at Quebec City left for England.  

Perhaps it was a combination of ambivalence, thrift and a belief in its volunteer military force that produced the indifference with which most Canadians greeted the news. Some even welcomed the change, seeing it as an opportunity for the homegrown militia to finally come out from behind the shadow of Imperial forces. In part, this sentiment may also have been the logical outcome of a country whose citizens’ wilful lack of familiarity with the realities of equipping and running a professional military had long been encouraged by their own militia units. As one such volunteer observed in 1870:

Let England withdraw every regiment tomorrow if she so wills it; we shall miss the social qualities of the officers, and the familiar faces of the most charming of our women won from us by men whose choices approve their taste; we shall miss the welcome presence of a grave and respectable soldiery; our farmers daughters will lose many good husbands and the country a wealth of useful settlers; we shall gain a priceless amount of self-reliance and the money now expended on the accommodation of Her Majesty’s troops will be applied to promote the efficiency of our own militia.  

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84 Quoted in Morton, *Ministers and Generals*, 11.
The period between the British withdrawal and the end of the century witnessed some small changes in Canadian defence policy. The country created the semblance of its own standing army in 1883, and began to construct a bureaucratic framework necessary for its operation. Throughout, however, the volunteer militia maintained its dominant role in the country’s defence plans and for most Canadians, including those in Toronto, became the public face of military affairs.  

Continuing to rely upon the British pledge that its forces would come to the Dominion’s aid in times of crisis, militia policy became a fiscal, rather than a martial, preoccupation among Members in the House. Liberal MP David Miller exemplified such attitudes when during a debate in 1875, he asserted that “...in a country situated as we were, not likely to be involved in war, and having a large demand upon our resources for ordinary public improvements, it was highly desirable to have our military affairs conducted as cheaply as possible.”

What was approved became an annual contest known informally as “Colonel’s Day,” where militia representatives sitting as elected MPs jockeyed for a share of the spoils for their particular unit. The result was that little thought was given to actual military matters, in favour of individual unit status and prestige, a situation that failed to meaningfully improve the overall condition of the country’s defence. Even successive condemnations of the progressively worsening state of affairs appeared to have little effect. Less than a year after the British troop withdrawal, reports were already circulating in inspection reports from Levis and Kingston that “the troops were not as smart or as clean as ought to be, after making all allowances,” and that

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85 Federal legislation creating a standing army was passed on May 25, 1883, making very meagre provisions. “It allowed the government to raise a troop of cavalry, three companies of infantry, and three batteries of artillery for permanent service.” See Morton, Ministers and Generals, 65.
86 According to Morton, this mindset “would remain the essential basis for Canadian militia policy until 1896, and to some extent, even the First World War.” See Morton, Canadian General, 48.
87 Quote taken from Morton, Ministers and Generals, 14.
88 Of the 206 MPs in 1874, 43 were in some way identified with the Canadian militia. The number shrank slightly, to 40 in 1878. See Morton, Ministers and Generals, 201.
“the memory of the well-disciplined British garrison was fading fast.” By 1890, military inspections at Halifax showed that the “stagnation of twenty years” had taken its toll. “Military stores had become museums, “filled with an accumulation of worn-out and worthless equipment, obsolete military stores and condemned utensils....” Outdated knowledge was as significant as outdated equipment because even officers who were aware of the shortcomings of the force looked back to an antiquated model.”

It is perhaps not surprising then that many observers chose to make comments about musical, rather than military matters. Reports on the quality of militia bands of the period tend to emphasize presentation over performance, suggesting that writers may have lacked the required musical training necessary to assess the caliber of playing. Militia inspections from 1869-70 are, on the whole, favourable toward a number of military bands, including the West Durham Battalion which was praised as “One of the best bands in the district.” The 29th Battalion in Hamilton was characterized as “a fair band of 11 musicians.” Likewise, bands could just as easily be criticized for improper behaviour. One commanding officer reported that his “bandmaster was improperly attired in morning suit and was no doubt drunk,” while another reported his band members for being “late for parade and [having] appeared without a drum.”

While on the whole, Toronto militia units fared better during this period than others in the country, their reliance upon members to supplement the small federal allowances meant that a great deal of emphasis had to be placed upon revenue-generating, rather than military, activities. The transformation went unchallenged. “In the conservative and patriotic atmosphere of Toronto, military activities were normally popular, provided they did not interfere with trade.

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89 Quoted in Morton, Ministers and Generals, 33.
90 Morton, Ministers and Generals, 96.
91 Although the source does not provide dates for all citations quoted, the anecdotes most likely come from incidents in the latter half of the nineteenth century. See Jack Kopstein and Ian Pearson, The Heritage of Canadian Military Music (St. Catharines, 2002), 20.
With no regular troops on hand to outshine them, the Toronto militia could shine in their own splendour.”\textsuperscript{92}

The Queen’s Own Rifles had by this time become the city’s premiere regiment. Under the guidance of William Otter, who had joined its ranks in the early 1860s, the “Queen’s Own” came to epitomize military culture in the city, and with his assistance, at the same time functioned as “a complete social and athletic club for its members.”\textsuperscript{93} As adjutant during the latter 1860s, Otter had been responsible for overseeing the unit’s military band, and as he rose through the ranks, he sought to expand the nature and scope of regimental activities.

Militia bands proved to be a very audible way to draw attention. One observer recalled how bands had stirred up support during the Fenian scare of 1866:

\begin{quote}
On my way to school I had to pass the Grand Trunk Station. Upon this particular morning in May 1866 the alluring sound of the fife and drum led me to cross the railway tracks and join the crowd at the platform. The volunteers of Peel had been called to repel the Fenian invasion. The band struck up the tune of Tramp Tramp Tramp the boys are marching. The men began to sing and the crowd cheered and the train pulled out for Toronto…\textsuperscript{94}
\end{quote}

In 1872 a fife band, made up of members from the city’s Orange Young Britons, joined the unit, and an amateur theatre troupe was created, “to help diversify the entertainments provided by the band.” In order to cope with the increasing costs associated with these initiatives, Otter incorporated popular attractions such as hot air balloons to entice bigger crowds to attend regimental events, and in 1876 began holding church parades, where the regiment in full regalia would march from one point to another to sing and attend a sermon. The latter event proved so popular that it was soon adopted by other militia units in the city and sometimes

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\textsuperscript{92} Morton, \textit{Canadian General}, 55.  \\
\textsuperscript{93} Morton, \textit{Canadian General}, 50.  \\
\textsuperscript{94} Quoted in Kopstein and Pearson, \textit{Heritage}, 21.  
\end{flushright}
occurred twice in one year.\textsuperscript{95} Crowds lined the streets to watch—and sometimes walk alongside—the uniformed, neatly-ordered columns of men, marching to the music of their respective bands.

Those regiments—the Governor General’s Body Guard and the 10\textsuperscript{th} Battalion Volunteer militia—although equally full of pomp and ceremony, tended to follow the lead of the Queen’s Own. The Body Guards had long been associated with the ultra-conservative Denison family of the city and were so overloaded with officers that the head of the Canadian militia observed in 1890 that there were “practically no privates in the ranks.”\textsuperscript{96} The Grenadiers had struggled financially during the 1870s and the appointment of Colonel William Stollery in 1875, described as “a small-time builder and contractor in Yorkville,” weakened its social prestige. An ensuing financial scandal in which Stollery was implicated eventually led to its being disbanded by the Militia department, but soon after a new battalion—the 10\textsuperscript{th} Royal Grenadiers—led by Toronto’s chief constable Henry J. Grassett, took its place. In spite of the positive outcome, the episode illustrated a central weakness of the existing militia organization, namely, that “it found itself compelled to operate under both military discipline and the informal rules of a social club.”\textsuperscript{97} This only further distorted a public image that was already moving away from the reality of military life.

The public’s exposure to the so-called “military experience” became even more surreal when in 1886, the Queen’s Own Rifles inaugurated sham battles between militia units in High Park, and later the Don Valley. These proved so popular that audiences often spilled over into the war games themselves. Spectators walked among and between opposing sides, creating a kind of fantasy battleground, which bore no resemblance to the grim reality of actual combat.

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\textsuperscript{95} Morton, \textit{Canadian General}, 57, 70, 71.
\textsuperscript{96} Morton, \textit{Ministers and Generals}, 104.
\textsuperscript{97} Moron, \textit{Canadian General}, 78.
\end{flushleft}
Recalling the inhospitable conditions he endured on his way to the Riel Rebellion of 1885, Colonel George Denison reflected this sentiment, underscoring the illusion “that war was more a manly triumph over the obstacles of nature than massive and indiscriminate slaughter.”

One historian of the Winnipeg Rifles chose to dwell on musical confrontations, recounting that in the Metis rebellion of 1885 “[t]he brass band, particularly during the last few months of the campaign…improved wonderfully and was the pride and joy of the force. There was almost a row in the artillery lines because some members of Colonel Otter’s force ventured to speak disparagingly of the 90th band.”

The idea that drill exercises would suffice as battle training created a precedent that was subsequently replicated in the public schools of Toronto and elsewhere. With the return of military drill classes in 1877, a new raison d’être also emerged for music in the school system. The seemingly logical combination of regimental band music with bold new programs of music not only enhanced the profile of the local volunteer militia units, but also added legitimacy to the hope that this combination represented yet another way to counteract some of the less-palatable musical activity that had been brought on by modernity.

CONCLUSION

As we have seen, churches and military organizations contributed significantly to musical activity in Toronto during the last half of the nineteenth century. In attracting trained musicians of exceptional ability, the city’s churches became centres of excellence for both choral and instrumental performance, which in turn encouraged the growth of secular institutions promoting

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98 Berger, Sense of Power, 236.
100 The practice of combining physical activity with military exercises had originated in Sweden in the early 19th century. It was introduced in Prussian schools in 1846, but did not become popular as a means of promoting national culture and military prowess in Britain until the 1890s. See McNeill, Keeping Together in Time, 138-139.
similar standards and practices. While the Protestant churches were by far the most numerous in the city, their musical output varied, both in terms of class and taste. Nowhere was this more evident than in the case of the Salvation Army, whose activities challenged some of the most fundamental aspects of mainstream Protestant religious practice, as they would have been understood by the late-Victorian middle class. Nevertheless, the popularity of the Army forced the Protestant mainstream to come to grips with modernity in a way that it had hitherto been able to avoid, and despite initial attempts to reject it outright, spokesmen soon realized that change was inevitable. As part of this dialogue, many church musicians came increasingly to rely upon popular formats, in the process creating a hybrid model emphasizing size and spectacle as a means of attracting audiences.

The city’s volunteer militia bands augmented this emerging musical format by presenting a model of military discipline and ordered precision, exemplified by their regular appearances at sham battles, church parades and other public occasions. Although these presentations revealed little about the skills required for modern warfare, they were nonetheless extremely popular with Torontonians and complemented larger aspirations on the part of the middle class for a society embracing the values of muscular Christianity and good citizenship.

Collectively, church and military music did more than simply provide musical entertainment. They fostered national-imperial sentiments by aurally linking traditions of the British Empire to the promise of the new Dominion, displaying both cultural refinement and military discipline in their pageantry and performance. Together, both showed that under the right circumstances, music could counteract many of the deleterious effects of urban life by

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101 The contrast was particularly evident in some areas. See for example, Lynn Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure and Identity in Late-Nineteenth Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 140-188.
rousing the moral instinct and encouraging a desire for rational order, self-discipline and deference to authority. The model proved irresistible to a new generation of school promoters.
This chapter returns to examine musical activity in the public schools of Toronto, as it developed in the first decade following the retirement of Egerton Ryerson. This period is critical, for it was during this time that the subject moved out of the classroom and into the city itself, in effect becoming the ‘public face’ of Toronto’s school system. This period also witnessed a marked change in the fervour and force with which educational ideas were implemented. Under the watchful eye of chief school inspector James L. Hughes, Toronto’s school system was transformed from a neglected bureaucratic backwater into one of the leading examples of modern education in North America.

In his attempt to fuse Froebelian concepts of child-centred learning with Victorian desires for disciplined precision, Hughes increasingly relied upon spectacles of school music to demonstrate that, in fact, the two were not only compatible, but complementary. The strategy was limited to church-related events initially, but by century’s end it was being used in several areas, including militarism, industrial relations and social reform. This cultural expression reached its peak in 1897, with the involvement of public school choirs in a host of events, including Diamond Jubilee celebrations for Queen Victoria. The approach was significant not only for the image it projected of public education, but also because it became the aesthetic template for subsequent musical activity in the schools of Toronto and the rest of the Dominion well into the twentieth century.
As part of a growing web of modern institutions, schools became focal points for social reform in their communities. Nowhere was this more evident than in large cities such as Toronto, where the process of industrialization and urbanization had been so rapid and intense. Given the ongoing debate concerning newer entertainment forms, it perhaps is not surprising that school officials would have turned to what they believed were morally trustworthy sources of music, in an effort to counteract possible ill effects. School officials devised and adapted many of the system’s public occasions involving music to include complementary themes, resulting in a mutually-reinforcing partnership that presented idealized representations imbuing cherished late-Victorian middle-class values embracing order, patriotism and muscular Christianity.

