June, soon after the Maysville Road Veto in May. That controversial decision still sparked partisan fireworks and Jackson’s reception was mixed, but his supporters were still able to arrange a patriotic reception on short notice. According to the Cincinnati Daily Republican, a Jacksonian paper, the President’s arrival on the Public Landing was a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe. A short distance above the town the escorting party were met by the steamer Clinton, with another band of music [the President’s boat had a band of nine local volunteers already on board]: the three boats were lashed together and the musicians united in performing national airs. Salutes were fired from several steamers at the shore, & from other positions, which were returned by the Atalanta and the Clinton – The President standing uncovered on the top of the former, bowing to the applauding multitudes which thronged the shore and the windows of the houses along the whole front of the city. ¹

As per usual, patriotic music was front and center in this celebration. It is notable that Cincinnati could so readily provide not one but two bands, both sufficiently expert to be able to combine forces for an impromptu joint performance. The tunes played by the combined bands were not named, nor did they need to be: the reporter could assume his readers understood what that meant. “National airs” were common knowledge and, along with the patriotic practices of cannon fire, cheering, fireworks displays, and nationalist imagery, had a robust network of performative spaces to thank for this familiarity. The rote formulas nestled in the description of Jackson’s arrival—“a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe,” for example—were equally a familiar part of descriptions of non-partisan civic events. Like John Durang’s, these encomiums signaled patriotic affect.

The rhetoric of unity and emotional transport could also be mocked. The Cincinnati Gazette, a rival Whig paper, did just that after the President departed: “There was much more éclat in the departure, than in the reception. There was more military show, more powder burnt, more of ‘a spectacle which we cannot adequately describe.’

¹ Cincinnati Daily Republican, June 29, 1830.
We wait therefore, for an official description, which we shall use according to our own discretion.”\(^2\) Descriptions of spectacles that exceeded words appeared repeatedly, as did phrases like “applauding multitudes.” The *Gazette* itself deployed such tropes: the same week as the President’s visit, its observer described without irony “emotions that are easier felt then [sic] described” in a report of a common school procession, complete with a band of music.\(^3\) The report continued that “we could not but wish there might be a future President among them [and] that he might never exercise his veto at the expense of Internal Improvement.”\(^4\) This political jab shows that patriotic tropes could be yoked to partisan bickering, even as they tracked the language of communal sentiment.

The course of Cincinnati’s early history as a musical city shows the entanglement of patriotic music and its accompanying visual symbols with the development and elaboration of a wide variety of places for performance, some of them becoming permanent, others thrown together for particular occasions. Musicians like William Nixon who lived in Cincinnati for years, and transient performers like Noah Ludlow or Sol Smith, anchored the local performative network and connected it to a broader one. For these performers, patriotic music was a familiar cultural product whose use tied together local theaters, homes, churches, streets, and parks like it did in the longer-settled cities and towns on the East Coast. Tracing the network back toward the East, we find another city whose longer history lent a sense of permanence to some of its artistic institutions, even as their flexibility and provisionality persisted.

\(^2\) *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 30, 1830.

\(^3\) *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 29, 1830. Cincinnati had moved forward relatively early with plans for widespread education; the common schools were privately funded institutions dating from the mid-1820s. See Greve, *Centennial History of Cincinnati*, 617-618; Keene, *History of Music Education*, 166-171.

\(^4\) *Cincinnati Daily Gazette*, June 29, 1830.
Baltimore: The Spectacle of Patriotic Performance

In 1790, when Cincinnati was a frontier fort and a handful of houses huddled again the Ohio River, Baltimore was the fourth largest city in the United States, a mercantile port with strong ties to Europe and the Caribbean and by river and road to its hinterlands and the western territories. The Monumental City was more populous in 1790 than Cincinnati in 1820, yet the booming western city had caught up to its eastern counterpart by the middle of the nineteenth century, both having populations hovering around 100,000 by 1850. In terms of its expressive culture, however, Baltimore’s head start was significant. When Cincinnati built its first named theater, the Shellbark, Baltimore had enjoyed performances in permanent, purpose-built theaters for more than thirty years. Its first brick theater structure had been built in 1781 and its principal theater, the Holliday Street Theatre, had been in place since 1794 (although newly and sumptuously rebuilt in the same location in 1813), and the city would soon boast several more. These theaters were used by local performers and also by the established, experienced theatrical troupes of the east. The city’s physical location, as a convenient port for immigrant European artists, also influenced its music. Like Philadelphia and New York, Baltimore was an origin point from which performances spread west, and the Holliday Street Theatre was preeminent among Baltimore’s many performative spaces.

