commercial spaces like theaters, and to performances spanning the gamut from the solemn, to the joyous. This diversity encompassed celebrations outside the expected calendar of national days. Patriotic sentiment was even a key feature of events celebrating the economic and commercial expansion of the new nation. The commemorative celebration for the laying of the foundation-stone of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, the “great national work which is intended and calculated to cement more strongly the union of the Eastern and the Western States,” took place on July 4, 1828.¹ It beautifully illustrated the musical ties that bound different spaces together – in this case a parade route, a temporary outdoor civic space, and the permanent space of the Holliday Street Theatre. Organizers chose July Fourth for the event, wishing to signal civic pride and affective patriotism.

Baltimore filled with visitors in the days before the celebration, so that on the morning of the Fourth the “immense throng of spectators…filled every window in Baltimore-street, and the pavement below….fifty thousand spectators, at least, must have been present.” The parade was massive and incorporated a great diversity of groups, including “bands of music, trades, and other bodies.” One focal point was a huge model, “completely rigged,” of a naval vessel, the “Union,” complete with uniformed sailors. Bands playing patriotic tunes were interspersed amongst the nationalist imagery on display: militia uniforms, banners emblazoned with patriotic verse, national flags, eagle figures, shields, and more. Charles Carrollton, one of the last surviving signers of the Declaration of Independence, gave the main public address at the site, accompanied by a march composed for the occasion, the “Carrollton March” (see Figure 2.4). John Cole,

¹ *Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser*, July 5, 1828.
Figure 2.4. Sheet Music of “Carrollton March” (Baltimore: John Cole, 1831), Lester S. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. This march was composed for the cornerstone celebration for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad in 1828.
composer and one of Baltimore’s leading music printers, wrote the piece and after the ceremony issued it as sheet music for private piano performance. Notably, however, he also composed a “Song for the Day” that was a much simpler strophic song, with multiple verses printed in the pamphlet that included reportage of the celebration, and probably in handbill form on the Fourth itself.² This song, distributed to crowds at the ceremony or along the parade route, made it easy to sing along with its patriotic sentiments.

What was so notable about the celebration of the railroad was its easy appropriation of patriotic signifiers. There was no particular reason to lay the B&O cornerstone on July Fourth, but the twinning of private capital and civic boosterism with the patriotic sublime was prompted by the junctions between the spaces of performances: civic and commercial, public and private, indoor and outdoor, temporary and permanent. The elaboration of a multitude of places and venues for Americans to play and listen to music was a key factor in establishing and elucidating expressions of patriotism in the antebellum decades, spurring their transformation into a broadly shared public culture.

² All quotes in this paragraph are from Detailed and Correct Account of the Grand Civic Procession, in the City of Baltimore, on the Fourth of July, 1828; in Honor of the Day, and in Commemoration of the Commencement of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (Baltimore: Thomas Murphy, 1828), Rare MHE 2791.B7 1828 .B2, MdHS This pamphlet, a reprint of a series of columns running concurrently in the Baltimore American, included music and lyrics of the “Song for the Day,” written by John Cole. See also Dilts, The Great Road, 7-12.
National Music and American Identity, 1790-1848

The Norwegian violinist Ole Bull was one of the first and greatest of the wave of European musical virtuosos who spilled onto the shores of America during the nineteenth century; whether sublime or simply flashy, all took advantage of the stamp of Old-World refinement that accompanied them as they entertained American audiences. After he performed his new piece “Niagara” in 1844, the mutual love affair between Bull and his American audiences inaugurated a vogue for music celebrating the sublime natural wonders of the young nation. In 1855, after years of touring in the United States, Bull also offered a prize of $1,000 “for the best original grand opera by an American composer, and upon a strictly American subject.”

His call occasioned a response from an anonymous critic in Philadelphia who

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1 Daily Ohio Statesman, Columbus, Ohio, January 22, 1855.
wondered about the propriety of “our musical young gentlemen…turning their attention to American history” for inspiration. He also doubted whether young Americans were as yet capable of producing anything better than the then-popular waltzes, Italian opera potpourris, and Stephen Foster tunes. He argued that the new nation’s culture had not as yet reached the level of refinement necessary to give weighty subjects, or more complex musical forms, their proper due. They should, he wrote, emulate their more cultivated and better-trained European masters rather than strain to produce an indigenous American music. Many, including the irascible Transcendentalist John Sullivan Dwight, who reprinted the Philadelphia piece in his eponymous Journal, agreed with this critic. But other guardians of culture saw in Bull’s Niagara and its celebration of the natural sublime hopeful signs that a distinctive and elevated national music was taking shape.

Intellectuals and tastemakers who debated the state of America’s music culture were participating in a discourse about national music and “national character,” which is the subject of the first section of this chapter. Although these elites often dismissed much of what went by the name of “patriotic music” in the United States as frivolous or crude, for them national music properly understood was patriotic music: almost by definition, it encouraged identification with the nation and its culture. And they had high hopes for it. As no less a figure than Lord Kames himself said, “patriotism…triumphs over every selfish motive, and is a firm support to every virtue.” Patriotic feeling, properly tuned, elevated morals.

2 “National Music,” Dwight’s Journal of Music vol. VI no. 18 (February 3, 1855): 139-140.
Critics who debated national music followed the Scottish Enlightenment stages of civilization schema, in which societies were placed on a continuum ranging from the simplest savage and barbaric cultures to the most advanced, commercial, and refined. For these critics, the national music of the new republic was an indice of America’s position on this continuum and raised vexed questions about its cultural heritage and future direction. Could a country that lacked a long history and therefore a culture rooted in “immemorial custom” produce a national music at all? If so, was it capable of the refined music characteristic of the most advanced civilizations? Dwight’s answer was evidently “no.” But perhaps, others said, this was not even desirable, given that refinement could slip so easily into corruption and effete luxury as it had in European aristocratic and court circles. Maybe the national music of simpler, freedom-loving peoples, like the Irish, who had only recently emerged from their barbaric pasts, was a better model for America.4

Men like Lowell Mason, the subject of the second section of this chapter, sought to elevate the nation’s culture and morals through the reform of sacred music and music education. Public reformers like Mason tried to instill what they regarded as proper moral and aesthetic responses to music. But they were also quick to include popular songs with patriotic themes in schoolbooks and in songbooks for adult audiences, because they recognized their value in evoking emotional and moral attachment to the nation.

Critics and reformers like Mason who regarded themselves as custodians of culture did not debate national musical culture in a vacuum. As they tried to define what

a properly national music was, and to condemn other music as crude or frivolous, Americans were busily engaged in creating patriotic music through a variety of musical practices, molding it “in ways which gave expressive shape to their own lived experiences.” This was true even of concerts, thought to be the most elevated kind of musical performance, and the subject of the third section of this chapter. Concerts in the early nineteenth century included patriotic music of all kinds in their repertoire. Elite critics therefore had to contend with patriotic music that they would have liked to dismiss on aesthetic grounds. They might even have to concede that these productions, even when not meeting the highest standards of refinement, were ineffably “national” and right for the new republic. The creative tension in patriotic music that arose from the push and pull between elite discourse on national music, and the musical practices they encountered inside and outside the concert hall, is a prominent theme in this section and throughout the chapter.

The relation between region and nation in the music of the burgeoning West was an important aspect of the debate about music and the subject of the final section of this chapter. Performers and audiences in the new western territories and states produced music that centered on a regional character type. They populated their songs with simple, rustic, and even bumptious figures, who were nonetheless also industrious and forward-looking. Perhaps, said western boosters, this character and his region were the best embodiment of America’s future direction as it emerged out of its rude condition and into the ranks of enlightened civil societies. These regional songs became part of the

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The Debate over National Music

The idea of a “national music,” a body of compositions both geographically defined and expressing a specific national character, received a boost in 1792, when newspapers up and down the east coast published news of a meeting of Irish harpists that had taken place in Belfast earlier that year amidst the fervor of the French Revolution and the founding of the United Irishmen. This competition of Irish minstrels featuring the “native airs of Ireland” was intended to “prevent the original music of this country from being lost.” Even in its perilous condition—unprinted and in the hands of illiterate (and mostly blind) harpists—the English correspondent praised what he believed to be this music’s deep roots in a national character when he extolled “the power of simple melody” of these “native airs.”

Reporting of the 1792 event in the American press was indicative of the hold “national” music had on the American imagination in the first half of the nineteenth century. Americans loved Irish and Scottish music. Fifteen years after the 1792 harp competition in Belfast, composer and music publisher James Hewitt advertised for subscribers for The Music of Erin, a collection of “Original Hibernian Melodies” (which was indeed published later that year). Hewitt remembered the “Bards” of 1792 in terms

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6 See Edward D. Mansfield, Memoirs of the Life and Services of Dr. Daniel Drake, M.D., Physician, Professor, and Author (Cincinnati: Applegate, 1855), 307; Constance Rourke, American Humor, 38-65.