In coming to terms with modernity, Toronto school officials recognized powerful allies in mainstream religious and military outfits. Music represented the cultural binding agent in helping each contribute to the fashioning of a public persona for the city’s schools. School concerts and parades marking special occasions were often the only opportunity most citizens had to see what was being done in the classroom, and as such, these events came to constitute a critical part of the system’s self identity. The image conjured was one that was simultaneously energetic and confident, yet reassuringly familiar. In the face of uncertainty and rapid change, the display of ordered pageantry and cultural harmony evoked by school children at these events presented hope that the future remained bright for the city and the nation. Thus, even in the face of a rising tide of cheap, low-brow amusements on offer in the city, the schools would awaken in their charges a taste for entertainment that was both culturally uplifting and socially acceptable. This chapter highlights some of the key events which initiated and encouraged this transformation.
Only two years before Egerton Ryerson retired as Chief Superintendent of Education for the province of Ontario, Toronto’s school board approved the appointment of the city’s third school inspector. At twenty eight, James L. Hughes possessed few of the qualifications expected of such an official responsibility. Yet, in his subsequent forty-four years in that position, not only would Hughes revitalize the school system after years of apathy and neglect at the hands of an indifferent city council, but his efforts would eventually catapult him to the forefront of modern educational thought, making Toronto a model for progressive educators to emulate across the continent.

Musically speaking, relatively little is known of Hughes’ early life. As part of his studies at the Toronto Normal School in 1865 he studied music as a subject, but the only mention made of it is in reference to being scolded for having forgotten his music books, and, on another occasion, for being in the wrong seat at a music lesson.¹ Lorne Pierce’s 1924 biography (written during Hughes’ lifetime and closely scrutinized by him) states that he did sing, and that he helped organize “concerts” while at his first teaching post in Frankford (Brantford?). Apparently, his vocal abilities left much to be desired for, as Hughes himself recounted with some humour in a short anecdote, others also found it lacking.

Three weeks after I began to teach in Frankford, Oronhyetekha, one of the ablest men Canada ever produced, came to practice (sic) medicine in Frankford....We worked together in the Division of Sons of Temperance. We even sang in the Methodist church choir. We sang only once. By general consensus we were

allowed to give up public singing. People kindly said, ‘they thought they would admire us more and like us better, if we did not sing.’²

In a speech many years later, Hughes provided another glimpse into the shortcoming, when he confessed to an audience that because his own lack of an “enlightened education in art,” the development of “the apperceptive centre” of appreciation had simply not occurred. As Hughes put it, “I am never so conscious of a lack of education as when I stand with a painter before a great picture, or walk with an architect in a grand cathedral. He sees and feels and thinks a thousand things, unseen, unfelt, unthought by me.”³

Hughes eventually moved to the model school in Toronto in 1867, becoming its principal in 1870. When the post of public school inspector was made vacant by the death of James A. Porter in early 1874, Hughes applied and, to some surprise, was hired. At just twenty eight, he was young by the standard of the day, and unlike his counterparts in large cities, he did not hold a university degree. Unfazed by such circumstances, Hughes began at once to reform a school system that had languished for years under his predecessor.

By the early 1870s, public education had become an accepted fact in Toronto, however, political apathy and chronic underfunding had led to overcrowding, substandard facilities and attendance problems. Rather than make excuses as Porter had done, Hughes set about identifying the weaknesses and making explicit recommendations in his annual reports to the board. These contained a mixture of bureaucratic reforms and pedagogic initiatives which would eventually become commonplace, but, at the time, represented bold innovation. For philosophical inspiration, Hughes drew upon the thought of Frederich Froebel, whose work emphasized child-centred education and learning through play. Among other things, this would

² Pierce, Fifty Years of Public Service, 54-55.
lead him to champion the introduction of kindergartens and playgrounds to Toronto, catapulting Hughes into the international arena as an expert and public speaker for the cause.

For many, the change was long overdue. Urbanization had made more visible the issue of youth in the city’s streets, in need of moral direction, and critics seized upon better public education as the solution. “No wonder, then,” one writer in the Globe opined, “we have crowds of rude, ill-behaved and uneducated lads and girls crowding our thoroughfares on Saturday and Sunday evenings—young people whose education both moral and scholastic is yet to be begun, or is of the most elementary and unsatisfactory character.”

Hughes emphasized the importance of developing what he called a child’s “artistic Power” and how this creative spirit should be harnessed to develop habits of good citizenship, deportment and character. This implied reconciling the competing concepts of freedom and order, a conflict transcended through the presence of music. Hughes immediately began to press for the rejuvenation of vocal music in the curriculum and in his first report to the board in December 1874, he was able to state: “I am glad that I have been instructed by your honourable Board to have the subject also introduced into all grades in our schools. Like drawing, it will be a source of enlivenment and relief, especially in our over-crowded Junior Classes.”

Since 1871, both music and drawing had been included as an optional “permissive unit” in curricular guidelines issued by the Department of Education; however, there was no uniformity or consistency in its delivery. In his 1874 report, Hughes identified the challenge, and served notice that things would soon change.

I have not yet been able to arrange a satisfactory plan and programme for the teaching of this subject. One confines himself almost exclusively to theory;

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5 The word “Power” is capitalized in the original. See Pierce, *Fifty Years of Public Service*, 90-91.
the other, to practice. I find that the two teachers adopt very different methods at the present. I intend at an early day to submit a uniform method. In the meantime, I will simply state my conviction, that one competent teacher, who would instruct the teachers at stated times, and who would adopt a natural and consecutive plan in his teaching would be sufficient for the City for some years. The regular teachers would be able, with very few exceptions, to review the teaching done by the Special Master, after a short course of training by him. Music could in this manner be made to form a part of the exercises in each class every day, and surely fifteen minutes per day would produce much better results in every way than a single lesson of an hour’s duration once a week.7

Two years later, Hughes submitted a unified system for teaching music based on ones currently in use in the United States, preceding similar initiatives from the Department of Education by almost twenty years.8 The initiative was not without its critics, however. Debate had moved from arguments about the worth of public education to discussions of its purpose and content. Even as Hughes delivered his first report in December 1874, school board members took sides. In the pages of the Globe, Trustee Bain complained, “There was a multitude of subjects taught already. In fact there was too many. The object should be to put the “tools,” as it were, in the hands of the children so that they might educate themselves. He looked upon these subjects, music and drawing, as mere luxuries for the children.”9

Ultimately, music as well as drawing did remain part of the curriculum, although board tolerance of such subjects was not a given. In February 1877, the Board discussed a proposal that would have introduced pianos or perhaps organs into city schools. Bain argued that it be denied, citing the usual reasons of cost and necessity, concluding his address by singing. “He felt that the human voice was much more beautiful unassisted, and proceeded to prove this to his fellow trustees by favouring them with an old Scottish ballad. The board was so moved that it

7 SMA, TBEAR (1874), 23-24.
8 In May 1877, the Department did issue a statement about music in the curriculum, but it provided little more than general guidelines for its inclusion. See Carter, “James L. Hughes,” 41. For the ten-tiered program as outlined by Hughes, see George Campbell Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music in Ontario” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1962), 140.
even declined permission for a concert to be held to raise money to purchase an organ.” The episode is interesting for a number of reasons. First, the fact that Trustee Bain in his official capacity would think it appropriate to sing as a form of argument suggests a certain level of middle-class familiarity and comfort with such display, lending further credence to previous assertions as to the ubiquity of music in Victorian culture. Second, Bain’s distinction echoed earlier arguments made about the types of musical expression appropriate in religious worship. Third, although the issue was ostensibly framed as one of cultural preference, the fact that music was being employed as a persuasive force to deny music may now be viewed as somewhat ironic. Nevertheless, Bain was—at least during the late 1870s—triumphant. Indeed, pianos and other instruments would eventually make their way into schools, but for the moment, circumstances militated against it.

During the first few years of Hughes’ career as inspector, Torontonians expressed a variety of viewpoints about the state of education in their city. For some, anything beyond fundamental numeracy and literacy was superfluous, an attitude that surfaced periodically in the city’s newspapers. As one writer quipped, “nothing should be taught in our Public Schools except the usual branches of a sound English education, which, if thoroughly taught, will be as much as the great majority of those who are educated in those schools will require.” Others noted the impact of compulsory schooling upon the family unit. One writer lamented the “poor weary mother” who “patiently endures the drudgery” at home because her children have no time to help her. Nor, the writer continued, is there time for a child to enjoy such outside activities as learning the piano.” A newspaper reporter who had been sent out to investigate the situation

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11 *Globe*, 3 February 1877.
observed curtly: “There were too many subjects, too many examinations, and too many tasks to be done at home.”

There was another, more insidious threat that loomed increasingly large during the period—the perceived menace posed by urban youth. As early as 1866, the Journal of Education was warning its readers to remain vigilant in their duty to prevent young people from falling victim to the plethora of moral hazards presented to them every day in the streets of the modern city. The youth who had already succumbed was not hard to spot, and his kind had to be quarantined:

... a cigar in his mouth, a swagger in his walk, impudence in his face, a care-for-nothing in his manner...Stop him, he is too fast; he can’t see himself as others see him; he don’t [sic] know his speed. Stop him, ere tobacco ruins his nerves; ere pride ruins his character, ere the loafer masters the man, ere good ambition and manly strength gave way to low pursuits and brutish aims. Stop such boys. They are legion, they are the shame of their families, the disgrace of their towns, the sad and solemn reproach of themselves.

As the century progressed, schools appeared to present a logical vantage point from which to thwart such moral degeneration. While Hughes recognized this fact, he was also quick to point out that the blame for the current situation lay not only in the system’s failure. When sufficiently provoked, Hughes responded to such criticism with humour and wit. In a letter to the Globe in November 1881, he summed up his defence against a variety of recent criticism, stating: “It is easy to blame the school. If a child catches cold, it is astonishing how often the school caused it; if a child is allowed to remain on the street, with what companions mama knoweth not, mama will nevertheless be quite content to attribute its coarse manners or bad language to the evil companions met at school.”

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15 Globe, 18 November 1881.
Although Hughes was making a valid point, criticism such as this made it all the more important for school officials to refute such claims. One of the most obvious ways to demonstrate the worth of public education was to make visible to the public some of what was being accomplished in the classroom. Orderly public events featuring school children represented a convincing public relations counteroffensive, and the more spectacular, the better.

The vice-regal visit to Toronto early in the fall of 1879 provided just such an opportunity. Trotting out groups of school children at official events had become a familiar sight in Toronto by this time. However, it had not been done on such a grand scale; this time, they would all be singing.

Preparations began in early September and by mid-month City Council had struck a reception committee and arrangements were made to erect “two very substantial galleries...one on each side of Lorne Street, extending from Esplanade Street to Front Street with sufficient space for seating about 8,000 pupils.” In his Annual Report, Hughes was careful to point out: “Although the procession took place during the first week of the session, and before the pupils had fully recovered the steadiness of school discipline, they behaved in a manner creditable alike to themselves and their teachers.” To buttress the claim, Hughes quoted directly from the Reception Committee report:

> Your Committee also desire to put on record their sense of gratification at the manner in which the pupils conducted themselves on the occasion of the reception. They feel that the Board should express its high approval to the teachers for the discipline and good behavior (sic) of the pupils under their charge.

There is no mention of singing in these reports, but, in fact, the children did sing at some point during the ceremony, for school board meeting minutes of September 3 note that there are

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16 SMA, “Report No. 2 of the Special Committee on Reception to the Governor General, 17 September 1879,” Appendix 52, in Minutes of the Toronto School Board (henceforth, “MTSB”) (1879), 90.
17 SMA, AR (1879), 29.
18 SMA, AR (1879), 29.
“several important errors appearing in the songs to be sung by the children,” and that “the Inspector be instructed to get a correct copy printed for presentation to the Marquis and Princess.”

Hughes’ report also remains silent on subsequent accusations that some teachers had not bothered to attend the reception at all. Nevertheless, the event was hailed in the local press as a complete success, and by extension, demonstrated that public schools were, indeed, capable of providing an effective training ground for order, refinement and good citizenship.