5 Rockman, Scrapping By, 28; Browne, Baltimore in the Nation, 3-4.
6 The original Holliday Street Theatre was begun in 1794 and completed in 1795; the wooden structure was torn down and a new brick theater built on the same site, opening in 1813. Various called the Holliday Street Theatre, the New Theatre (in fact the third theater to be referred to as the “New Theatre”), the Baltimore Theatre, and Old Drury, the structure operated as a theater into the 1870s (when it was partly destroyed by fire), making it one of the longest-lasting in the nation. It was finally torn down in 1917. Other important antebellum performance spaces included the Front Street Theatre and Circus (Jenny Lind’s Baltimore performances took place there in the 1850s), the Adelphi Theatre (commonly known as the Mud Theatre for its low-lying site), the Roman Amphitheatre, the Howard Athenium, and the Old Baltimore Museum. As in New York and Philadelphia, John Bill Ricketts built a short-lived circus in Baltimore in the 1790s. See Clayton Coleman Hall, ed., Baltimore: Its History and Its People (New York, 1912), 652-653;
Theatrical performances, including patriotic ones, relied on spectacle. Baltimore’s theatre scene was no exception. Theatrical spectacles, using fantastical sets (sometimes of exotic locales), and elaborate special effects appealing to both the eyes and the ears, were an accompaniment of the melodramas that were so popular in early national theatre. In Baltimore, theaters programmed pieces like “Cherry and Fair Star,” advertised as a “Grand Eastern Spectacle;” “Lady of the Lake,” based on Walter Scott’s poem; and the bizarre “The Gnome-King,” a spectacle play based on German myths whose author actually criticized “mere ‘vehicles’ for Musick and Spectacle” even as he added to the genre. During the War of 1812 and for decades afterwards, the vogue for spectacle made the staging of grand martial scenes an attractive option for theater managers: theatrical spectacles were excellent occasions for the enactment of the patriotic sublime.

Permanent venues like the Holliday Street Theatre enabled the spectacle plays characteristic of the post-1812 Baltimore stage, but earlier Baltimore performers employed temporary venues. For example, a 1797 performance in “Aaron Barling’s Oyster house and Tavern” took place next door to the then-new Holliday Street Theatre and featured “a Medley of Entertainments, Pleasing Deceptions, and Balancing, and the Babes in the Woods by Automatons four feet high.” Even the most specialized artists had multiple roles. For example, Alexander Reinagle, well-known musician and

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7 George Colman, *The Gnome-King, or, the Giant-Mountains* (London: John Miller, 1819); italics in original. Genre terminology was much less precise in antebellum America than today, so that the category of spectacle play could easily encompass opera as well. It is important to note that virtually all such plays contained music. We would today call them opera, operetta, or musical theater. On theatrical spectacle, see Grimsted, *Melodrama Unveiled*, 76-84; Lewis, ed., *From Traveling Show to Vaudeville*, introduction; Barry Witham, ed., *Theatre in the United States: Volume 1, 1750-1915: Theatre in the Colonies and United States* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124-133, 148-168.

8 *May’s Dramatic Encyclopedia*, MS 995, Roll 1, Jacket 3, Part 6, S26, Maryland Historical Society.
composer, was not only the co-manager of the prominent theatrical troupe of Reinagle and Wignell in Philadelphia and Baltimore, but also doubled as scenic painter for the troupe.

Reinagle’s career reveals how composing as well as playing patriotic music was a matter of course for performers. Reinagle wrote a number of patriotic tunes, including “Madison’s March,” “Mrs. Madison’s Minuet,” and “The Tars of Columbia” celebrating the naval heroes of the First Barbary War, as well as a piece for a Baltimore militia company, “First Baltimore Hussars.”9 He also mounted expensive musical productions. William Wood, a member and later manager of the same company, actually criticized Reinagle for spending too much money on music. His complaint bears out how elaborate these musical accompaniments were:

The musical part of the entertainment being now made so prominent, greatly swelled the expenditures. These included the enormous charge of a perfect orchestra of instrumental performers of undoubted abilities….The musical instruments of all kinds…including two grand pianos and a noble organ, swelled this sum yet more. Then again the skeleton of a chorus, to be constantly kept and filled up as wanted, formed another item.10

Reinagle was interested in the aural spectacle that a large orchestra could provide and chafed at the financial constraints. His efforts anticipated the much larger orchestras of the mid-nineteenth century and later. At the turn of the century most audiences had to be satisfied with smaller forces like the Old American Company’s eight-person orchestra.