8 “National Music of Ireland,” New York Daily Gazette, September 27, 1792; Dunlap’s American Daily Advertiser, Philadelphia, September 25, 1792; Charleston City Gazette, October 15, 1792.
that linked musical performance to the whole of Irish history:

…a meeting was convened in the North of Ireland [in 1792], by a few remaining members of that ancient order, which had spread the ‘light of song’ over the gloom of unillumined ignorance; or softened the ferocity of uncivilized heroism….Many of the airs (several of which are Carolan’s) and poems intended to compose this little selection, were originally collected in what may be deemed the Classic Wilds of Ireland – where Ossian sung, where Fingal fought, and Ofear [sic: probably O’Farrell or O’Fearghail] fell.9

The popular perception of the Irishman at the turn of the nineteenth century was that he was at once a drinker and brawler of the lower sorts and a musician and songwriter seemingly formed by nature. The songs in Hewitt’s collection were, according to one historian, “patriotic, proud, alcoholic, and earthy.” In fact, the editor of one collection felt obliged to vouch for the virtue of his Irish songs, which he promised would not cause “Fair Americans” to blush.10

Americans had quickly and effectively mythologized Irish “national” music, in effect excising it from the course of recorded history and placing it in the immemorial past, with its mythical or legendary Fingals and Ossians. Such supposedly authentic emanations of a deeply-embedded mythic cultural past was “national” music: “a generally received opinion, that most countries have a music of their own, the character of which may be called national.”11 Historical figures like Hewitt’s and others’ “Carolan” (in actuality Turlough O’Carolan, a sixteenth to seventeenth century harpist and composer who wrote many later-famous tunes) took on the patina of myth. And Irish and

10 Hamm, Yesterdays, 43-44, quotes from 44.
11 William Gardiner, The Music of Nature; or, an attempt to prove that what is passionate and pleasing in the art of singing, speaking, and performing upon musical instruments, is derived from the sounds of the animated world (Boston, 1841), 351. Gardiner’s tome was originally published in England in 1832; it was republished at least twice in America (in 1838 and 1841). The American edition was dedicated to Thomas Moore.
Scottish music were only the most popular bodies of national music; music from other countries like Italy, Germany, Spain, Russia and many more were similarly singled out and endowed with an immemorial past. National music, it was thought, even characterized ancient Israel, Egypt, and Greece, and editorialists constructed elaborate histories tracing the course of national music from classical civilizations through the middle ages to their current enlightened age, all in order to explain its affective power: “it was music which imparted to [poetry] its popular power; its power to alarm, to agitate, to melt, to win.”\textsuperscript{12} Such commentaries sought in the music of the immemorial past explanations for its importance to national characters of the present.

But the United States did not have an immemorial past, and contemporaries wrestled with the question of national identity and national music in the context of the nation’s newness. How could a new nation, founded within living memory on the basis of appeals to an enlightened and rational polity, inculcate a collective identity in the absence of ethnohistorical traditions?

Commentators solved this dilemma in a variety of ways. Some made an appeal to individual musical memory: the “sounds assimilating with our earliest and most innocent employments and recreations.”\textsuperscript{13} National identity was, in other words, nostalgia for the sounds of youth. Others contrasted the “good old songs” with the “indecency” of the current “fashionable” songs, contrasting the latter with the “moral character” of national music.\textsuperscript{14} In practice, the lack of a deeply-rooted past made available to Americans a


\textsuperscript{13} C. Dingley, “Original Communications,” \textit{Euterpeiad}, New York (September 1, 1830): 73.

\textsuperscript{14} “Secular Songs,” \textit{Western Recorder}, July 27, 1830, 120.
variety of models for national music from which they could select styles, genres, and even individual songs to fit their taste and the situation. Francis Scott Key’s use of a British popular song was one example. Even more telling, Americans directly borrowed the specific patriotic songs of other nations in at least two significant instances: the well-known Scottish patriotic song—in fact, Scotland’s *de facto* national anthem—“Scots wha ha’ wi’ Wallace bled,” and “America,” which was of course “God Save the King” with new lyrics. Americans’ willingness to appropriate patriotic music and reshape it for their own needs circumvented the perceived problem of newness, linking the nation’s recent past with its present by using music from other countries thought to be “national” as models, and thus creating a new nationalist narrative.

Appropriation extended to specific musical styles. A subset of patriotic music made use of what musicologist Richard Crawford has called the “song of yearning,” in the style of another Irishman, Thomas Moore, and his popular ballads. Moore was born in Ireland although he spent most of his life in England: he was from early in life a talented poet (his first publication was a translation of the odes of Anacreon) but was also a gifted amateur musician. His publications of “traditional” Irish melodies made him

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15 Usually known today as “My Country ‘Tis of Thee.” See Robert James Branham and Stephen J. Hartnett, *Sweet Freedom’s Song: “My Country ‘Tis of Thee” and Democracy in America* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). Branham and Hartnett emphasize the martial use of “America” during the Civil War period with an account of an 1861 performance at a militia drill and concert: a correspondent reported, “Oh, how grandly it sounded through the woods!” When the regimental band took up the refrain, he added, “it crashed louder than before” (123).
famous in Britain and especially in America.\textsuperscript{18}

The “yearning” effect was an aural portrayal of emotional remembrance, “flights of feeling and imagination” characterized musically by “unexpected [melodic] leaps that are then filled in by falling movement, mostly stepwise.”\textsuperscript{19} This construction is readily apparent in one of Moore’s first and best-known ballads, 1808’s “Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms,” which became one of the nineteenth century’s most popular songs, through the sales of the \textit{Irish Melodies} and through myriad reprints as sheet music (see Figure 3.1). The melody climbs to a high F in the second measure of the verse on “young charms,” then falls stepwise over the next measure before climbing again. This figure was one aural pattern through which audiences came to associate Moore’s music with a sense of yearning. Significantly, this emotional valence was thought to signal the music’s ancient provenance: Irish music was thought to be akin to the music of ancient Israel or Greece in its antiquity. To these early nineteenth-century critics, invested as they were in ethno-historical definitions of nation, Irish music was “sui generis,” and was “too strongly marked ever to be mistaken” for another nation’s music.\textsuperscript{20} Its antiquity positioned it within Kames’ developmental scheme and guaranteed that it was the authentic emanation of the Irish “genius.”\textsuperscript{21}


\textsuperscript{19} Crawford, \textit{America’s Musical Life}, 248; see also Hamm, \textit{Yesterdays}, 51-52, 55-56; Susan Key, “Sound and Sentimentality: Nostalgia in the Songs of Stephen Foster,” \textit{American Music} 13, no. 2 (Summer, 1995): 145-166.


\textsuperscript{21} “Ancient Irish Music, no. IV,” \textit{Euterpeiad}, July 15, 1831, 62. The connection to the stages of civilization was explicit: one critic wrote that “the most exquisite effusions of [music] have had their origin among the simplest and most uncultivated people. Nor can all that taste and science bring afterwards to the task do
The popular subgenre usually rested on a woman’s lament for a departed son, husband, or lover at war. A richly illustrated setting of Thomas Moore’s song “Go Where Glory Waits Thee” shows a series of scenes of the soldier departing for the battlefield, leaving his grieving lover behind to contemplate his heroism and sacrifice (see Figure 3.2). The illustrations equate the departed with a mythic ancient hero in armored garb. American composers appropriated the form for their own compositions. Enduring popular songs exemplifying the theme included James Hewitt’s “The Wounded Hussar” from 1800 and his son John Hill Hewitt’s “The Minstrel’s Return’d From the War,” written in 1825. Songs like these, printed as sheet music for home performance or played in concerts and recitals, extended patriotic themes of sacrifice and martial nobility beyond military settings into the commercial realm.

Martial music was, of course, a central part of national music. The musical commentariat considered military music an important sign of national virtue. The Scots certainly displayed it: “a species of martial music called Pibrochs, rouses the native Highlander as the sound of a trumpet does a war house, and produces effects little less marvelous than those recorded of the ancient music.” Creating martial music in America was, for such critics, a high priority. During the War of 1812, one commentator urged that “in this emergency, every spring should be put in motion to propel the grand

23 “Effects of Martial Music,” The Lady’s Miscellany or, Weekly Visitor (Aug 22, 1812), 283. The pibroch is an elaborate form of Scottish theme and variations.
national machine to one grand object—Martial spirit and discipline.”24

Commentators compiled detailed taxonomies of various national musics, evaluating and ranking them as bodies. There were “many pleasing national melodies in Spain and in Russia,” while “The French music, in so far as it is national, is in a most wretched taste.” Meanwhile, “The National music of Germany, doubtless possesses [sic]... a wildness of character peculiar in most cases to remote districts where the people retain their primitive rudeness and simplicity.” As for England and the United States, “neither... have a style of music peculiar to either country.” Conversely, “the national music of Scotland is daily becoming the most popular, and is very deservedly the best national, and most fashionable music extant.”25 Antiquarians even pored over the supposed Biblical and classic origins of national music, which “roused the martial spirit of the fiery Macedonian.”26 Throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, a cadre of proto-“expert” commentators classified and even created the folklore of national cultures.