In terms of school participation, the 1879 celebration bore many of the characteristics by now becoming familiar to the residents of Toronto. Children were dutifully paraded before enthusiastic crowds of parents and others, and special preparations—in this case, bleachers—were constructed in order to accommodate them as a distinct group. However, its sheer scale and the deliberate inclusion of singing as the primary activity in many ways set it apart from its predecessors. Here was tangible proof that order, harmony and middle-class cultural refinement were possible, even as urban life became faster, increasingly unfamiliar and more chaotic.

Through the agency of the public schools, citizens were able to experience it themselves, and though aurally fleeting, it set the stage for more ambitious initiatives in the ensuing decade.

Apart from the new singing classes and these periodic displays, music also made its way into other parts of the curriculum. There is some evidence to suggest that some Toronto students were exposed to instrumental music, through the introduction of military drill exercises. In addition to reviving the music program in Toronto schools, Hughes had championed the re-invigoration of military drill exercises into the curriculum. As noted previously, some military drill classes had taken place in Toronto during the 1860s, but general domestic ambivalence,

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19 SMA, MTSB, 3 September 1879, 83.
20 See SMA, MTSB, 17 September, 1 October 1879.
21 Ryerson had included a course of study in military drill as part of the 1865 Grammar School Act. In Toronto, its introduction had been recommended by a committee, but the Board refused its support. The 1867
coupled with the chronic reluctance on the part of successive governments to fund a standing army, had led to a general decline in interest. Subscribing to the myth of the hardy volunteer, Hughes sought to reinvigorate public enthusiasm for a citizen army, seeing drill in schools as an ideal way of providing city militia regiments with well-trained recruits. Military drill in schools seemed a logical way to nip the “boy problem” in the bud. As Burke notes, in the minds of many, drill in schools appeared to supply a ready-made cure for many of the social ills affecting youth:

Indeed, the sight of a group of adolescent boys responding as one, to the barked commands of authority, was a reassuring contrast to the swaggering, insolent, foul-mouthed, cigarette-smoking toughs who were becoming a source of annoyance in towns and cities. Military drill proclaimed a triad revered by late-Victorian society—order, efficiency and obedience. The formation of cadet corps was the embodiment of a state of behaviour, pleasing to a large, and influential, segment of society.  

Hughes lobbied tirelessly for its uniform implementation across the city, finally succeeding in 1876. He appointed John Thompson, who had trained under George T. Denison and had joined the city’s Royal Grenadiers militia in 1874. Originally hired as a truant officer in the fall of 1875, Thompson took on the additional responsibility in the autumn of 1876, commencing classes shortly thereafter. Promoted to the rank of captain by his militia unit in 1879, it was Thompson who subsequently dominated the content and delivery of drill classes in the schools, and unlike other subject masters, he regularly accompanied Hughes to school board meetings.

*Annual Report* notes that George T. Denison had resigned as drill instructor for the Senior boys. See SMA, *TBEAR* (1862), 36-43; *AR* (1867), 6.  
22 Gerry J. Burke, "Good for the Boy and the Nation: Military Drill and the Cadet Movement in Ontario Public Schools, 1865-1911" (University of Toronto, 1996). 89.  
23 Thompson drilled senior boys taught by female teachers, while headmasters trained first and second division boys on “Militia Drill and Exercises” a half-hour twice weekly. See Burke, “Good for the Boy,” 110.
The inclusion of drill in Toronto schools held much promise for Hughes. In his 1876 report, he confidently declared:

During the past year, this subject has been introduced more systematically in the higher classes of boys. Captain Thompson, training officer, gives valuable assistance in drilling the classes of senior boys, which are taught by female teachers. The programme followed is that presented for the Province by the Education Department. I hope the students may soon be sufficiently drilled in justifying the Board in holding an Annual Review, as is done in London by Sir Charles Reed.”

The following year, Hughes made no mention of school music classes per se, but in his justification of drill, alluded to its presence. Drill, he argued “should be more thoroughly taught in our schools. Whether it be desirable or not to train up a nation of soldiers, all thoughtful educators agree that it is of great importance:

1. That the physical systems of the pupils should be developed. The more carefully this is attended to, the more easy will it be to secure the natural growth of the mental and moral nature.
2. The pupils should acquire an erect bearing, a graceful carriage and a correct method of walking.

Hughes continued, arguing that it was the addition of music that made the exercise truly rewarding:

These ends can be gained in no other way so well as by the “setting up” drill of the British Army, and a simple, reasonable series of calisthenic (sic) exercises. The latter have been introduced during the past year in most of the primary classes by the regular teachers, in connection with music. The results are very satisfactory. There is no other means of disciplining classes, and getting rid of the accumulation of superfluous energy in a school-room, which is so natural and so successful as the practice of exercise in time with music. In some of the higher classes of boys drill has been fairly taught. In classes in which the boys and girls are taught together, the master takes the boys of the higher two classes at drill, where the lady teacher takes the girls of the same two classes at needlework.\(^{24}\)

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\(^{24}\) The gendered aspects of drill and callisthenics are explored in more detail below. Quoted in SMA, *TBEAR* (1879), 27-28.
The source of “music” to which Hughes refers is not clear, and thus remains open to speculation. As we have seen pianos were shunned by the board as an unnecessary expense, and there was no program of instrumental music within the schools at this time. Perhaps students sang as they marched, however no other such reference appears in school board correspondence for the period. Perhaps their association was such a natural pairing for Hughes that mentioning it was simply stating the obvious. Regardless, the connection would become much more pronounced in the years that followed, thanks in large part to the intensification of an imperial military spirit among many Canadians, and the concomitant popularity of cadet corps.

Yet another area in which musical activity would have been present was in another of Hughes’ initiatives—the kindergarten. On a philosophical, as well as concrete level, the kindergarten made music one its primary methods for teaching young children. The concept had originated with Friedrich Froebel, a German-born disciple of Pestalozzi who saw childhood as a distinct phase in human development. From this premise, Froebel constructed a model of education that emphasized freedom, discovery and play as learning strategies, all of which became central elements in the concept of the kindergarten.

Froebelian-inspired education eventually found its way to the United States, where it fit well with similar pedagogic approaches collectively referred to as “the new education.” Hughes claimed to have first read about it in a magazine, but credited his decision to support it to a visit he made to Boston, shortly after becoming Inspector in 1874. The morning after being invited by the hotel proprietor’s grand-daughter to visit her kindergarten, Hughes became convinced by what he saw that kindergartens could and should be made part of Toronto’s public school system. He later recalled:

I saw an educational process that was intended to develop vital centres of power and skill and character, instead of merely storing the memory and giving an
abstract training in reasoning. I saw a series of processes by which the child himself by play and work started to grow in his own life—constructive power, artistic power, mathematical power, and especially his own individual power; by which he had revealed to him his relationship to home and society; and by which he became an independent, individual, progressive character; and wrought into his life, by executing his own plans, the apperceiving centres for law in home, school and nation, and of recognition of the laws that bring harmony to his own life, and the universe.\(^\text{25}\)

In subsequent annual reports, Hughes repeatedly called for the adoption of the kindergarten as part of Toronto’s public school system. Finally, in April of 1882, the Board sent Hughes and school trustee Roden to St. Louis, where a successful kindergarten program was running as part of the public school system, under the direction of Susan Blow. Both men returned, more determined than ever, to replicate the American model they had observed. Blow was invited to speak to the Board that fall and the following summer, approval had been given to open North America’s second public school kindergarten, under the direction of Miss Ada Marean.\(^\text{26}\) Located in the Louisa Street School, the first class consisted of 70 students. The following year, classes were opened at the Niagara and Victoria Street Schools, and by 1890, 24 of the city’s 50 schools had kindergartens in operation, employing 38 teachers and 42 assistants.\(^\text{27}\)

Thus, by the early 1880s a new curricular foundation had been laid for musical activity in Toronto’s public schools. At about the same time, Hughes began exploring other ways to augment musical activity. Tapping into Toronto’s vibrant musical community, he approached the school board in 1881 to seek approval for F. H. Torrington, music director at the Metropolitan Church, to provide after-school lessons for a modest fee. In spite of his

\(^{25}\) Pierce, *Fifty Years of Public Service*, 90-91.

\(^{26}\) Marean would later become Hughes’ second wife. For a general description of the early development of the kindergarten program in Toronto during Hughes’ time, see Carter, “James L. Hughes,” 105-110.

\(^{27}\) Honora M. Cochrane (ed.), *Centennial Story: The Board of Education for the City of Toronto, 1850-1950* (Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1950), 89.
enthusiasm, the board declined to pursue the initiative.\textsuperscript{28} Hughes remained undaunted. Perhaps the 1879 vice-regal visit had sparked his imagination, or he simply recognized the public relations potential of such activities; regardless, in his annual report that same year, Hughes also recommended that a yearly school music festival be held “for the purpose of showing the proficiency of the pupils in this important branch.”\textsuperscript{29}

Three years later, Hughes got his wish. In his report submitted at the end of 1884, he stated somewhat prophetically:

The Children’s Concert in connection with the Centennial Celebration was the greatest musical event in connection with the history of the schools. A chorus of over six hundred children from the Public and Separate Schools sang under the direction of Mr. E. W. Schuh. The concert was a most satisfactory one in every respect, and I trust that a similar Concert may in future be one of the annual events in connection with the closing exercises of our schools.\textsuperscript{30}

This, too, became a reality, for as Trowsdale reports, “from that date an annual public school concert was held in Toronto.”\textsuperscript{31}

As successful as the public concert may have been, by Hughes’ own admission, the regular teaching of school music was less so. In December of 1883, an additional instructor, A. P. Perrin, had been hired to assist with music classes, but the following year, Hughes still had to concede that the “progress in this subject is on the whole not so satisfactory as I could wish it to be.”\textsuperscript{32} There is no mention of a public school concert in 1885, but the following year would see school concerts reach new heights, with the inclusion of a children’s choir in the Toronto Musical Festival.

\textsuperscript{28} See Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 472.
\textsuperscript{29} SMA, 	extit{TBEAR} (1881), 25
\textsuperscript{30} As noted in the previous chapter, Schuh was choirmaster at St. James Cathedral. See SMA, 	extit{TBEAR} (1884), 22.
\textsuperscript{31} Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 490.
\textsuperscript{32} Perrin was hired at an annual salary of $600. See SMA, 	extit{MTSB} (1883), 111. For Hughes comment, see SMA, 	extit{TBEAR} (1884) 22.
The festival was organized by F. H. Torrington. Although it is impossible to definitively explain why a mass choir of school children ended up becoming a part of his three-day event, it is likely that his prior affiliation with Hughes had something to do with it. Torrington’s plan for the 1886 festival certainly would have appealed to Hughes’ desire for such an activity. When one considers that his name appears on the Festival Board of Management and its Music Committee, it makes sense that Hughes would have been involved in advancing the idea. He would also have been well placed to steer the proposal past any bureaucratic obstacles that might have interfered with its realization.

Regardless, the resulting partnership forged a symbolic bond between the schools and the elite element of Toronto’s musical community, while in turn according status to both. Roughly put, cultural refinement bred good citizenship. The children’s concert became a means by which to publicly acknowledge the fact that schools were firmly onside in the struggle to inoculate youth against the perceived perils lurking behind the newer forms of entertainment spawned by modernity. As indicated in its promotional material, the strategy was considered and deliberate: “As it is to the school children of to-day that we must look for the future patrons of our concerts and musical enterprises, the wisdom of interesting the little ones in the good work of the Festival is too apparent to need comment.”

The official program, published for the event, indicates what inspired Torrington to propose a major musical event for Toronto. “The credit of the inception of the enterprise is due to Mr. F. H. Torrington, whose ambition for many years past has been to see established in this city a series of music festivals along the lines of those held with such signal success in the great

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cities of the United States and England.”

Employing a strategy similar to that of Patrick Gilmore in the financing of Boston’s 1869 Peace Jubilee (in which Torrington had played a significant role), Torrington issued a circular in early 1886. In it he solicited support from what the program described as “leading citizens and musical organizations.” His pitch played upon two themes: first, as the leading city in English Canada, Toronto should now begin to emulate the other great cities of the world by hosting such a spectacle and, second, in supporting it private citizens and public leaders not only demonstrated their own cultural refinement, but also held it up as a musical model for the entire population of Toronto.

The strategy worked. On board from the outset were music dealer-turned-financier Samuel Nordheimer, and prominent distiller George Gooderham, both of whom oversaw the newly-formed Toronto Musical Festival Association as president and honorary president, respectively. Early on, Torrington also appeared before the Toronto School Board to secure its endorsement for the venture. The matter was referred to the Board’s Management Committee, which recommended in its report of February 17 “[t]hat permission be granted to the Musical Festival Association to train such pupils of the Public Schools as are capable of taking part in a concert at the Musical Festival, to be held in June next, the musical instruction to be given in the schools, at the expense of the Musical Festival Association.”