Spectacle performances at the Holliday Street Theatre during the War of 1812 and afterwards vividly brought the patriotic sublime into the theatre. The Holliday Street

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10 William Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage, 92-93; see also Downer ed., Memoir of John Durang, 20-21, 112.
Theatre seated more than 1,500 spectators and was “tastefully decorated,” boasting “all the complicated fixtures and machinery of scenic display.” The string of American naval victories in 1813 on Lake Erie and in the Atlantic prompted a series of spectulars at the theater. On May 12, for example, the resident company premiered a new show called “The Constitution and Wasp; or, American Tars Triumphant.” This show also featured premieres of two new patriotic songs: “American Chronology” and “The Pride of Columbia,” sung by Mr. Hardinge, who later premiered “The Star Spangled Banner” at the Holliday Street Theatre.

Five months later, the theater celebrated Commodore Perry’s Lake Erie victory with “Heroes of the Lakes,” another new patriotic opera, as well a “Grand National Transparency” featuring the sort of rich visual detail the lyric to “The Star Spangled Banner” would soon invoke:

The Genius of America is seen seated on a rock, upon the borders of the lake, presenting to an infant figure of fame (illustrative of the growing splendor of our naval band) a portrait of the youthful hero Commodore Perry. In the perspective, a distant view of the enemy’s captured fleet, and the moment of its being taken possession by its valiant conquerors, and surmounted by our national flag…

This performance also connected the indoor space of the theater with the street outside:

“For this night only,” as the advertisement said, “the front of the theatre will be fancifully

11 John H.B. Latrobe, Picture of Baltimore, Containing a Description of all Objects of Interest in the City; and Embellished with Views of the Principal Public Buildings (Baltimore: F. Lucas, Jr., 1832), 189; Jonathan B. Jeffery, Jno. B. Jeffery’s Guide and Directory to the Opera Houses, Theatres, Public Halls, Bill Posters, etc. of the Cities and Towns of America (Chicago, 1889), 136.
12 This was the former company of Thomas Wignell and Alexander Reinagle, by this point managed by William B. Wood and William Warren: it was the dominant theatrical company in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Annapolis. See Wood, Personal Recollections, 182-215.
13 Playbill, “First Commemoration of Naval Victories,” for the Holliday Street Theatre, May 12 1813, Ephemera Collection, Series W, Box 40, Maryland Historical Society.
14 Two weeks later, the theater presented a second “National Scene” depicting the Lake Erie victory. The performance featured a “Naval Triple Hornpipe” by John Durang’s two sons, Charles and Ferdinand Durang, who had joined the military in Baltimore. See Holliday Street Theatre playbills, October 1 and October 23, 1813, Ephemera Collection, Series W, Box 40, MdHS.
illuminated and ornamented in honor of the victory, with transparencies and naval emblems.” The colorful display, making the theater’s façade part of the patriotic occasion, turned even passersby into an audience.

Warren and Wood used the concatenation of music with various spectacular visual and aural effects to reinforce the sublimity portrayed by “The Star Spangled Banner” itself. On November 12, two months after the British were beaten back from the city and less than one month after Key’s “Star Spangled Banner” was performed for the first time, the troupe unveiled an “ENTIRE NEW SCENE” they had been teasing in playbills for more than a month – a depiction of the bombardment of Fort McHenry. The eyewitness’s point of view was “taken from Hamstead Hill” and the description seems remarkably similar to the famous print of the battle produced around the same time (see Figure 4). Theatrical spectacle created a vivid and lifelike scene: the fort was “illuminated by the fire from the Enemy’s Bomb Vessels; Which discharge a rapid succession of SHELLS, (accurately represented by machinery); some bursting in the air, &c.” The effect of this scene as advertised was visual and aural: audience members could even smell the powder used for the replicated explosions.

Spectacle also informed civic nationalist performance in urban parades, and in the streets the force of music was especially evident. One link between theatrical spectacle and the civic space of the street was the circus. In 1837, the circus spilled into the streets of Baltimore with the arrival of Purdy, Welch, Macomber & Co.’s “stupendous
Menagerie.” Baltimore was part of the New York-based group’s tour of cities and small towns, including Philadelphia, Buffalo, Ithaca, Waterford, Schenectady, and Troy, New York. It was accompanied by the most famous brass band in America, Edward “Ned” Kendall’s Boston Brass Band. “Anxious spectators” crowded the parade route starting on Pratt Street near Eutaw Street in Baltimore; the “majestic elephant Tippo Sultan” led the procession, followed by the band on “beautiful grey horses.” The spectacle of the menagerie was “beautiful, wonderful and sublime” and the brass band was not least of the attractions: “the concentration of musical talent is alone worth the price of admission.”