It is not surprising, then, that the veritable cataract of interpretations, judgments, hierarchies, and histories of all these national bodies of music would easily encompass the realm of patriotic virtues, and in the process be pregnant with meaning for the writers of all these commentaries—and their own country:

The moral character of a people depends much—very much upon its National Music. It is the beautiful and patriotic music of Germany, Switzerland, and Scotland, which gives a great proportion of the virtue of the people. Aside from the direct application of religious principles, the music of a nation is that which can easiest change the character and fix the morals of any community. Away, then, with our present

24 National Advocate (New York), August 24, 1814.
25 “Of National Music,” The Euterpeiad: or, Musical Intelligencer, and Ladies Gazette 1 19 (Aug 5, 1820): 75, italics in original. This Euterpeiad is unrelated to the similarly named magazine published around 1830.
degraded style of Song, and let us have such music as becomes an intelligent and moral people.\textsuperscript{27}

The commentator not only links national character to music, he cites it as the single most important factor in the nation’s collective identity. “National music” is, he writes, synonymous with “patriotic music.” Like religion, it had enormous power to shape the morals of a people. The editor of the \textit{Euterpiad}, the literary magazine that printed this commentary, emphatically agreed and tied the theme of uplift to the education of children: “the subject on which [the writer] treats, is of the greatest importance to the rising generation, and is deserving [of] [t]he serious consideration of every parent.”\textsuperscript{28}

Some critics saw popular song, including Irish or Scottish songs, and even favorite patriotic standards, as evidence of America’s lack of refinement. These songs were not what they meant by national music. “In a word, we have no national music now,” one author lamented in 1812.\textsuperscript{29} Concerned critics tried to pinpoint the problem in the present lack of musical institutions and even proper places for performance. As early as 1807, a critic writing upon the occasion of a visiting German violinist’s concert in Baltimore bemoaned:

\begin{quote}
What will this \textit{Virtuoso} do here?...we have neither large theatres; nor church choirs; nor subscription concerts; nor military music; nor national academies….This exquisite skill then, will be buried like that of so many other Europeans, who vegetate here already, to our shame and our detriment...\textit{in the very Siberia of the arts}.\textsuperscript{30}
\end{quote}

Baltimore, it was alleged, lacked every possible support for decent music. Such concerns

\textsuperscript{27} “Modern Songs,” \textit{The Euterpiad}, July 15 1830, 50.

\textsuperscript{28} “Modern Songs,” \textit{The Euterpiad}, July 15 1830, 50.

\textsuperscript{29} J. Melville, “An Oddity,” \textit{The Lady’s Miscellany; or, Weekly Visitor, and Entertaining Companion for the Use and Amusement of Both Sexes} (Aug 1, 1812).

were echoed throughout the first half of the century by critics who saw Americans’ musical practices as improperly rude.

To return to the example that began this chapter, Ole Bull and his *Niagara* exemplified the tensions over what constituted national music and musical refinement. Critics responded to Bull’s *Niagara* in at least two different ways: some praised its tone painting of American sublimity, while others criticized its vulgar showiness and, as we saw, scorned Bull’s prize for an American opera as misguided and likely to result in fripperies. Not even the memory of George Washington was safe. Our Philadelphia critic scornfully imagined “the Father of his Country [having] his fame perfected by some big Italian basso, who shall rant over the stage.”³¹ The choice was stark. American musicians must, until their rude country got “older, richer, and more composed,” pattern themselves after refined “nations where Art has been studiously pursued for ages.”³² Otherwise, they would have nothing to “fall back upon” other than “Yankee Doodle, The Star Spangled Banner, or the negro melodies.”³³ In short, Handel and Haydn should be America’s “models,” not Thomas Moore’s ballads, not to speak of the indigenous productions of slaves, workingmen, or even self-taught gentleman amateurs.

Conversely, the majority of critics perceived “Niagara” and its performance to signal the country’s coming of age: “a new era in the history of the fine arts and public taste” in a country that for too long had been “fettered by this sense of inferiority.”³⁴ The critics who praised Bull’s performances were fully invested in laudatory descriptions of the audience’s fervent response, which they took to be a powerful example of patriotic

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³² Ibid.
³³ Ibid.
³⁴ *New York Herald*, December 20, 1844.
feeling. One reviewer (as most did) translated the aural experience into specific word-pictures of the “sublime catastrophe” of Niagara Falls, just as Francis Scott Key attempted to do at Fort McHenry in 1814:

Gradually, and in almost imperceptible succession, fall in the other voices of the scene – the growling and roaring of forest beasts, the gurgling and dashing of the upper waters as they leap madly from their dizzy height into the whirlpool – the winds signing and moaning through the trees, and singing their everlasting anthem to the thunderbass of the cataract – the sharp, gay warbling of birds that fill the branches; and, higher still, as the great oratorio progresses, flitting dream-like over the mingled mass of sound, are heard the voices of spirits, as if dropped from the bles[t] heaven above…Every body appeared stupified [sic] and overwhelmed, and every body inquired, with the eyes, of his companion or his neighbor, ‘What does it mean? what has happened to us all!’

As with Key’s “Star Spangled Banner,” descriptions of “Niagara” placed listeners as eyewitnesses to a vivid scene, and invited them to contemplate the sublimity of a national icon—in this case a geographical one. The composer himself and “Niagara’s” auditors were emotionally transported by the musical version of America’s natural sublime, and considered it to be America’s distinctive national music.

Ole Bull, meanwhile, was a performer, not a critic. He readily catered in his concerts to his audiences’ interest in patriotic musical displays without too much concerned about his compositions’ theoretical significance. He had a piece ready-made for such functions, composed during his American tour: “Memory of Washington,” which combined the sort of tone painting he also attempted in “Niagara” with the

35 Remarkably, and unusually for nineteenth century pieces, the music has been completely lost; we have only public descriptions of its performance.
melodies of favorite patriotic tunes including “Yankee Doodle” and “Hail, Columbia.” In this case, he evoked not a natural wonder, but an epic battle. (As one reviewer described it, “the second movement begins with the sound of an alarm bell, followed by the rush to battle. The themes advance and retreat, mingle and cross each other, like two contending armies.”) Bull was not above fulfilling audience requests, either. Here is one Boston critic’s account of his own stunned reaction:38

A voice in the crowd called for Yankee Doodle. It shocked me, like Harlequin tumbling on the altar of a temple….But, bowing to the audience, he smiling drew the bow across his violin, and our national tune rose on the air, transfigured, in a veil of glorious variations. It was Yankee Doodle in a state of clairvoyance. A wonderful proof of how the most common and trivial may be exalted by the influx of the infinite.39

Bull’s impromptu “Yankee Doodle” and the reviewer’s complex response neatly encapsulate the debate about national music. The reviewer was archly dismissive of the song itself and initially “shocked” by the mixing of what he was starting to identify as “high” and “low” genres of music (“Harlequin” suddenly appearing at the “temple”). But Ole Bull transfigured or “exalted” the song and his audience (now touched by an experience of the “infinite”).

Music Education and National Music

The push for music reform first in churches and then in schools promoted national music. Musicians, composers, tunebook compilers, and critics had always viewed music

38 Boston Evening Transcript, October 14, 1845; see also “Musical Department,” Broadway Journal, December 6, 1845, 338.
as a way to mold individual character. As early as the so-called Singing Controversy in New England in the 1720s, music reform was thought necessary to properly praise God: early reforms included the singing of original hymns and the institution of church choirs. By the advent of the First New England School and William Billings’ new fuging style, innovations in church music had become associated with the promotion of republican virtue. In the early nineteenth century, improved music in churches and schools became linked to the goal of elevating national character through the dissemination of patriotic music.40

Early nineteenth-century critics recognized the important role of patriotic songs during the American Revolution, but argued that America had advanced musically since Billings’ day. Looking backward, Nathaniel Gould, the nineteenth-century historian of church music, praised William Billings as “the father of concerts or musical exhibitions in this country,” acknowledging that his “lively and spirited airs,” especially the ubiquitous “Chester,” were “exactly suited to the excited feelings of the people” and a “powerful instrument, for the time, in exciting the spirit of liberty.”41 Still, he portrayed Billings as an unlettered man (a tanner of “humble origin….ignoran[t] of language” who wrote “his first tunes with chalk, on the walls of the building, while tending [his] mill”) and his fuging tunes, with their appeal to untempered emotion, as no longer suited to modern conditions.42 Billings represented a heroic but coarse period in America’s past. Tellingly, Gould ridiculed past performance practices. The concerts Billings helped

41 Nathaniel D. Gould, History of Church Music in America (Boston: A.N. Johnson, 1853), 41.
42 Ibid.
popularize “would perhaps appear rather ludicrous at the present day. For instance, when the words ‘clap your hands’ occurred in their music, they used to make the action correspond with the words, and all clap their hands in time.” For Gould, the spectacle of people clapping their hands to music was risible: he used it to make a polemical argument against contemporary rowdy theatre audiences and religious revivalists. Gould’s espousal of uplift through properly reformed music and his doubts about popular music were widely shared by other pre-Civil war music reformers.