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34 There is no other primary source with which to authenticate the statement, however, Torrington’s name appears as a member of the “Advertising and Printing Committee; thus, there is little reason to doubt its validity. See TRL, BRSC, Toronto Musical Festival Text-Book and Programme, 10.
35 TRL, BRSC, Toronto Musical Festival Official Text-Book and Programme, 5, 10.
36 Nordheimer, who had established Canada’s “pioneer music speciality house” in Toronto with his brother Albert in 1844, went on to become the president of the Federal Bank of Canada. See EMC, s.v. Nordheimer, Samuel.” In addition to his initial business interest, Gooderham also became involved in finance, becoming the president of the Bank of Toronto. He also helped Torrington found the Toronto Academy of Music in 1888. See G. Mercer Adam, Toronto: Old and New (Toronto: Mail Printing Company, 1891), 134, 195.
37 SMA, “Committee Minutes and Reports, Management Committee, Public School Board, Jan. 29, 1886 to December 26, 1889,” Report No. 2, February 17, 1886, II.A.1.i. C1 S3.
Some kind of prior arrangement must have been made to approve the venture, for a public notice appearing in the Telegram on February 1 advised “[s]tudents residing west of Simcoe and south of Queen’s Park intending to join the Festival Chorus” to “meet for organization” that evening at Old St. Andrew’s Hall. Whether Torrington had sought, or been granted permission to proceed prior to receiving official sanction remains unclear. However, the fact that the declaration of February 17 was forthcoming and was free of any censure for premature action suggests that some accommodation had been made.

A further indication of the festival’s broader appeal lies in the fact that the Association met its goal of raising $25,000 in order to cover fees and other expenses—a considerable sum in its own right, raised in less than six months. While no official financial support came from the school board, several members did make personal contributions. The gestures may have come from Festival treasurer James McGee’s solicitation at the Board’s May 6 meeting. There, McGee requested “the influence of the members of the Board, also their aid in raising the guarantee fund necessary for the purpose.” Among the list of 446 names appearing in the festival program was that of School Inspector Hughes, as well as those of one member-at-large and both the chairs of the school board and its management committee.

Having met its financial target the Association made arrangements for the event to take place on June 15, 16 and 17. It would be centred around three major concerts and a matinee at the Mutual Street Rink, then Toronto’s largest indoor facility. Works performed would include Gounod’s Mors et Vita, Handel’s Israel in Egypt, and the special concert featuring a mass choir

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39 SMA, MTSB, (1886),” 55.
40 In addition to board chair Walter S. Lee and committee chair George McMurrich, the list includes board member Dr. W. W. Ogden. Interestingly, Torrington’s is the only church musician who appears in the list. See BRSC, Toronto Musical Festival Official Text-Book and Programme, 5-8.
of school children singing a variety of songs. Audiences would no doubt have been accustomed to hearing a mixture of musical genres at such an event, yet the inclusion of a children’s choir as a signature highlight stands out precisely because it marks the first time such a blending occurred. Furthermore, organizers must have been convinced that school children could meet such rigorous musical standards, and draw a paying audience into a 3,000-seat venue.

The festival was by far the most ambitious musical undertaking the city had yet witnessed. Training the 1,400-voice children’s choir composed of students from across the city’s public and separate schools represented a monumental task in itself. The one-hundred-piece festival orchestra was made up of musicians assembled from around the Great Lakes region, including the United States, as was the adult chorus of one thousand. Several well-known performers also signed on, including American vocalists Max Heinrich and Albert King, and contralto Agnes Huntington. Noted German soprano Lilli Lehmann was also to appear. The weekend prior to the event, festival organizers launched their press campaign, placing advertisements in several of the Toronto dailies. Notices billed the event as “Canada’s Grandest Musical Event,” accompanied by details on concert dates and performances.41

The press coverage continued throughout what was touted as “festival week,” culminating in the third evening’s performance, which included the “Children’s Grand Jubilee.” Whereas the first two nights’ program had been built around major works, the final night featured a number of songs performed by the school children, interspersed among a number of classical selections. In its description of the proceedings, the World highlighted Torrington’s ability to bring order out of youthful playfulness: “The children were early in their places on the platform, and by the time Mr. Torrington appeared, their childish whisper had grown to immense

41 The Globe featured three pieces in its June 12th edition, two on the 14th, and two more the day of the first concert. On the same days, the Telegram ran two, one and six, respectively; the Mail ran ones on the 12th and another on the 15th, while the World ran two pieces on the 15th, both of which appeared on its front page.
proportions. At the first tip from the conductor’s baton, however, their attention was attracted and complete silence followed.\textsuperscript{42}

The chorus sang one stanza of Bishop’s “Hark the Rolling Drum and three songs: Richards’ “So Merrily Over the Ocean Spray,” led by St. James choirmaster E. A. Schuch; “Canada,” penned by Torrington for the occasion; and Verdi’s “Swiftly Winging.” It was Torrington’s number that stole the show, however. The lyrics made no apologies:

O Canada, fair Canada
Name ever dear to me
A home for all who love the shores
Beyond the bright blue sea
We love our land, though young it be
Its sunshine and its storm
Its faces fair and hearts sincere
Affections strong and warm

O Canada, our birthplace dear
Our home of liberty
We’ll cheer for thee, we’ll strive for thee
Though young of old be we
From youth to age we’ll love the land
Which to our fathers gave
The fruit of earnest, manly, tall
Of effort strong and brave

O land our fathers chose of yore
What do we owe to thee?
Our homes, our hearths, from thralldom clear
Each man both bold and free
We love our land
We love our flag
Beyond all others seen
God prosper our Dominion fair
Our country and our Queen

The last four lines served as the song’s chorus and, as one report noted, was topped off with a unique finale: “At a particular point in the closing verse, each child waved a small Union

\textsuperscript{42} World, 18 June 1886, 1.
Jack in the air, and the beautiful sight, together with the patriotic sentiment and excellent singing of the song created the greatest enthusiasm and the last verse had to be repeated.”

The next day, press reports gushed about the triumph of the festival in general, and the children in particular. As one paper summed it up:

The children were, of course, the chief attraction of the evening. This was their night and their jubilee—and on them rested the responsibility of bringing Toronto’s first grand Musical Festival to a successful close. When their youthful voices, with pleasing freshness and simplicity, struck up the chorus, ‘Hark to the Rolling Drum,’ the vast assemblage listened with marked attention and many a father and mother present looked with pride upon their children, whose appearance and behaviour reflected much credit upon the city.

On the other hand, little mention was made of the fact that the orchestra had performed so poorly on one of Lilli Lehmann’s solos that she had stormed off the stage, and that the children were at times so noisy that other performances became difficult to hear. Instead, a great deal was made of the fact that the festival had not only paid for itself, but actually turned a small profit. The general feeling expressed was that it should become an annual event, and calls were renewed for a purpose-built facility that could house large audiences for such occasions.

In many respects, Toronto’s first large-scale musical event simply reflected a larger cultural trend toward what Trowsdale describes as “the festival movement,” which no doubt contributed to its popularity well into the twentieth century. Similarly, pedagogic innovations such as the kindergarten and classes in vocal music and drill gained an increasing number of adherents as the century turned over. Taken together, they provided new cultural vantage points.

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43 World, 18 June 1886, 1.
44 World, 18 June 1886, 1.
45 In her memoirs, Lehmann stated that Torrington “knew so little” about the piece that afterward she “called him, in English, in the presence of the committee, a veritable ‘ass’...and he did not take umbrage, but tried to excuse himself.” Quoted in Helmut Kallamann, A History of Music in Canada, 1534-1914 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 145. Of all the dailies, the Mail was the only paper to complain of the racket of the children. See Mail, 19 June 1886, 6.
46 For example, see “Need of a Music Hall,” Newx, 17 June 1886, 2; “Reports,” World, 17 June 1886, 1, 18 June 1886, 1; “A Music Hall,” Mail, 19 June 1886, 6.
for Toronto educators to counteract many of the perceived social consequences of modernity upon the youth of the city. In associating school music with the lofty pretensions of Toronto’s respectable music community, James L. Hughes was reinforcing a vision of social harmony that enjoyed wide appeal. The rising cadre of middle-class professionals such as Hughes who were remaking the school system in their own image saw school music as part of a larger effort to imbue their charges with the moral tools necessary to comprehend a modern, urban industrial society. The tantalizing prospect of combining individual scholastic achievement with collective public display made school music the logical show-piece for officials, as it offered proof that students were being taught the essential elements of good citizenship, as understood by the Victorian middle class. It was this vision that would lay the foundation for a pattern of school music that would endure far past their time, as well as that of the students first affected by it.
CHAPTER SEVEN

SCHOOL MUSIC IN TORONTO, 1887-1897

This chapter examines the continuing development of public school music in Toronto during the decade following the first music festival, described in the previous chapter. The period is critical in understanding the place of school music in the city, for several changes occurred which established bureaucratic practices and patterns of performance that would endure well into the twentieth century. The year 1887 in particular is pivotal, most notably because this marks the arrival on the scene of Alexander Thom Cringan, a figure who not only would come to prominence as an innovator of music curriculum in Toronto, but who would also go on to influence provincial and national school music during his long career.

In many ways, Cringan’s appointment proved serendipitous. By the late 1880s, Chief School Inspector James L. Hughes had firmly established his credentials as a progressive educator. His tireless enthusiasm for change and improvement across Toronto’s school system created an environment within which many of the music instructor’s innovative ideas could germinate and, ultimately, thrive. Not only did Cringan advocate for what he believed were superior methods to teach school music to large groups of students and teachers, but he backed his claims with regular public displays of school choirs that, over time, became familiar and expected features in the city’s annual calendar of events. In so doing, public school music took on the mantle of progressive education itself, demonstrating to anxious late-Victorians that despite all of the uncertainty and chaos being wrought by modernity, schools could infuse in
their children the necessary intellectual, physical and moral qualities that would empower them to navigate what surely promised to be an equally unpredictable future. These models of character development were widely understood and had been adopted by the time Queen Victoria celebrated her Diamond Jubilee.

The success of the 1886 Musical Festival had both immediate and longer-term effects upon public education in Toronto. First, it demonstrated that such events were popular enough to be supported financially by the city. Second, the festival’s afterglow rekindled interest in the subject of music generally, and underscored the fact that even as Toronto was emerging as the de facto capital of English Canada, it still lacked a purpose-built venue to host musical events of this calibre. Third, the current tone also provided an ideal environment for Inspector James L. Hughes to further promote public displays of school music as part of his overall vision. It was in this context that he successfully recommended the appointment of another Special Instructor of Music in early 1887. Like the Inspector, Alexander Thom Cringan would not only promote his cause in the city’s schools, but would also become internationally-recognized and respected in his field.

Born in Carluke, near Glasgow, on October 13, 1866, Cringan had visited Toronto in 1885, and a year later decided to settle there permanently. In Scotland he had trained under John Curwen, a leading proponent of the tonic sol-fa method for teaching vocal music.1 This approach was distinct from the Holt system then in use in the schools of Ontario; as will be shown later, the resulting discord among supporters of each approach led to a showdown of sorts in Toronto late in the 1880s. Cringan was appointed choirmaster at Central Presbyterian Church

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1 Encyclopedia of Music in Canada (henceforth, “EMC”), s. v. “Cringan, Alexander T.”
in 1886, and was hired by the school board in March of the following year as an ‘assistant music teacher’ in the city schools.\(^2\)

In many respects, Cringan’s appointment was fortuitous. As mentioned at the outset, the Festival had demonstrated that there was sufficient public interest in loftier forms of musical entertainment, particularly when set in the context of a grand spectacle. The presence of drill in Toronto schools, with its emphasis upon rhythm and synchronized movement, and the fact that volunteer militia bands were available as a ready source of instrumental music, made it relatively easy to insert student choirs into existing activities involving the schools. The 1886 event had also inspired several city merchants to sponsor prizes for student musical achievement, and revived calls for a purpose-built facility dedicated to musical performance. Schools themselves sought permission from the Board to hold concerts and raise funds to purchase their own pianos and organs, a practice which hitherto had been frowned upon. As well, 1887 witnessed the launch of the Musical Journal, which offered a monthly synopsis of music-related events and sheet music, sprinkled with notes on local personalities and happenings.\(^3\)

Admittedly, there were also some immediate challenges. Cringan had been hired in March of 1887, at the tail end of the school year, and a mere three months prior to the celebration of Queen Victoria’s Golden Jubilee. The board had hired A. Perrin to teach music in the public schools four years earlier; it appears, however, that his duties were limited. In the Annual Report of 1885, Hughes was still repeating his recommendation “that a special teacher of music” be

\(^2\) Although initiated by Hughes, the actual recommendation came from the board’s management committee. See Toronto District School Board, Sesquicentennial Museum and Archives (henceforth “SMA”), “Committee Minutes and Reports, Management Committee, Public School Board, January 29, 1886 to December 26, 1889” II.A.1.i. C1 S3, 17 March 1887.