“Theatre” and “circus” were sometimes so close as to be interchangeable, as with Baltimore’s Front Street Theatre and Circus. It programmed many of the same kinds of plays as the Holliday Street Theatre, in addition to fare as varied as displays of horsemanship and Jenny Lind’s first Baltimore performances during her 1850 American tour. But outside, when on parade, the menagerie could take full advantage of band music. The Boston Brass Band represented the martial and patriotic element of the spectacle, both in its military uniforms and bearing, and the music it performed, which included martial marches and quicksteps. Like theaters that incorporated patriotic music

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17 *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, September 27, 1837.
and visuals into their regular round of performances, the menagerie wove these martial signifiers into a public parade that was not part of a specific patriotic memorialization.  

As in Cincinnati during Lafayette’s 1825 visit, parades turned Baltimore’s street system into a vast space for patriotic display. Parades ran the gamut from militia drills and parades announced on short notice, to events like the Purdy menagerie’s parade, to community-wide parades on national days of celebration or mourning. By the 1820s, as befitted the so-called Monumental City, Baltimore’s streets were marked by the Washington Monument (begun in 1815 and completed in 1829), and the Battle Monument, commemorating the Battle of Baltimore during the War of 1812, begun in 1815. During the celebration of Defender’s Day in 1822 (the date of the defense of Baltimore and the bombardment of Fort McHenry), a parade to the site reached its high point with the erection of the statue on top of the monument, accompanied by two “Grand Salutes” by artillery and a performance by the “military bands” of music composed for the occasion, the “Baltimore Monument March.”  

The Baltimore Patriot, edited by Isaac Munroe, Francis Scott Key’s close friend, lauded the “full and brilliant military parade,” singling out the bands of music present for particular praise. He also pleaded with his readers to help fund the completion of the Battle Monument in highly wrought rhetoric.

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22 Ithaca Herald, August 9, 1837. Fraternal and other associational groups held similar parades. See for example “Odd Fellows Celebration in Oley,” Gazette of the Union, Golden Rule, Odd Fellows Family Companion (New York) 11, no. 10 (1849); “Croton Water Celebration,” New York Spectator, October 15, 1842 (a temperance parade).

23 Baltimore Patriot, September 10, 1822.

24 Baltimore Patriot, September 13, 1822. The Battle Monument was completed in 1825. In 1828, the Holliday Street Theatre celebrated Defender’s Day with a performance of She Would Be a Soldier and patriotic music including “The Star Spangled Banner.” See Ephemera Collection, W45, MdHS.
meant to signal familiar patriotic sentiment, exhorting them to take action “while every heart beats high with just pride, at the remembrance of the event.”

The twin sites of the Battle and Washington Monuments were nodes that marked patriotic celebration, and from them parades spread out through the city (see Figure 2.3). In 1820, a citywide July Fourth parade followed a straightforward route between the monuments. Ceremonies in the “natural amphitheatre” of Howard’s Park, adjacent to the unfinished monument, followed the parade. Music punctuated the beginning, middle, and end of the affair: “the performances were commenced with national music from the bands” and concluded with “another national air…and a salute of thirteen guns.” Music also marked the huge funeral procession for William Henry Harrison in 1841: many bands were placed at intervals along the long, winding route of the procession, which began on Market Street and went past the Battle Monument on a circuitous route encompassing a large stretch of the city from east to west, ending finally at the Washington Monument. Newspaper reports noted nine different bands, including “Capt. Roundtree’s excellent band, in uniform, playing the admirable dirge dedicated to the memory of General Harrison….The band mustered its full strength, consisting of eighteen instruments.”

Parades drawing on patriotic tropes, as well as the celebration of national days and local civic events thus laced city streets into a complex performative network and inscribed patriotic affect as one of its primary valences. The network linked civic space to

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25 *Baltimore Patriot*, September 13, 1822.
26 *Christian Watchman* (Boston), July 15, 1820; reprinted from *Baltimore Patriot*.
27 *Baltimore Sun*, April 28, 1841.