The ideals of sacred music reform and its version of music education came together in one figure: Lowell Mason. Remembered today mostly as the progenitor of public school music education, Mason was one of the most powerful voices in the musical world of antebellum America: his various psalmody, manuals, school texts, and tunebooks were best-selling and very influential. A reformer of psalmody, he was more broadly a key figure in the push to edify the public through the propagation of refined music, both sacred and secular. He was born in Massachusetts in 1792, but during a long sojourn working as a merchant and bank clerk in Savannah, Georgia he published his first important musical compilation, 1822’s Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music.

Mason’s hymnbook was a best-seller, going through almost two dozen editions in the succeeding years. It also leaned on the aura of refinement associated with the prestigious Handel & Haydn Society (founded in 1815) and its high-flown views about

43 Ibid, 45.
45 Chase, America’s Music, 132-134.
music. Many of the tunes for its various lyrics were taken from the music of lauded European masters like Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, and Mason also promoted his work by including recommendations from noted foreign-born musicians, who praised its combination of taste and sophistication: “the [selection of tunes] are [sic] harmonized with great accuracy, taste and judgment, according to the acknowledged principles of musical science.”

In 1822, the “science” of music, which combined the ability to read music (thought to be uncommon) with a sense of how music produced emotional response, was still new.

Like Francis Scott Key, Mason combined his advocacy of refinement with evangelical piety (he had undergone a conversion experience sometime before 1814). And like Key, he emphasized the role of refined emotion in the proper performance of music, contrasting his sacred music with what he saw as the previous century’s leaden, unfeeling performances. “Singers should always recollect, however, that the mere mechanical execution of music is insufficient. Music is emphatically the language of the heart….Let the singer feel, deeply feel…let him give expression to…sublime and ennobling thoughts.” Science and taste in music included properly calibrated emotion, and these principles applied to all music, not just sacred song.

Reformers and others seeking to make a living from music instruction promoted a

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46 Another recommender wrote, “to all the lovers of sacred music, I cheerfully recommend it as a work in which taste, science, and judgment are happily combined.” Lowell Mason, The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music (Boston, 1822).
47 A long letter dated June 8, 1814 offers forceful religious advice to each member of his family back in Massachusetts. To his father, for example, he wrote: “you know not the satisfaction I should experience from an evidence of your real conversion. Why, why will you not embrace the Saviour?…..you are already on the border of eternity….O that his glorification might be in your salvation and not in your damnation…” Quoted in Broyles, ‘Music of the Highest Class,’ 66.
48 Lowell Mason, Lyra Sacra, Special Collections, Eisenhower Libraries, Johns Hopkins University (1832).
49 See Mason, Handel and Haydn Society, 1822, preface.
steady growth in private academies, singing schools, Sunday schools, and individual musical instruction, and after 1830 reformers could also count on a groundswell of support for common school reform to expand opportunities for uplift through musical education.\textsuperscript{50} In 1833, Lowell Mason founded the Boston Academy of Music, while his brother Timothy founded a similar institution the following year in Cincinnati.\textsuperscript{51} The beginnings of access to formal music education directly fueled the spread of patriotic music, by training musicians and audiences who were more knowledgeable producers and consumers of music.

The publication of songbooks for schools and for adults also promoted the spread of patriotic music. Lowell Mason’s songbooks for children, such as his 1841 \textit{Boston School Song Book}, aimed at students from ages ten to sixteen, contained patriotic songs pitched for instructional use: simple, hymn-like tunes usually in either three- or four-part harmony or in melody with a simple piano accompaniment.\textsuperscript{52} Mason and other compilers of school songbooks frequently included patriotic songs with new lyrics that praised America’s natural beauty, its political freedoms, and its unity as a nation. An 1834 example, penned by influential writer and editor Sarah Hale, begins:

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Lowell Mason, \textit{The Boston School Song Book}, Special Collections, Johns Hopkins University (1841), preface. An inscription hints at this volume’s staying power: it was still in circulation three years after its publication, when given to a “William Dalrymple” in September of 1844.
\end{flushleft}}
\end{quote}
My native land, my native land –
O 'tis a lovely land to me;
I bless my God that I was born
Where man is free. 53

Mason’s *Boston School Song Book* featured a similar song several years later titled “We Know a Land.” 54 These songs were intended to introduce children to basic concepts of republican citizenship and love of country suffused with Protestant moral values.

Some of these songs were explicitly martial in imagery and tone. In 1831’s *Juvenile Lyre*, advertised as the first children’s songbook published in the United States, Lowell Mason included the “Marseilles Hymn,” noting admiringly that it “has often nerved the arm to bloodshed.” 55 Mason himself was a careful observer of military music, and would on his two journeys to Europe in the 1830s and the early 1850s sprinkle his journals and letters (later published) with observations about the instrumentation and repertoire of European military bands. 56 He also emphasized that patriotic feeling stimulated by military sights and sounds was proper to women as well as men. For

53 Sarah J. Hale, *The School Song Book, Adapted to the Scenes of the School Room. Written for American Children and Youth* (Boston, 1834), 60. Hale acknowledged Lowell Mason for setting some of her earlier published poems to music.


example, he admired the main character of Donizetti’s *Daughter of the Regiment*, a “bold soldier girl,” because she showed that when citizens had “imbibed the military spirit,” they would carry their “love of the parade, the march, the trumpet, and the drum into the drawing room.”57

Publishers of general readers, not just specialized handbooks, also stressed the importance of patriotic music. The McGuffey readers, the most popular of all nineteenth-century school primers included, beginning in 1837, the well-known song “America,” calling it a “National Hymn.”58 Whether writing new songs in the sacral patriotic mode or including familiar patriotic songs like “America,” reformers like Lowell Mason, Hale, and McGuffey linked the patriotic sublime to their educational reforms.

Reformers also courted adults as they sought to refine public morals and feeling through song. An 1838 magazine editorial by one “H.K.” was delighted to report that both sacred singing school and voluntary societies “formed for the practice of secular music” were spreading rapidly “in our cities and large towns” and “our country towns.” He looked forward to the day when “throughout the land the hours of relaxation shall become vocal with songs, cheerful, tender, and patriotic.”59 Lowell Mason’s prolific pen engaged this market as well, in a string of songbooks for adults like *The Gentleman’s Glee Book* (1845), *The Odeon* (1848), and *The Lyrist* (1838). *The Odeon*, for example,

published the “National Air” of “America.” *The Gentleman’s Glee Book* contained no less than six patriotic songs for four voices, including such titles as “The Youth’s Patriotic Vow” and “The Patriotic Band,” all with stirring sentiments about national glory and honor.\(^6\) Printed songbooks, reform of childhood education, and adult musical instruction all brought the sacral project of musical uplift to a national public.

*Concertizing National Music*

The rhetoric of edification and refinement helped bring the idea of “national music” into a space thought to be a venue for the display of sensibility and refined deportment: the concert. Music reformers interested in national music as part of the journey towards refinement saw concerts as a method to demonstrate proper taste, even in patriotic music. Early attempts to organize and institutionalize musical performance, like the formation of local music clubs for choral singing or instrumental performance, gave proponents of refined national music new places to talk about and evaluate, and patriotic music another place to be performed—tastefully.

Early national Americans began to organize concerts around a variety of voluntary associations with the purpose, expressed or implied, of refining American musical tastes. Such concerts, whether instrumental or vocal, could and did take place almost anywhere, including outdoors in public gardens or on pleasure cruises. They increasingly included performances of European forms like selections from oratorios,

\(^{60}\) Lowell Mason, *The Gentleman’s Glee Book: consisting of a selection glees for men’s voices, by the most admired German composers* (Boston, 1845), Special Collections, Eisenhower Library, Johns Hopkins University. This copy was evidently a gift: the inscription reads, “Mr. Charles Mulchahey with the respect of H. Gustav Tiepke.”
instrumental pieces by the likes of Mozart, Boccherini, and Cherubini, and operatic themes.\textsuperscript{61} The Handel & Haydn Society, founded in 1815 and for which Lowell Mason compiled his first bestseller, was the best known of a myriad of such clubs and societies that sprang up across the country in the early decades of the nineteenth century. It was dedicated to “improving the style of performing sacred musick,” which to them meant privileging the oratorios of Handel and Haydn, at the time the dual exemplars of what such clubs meant by cultivated music.\textsuperscript{62} Usually composed of members of the burgeoning middle class, choral societies marshaled their love of music into what they perceived as the salutary goal of improving the musical taste of their community and country; they doubtless also received a certain measure of social reward or respectability along with the musical fruits of their labor of love.\textsuperscript{63} The concertizing of groups such as the Handel & Haydn Society marshaled ideals of refinement and edification around actual performance.