\(^3\) The journal ceased publication in the early 1890s. No complete set exists, however, some copies have been transferred to microfiche. The most comprehensive original collection is housed in the Baldwin Room Special Collections at the Toronto Reference Library.
appointed. Trustees had, to this point, turned to the expertise of outside musicians such as F. H. Torrington and E. W. Schuch to oversee major musical productions involving school children; given the circumstances, one would have expected such preference. In fact, two weeks prior to Cringan’s official hire, the board had received correspondence from Schuch, offering to organize a school choir for any such Jubilee event.

Nevertheless, it was Cringan and Perrin who were present in Queen’s Park on June 23 to lead the singing of the school children. The day began with a general religious service at the Metropolitan Church that included a series of speeches, as well as music supplied by a choir drawn from the city churches and led by Torrington. On the street, children from the several public schools of the city were assembling for the grand march planned for the day. First meeting at their individual schools, the students eventually came together and were organized into marching columns by drill instructor Thompson.

The school children’s Jubilee procession yesterday was one of the most interesting events in the annals of this city. Fully eight thousand children assembled on the Queen street avenue at 10 o’clock and marched with banners and martial music to the Queen’s Park where anthems to her Majesty’s praise were sung by a chorus composed of these eight thousand voices.

Almost two miles in length, the procession itself also included several of the city’s national and volunteer societies, interspersed by militia bands and members. At its head was none other than Inspector Hughes, astride a coal black steed, followed by the Grenadiers’ band, school trustees and teachers, and finally, the children, organized by school. Somewhat apologetically, the Mail reported:

The children were fagged and weary after their long march under a hot sun, and it was not expected that they could respond heartily to the conductor’s

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4 SMA, TBEAR (1885), 22.
5 Schuch’s letter is recorded as received in the school board’s minutes of 3 March 1887. Cringan was hired 17 March 1887. See SMA, TBEMSB, 3 March 1887, 25; Appendix, 56.
6 Mail, 1 July 1887, 2.
baton. Nevertheless, the singing was good, under the circumstances, and showed, perhaps better than anything else could, the careful training of the music teachers, Messrs. Perrin and Cringan. The large choir, occupying a space of some eighty yards deep and fifty yards wide, was under the direction of Mr. A. T. Cringan, assistant music teacher of the public schools. He showed good confidence and steadiness in beating time, and had the children well under command. The songs sung were “God Save the Queen,” “Rule Britannia,” and “Queen Victoria’s Jubilee,” the words of the latter being by Mr. John Imrie. It was the best and most heartily sung.”

The school drill companies then performed a number of drill exercises, all under the watchful inspection of Lieutenant-Colonel William Otter. After complimenting Captain Thompson on their training, Otter turned his attention to his young audience:

It was no doubt a great benefit to them to be properly drilled. It was a great physical advantage and also inspired a love of manliness in them. They would never forget their early discipline, and when they grew up to be men, no doubt many of them would be found in the volunteer services as efficient officers and men. They were fortunate in having an Inspector like Mr. Hughes who was possessed of sufficient public spirit to originate a drill department and in having school trustees ready to back up the Inspector. The scheme of school drill had his entire approbation and he was very much gratified with the movements they had that day gone through so well.

The companies were then dismissed until 1:15 p.m. when they reformed to participate in drill and exercise games led by their teachers; all of whom, the reporter noted, were female.

Cringan’s impression of the day remains a mystery, for he makes no reference to it in his end-of-year report to Hughes. This is somewhat surprising, considering its prominence in the school year calendar of events, and the significant amount of time and energy it would have taken to coordinate such a spectacle. One reason might have been that as the new teacher, Cringan was initially unsure about format and content. Another possibility may have been that he assumed, or was advised, that the day’s activities would be summarized in a more general fashion by the Jubilee committee, or possibly Hughes himself.

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7 *Mail*, 1 July 1887, 2.
8 *Mail*, 1 July 1887, 2.
A third factor which might have dissuaded him from commenting lies in what became known as the “methods conflict,” an ongoing controversy in which Cringan had already played a significant role. With his appointment as Toronto’s newest school music instructor, this conflict would soon come to a head. While it is beyond the scope of this study to examine in detail the merit of varying techniques employed by competing approaches to teaching vocal music, it is useful to consider how the disagreement influenced the overall state of music in the schools of Toronto in general, and Cringan’s career in particular, for it was he who, in the end, prevailed.\(^9\)

As mentioned earlier, Cringan taught vocal music using the tonic sol-fa approach, which had developed out of techniques created by Sarah Glover in Britain earlier in the nineteenth century\(^10\). These in turn had been refined into a comprehensive method for teaching vocal music by James Curwen and his son John, under whom Cringan had studied. Using a different notation and incorporating a “moveable doh,” tonic sol-fa posed a direct challenge to the method currently being taught in the city’s normal and model schools. The Holt method, named for its creator American Hosea Holt, drew its inspiration from the approach used by John Hullah, which Ryerson had recommended following his first European tour. Holt’s method relied upon traditional staff notation and a “fixed doh” as its base, and had become quite popular in many schools in the United States. With some minor modifications, it had been brought to the Toronto Normal School in 1858 by the new music instructor Henry Sefton, and following his retirement in 1882, the practice continued under his successor, S. H. Preston. An enthusiastic supporter of the approach, Preston published his own version of Holt’s Normal Music Course in 1885, the

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\(^9\) In his history of public school music, Trowsdale notes that, had it not been for Cringan, the Holt system may indeed have carried sway. See George Campbell Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music in Ontario” (Ed D diss., University of Toronto, 1962), 265. Trowsdale also discusses the evolution and use of the various techniques for teaching vocal music in considerable detail on pages 214-347. For a comparison of “fixed doh” and “moveable doh,” see Clement Antrobus Harris, “The War Between the Fixed and Moveable Doh,” Musical Quarterly 4, no. 2 (1918): 184-195.

same year Holt himself spoke at a meeting of the newly-formed Ontario Music Teachers’ Association.

However, in spite of the enthusiasm of Preston and his supporters, the education department refrained from declaring an official preference, although in 1884 it gave tacit approval by recommending Holt’s Public School Music Reader as a textbook. This hesitation may have been due in part to the fact that much support already existed for tonic solfa, as by this time many teachers were using it across the province.¹¹

Based upon their research of a similar disagreement which had taken place in Hamilton, Green and Vogan suggest that, generally speaking, “school teachers preferred tonic solfa while private music teachers felt that all instruction should be given in staff notation.” Furthermore, operating in both spheres may initially at least have placed Cringan in a somewhat awkward position. At the 1886 annual meeting of the Ontario Music Teachers’ Association, he and Preston had gone head to head in a competition which featured demonstrations that displayed the advantages of each system.

The intense debates that followed at the conference and in the press presaged a battle from which Cringan would and could not retreat, especially after his appointment to the school board. Because of Cringan’s silence on the matter, it remains unclear as to which method was employed to lead the children at the Golden Jubilee. What is known is that he began offering classes to teachers in the spring of 1887. In his report at the end of 1887, Cringan notes: “At the classes for teachers being held during March, April and May, the average attendance was one

¹¹ Hughes commented that after Sefton’s retirement, he had been “visited by scores of Tonic Sol-Fa teachers, who requested me to recommend them to our school board....” See J. L. Hughes, “A Letter to the Musical Journal, No. 6, 15 June 1887. 99. Trowsdale traces the earliest mention of tonic solfa in Ontario to a Globe editorial appearing in the Journal of Education in July 1869, while Green and Vogan cite several examples of teachers who were using the technique to teach vocal music classes. See Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 268-269; J. Paul Green and Nancy Vogan, Music Education in Canada: A Historical Account (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 60.
hundred and forty-six (146), the total number of teachers in the junior divisions at that time being one hundred and eighty (180).”

Meanwhile, that summer Holt returned to Toronto to teach classes and, following their conclusion, the Ontario Music Teachers’ Association, now renamed the Canadian Society of Musicians, sent a deputation to Education Minister George Ross. This group cited the use of the Holt Method at the normal school and advocated its exclusive adoption for all public, high and model schools in the province. Once more, the Department refused to take sides. With the Musical Journal cautioning against such action prior to thorough classroom application, Cringan gradually gained the upper hand. Following his classes in tonic sol-fa the next summer, Cringan’s students sent a letter to the education department requesting that the text books edited by him be authorized.

The “methods controversy” added a new dimension to discussions about the role of music in Toronto schools. The Musical Journal took a keen interest from the outset, printing a circular in its May 1887 issue requesting reader opinion on the merits of both systems. Predictably, Preston and Cringan lined up on opposite sides of the debate, with a range of opinion forthcoming from across the musical community.

Thanks, in large part no doubt, to Cringan’s persistence and enthusiasm, the tonic sol-fa method gradually gained acceptance in Ontario schools. As it turned out, though, neither it nor the staff notation system was authorized by the Department of Education. Recalling its

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12 SMA, TBEAR (1887), 71.
14 In spite of being the best-selling music text in Ontario for decades, the series was never officially authorized. Some of the letter appears in Trowsdale’s thesis and as he notes: “By 1890, classes all over the province were using the system and most satisfactorily.” See Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 271, 290, 291.
15 The circular contained five questions soliciting comments about the use and inter-changeability of each system in choral and classroom environments. For the list and responses, see Trowsdale, “A History of Public School Music,” 303-307.
remarkable ascendance under Cringan’s guidance, school board chairman W. D. McPherson stated in the annual report of 1892:

At one time, it was a commonly accepted idea that ordinary teachers of Public Schools were incompetent to teach singing....The difficulty which formed... was the want of a method sufficiently simple to be capable of being grasped by teachers not previously trained in the teaching of music....The fallacy of this statement has been repeatedly proven both by public demonstration and the results obtained in the school room.16

The debate had sparked renewed interest in school music, however, and had created the impression that vocal music, like any other subject, was not immune to the winds of change being stirred in educational circles, and that innovations of this sort augured well for the students of Toronto’s public schools, as they grappled with the changes being wrought by modernity.

Having successfully stood his ground during his first year, Cringan now began to consolidate his position, gradually assuming the role of lead music instructor for the public schools. In spite of Perrin’s seniority, it appears he was content to let Cringan take matters in hand. With the approval for use of the latter’s text in 1888, the stage was set for Cringan and his musical ideas to dominate Toronto school music for the next decade.17 Dispensing with the previous pattern of activity, in which musicians had been parachuted in to manage large public displays incorporating school choirs, Cringan assumed ongoing responsibility for musical training both in and out of the classroom. He standardized teaching methods and provided continuity to both teachers and students. Along with Perrin, his main duty was to visit assigned schools each week to give classes in vocal music; the Board picked up the cost of travel.18

Under the official sanction of the school board, a regular schedule of events began to take shape during the 1880s and 1890s that featured school choirs as part of the programme.

16 SMA, TBEAR (1892), 15.
17 Permission was granted on March 1, 1888 for students to purchase the Canadian Music Course. See SMA, TBEMSB, Appendix 3, Management Committee Report No. 3, 1 March 1888, 45.
18 SMA, TBEMSB, Appendix, Management Committee Report No. 7, 84.
Patriotic, state-sanctioned dates of importance had long been hallmarks of the regular school year. However, closer to the end of century these events increasingly featured cadet corps and school choirs as their main attraction, in effect becoming the de facto persona of the public school system. As was discussed earlier, Dominion and Victoria Day festivities, as well as commemorations of the battles of Ridgeway and Queenston Heights, drew large crowds of spectators and provided an irresistible opportunity to display well-trained, disciplined child soldiers. The addition of large choirs adorned such spectacles with the cultural respectability embodied in the ideal of muscular Christianity. For many citizens, this might be the only glimpse “inside the school,” creating a powerful image of public schools as the perfect moral training ground for the next generation, equipped mentally, morally and physically to navigate the ambiguous cultural terrain of the modern city.