Patriotic and martial music was part of this refined setting. An 1817 concert given to welcome the Virginian President James Monroe to Boston on his nationwide tour opened its typical program of chorales, solos, and duets from the oratorios of Handel and Haydn with patriotic music: a “military movement…called President Monroe’s March,”

\textsuperscript{61} “Concert” has never been a very distinct category, but one clear distinction then and now is its lack of staging, thus distinguishing it from theatre and opera. Early national Americans tended to use the distinctive phrase “concert of vocal and instrumental music” (especially in advertising) for “concert,” similar to the way “band of music” described a wind band of any sort.

\textsuperscript{62} Quote from Constitution of the Handel and Haydn Society: Instituted April, 1815 (Boston, 1815), 4. All of these societies were short-lived, with the single exception of the Handel & Haydn Society, which not only exists today but is still a central cultural institution in Boston. Its survival owes much not only to historical contingency (not least its association with Lowell Mason) but also to its being ensconced in Boston’s Brahmin community, with its century-long love affair with “high” culture. See H. Earle Johnson, Hallelujah, Amen! The Story of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, 2\textsuperscript{nd} ed. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1965, 1981), 7-55; Boston Musical Gazette, May 2, 1838, 8.

and also featured an original “ode, sung at the celebration of peace, and the birth day of
Washington, Feb. 22, 1815.” The ode was full of high-flown rhetoric about peace—not
surprisingly for this stridently anti-administration section of the country during the
late war:

Wreaths for the Chieftain we honour, who planted
The Olive of Peace in the soil that he gain’d;
Foemen his praise ‘neath its shelter have chanted –
Secure in its branches the ring dove remain’d.
War-blasts have scatter’d it!
Rude Hands have shatter’d it!
Flown is the nestler that tenanted there.
Long from the pelting storm
None sought its blighted form,
Save the lone raven that scream’d in despair…

In its classical allusions and polite poetry, this ode represented a subset of patriotic
performance taking place in what its auditors would have considered a refined setting.
The patriotic ode could have come from the pages of one of Lowell Mason’s songbooks,
but it is significant that a martial form like a march opened the concert.

Displays of strong emotions were a common feature of genteel concerts. Concert
music encompassed sublimity and patriotic feeling. An 1810 concert in Baltimore to fund
the new St. Augustine’s Church featured what was, for the time, a remarkably full band,
as well as a choir and organ, playing a variety of music by Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and
Pergolesi. A glowing review, probably penned by one of the concert’s promoters,

64 The “raven” is likely a reference to a specific anti-war figure from Massachusetts, or possibly a
personification of the region as a whole during the war. Handel and Haydn Society, “Select Oratorio…in
Presence of James Monroe, President of the United States” (Boston, 1817).
emphasized both its refinement and the intense emotions associated with the music. The church was “filled with…an assemblage of taste and science, beauty and fashion.” The music produced “highly wrought fellings [sic],” in an audience “beaming with the intelligence of soul and cultivation of mind….It was singularly sublime and affecting.”

Patriotic celebrations tapped into the stirring atmosphere of concert music: for example, the 1811 celebration of Washington’s birthday in Baltimore included “an interval of appropriate [i.e. patriotic] music, from a band of amateurs, who patriotically aided the celebration with their superior talents.” Concerts like these combined patriotic sentiment with the perception of sublime emotion.

In the West, Cincinnatians were quick to organize similar events. As early as 1819, the city’s Haydn Society was organizing concerts featuring the inevitable Handel and Haydn at the town’s Episcopal Church. But these concerts, led by a local dance instructor, also included a wide range of songs, opera arias, marches, waltzes, such as British popular songs alongside an instrumental trio by Ignaz Pleyel, or favorites like “The Soldier’s Bride” followed a “French air” and a song about William Tell. The society also had access to new music: a concert the following year featured not only pieces by Handel and Haydn but also an anthem by the Baltimore-based composer Charles Meineke. The Cincinnati Haydn Society’s concerts were demonstrations of the

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65 Baltimore Federal Republican, May 28, June 28, 1810.
66 Baltimore Federal Republican, February 25, 1811.
68 Western Spy and Literary Cadet, April 29, 1820. Charles Meineke, variously known as Charles, Christopher, or Christian (not to mention Meineke and Meinecke) was a typical specimen of German émigré musician. He settled in Baltimore in 1800 as organist and choirmaster of St. Paul’s Church. He was a member of various musical societies over the years, including a short-lived Handel Society in 1803, the Baltimore Harmonists in 1820, and the Anacreontic Society mentioned in Chapter One. His compositions were widely known and respected: an 1822 review from the early musical magazine The Euterpiad lauded his music as “appealing to a higher class of musicians than are anywhere found in our country.” See J.
developing city’s cultivation: as a reviewer wrote of one concert, it was “the strongest evidence we can adduce of our advancement in those embellishments which refine and harmonize society and give a zest to life.”

These concerts selected from a shifting smorgasbord of styles and genres but retained a core of refinement, musical “science”—and edification.

Concert promoters in urban centers organized performances in a variety of places, integrating them into the daily entertainment life of the city. Three examples from 1816 to 1818 in Baltimore illustrate the ubiquity of concert activity in general-purpose venues that programmed national music alongside sacred music, European instrumental pieces, and popular song. The three concerts, in spring, summer, and fall, featured different combinations of instruments, including one on “that much admired and fashionable instrument, the GRAND PEDAL HARP.”

One was heavily tilted toward the “national music” of Scotland and Ireland, with selections from Moore’s Irish Melodies and martial Scottish tunes like “The Pibroch add [sic] Scotch Airs on the Highland or Military Bagpipes.” The other two advertised American patriotic songs, like “New National Songs never performed [such as] Here’s Columbia forever.” They took place in “Mr. Gibney’s Assembly Room” and “Mr. Duclairacq’s Ball Room.” Concerts like this drew together the supposedly refined, if temporary, space of concerts with day-to-day patriotic performance.


69 Osborne, Music in Ohio, 23.
70 Baltimore Patriot, July 24, 1816.
71 Baltimore Patriot, March 4, 1818.
72 Baltimore Patriot, November 29, 1817.
The long-forgotten performers who promoted and starred in these concerts were commercial actors, putting together programs of music including national songs in hopes of a large crowd and a sizable profit, though perhaps corresponding to their own patriotic sentiment. Ticket sales described a local urban web of musical commerce: one could buy a ticket for the three Baltimore concerts from 1816-1818 at “Mr. Carr’s Music Store,” “Mr. Robinson’s Circulating Library,” “Mr. Lucas’s Book Store,” or at the home of Mr. Clifton, who arranged and performed in the November 29, 1817 concert. Promoters followed up live performances by advertising printed music tied to concerts, available at local shops. For example, the Baltimore print shop of Warner & Hanna, dealing in maps, almanacs, and a wide variety of other printed material, advertised “The Comic Songster” in 1811, “being a collection of the most Admired Songs sung at the Theatres & Concert Rooms, and a number of New National Songs.” Music printers hoped to capitalize on well-attended concerts by selling songsters, sheet music, and broadsides locally.

Commerce linked printed music to live performance across regions, bringing patriotic music and new kinds of “national” music west to frontier towns like Cincinnati. The fledgling Haydn Society, which appeared and quickly vanished after two or three seasons around 1820, highlighted such a program in March 1820. Besides an overture by the “full band,” it was largely a series of popular “national” tunes, including a hymn from Germany, a ballad by Thomas Moore, a “Hungarian air,” and “Scots Wha’ Hae.”

74 This last is listed as composed by John Braham, which is confusing. Braham, a British tenor, was at the height of his transatlantic fame at the time and thus the Haydn Society would want to take advantage of his popularity in their program. The Scotch anthem, which depicts the legendary oration of Robert the Bruce to his army in 1314 at the Battle of Bannockburn, was actually written by Robert Burns to a traditional tune and published in 1793; it was apparently premiered by John Braham. Adding to the confusion, a subsequent concert by the Haydn Society gives a short description of the piece—listing it as an “Address to his
one-off concert later that year at the Cincinnati Hotel featured both the popular martial overture *The Battle of Prague* and, more significant, the first recorded performance of “The Star Spangled Banner” in Cincinnati—“by desire,” according to the ad, implying that the song was already familiar in town.\(^{75}\) “The Marseillaise,” a song with connotations of both French character and American patriotism, remained popular, appearing on an 1824 concert program in Cincinnati.\(^{76}\)

Outdoor pleasure gardens were a popular spot for concertizing, reaching their height of popularity around the turn of the nineteenth century and for several decades after. Programs for outdoor concerts did not differ greatly from those in more formal indoor spaces, with one exception: it was easier to use brass-heavy instrumentation and, most notably, fireworks and illuminations outside.\(^{77}\) A series of concerts in 1816 and 1817 in Boston’s Vauxhall Garden illustrates their colorful and patriotic character. Organizers described the fireworks for an August 1816 concert in great detail: “rockets,” “wheels,” and even a salute of cannon fire recalling the late war and possibly the attack on Fort McHenry specifically. Each firework was accompanied by music, much of it martial or specifically patriotic, including “Washington’s March,” “Hull’s March,” the much-loved “Battle of Prague,” and various national pieces. The patriotic topper was a “fine Transparency…placed in the centre walk…being the full length figure of the immortal Washington.” The martial music advertised at all of these concerts was likely