Under teachers Cringan and Thompson, these celebrations were transformed into audio-visual spectacles of scholastic achievement. Whether it was at Hughes’ suggestion, or at their own initiative, the drill and music departments increasingly pooled resources and coordinated efforts, fusing and refining the image of public schools in accordance with the ideal of muscular Christianity that was epitomized by marching cadets. The Dominion Day parade of 1889 had been led by cadets from the newly-formed Industrial School. In their respective contributions to the 1890 Annual Report, both Cringan and Thompson referred to that year’s Dominion Day programme, which had featured a 1,400-voice choir in combination with a gymnastic display put on by female students at the main building in Exhibition Park.19

19 Both instructors were granted permission to offer after-hours classes, in order to prepare for the coordinated event. See SMA, TBEMSB, Appendix 37, Management Committee Report No. 7, 24 April 1890, 109. For information related to female physical activity in the schools, see Helen Lenskyj, “The Role of Physical Education in the Socialization of Girls in Ontario, 1890-1830” (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1983). See also Nancy R. Francis and Anna H. Lathrop, “‘Children Who Drill, Seldom Are Ill.’ The Rise and Fall of a ‘Female Tradition’ in Ontario Elementary Physical Education, 1850s to 2000,” Historical Studies in Education/Revue d’histoire de l’éducation, 23:1 (2011): 61-80.
impressed with Cringan that he recommended the creation of a fife-and-drum band under the music instructor’s direction. At the city’s industrial school where both subjects had been included as part of its mission to educate those youth who hitherto had escaped the system’s regimen, Hughes confidently reported: “The pupils are rapidly attaining to a high degree of efficiency in music and drill under the training of Mr. Cringan and Captain Thompson.” In the fall of the same year, the school board gave its official support to designate October 13 for annual commemoration of the Battle of Queenston Heights, which would include patriotic music and drill inspection at Queen’s Park.

The school board, alone or in partnership with outside interests, invented ceremonies that emphasized particular aspects considered significant enough by officials to warrant space on the itinerary. According to Trowsdale, activities connected with the closing of the school year had included a regular student concert since 1884, and the recognition of School Children’s Day at the city’s late-summer Industrial Exhibition at about the same time provided additional opportunities for public school music in the official school calendar.

By the opening of the last decade of the century, “Floral Day,” or “Flower Day,” as it became known, also began to appear in Cringan’s list of annual concerts. Although he did not refer to it by name until 1891, Cringan’s 1890 report suggests that something akin to it may have already been in place. His report states that during the first three months of that year, he had trained a 400-voice choir for a concert which took place on March 21, at which Thompson’s “Broom Drill Corps and Calisthenic (sic) Class” had also provided “valuable assistance in

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20 SMA, TBEAR (1890), n.p.
21 SMA, TBEAR (1890), 71.
22 SMA, TBEMSB, Appendix 70, Management Committee Report No. 13, 25 September 1890, 217.
adding to the success of the entertainment.”

The chorus formed the basis of the 1,400-voice choir which was assembled for Dominion Day, already noted above.

A similar pattern emerged in 1891. That year, Cringan had “by instruction of the School Management Committee...organized a choir of eight hundred voices to supply the musical part of the programme for the Floral Day concert.” Once more, this core group was expanded, this time with an additional 800 voices, in preparation for the 1891 Dominion Day concert. Whether it was initially Cringan’s idea to hold a spring concert remains unclear. However, the fact that a music-focused event received immediate—and as it turned out, enduring—official endorsement indicates that it was considered a worthy endeavour in its own right.

Another musical highlight of the 1891 school calendar occurred on July 16, when the same mass public school chorus performed at the national convention of the National Educational Association. Although American-based, the organization had, in deference to Hughes, held its proceedings outside of the United States for the first time. Toronto’s school inspector had first spoken at an N. E. A. convention in 1885, and his rising reputation as both an educational visionary and flamboyant presenter quickly made him a favourite at the annual gatherings of the progressive organization. In fact, so impressed were its members that they awarded him honourary membership at its Toronto meeting, and the following year appointed him to sit as a member of the 1893 convention’s organizing committee.

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24 SMA, TBEAR (1890), 65.
25 The annual concert eventually assumed the title of “May Festival,” and continues to the present day.
26 SMA, TBEAR (1891), 114-115.
contingent of students whose discipline, order and harmony reflected back upon all of the work being accomplished in the classrooms of the city.

Each of these events did have its own raison d’être, but the repetitive, spectacle-driven presentation strategy employed by Cringan resonated throughout them all. Having children sing, and sing well, in public reflected positively not only on him personally, but also upon the progressive pedagogical views espoused by Hughes and implemented on a daily basis. With the possible exception of drill, it was public school music alone that could conjure such a captivating illusion for late-Victorians. Here was an institution mandated to provide education for all that could educate the city’s youth, training them to discern and distinguish worthy from unworthy entertainments among the seemingly ubiquitous supply now available in the modern city. Through public displays of school music, the children of Toronto’s increasingly foreign and strange population could be immersed and thus indoctrinated with desirable middle-class traits thought essential for good citizenship and character.

Early on, Cringan had championed music’s unique power to civilize and elevate taste. In the annual report of 1890, he drew attention to the issue, by reminding readers:

Music was not a mere amusement or recreation, but is one of the most refining agents that can be used in the development and formation of character....Many of the children in the poorer localities have little or no opportunity of intercourse with music after leaving school, and every effort should be made to make the musical training as complete and thorough as possible during the time when this is available.”

In a speech in 1895, Cringan went further, arguing that musical instruction at school was not only preferable, but critical for proper development of character and taste:

Thousands of children are brought under the influence of music through the agency of the public schools who would otherwise never learn a note. If deferred until after the school-period, music cannot be so well taught, as the faculties of voice and ear have been allowed to lie dormant. The systematic
development of the whole being, mental, moral, physical and aesthetic should be aimed at during school-life. Special teachers are necessary, because school teachers have never had the opportunities necessary for the efficient preparation for music teaching. It is a life work. Details of vocal physiology, musical theory, reading notes, harmony, and the application of pedagogical principles to the teaching of music must be mastered. Without the guidance of a special teacher it would be impossible to attain a satisfactory degree of proficiency in music. This fact has been recognized by the school trustees of nearly every city in Canada.... The results of music education in Toronto schools amply justify the expenditure.  

Thus, school music represented a potent weapon in the cultural counteroffensive against the litany of moral temptations which seemed to infuse modern entertainments. In this regard, “the children in the poorer localities” were most at risk, and therefore, stood to benefit most from the culturally-uplifting moral vaccine inherent in the particular brand of music being provided in the city’s public schools. The association not only illustrated the worth of school music, but linked it inexorably to late-Victorian ideals of social reform and control.

The year 1894 marked another musical landmark for school choirs and the city itself. Thanks to a $100,000 donation from Hart Massey, the Massey Music Hall was built. Toronto finally had its own state-of-the-art performance space. A staunch Methodist, Massey’s characteristic suspicion of leisure made him leery of the plethora of amusements now pervading the city. However, his respect for the arts and a long-time friendship with F. H. Torrington through the Metropolitan Methodist Church inspired him to endorse the idea of supporting the construction of such a facility as a way of honouring the memory of his late son Charles Albert, who had died from typhoid fever in 1884 at the age of 36.

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29 The speech is dated 27 December 1895, but it appears that Cringan may still have been using parts of it in 1913, in his summer music classes for teachers. See Library and Archives Canada (henceforth “LAC”), “The Alexander Thom Cringan Collection,” Volume I, 2, MUS 73 File 1976-7.

30 There is some evidence to suggest that it was, in fact, Torrington’s success with the 1886 festival that sparked Massey’s interest. See William Kilbourn, Intimate Grandeur: One Hundred Years at Massey Hall (Toronto: Stoddart, 1993), 21.
Plans were drawn up by architect Sidney Badgley, who modified Torrington’s suggestion of a rectangular building by incorporating horse-shoe shaped galleries into its interior, as he had done with churches he had designed previously. The result, as William Kilbourn points out, met sacred and sensory pursuits: “The Protestant objective was to pull all members of the congregation as close as possible to the preacher and choir, who were at centre stage, so that every word, sound and gesture could be clearly understood and intensely felt.”

A site was eventually purchased at the southwest corner of Shuter and Victoria Streets; the cornerstone was laid on September 21 1893 by the elder Massey’s six-year-old grandson Vincent, a future governor-general of Canada and benefactor of Hart House at the University of Toronto. Despite some criticism regarding motives and subsequent stewardship, construction proceeded apace and a grand opening was announced for June of the following year. Not surprisingly, many of the personalities who had participated in the 1886 music festival, including Hughes and Torrington, took part in planning the event. Although on a smaller scale than their predecessors, the 1894 concerts bore many of its characteristics. Once more, Torrington oversaw musical preparation—complete with a children’s concert—but this time it was Cringan who would train and conduct the school chorus.

Opening festivities were scheduled for June 14 through 16, featuring three evening concerts Thursday, Friday and Saturday, and afternoon concerts on the latter two days. Works to be performed included Handel’s Messiah and Mendelssohn’s Hymn of Praise, with solo performances by singers Emma Juch and Lillian Blauvelt, and pianist Arthur Friedheim, among others. During the week leading up to the dates, notices began to appear in the local press that featured program highlights and reminded readers that on Friday evening, vice-regent Lord and Lady Aberdeen would be on hand to officially open the hall. So significant was the occasion that

both the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific railway companies offered return fares for the price of a one-way ticket for out-of-town travellers, as well as adjusting train schedules to accommodate the evening concerts.\footnote{World, 12 June 1894, 2.}

As final preparations were made for the event, the Telegram gushed: “There is not a city of Toronto’s size on the continent that has an auditorium equal to the Massey Music Hall....The work of local talent in the choruses and the orchestra shows that Toronto has the musical resources of a great city, and the inexpressibly noble hall is a part of every great city’s equipment.”\footnote{“The City’s Thanks,” Telegram, 12 June 1894, 2.} Through the benefaction of Hart Massey, Toronto had indeed achieved a milestone in its aspiration to be recognized as a budding North American metropolis, a cultural landmark in which its public school children would once more play a part.

The first day’s concerts proved to be a mixed success. Attendance was mediocre at the afternoon concert of “miscellaneous selections,” but Friday evening was a sell-out, thanks no doubt to the presence of the vice-regal party. Somewhat ironically, Lord Aberdeen departed early, to head back to Ottawa, but left behind a letter which was to be read to the school children the following day.\footnote{The Telegram reported an attendance at the evening concert of 3,500, however Kilbourn reports that the Globe put the figure at “about 4,000.” See Telegram, 16 June 1894, Kilbourn, Intimate Grandeur, 26.} His message contained all of usual patriotic rhetoric associated with such an occasion, this time tinged with a little more militaristic fervour. As Kilbourn points out, the children “were duly reminded by Lord Aberdeen what a great thing it was for them as loyal subjects of the queen to belong to the British Empire and were bade to be worthy of the British name they bore, and of the Dominion of Canada, their country.”\footnote{Kilbourn, Intimate Grandeur, 26-27.}

Although a matinee, the children’s concert drew a respectable number of spectators. Among several miscellaneous selections which included solos by Blauvelt and Friedham, the
“bright, joyous, and happy-faced children” performed Torrington’s “Canada, Fair Canada,” the song that had proven such a crowd pleaser at the 1886 music festival, and Alexander Muir’s “Maple Leaf Forever,” by then becoming widely accepted as English Canada’s unofficial national anthem. When it was all over, the three-day, five-concert event had even made a small profit, with expenses and revenues totalling $8,000 and $8,500, respectively.

Massey Music Hall quickly assumed prominence among the city’s prime venues for putting on concerts and conducting meetings of various sorts. On the Monday following the opening, the Liberal party held a political rally and that weekend the band of John Philips Sousa gave two concerts. The local Salvation Army, apparently hoping to capitalize upon the hype generated by the opening ceremonies, held a “Salvation Festival,” composed of “a large brass band and about five hundred of the Salvation singers. The proceedings opened with a selection by the band which made a deafening din, and the remainder of the evening was devoted to the singing of typical Salvationist songs set to popular music.”

That first week, the same school choir gave another concert at the hall, this time in aid of a local charity. Following a programme similar to its earlier performance, the choir was, at the behest of the Toronto Public School Board, “to give a concert in aid of the Children’s Aid Society.” Although it is not clear precisely why the Society was chosen, the pairing seems logical enough. The Society after all was one of Hart Massey’s favourites and the utilization of a chorus of school children in such an honourable cause certainly fit well with the emerging image

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36 Advertisements preceding the event had numbered the chorus at 1,000, the “great heat of the day” and competition from the “Wanderers Bicycle Rally” may have decreased choir attendance somewhat. The audience appears not to have been likewise affected. See Kilbourn, *Intimate Grandeur*, 26-27.
37 *World*, 18 June 1894, 1.
38 *Mail*, 22 June 1894, 6.
39 *Mail*, 18 June 1894, 5.
of public education being crafted by the likes of Hughes and Cringan. The spectacle was not lost on the Mail, which reported:

The eight hundred or more children who sang on Saturday afternoon at the Music Festival repeated their selections last night at the Massey hall in aid of the Children’s Aid Society. There was an audience of about two thousand people....The school children, under the able direction of Mr. A. T. Cringan, sang their selections in excellent style. Their greatest success, as on Saturday, were (sic) made in the patriotic songs by Messrs. Muir and Torrington, both of which were encored. The exhibition of singing from manual signs was a surprising illustration of the training of the children.40

The evening also included a speech by R. S. Baird, the chairman of the school board, about the mission of Children’s Aid, and an appearance from Hughes in which he thanked Torrington for the orchestral support and also announced the creation of three music scholarships, to be presented by the Toronto College of Music.