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\(^75\) *Liberty Hall and Cincinnati Gazette*, December 9, 1820. Harry R. Stevens notes that these concerts from approximately 1819 to 1824 show little difference from similar performances in larger eastern urban centers. See Stevens, “Adventures in Refinement,” 16-17, 28.


provided by one or more than one local militia band in addition to the traveling theatrical troupe of Mr. and Mrs. Burke, Mrs. Burke being typically the prime vocal attraction.78

Garden concerts were replicated in other cities as well, the Fourth of July not surprisingly being a prime date for such spectaculars. A July 4th concert at New York’s Vauxhall Garden in 1830 displayed every type of patriotic symbol imaginable, from the flag to an intricate illumination encompassing the names of all the states in the union to a “Grand Naval and Military Column…on which are registered the names of AMERICAN HEROES.”79 The fireworks in particular were advertised in highly symbolic terms: the concluding “Coup de Feu” was “intended as allegorical of the Declaration of Independence.” The music, provided by the “Grad Military Band of the 9th Regiment, in full Uniform,” included a fantasy on the by-now favorite “Star Spangled Banner.” By 1830, musical performance had helped to create the “national music” that commentators had been pondering for decades. Audiences, it seemed, found the existence of a specifically American music less problematic than did tastemakers.80

The discourses of “national music” and cultivated music became inseparable with the superstar performers that flooded American performance spaces beginning in the

78 Mrs. Burke, a “young and very pretty actress and singer,” was a progenitor of later female vocal stars like Maria Malibran and Jenny Lind. Her given name has not come down to us; she was inevitably known as simply “Mrs. Burke” or “Mrs. Thomas Burke.” The Burkes’ troupe toured extensively in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic. See Francis C. Wemyss, Chronology of the American Stage, 25-26; Wood, Personal Recollections of the Stage, 200; Sol Smith, Theatrical Management in the West and South, 15 (quote). For the Boston Vauxhall Concert, see Boston Gazette, August 19, 1816. See also Boston Daily Advertiser August 19, 1816 and September 22, 1817; Boston Gazette June 2, 16, July 25, 29, and September 11, 1817.

79 New York Columbian, June 30, 1830.

mid-nineteenth century: Ole Bull, Henri Vieuxtemps, Jenny Lind, Anton Rubinstein, and many others. Ole Bull was as popular for his virtuoso arrangement of “Yankee Doodle” as he was for “new” Americana like “Niagara.” The 1853-1854 American tour of French conductor Louise-Antoine Jullien represents how the complexity of this discourse was transformed into unabashedly patriotic performance. Jullien’s orchestra relied on its conductor’s mastery of dance forms, specifically the quadrille, and, like Ole Bull, patriotic showstoppers—especially his “American Quadrille.” But it was also a paragon of instrumental virtuosity and orchestral color. Not surprisingly, J.S. Dwight’s reaction to the Jullien orchestra was puzzlement at such refined musicality in the service of what he regarded as common tunes. Jullien’s “hacknied selection” of popular and patriotic songs was relieved only temporarily by snippets from Beethoven and Mendelssohn; yet at the same time “there was the rich, vivid…collective orchestral sound” and the ensemble’s “wonderfully perfect precision.”

Still, Dwight wanted more from the Frenchman:

Jullien’s quadrilles and polkas and arrangements are infinitely clever…but if one chances to want more than amusement, if the soul craves to be fed, and filled, and restored to its native purer atmosphere, these things grow feeblener and feeblener by repetition.

Dwight took solace in the orchestra’s edifying role; the “powers and glories of a mighty orchestra…educat[ed] the musical sense by the most rapid process.” Dwight’s finely tuned perceptions of musical refinement found it difficult to reconcile programs that were so complex and simple at the same time: refined talent that played Beethoven, patriotic airs, and minstrel tunes all to rapturous applause.

Audiences seemed to understand the import of such programs implicitly, and,

81 “Jullien and his Orchestra,” Dwight’s Journal of Music, April 29, 1854, 46. As was usual, no author is listed for this editorial but there is little doubt it was written by Dwight himself.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid.
they showed their pleasure. The “American Quadrille” seemed to be universally popular: it was inevitably followed by “a scene of the wildest enthusiasm…The ladies in the audience wave their handkerchiefs and the gentlemen swing their hats and shout and stamp ‘till it is repeated.”84 Sheet music editions with colorful patriotic iconography quickly followed (see Figure 3.3). The music of the quadrille, a dance that experienced a vogue in both Europe and America at mid-century, was eminently suitable for patriotic purposes: it was insistently rhythmic and fast-paced, usually played at a fast marching tempo like 2/4 (as the quickstep). Jullien’s “American Quadrille” was no different. He also added a fascinating finale that included a rousing rendition of “Yankee Doodle” and that draws the home performer through a battle sequence, complete with instrumental cues that might exist on the battlefield itself, like a fanfare for “Trumpets” (see Figure 3.4).85

The success of the “American Quadrille” prompted a string of other such potpourris. Notably, Jullien’s original piece contained not only obviously patriotic tunes like “Hail to the Chief” and its rousing rendition of “Yankee Doodle,” but also Stephen Foster’s “Old Folks at Home.” Further examples, like his “American Polka,” also contained much popular music, including minstrel tunes like “Old Dan Tucker” and “Lucy Neal.”86 Patriotic music was, perhaps, whatever stirred the blood, and this new American “national music” merged in these polyglot venues and performances. Another

Figure 3.3. Louis-Antoine Jullien, Sheet Music for “American Quadrille,” sheet music cover (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853). Lester S. Levy Sheet Music Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
Figure 3.4. Jullien, *American Quadrille, “Yankee Doodle” variation* (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853). Note descriptions like “Army Advancing” and “The Battle” tying specific sections to an imagined battle narrative.
theme with a national valence characterized music in the nineteenth century: picaresque songs of the West. They too became part of the multifaceted construction and reception of what could be taken broadly as authentically American music.

*Discourses of the West: Tosso “The Arkansaw Traveler,” and the Picaresque*

The founding and rapid growth of Cincinnati occasioned a great deal of spirited civic boosterism. Primarily aimed at advancing the prospects of the Queen City of the West itself, boosterism also naturally encompassed the surrounding territory at different physical removes, so that it variously described the advantages of Cincinnati itself in its vale of seven hills, the Miami country (drained by the Great and Little Miami Rivers), the state of Ohio, the Ohio River Valley, the Mississippi Valley, and indeed even the entire Union west of the Alleghanies. Its boundaries were in fact not strictly reliant on physical geography but rather on the scope of the author’s imagination. It was a discursive and rhetorical territory less clearly bounded than the Old West of postbellum and twentieth century America. It was, as it were, not-East.87

Mirroring the Janus-faced musical discourse of tasteful cultivation and emotional “national music,” this discursive West was characterized by stern, hard-nosed industry on one hand and colorful whimsy on the other. Within a couple of decades of the founding of Fort Washington, Westerners who settled in and around Cincinnati were pushing its commercial advantages in moral terms. Dr. Daniel Drake, probably the foremost civic leader in the young city before 1850, summed up this character in 1815: “the people of

the Miami country, may in part be characterised, as industrious, frugal, temperate, patriotic and religious; with as much intelligence, and more enterprise, than the families from which they were detached [i.e. in the East].”

Drake’s case had remarkable staying power. In 1841, a booster predicted that by the year 2000, Cincinnati would be the “greatest city in the world.” He relied on a similar moral proposition: the West in general was “peopled and peopling by the most active and enterprising, and, in some respects, intelligent population on the globe.”

The growth of the West became linked over time with American identity itself. To be a national patriot was to display “the noblest of civic duties,” and was only strengthened by “the sentiment of affection for our own [Western] land.” “National character,” said Daniel Drake, was shaped by the West because it “exert[s] on the mind that expanding influence, which comes from the contemplation of vast natural objects”—a Western sublime. Moreover, the sublime wilderness would be over time transformed into refined society. A eulogy of Drake reflected the perception of transformation and its meaning for the entire country:

His own country [i.e. the United States] has risen from an humble and feeble republic to the most exalted position that any government or people can occupy. The West, the more immediate theatre of his own fame and usefulness, has been transformed from a wilderness…into a smiling and luxuriant garden…teeming with the arts, and luxuries, and refinements of civilized life.

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88 Daniel Drake, *Natural and Statistical View*, 166.
Just as the project of refinement in the “old” East saw the nation in terms of progression from one stage of civilization to another, Drake and his peers charted the transformation of the West, which was much more dramatic: from wilderness to refinement in one or two generations. Noah Ludlow, actor, theater manager, sometime partner and eventual rival of Sol Smith, applied this same transformation to the theater, where the “pioneers of the Drama serve to mark the progress of civilization and refinement.” Edification was as central to Drake’s program as it was for Lowell Mason, except that, so Drake thought, the West provided the ideal arena for learning. True, eastern children, surrounded by the “inventive genius of civilization,” “acquire[d] a copious and varied learning,” but also suffered from “conformity.” The advantage of the West lay in its potential to fuel “curiosity” and “observation,” so that young people were “supplied with fresh materials of thought, instead of ruminating on the old.” The West, as it marched toward refinement, had unique advantages.