In many ways, the linkage among these pieces can be seen as symbolic. Here was one of the premiere musical institutions of the city bestowing artistic benevolence upon local youths, coming from across the city, employing standards of excellence to which all might aspire. In turn, in their organized and choreographed roles, choir participants became models of ideal Victorian children, disciplined, cooperative and deferent to authority. Surely charges of the Children’s Aid Society would look to these peers as their models, further extending the message of self-discipline and social order conveyed by public education.

In terms of its overall significance for the image of Toronto school music, the benefit concert not only laid the groundwork for associating the work of public education with charitable activity, but also provided a cultural example for other prominent social institutions to follow, as each sought to raise money and attract public attention to a particular cause. The very next year, for example, the Methodist Social Union, which had evolved from the denomination’s

40 Mail, 20 June 1894, 8.
Toronto Home Mission Council, organized the first “Festival of the Lilies” concert on Easter Monday, 1895; participants from Methodist church choirs throughout the city, under Torrington’s direction, sang at the Massey Music Hall. Event proceeds totalling $800 were used to aid three needy churches in the city’s west end.\textsuperscript{41}

The following year’s concert at the hall raised $206.17 and included instrumental accompaniment supplied by the Sabbath School orchestras, while the 1897 event featured an appearance by the band of the Queen’s Own Rifles, and raised $346. A couple of weeks prior to the concert, James L. Hughes had been invited to speak at the Union’s Eighth Banquet about the upcoming convention of the International Epworth League. Not surprisingly, Hughes was chair of the executive committee overseeing the event.\textsuperscript{42} In 1898, the concert added a chorus of 700 Sunday school children, led by Cringan and accompanied by the Band of the Royal Grenadiers, and by century’s end, a complete public school-inspired template was in place, with a children’s chorus, military band and patriotic displays. As noted in the Union handbook:

The programme was on somewhat similar lines to that of the previous year, being composed of singing by a highly trained chorus of 800 children from the different Methodist Sunday Schools of the city under the direction of Mr. Cringan, and accompanied by the Royal Grenadiers’ Band. In addition to this, a cantata representing Canada’s relation to the British Empire, and illustrated by various regiments comprising Canada’s contingent to South Africa was presented by a number of children under the direction of Mrs. H. B. Somers. The whole effect was exceedingly beautiful and attractive. This was the most successful concert ever given by the Union, the Hall being unable to hold all who came. The net proceeds ($705.05) were granted for the relief of the Perth Ave. Methodist Church.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41} United Church of Canada Archives (henceforth “UCCA”), “Methodist Social Union of Toronto,” Pam BX 8251.A15 T68, 18-19.
\textsuperscript{42} The League was a Methodist youth organization dedicated to moral uplift and social reform. See Dan Brearly Brummitt, \textit{The Epworth League’s History and Our Pledge} (Whitefish: Kessinger Publishing, 2010). See also UCCA, “Methodist Social Union,” 19-20.
\textsuperscript{43} UCCA, “Methodist Social Union,” 25-26.
In repeatedly drawing upon the model provided by school displays, the public image of organizations such as the Methodist Social Union thus became visually and acoustically indistinguishable from it. Indeed, like so many other similar agencies during the period, it blended its musical entertainments with the ideals of muscular Christianity; both appeared to imbue children with all the virtues necessary to withstand the social uncertainty inherent in modernity.

This sensory tapestry reached its zenith in 1897, with Toronto’s celebration of Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee. Although Golden Jubilee celebrations had sparked some civic interest a decade earlier, the eagerness and enthusiasm with which Toronto marked the sixtieth anniversary of her accession to the British throne provides ample evidence that much had changed. In the initial absence of other models, Cringan, Thompson and Hughes had been provided with an opportunity to craft a formula for public celebration that had not only augmented and justified the significance of classroom music, but had also revitalized the public image of schools in the city, and beyond. Somewhat ironically, it was precisely this popular formula that could—and in the case of the Diamond Jubilee, would—overshadow the place of school music in Toronto’s modern culture.

In anticipation of the celebration, school board preparations for the Diamond Jubilee in Toronto began in February 1897, with the striking of a Diamond Jubilee Committee.\textsuperscript{44} In addition to arranging and coordinating board-sponsored activities involving school children, members were to liaise with other groups planning related events, including participation in a grand parade planned for June 22. The expected request came from the city on March 4, care of its Civic Demonstration Committee chair, Alderman John Hallam. What eventually emerged

\textsuperscript{44} Members appointed to the committee were trustees Kent, Brown, Baird and Starr. See \textit{TBEMSB}, 4 February 1897, 10; 25 February 1897, Appendix 15, “Management Committee Report No. 3.
from the discussions proved to be one of the most multi-faceted and ambitious public relations schemes yet undertaken by Toronto school children. It incorporated athletic games, drill and callisthenic displays, and two choral concerts. Of the latter, one was of 800 voices at Massey Hall, and another, featuring a chorus of 4000 students, would be given at the Exhibition grounds at the conclusion of the parade.

As the day drew nearer, schedules of games events and notices were published. They designated areas for participating groups to organize. The city even issued a formal “Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Proclamation” which, among other things, encouraged citizens to decorate and illuminate their homes and places of business on June 22 as a way of demonstrating their loyalty.\(^4^5\) Notices also appeared for special “accession” church services on June 20, the actual date upon which Victoria had taken the throne in 1837, and a “Diamond Jubilee Grand Patriotic Concert,” to be conducted by F. H. Torrington and held at the Massey Music Hall. Businesses also scrambled to associate themselves with the event. Hoping to lure customers, several local entrepreneurs employed “jubilee” advertisements to draw attention to their products. “Jubilee cakes,” jubilee roses,” and even a “jubilee production” at the Grand Opera House were among the many items and services that adopted the moniker as a way to commemorate the royal celebration and increase profits.\(^4^6\)

The first school concert took place on June 19, pairing the Royal Grenadiers band with a chorus of 800 children led by Cringan. The programme, by now a familiar combination of military music and drill display by the boys and girls-all of which was interspersed with patriotic songs and speeches-garnered the usual praise, although the Mail and Empire noted that some boys failed to maintain an erect, soldier-like posture throughout their exercises. Once more, the

\(^4^5\) See *Mail and Empire*, 17 June 1897, 6.
\(^4^6\) The advertisements appeared in virtually all of the dailies during the week preceding the June 22\(^{nd}\) celebration.
picture painted for readers was one of order, beauty and promise, rife with emotion and patriotism:

No one present on Saturday evening will forget the singing of “Rule Britannia,” which was probably the finest number. When the full strength of the fresh young voices and the lusty band swelled out on the last chorus, there were many moist eyes in the house, for it was an inspiration to which none could be insensible to hear the rising generation of Britons proclaim so heartily the “Britons never shall be slaves.”

With a nod perhaps to the 1886 musical festival, Cringan borrowed one of its gimmicks. “In the last chorus of ‘Victoria is Our Queen,’ written by Mr. Cringan, each child suddenly produced a little flag, and, waving it in time to the music, ended it with a rapid fluttering that threw a shimmer of colour over the white dresses and bright faces.”

It was then Cringan’s turn to be surprised. Just before Education Minister George W. Ross came to the podium to speak on the progress of the past sixty years, James L. Hughes appeared and beckoned the music master to join him on stage. Hughes began by pointing out that Cringan had taught the children of Toronto’s public schools for ten years. At some point early in his career, he had expressed to Hughes his hope that one day he would complete a music degree in Toronto. At the time, Hughes had promised that, pending board approval, he would see to it that Cringan received a medal for such achievement. Now the time had come.

As Mr. Cringan had only recently realized his intention, Mr. Hughes felt more pleasure than ever, because of the inestimable services Mr. Cringan had since given to the schools of the city, in now presenting to him the medal spoken of so long ago. That the presentation accorded with the sentiments of pupils and parents was at once evidenced by repeated outbursts of applause.

No doubt a little taken aback, Cringan briefly thanked Hughes and the board for the recognition. Despite his modesty, his accomplishments for school music in ten years had been

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47 Mail and Empire, 21 June 1897, 3.
48 “School Children’s Jubilee Concert on Saturday,” Mail and Empire, 21 June 1897, 3.
49 “The Children’s Festival,” Globe, 21 June 1897, 5. Interestingly, the Encyclopedia of Music in Canada lists Cringan as having obtained his B. Mus. in 1899. See EMC, s. v. “Cringan, Alexander T.”
truly remarkable, and had made a lasting impression upon the city and its people. He would again demonstrate this gift at Exhibition Park three days later.

Meanwhile, jubilee activities continued, with the Globe reporting several “accession day” services on Sunday, June 20 at Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in the city. Notable too were special parades that day of the Masons and the Queen’s Own Rifles, who had gathered at the Horticultural Pavilion in the morning and afternoon, respectively, and a mass meeting of the Sons of England at St. James Cathedral. There, at 4 o’clock, all joined in the singing of “God Save the Queen,” “in agreement with the striking plan whereby the national anthem rolled round the world at that hour.”

Several other events were planned for the days leading up to the official June 22 date, all of which were encouraged, if not formally endorsed. Editorials advised readers that the best way to express their feelings was to dress up their own homes. A week before the day, the Mail and Empire reminded its readers:

Every municipal occupation and every government throughout the Empire that bestirs itself to commemorate the greatest occasion of this half of the century does itself honour by the completeness of its arrangements. But beyond and beside the ordered pageantry that will thus have origin, there will be a vast amount of loyal feeling that may well find expression a week from today in individual and independent decoration. Let flags fly and lights blaze. For it is a feature of this great demonstration that it comes from the people’s hearts. It binds the great Empire in one, not merely by an official bond, but by a real union of sentiment. Accordingly every home should put on its bit of gala show. We are not a stolid people without inventiveness and measure and if the whole population determine (sic) to do something by way of marking the day, the result will not only be a pleasurable one to thousands, but a noteworthy and precious feeling of brotherhood will be established.

Further, conspicuous display represented the ultimate expression of modern middle-class patriotism, creating a genuine bond with the rest of the Empire:

Toronto is a beautiful city not only for its general conformation and site, but because so many of our citizens take a pride in their homes and their surroundings. They like their houses and grass plots to look well, and a street car ride along any of our home thoroughfares shows that a wonderful amount of care is bestowed to this end. The same features will, we feel assured, lead our children to make a good show on Jubilee Day. As for the method of it, that may safely be left to individual taste and ingenuity. Very much may be done with flags and bunting, and floral and foliage decorations....There is no necessity for pumped up loyalty. If we reflect for a while on what the reign of the Queen has been, and remember that in the nature of things she will not always be with us, we shall need no prompting to take hands and join in vast chain of jubilation that next Tuesday will stretch all around the world.51

Meanwhile, final adjustments were being made for the parade day. The school board announced it had set aside $350 for prizes for the athletic games. At its June 17 meeting, the Board asked parade organizers to shorten the route of the procession, so as not to tire the younger school children.52 Aside from the sheer logistics of assembling and marshalling such a mass, organizers also had to contend with dozens of musical bands, both military and otherwise, which would have to be interspersed among the 14,000 marchers from various ethnic, labour and fraternal organizations, so as not to interfere acoustically with one another.

In spite of all of these challenges, the day appears to have come off without a hitch. The Mail and Empire observed that there had been no arrests or ambulance calls in the downtown during the parade itself, and that only one case of pocket-picking had been reported. Acoustically, it had also been a success. “The music was well chosen and the bands were placed so as not at all to interfere with one another.”53 The “school brigade,” consisting of 1,451 students making up 24 drill companies from 21 city schools, wended their way from Queen’s Park to the city’s Exhibition grounds. All in all, the march from Queen’s Park to the city Exhibition grounds took just under three hours, almost the same amount of time it had taken the

51 “Let Us Decorate,” Mail and Empire, 15 June 1897, 4.
52 See “Playground Policy,” Mail and Empire, 18 June 1897, 5. See also SMA, TBEMSB, 2 July, 117.
Queen herself to complete her jubilee parade route through London that same day. The message conveyed by such discipline and order was evident in one press report:

Of the great number of bodies which joined the procession, few created a greater feeling of interest than the long line of boys, marching with the sturdiness and precision of veterans; frank-faced, intelligent little fellows, bearing themselves with self-reliance, and giving promise of a manhood not a whit inferior to that which built up their country, the city which owns them.

Relating the length of Queen Victoria’s reign and the change brought about by universal state-funded education, the piece underscored its importance to the rise of a meritocratic middle class:

Sixty years ago such a sight would have been impossible in any city of the Empire the size of Toronto. Boys there would have been enough, but not of the same quality. Education had not then spread over the land, gathering children by the tens of thousands into the schools, teaching them that which would help to make them into good citizens and enforcing a healthy discipline both of mind and body. No greater evidence of the progress of the Victorian era could be furnished than this display, and not even the most notable scientific achievement in discovery can rank beside the emancipation of the bulk of the population from the thralls of ignorance which bound it in the earlier part of the century. Now it is the proud boast of the Empire that no child is so humble that it cannot obtain facilities for self-improvement, and that the general tone has been so elevated and the advantage of education become so generally recognized among all classes that there is little disinclination to put aside the opportunities offered.

Further proof of the potential for such order and progress came with the performance of the mass school choir early that afternoon. Positioned in the Exhibition grandstand amid the hubbub of the crowds, the choir of 4,000 school children provided an equally compelling sensory experience.

Bands were stationed all over the grounds and their playing proved a great feature of the afternoon’s entertainment....Thousands of children, boys and girls and their parents, were assembled there, and as the time arrived for the programme of music from the little ones, every person was all attention. The singing was excellent, and well deserved the hearty cheering it received.

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54 “The Great Parade,” Mail and Empire, 23 June 1897, 1.
55 “Toronto’s Loyal Tribute to Britain’s Queen,” Mail and Empire, 23 June 1897, 1.
Following some initial greetings to the assembled multitude from city mayor R. J. Fleming, “a very small proportion of whom could hear him,” provincial Conservative party leader J. P. Whitney expressed his hope that “in the future our children may reap similar benefits from the example set by our Gracious Sovereign Queen Victoria, and that hereafter as they tell their children the part they took to-day in the celebration of this diamond jubilee, that the lessons learned will have a lasting influence not only upon the Canadian people, but upon all peoples upon the earth.”

The remainder of the afternoon was taken up with athletic games, which ended at 5:30. People then began to make their way to various areas throughout the city to witness what was a truly modern spectacle – its virtually complete illumination by human design. Huge lighted displays graced the tallest downtown buildings and massive bonfires were built to be lighted at 8 p.m. on Toronto Island, and in Dovercourt and Riverdale Parks. Lighting up parts of the city at night was certainly nothing new. However, as Keith Walden notes, innovations in technology that “created unparalleled opportunities for brilliant demonstrations” held public fascination during the period. Collectively, this particular experience was so novel that the following day newspapers featured illustrated depictions of buildings so festooned in an attempt to convey the grandeur of the accomplishment.

The city’s hospitals and charities also did their part. The Toronto Home for Incurables decorated its facade, as did St. Michael’s and Toronto General hospitals, and Toronto’s Grace hospital even held an ice cream and strawberry social on its rooftop, so that nurses and patients

56 “Toronto’s Tribute,” Mail and Empire, 23 June 1897, 8.
57 “Toronto’s Tribute,” Mail and Empire, 23 June 1897, 8.
58 Walden, Becoming Modern, 304.
could view the festivities from a safe vantage point.\textsuperscript{59} On the ground, the city streets teemed with traffic, prompting one observer to comment:

It was not too much to say that every man who was out carried his life in his hands for, with swiftly moving trolley cars and carriages, he was threatened at every corner....It is almost a miracle that no one was run over, especially at the corner of King and Yonge streets, and the policemen on duty at the corner performed the labours of Hercules several times over, but it was a jubilee crowd and it kept its head.\textsuperscript{60}

Perhaps the most profound description of the evening came from a Mail and Empire reporter, who went aloft to the tower of his employer’s building and beheld perhaps for the first time a night-time scene of urban light and colour, sound and smell:

The fierce, steady light from the grand illuminations of the great business blocks in the boundaries stated, reflected on the enormous masses of bunting and flags, produced a most peculiar effect. It was as though a great conflagration was raging, and sending out from its midst sheets of red and yellow flames. From the streets came the roar of traffic, the heavy tread of thousands of feet, and a babel (sic) of shouts and cheers. Ever and anon an enthusiastic man would call for cheers for the Queen, and from hundreds of throats would come a deep, hearty hurrah. Bands were constantly passing east and west on King street, the members seemingly undeterred by a day’s playing for the procession, and bent upon adding theirs to the gaiety of the night. From drum and fife and brass bands came the ringing strains of tunes, which in almost every part of the known world have inspired the sons of the Empire to battle for the dear old flag. The National Anthem, “British Grenadiers,” “Men of Harlech,” and our own “Maple Leaf,” rang out clear and bold, and the shouts and cheers were hushed at intervals, that the people might listen to the music—only to be renewed again and again as a band ceased playing, or struck up another air. Looking down on the vast crowds and recognizing the fact that the enthusiasm was a spontaneous outburst from the citizens of a representative city of the Dominion, one could not but be convinced of the fact that this glorious country is rapidly making for herself a place amongst the great nations of the earth.\textsuperscript{61}

Here was beauty and chaos on a grand scale, the hallmark of a modern city caught up in the ecstasy of celebration. Whether the revellers described had learned the songs at school, or

\textsuperscript{59} See “Hospitals and Charities,” \textit{Mail and Empire}, 23 June 1897, 8-9. To the 21\textsuperscript{st}-century observer, these appear to fall far short of achieving their aims, however, one must remain mindful that photography was only just beginning to make inroads into the newspaper trade. See “Toronto’s Tribute,” \textit{Mail and Empire}, 23 June 1897, 8.
\textsuperscript{60} “The City After Dark,” \textit{Mail and Empire}, 23 June 1897, 8.
\textsuperscript{61} “From the Mail Tower,” \textit{Mail and Empire}, 23 June 1897, 8.
through their oft repeated performances by school choirs cannot be known. What is certain is that most had experienced state schooling and so would have been exposed to its influence, both musical and otherwise. This day had also shown that public schools remained an important component in the diffusion of late-Victorian middle-class values as they were expressed in Toronto. More than anything, the city’s celebration of the Diamond Jubilee had proven that even displays of patriotism and loyalty were open to interpretation and could be manifested in a number of ways in a modern and complex urban environment. Thanks to the initiative of pioneers like Hughes and Cringan, Toronto schools had formulated a model of musical expression that suited the modern city. That it blended so well with the celebration at hand offered tangible proof that this, in fact, was the case. In so doing, they also provided a cultural template for school music which would endure long after they had left the scene.
“The public school is the only conservatory most children will ever know.”

“Modernity generally was as much about trying to control sound as producing it and industrialization and urbanization upped the ante in this regard.”

The purpose of this dissertation has been to examine the role of public school music in the making of a modern middle class in late-Victorian Toronto. In so doing, it has attempted to present the aural context in which both developed, a task which has involved the use of sensory history to augment the discussion. Throughout, the hope has been that this approach will supplement, rather than replace, existing narratives, thus broadening the field and opening up new avenues for further consideration of the topic.

In framing an understanding of the full social historical context of schools and music that found expression in the ‘Jubilee Moment’ of 1897, this thesis has necessarily moved from the general to the specific, both in terms of its subject matter and the individuals involved. The strategy has been to set this particular—and special—moment into a context in which it becomes clear that historiographical questions related to "who" and "why" and "how" find expression in specific time, place and event.

In personifying my argument, I have been fortunate in that both Egerton Ryerson and James L. Hughes, two of Canada’s most prominent educators of the nineteenth century spread their pedagogical ideas outward from Toronto; hence, their experience of and reaction to modern influences provides a unique insight into how particular ideas about school music and education

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evolved under such circumstances. The cultural world surrounding Ryerson was very much one informed by Old World influences, and his immersion in Methodism as it was practised earlier in the century caused him to think about music in public schools as an extension of an activity that was (or should be) already taking place in the home and church. Even as he witnessed firsthand the changes besetting urban areas abroad and in the United States, his philosophical outlook remained rooted in a pre-industrial worldview which understood moral character as an outgrowth of certain divine principles—principles that could be formalized and reinforced through the instruments of public education. To him, vocal music in the schools represented a logical extension of this approach.

Ryerson’s own musical talents and his Primitive Methodist background no doubt informed his belief in music’s power to uplift and transform individuals; thus, for him the school represented yet another place to instil “cheerful obedience” and nurture family life. Even as he began to put his plans into practice, however, events within his own family signified that change was underway.

In many ways, James L. Hughes epitomized this change. The last half of the nineteenth century witnessed the virtual transformation of cities such as Toronto into modern, urban entities. As Andrew Holman observes, the shift represented more than simple physical rearrangement:

Called both the era of the “first industrial revolution” and “Canada’s Age of Industry,” these forty or so years have been identified by historians of social structural change as a critical period in the development of class disparities, identities and strategies. By the 1890s, the forces of industrialization and urban growth had produced a society that comprised extremes of wealth and poverty, luxury and want, capital and labour. It was a society, contemporaries recognized, made up of three classes: workers, the wealthy, and the middle class.\(^3\)

Coming of age in this period, Hughes bore late witness to the fading reality so familiar to Ryerson, but used the myths it generated to reconfigure schooling to meet head-on the challenges confronting the burgeoning city. Immersing himself in innovative pedagogical approaches, Hughes encouraged their dissemination among those he hired and inspired, and it is safe to say that on both counts, Toronto school music instructor Alexander Cringan fit the bill.

Thoroughly trained and steadfast in his convictions, Cringan borrowed many of the characteristics associated with popular spectacles to take school music into the street, and in the process, turned it into a vehicle for public promotion, something both attractive to, and welcomed by citizens. To them, the combination of school music and drill exercises represented tangible proof that public schools were, in fact, steeping a new generation of modern youth in muscular Christian values that would equip them to navigate whatever moral terrain the modern world might bring, temporarily allaying fears and renewing faith in the age.

While not unfamiliar to education historians, previous attempts to explain the role of music in schools have relied upon official pronouncements about what ought to take place, as opposed to actual day-to-day activities in the classroom. As we have seen, a paucity of evidence directly related to school music for much of the period leaves previous scholarship at a disadvantage in this respect. In constructing such a detailed aural context for these official pronouncements, and by drawing upon popular press accounts describing their performative presentation and reception, this thesis contributes a unique dimension to the way in which late Victorian Torontonians comprehended and responded to the public spectacles of school music before them. In the collection of news and feature items recounting such events—written for

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4 Research about schooling in Ontario during this period generally has faced a similar challenge. For example, Julie Mathien has illustrated the difficulty involved in calculating actual patterns of attendance. See Julie Mathien, “Children, Families and Institutions in Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Ontario” (Master’s thesis, University of Toronto, 2001), 12-15.
audiences living in an era pre-dating recorded sound—we are offered a sensory experience combining both the acoustic moment and its lingering sentiment, as imagined by reporters for their readers. Putting in print what could not yet be easily recorded and reproduced en masse even at century’s end makes this perspective an even more intriguing exercise by reminding us that listening itself must be understood within its own particular historical context. Within this framework then, school music became part of, rather than apart from, the soundscape which surrounded it. Although increasingly specific in its bureaucratic aims, it fit within a broader cultural understanding that remembered music as a transcendent part of being human.

Thus, the part played by Toronto schools in Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations fit perfectly with a public sentiment that had grown accustomed to displays of this sort, in essence, seeing it as simply the ‘proper’ thing for school children to do on such an occasion.

In considering the impact of modernity upon the people of Toronto Keith Walden writes:

Becoming modern, being modern: few people in the late Victorian period thought of their experiences in these terms. They did not see themselves as mere ciphers in a vast, amorphous transformation that could be summarized by neat terms like ‘industrial capitalism’ ‘the culture of consumption,’ or ‘modernization’...Becoming modern, as a deliberate goal, was not something most people considered consciously with any consistency. Yet, in ways that were piecemeal, uneven, and obscurely understood, modern they became—either willingly, or in spite of themselves.\(^5\)

Perhaps then, it is worth keeping Walden’s observation in mind, as we consider the place of school music in this historical space. To say that the year 1897 marked the ultimate expression of school music in Toronto would negate the significance of later ventures which, in size, splendour and presentation moved far beyond the aspirations of earlier productions. What is clear, however, is that public school music held a significant place amid the exuberance

expressed by Torontonians as they acted out a collective late-Victorian desire for harmony and order, full of promise and boundless possibilities.
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