Furthermore, according to Drake and his ilk, the special qualities of the Western regional character were entirely compatible with patriotic attachment to the nation. Drake, by training a medical doctor, was also a literary man, and he identified Western literature with patriotic sentiment:

Our literature cannot fail to be patriotic, and its patriotism will be American….To feel in his heart, and infuse into his writings, the inspiration of such a patriotism, the scholar must feast his taste on the delicacies of our scenery, and dwell with enthusiasm on the genius of our constitution and laws….A literature, animated with this patriotism, is a national blessing, and such must be the literature of the West.

93 Noah Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I Found It*, 2.
94 Drake, *Discourse*, 6-8.
95 Drake, *Discourse*, 40.
A distinctive Western art rooted in the region’s landscape embraced and enhanced love of country: the West was the exemplar of patriotism. Was it “consistent with the peace and perpetuity of the UNION, to inculcate a devotion to one of its parts?” asked Drake. Emphatically yes:

…a devotion to the WEST, is manifestly compatible with both, and indeed the most efficient means of promoting both. This results from the geographical relations between the Valley of the Mississippi and the Atlantic states; relations, which being founded on nature, cannot be dissolved by the hand of art, but are daily acquiring new strength...

Commercial and geographic ties made Western qualities part of the nation as a whole, and love of country bound section to whole. The West, by nature and nurture, was quintessentially American.

The striving character of the West was encapsulated in a picaresque literary and musical character, but the Western picaro had an Eastern forebear: the dour, salt-of-the-earth Yankee peddler of turn-of-the-century literature, notably a central figure in the first significant American play, Royall Tyler’s The Contrast. The Yankee was represented musically in “Corn Cob Twist Your Hair,” a popular song set to the tune of “Yankee Doodle.” Such archetypal figures—the Yankee, mythic Western and Southwestern backwoodsmen like Davy Crockett or Mike Fink, or the characters of blackface minstrelsy such as Jim Crow and Zip Coon—combined supposed regional characteristics with nationalist feeling, in the process capturing the imagination of the entire country.  

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96 Drake, Discourse, 6.
Like the Yankee, the Western picaro was both subversive and authentically American. These American picaros followed a classic script: their adventures were autobiographical and episodic, they came from lowly or obscure backgrounds, and they offered trenchant commentary on society and manners. The picaro “lived by his wits through trickery.”98 No better example exists than our old friend Sol Smith, who chronicled his roguish exploits in Western theater in humorous detail. On his way with a theatrical troupe to Kentucky in 1826, Smith got one over on the citizens of the river town of Gallipolis:

…we intended to give a concert, but the people all mistook me for a preacher…every thing indicated that I was mistaken for one of those godly individuals who perambulate the country converting sinners, and eating the best the land affords. I thought it a pity to undeceive our entertainers [i.e. hosts]. If they chose to deceive themselves, why should I say any thing that would take away from their satisfaction? In the morning I offered to pay my bill, but not a cent would the landlord receive. So we departed, without saying a word about the concert.99

Smith traveled on to Cincinnati in true picaresque fashion, “without a dollar in my pocket.”100 His memoirs are full of portrayals of colorful regional characters, such as the inimitable and peripatetic Monsieur Matthieu (see Figure 3.5), emigrant, farmer, and musician: “Sacre! I plant la pomme de terre [potatoes] – he no grow in five months; I make engagement to play de feedle – I get no pay! Begar [by God], I sal take up my bed and promenade – dam if I don’t!’ and, sure enough, he put off for Texas!”101 The character of Matthieu embodies and caricatures the roguish traveler who, having been

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99 Sol Smith, Theatrical Apprenticeship, 117-118.
100 Smith, Theatrical Apprenticeship, 118.
101 Sol Smith, Theatrical Management in the West and South, 173-174. Another well-known example of this trope is the “Pardon Jones” letters, written by C.M. Haile, a transplant from New England to New Orleans. See Ed Placentino, ed., C.M. Haile’s ‘Pardon Jones’ Letters.
engagement to play de fiddle—I get no pay! Beggar, I al take up my bed and promenade—dam if I don’t! and, sure enough, he put off for Texas!

One morning in the winter of 1845, a card was brought to me in the director’s room of the St. Charles’s Theatre on which was written the name of the veritable Mons. Matthieu! I directed that he should be instantly shown up. On entering the room, he jumped so high that I was doubtful whether he would ever come down again.

"Ah ha! Monsieur Sol, I am too happy I see you again! Ah ha! you got one splendid theatre; I shall make application to be your leader, tout de suite, directly."

"Sit down, my old friend, and compose yourself. Where have you hid yourself for the last seven years?"

"Hid myself? I have been at Texas, by golly. I fight some battle at St. Jacinto; I got so much land as I can not find; I almost starve my family in that glorious country; and I come back to follow my profession in dis city for some bread to eat."

After some conversation, I asked him what he was doing in New Orleans.

"Doing? what do I do here? I am at present leading for Mr. Adams, the conjurer,” he replied.

"Leading?"

"Yes, leading the orchestra.” He was the sole musician!

I have not seen the monsieur since. There was but little left of him; a strong wind would find no difficulty in blowing him away.

CHAPTER VI.

The St. Louis Theatre was sold this spring (1848) under a deed of trust given by the stockholders to secure a loan of $20,000. It was bought in by Mr. George Collier, of whom we afterward rented it. The original cost of the lot and building was $78,000, and it was never finished.

The season opened May 20th, with Yankee Hill as the star, to a house of $157 75. Joe Kirby and Ben De Bar played brief engagements, and then came the English lecturer Dr.
himself bamboozled, freely pulls up stakes and moves on to the next venture. His bluff freedom and physical mobility was essential to the Western picaresque. Popular music reflected this.

One of the first musical expressions of the Western character was “Hunters of Kentucky,” composed to celebrate the victory of Andrew Jackson’s army over the British in the Battle of New Orleans (see Figure 3.6). The song idealized the “half horse, half alligator” character of the Kentucky rifleman (and by extension Jackson himself). It became a campaign song for Jackson, but in its first incarnation it was a popular patriotic sensation recalling the late war. Noah Ludlow claimed its premiere in 1821:

As soon as the comedy of the night was over, I dressed myself in a buckskin hunting-shirt and leggins, which I had borrowed of a river man, and with moccasins on my feet, and an old slouched hat on my head, and a rifle on my shoulder, I presented myself before the audience….As I delivered the last five words, I took my old hat off my head, threw it upon the ground, and brought my rifle to the position of taking aim. At that instant came a shout and an Indian yell from the inmates of the pit, and a tremendous applause from other portions of the house, the whole lasting for nearly a minute….I had to sing the song three times that night before they would let me off.

Sol Smith claimed to have sung “Hunters of Kentucky” for forty one nights straight at one engagement; the song was well enough known that when he forgot part of the lyric, he was “prompted from the boxes!” According to these anecdotes, “Hunters of Kentucky” and its hardy frontiersmen were popular among the “inmates of the pit,” but also appealed to the more refined denizens of the boxes. “Hunters of Kentucky” incorporated the Western backwoodsman and picaro into its vivid portrayal of martial

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102 “Hunters of Kentucky,” ca. 1815, Special Collections, Filson Historical Society, Louisville, Kentucky.  
103 Ironically, the celebration of the fabled Kentucky rifleman was inaccurate; the Kentucky militia at the Battle of New Orleans were largely ineffectual and the battle in fact was won by the American artillery. See Donald Hickey, The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict, 221; Howe, What Hath God Wrought, 17.  
104 Ludlow, Dramatic Life as I Found It, 238.  
105 Sol Smith, Theatrical Apprenticeship, 96.
Hunters of Kentucky, or Half Horse and Half Alligator.

But Jackson he was wide awake,
And was not scar'd at trifles,
Till well he knew what aim we take
With our Kentucky rifles.

So he led us down to Cypress swamp,
The ground was low and muddy,
There stood John Bull in martial mood,
And here was old Kentucky.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

A bank was rais'd to hide our breasts,
Not that we thought of dying,
But that we always like to rest,
Unless the game is flying.

Behind it stood our little force,
None wished it to be greater,
For ev'ry man was half a horse,
And half an alligator.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

They did not let our patience tire,
Before they show'd their faces,
We did not choose to waste our fire,
So stilly kept our places.

But when so near we saw them wink,
We thought it time to stop 'em,
And it would have done you good I think,
To see Kentuckians drop 'em.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

They found, at last, 'twas vain to fight,
Where lead was all the beauty,
And so they wisely took to flight,
And left us all our beauty.

And now, if danger e'er annoys,
Remember what our trade is,
Just send for us Kentucky boys,
And we'll protect ye, ladies.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

Ye gentlemen and ladies fair,
Who grace this famous city,
Just listen if you've time to spare,
While I rehearse a ditty;
And for the opportunity
Conceive yourselves quite lucky,
For 'tis not often that you see
A hunter from Kentucky.

Oh Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!
Oh Kentucky, the hunters of Kentucky!

We are a hardy, free-born race,
Each man to fear a stranger;
Whate'er the game we join in chase,
Despoiling time and danger
And if a daring foe annoys,
Whate'er his strength and forces,
We'll show him that Kentucky boys
Are alligator horses.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

I s'pose you've read it in the prints,
How Packenham attempted
To make old Hickory Jackson wince,
But soon his scheme repentend.

For we, with rifles ready cock'd,
Thought such occasion lucky,
And soon around the gen'r'al flock'd
The hunters of Kentucky.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

You've heard, I s'pose how New-Orleans
Is fam'd for wealth and beauty,
There's girls of every hue it seems,
From snow white to crypt.

So Packenham he made his brage,
If he in fight was lucky,
He'd have their girls and cotton bags,
In spite of old Kentucky.

Oh Kentucky, &c.

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Figure 3.6. “Hunters of Kentucky,” (Boston, broadside, ca. 1815). American Song Sheets, Rare Books and Special Collections, Library of Congress.
victory at New Orleans, and thence into nationally popular patriotic music.

One now-forgotten musician from Cincinnati joined the trope of the Western picaresque to cultural ideals of cultivation and refinement, and in the process created an exemplar of one kind of national music. Joseph Tosso was born Jose Anguel Augustin in Mexico City in 1802 to Spanish parents, received his musical education (his primary instrument was the violin) at the Paris Conservatoire, and traveled extensively in the United States. He performed with his father, a talented amateur violinist, for several years in Baltimore’s theaters and concert venues before moving west, where he worked and concertized for brief periods in New Orleans and Louisville before settling permanently in Cincinnati. In the Queen City, he was involved in musical activity across the spectrum of genres and spaces. He sold pianos out of his residence and operated music and dancing schools with a succession of partners as dancing masters. In 1830, the school of Tosso and a Mr. Pius occupied space in Frances Trollope’s multi-use Bazaar, where they trumpeted that building’s recent renovation in the hope that it would “afford them a fair patronage, and give them an opportunity of testing their capacity for imparting instruction, and for extending the field of elegant and refined amusement.” His concertizing led to comparisons to Ole Bull and Henri Vieuxtemps; said one memoirist, “I have seen him stand on the platform at a concert in [a] large church without any

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107 Alice Hambleton, compiler, The Trollope Family, the Bazaar, and Mr. Hervieu, quotations from the Cincinnati Gazette, March 3, 1828-November 30, 1830, MssVF 2570, Cincinnati History Library, Cincinnati, Ohio; Smith, “Joseph Tosso,” 24; Greve, Centennial History of Cincinnati, 919-920. The Bazaar was a locally infamous white elephant, erected by the visiting Mrs. Trollope (who famously denigrated the society of almost every American stop she made), while living in Cincinnati for several years. Its opulence exceeded its funding and it changed hands and was rebuilt several times. See Greve, 552.
accompaniment and fill the whole building.” Such paeans were common. It is no exaggeration to say that Joseph Tosso was the center of refined musical life in Cincinnati for several decades.

However, Tosso was equally well-known as the personification of a Western trope: “The Arkansaw Traveler.” He performed with equal facility the virtuoso soloist, the elegant bandleader at a ball, and the jocose characterization of a Western trickster. The origin of “The Arkansaw Traveler” is uncertain, but Tosso made the character his own. “The Arkansaw Traveler” is a performance as much as it is a song; in it, a traveler (“an Eastern man”) stops in front of a humble shack where a man sits out front playing a violin; the old man, possibly a squatter, has heard a new song on a trip to New Orleans and is trying to reproduce it. He has succeeded with the first part but cannot get the second quite right. The song consists of a comic dialog between the two, interspersed with music (see Figure 3.7). There are many different versions of the dialog, but all are similar in that the roguish Arkansan continually misinterprets the traveler’s questions. For example:

S[tranger]: Give me some satisfaction if you please sir, where does this road go to?
O[ld] M[an]: Well it hain’t moved a step since I’ve been here.

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108 *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune*, January 17, 1887.
111 “The Arkansaw Traveler” has survived to the present and is readily familiar as the nursery tune “I’m bringing home a baby bumble bee,” and through Warner Brothers cartoons of the 1940s and 1950s. A version by Pete Seeger can be heard at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oJcMSmJaww4 (“Arkansas Traveler by Pete Seeger,” YouTube video, 2:37, posted by “thewhitestripes93,” February 22, 2014). Seeger’s version is performed on the banjo instead of the violin, but has the advantage of replicating the original’s comic dialog. For a version featuring period instruments and performance practice, the 2nd South
Figure 3.7. Sheet music for “The Arkansas Traveler,” n.d. Note the scene-setting prologue, perhaps intended to be read by the home performer.

The old man’s goal in most versions is to trick the visitor into teaching him the second part of the tune: when the Easterner finally plays it, the old man becomes suddenly friendly and invites the stranger in. The song portrays the Westerner as a trickster who, in the end, gets one over on his visitor.

A recollection of a citizen of Salem in northeast Ohio of one performance of “The Arkansaw Traveler” paints as detailed a portrait of mid-nineteenth century small town performance practice as exists. It deserves to be quoted at length:

The chief attraction in early times at the ‘Golden Fleece’ [tavern] was the music, the \textit{chef d’oeuvre} of which was considered to be the ‘Arkansas Traveller.’ The residents always kept their attention upon any night when it was likely this play would be enacted…...the big table which stood against the wall brought out into the center of the room, and one of the boys…mounted thereon…and commenced to play the first part of the tune. After playing it once or twice to familiarize the new members of his audience, he prefaced the performance with an explanation, a sort of prologue…[He then played the tune] in different keys and to different time; improvising right and left in it, playing it high and low…but the last part of the tune continually evaded him. While thus engaged, his brother would enter the room dressed in the guise of a Traveller, and make his way up to the front part of the circle around the player….It was largely a matter of improvisation, depending upon the skill and ability of the players, the humor they were in, the time at their command, and the extent to which the audience could arouse the enthusiasm of the players.\textsuperscript{112}

The Golden Fleece was an improvised, intimate performance venue. A table provided a rough stage: dragged out into the center of the tavern, it turned the audience into active participants in the story of the Arkansaw Traveler. A successful performance depended on the onlookers “arous[ing] the enthusiasm” of the two players in the middle of the room. The song and its characters were familiar and eagerly anticipated by the townsfolk: “if it should get out…that [the song] was to be given, that night would surely see the old

\textsuperscript{112} Thomas Wilson, “The Arkansas Traveller,” \textit{Ohio History Journal} 8, no. 3 (January, 1900): 296-308.
Performances like this one established the Arkansaw Traveler as a distinct character and wove his song into the fabric of local musical culture.

Performance made the discourse of “national music” meaningful. Whether it was a pair of fiddlers in an Ohio tavern, Ole Bull premiering a tone poem about Niagara Falls, a singing school with one of Lowell Mason’s tunes about national virtues in hand, or Joseph Tosso playing national songs at a refined concert, performance linked ideas about national music and its relation to feeling to local expressions of nationalist sentiment in practice. Tosso’s contemporaries remembered and honored him towards the end of his life because he encompassed the entire range of national music from regional ditties like the original “Arkansaw Traveler” to virtuoso concert performances of Mozart and Beethoven.114

So, too, patriotic music in concerts, civic celebrations, theatrical spectacles, and other settings drew upon structures of signification that included canonical European music, lively homegrown tunes about regional characters, sacral hymns to America’s majestic landscapes, and proudly martial marches. Local musicians linked these different kinds of music and their associations with aspects of national symbolism to the nation’s musical network. In performance, all had become national music. In the next chapter, we shall see how the music most associated with the patriotic sublime laid claim to be the major normative musical expression of national attachment.

On August 2, 1842, 36 members of the Maryland Cadets, one of Baltimore’s white volunteer militia companies, embarked on a tour to Boston with brief stops in Philadelphia, New York, and Providence, Rhode Island, accompanied by the band of music of the Independent Blues, another volunteer company. On a pleasant summer day (the temperature never left the mid-seventies) their departure was perhaps the most notable event in town. The tour had been publicly announced well in advance but, as the Baltimore Post reported, it was only on the morning of their departure that it had been “early rumoured” that the Cadets would drill in Monument Square before boarding a steamship for Philadelphia. The rumor “consequently drew a large crowd of ladies and gentlemen, and the Square during the evening presented quite a lively appearance.” The crowd, in fact, was “so dense,” continued the Post’s report, that the company found its drill, accompanied as it was by the whirl of muskets and the rattle of drums, somewhat
constrained—“they wanted room.” Nevertheless, the drill was accomplished in a “highly creditable” manner even so, and afterwards the Cadets marched for the Philadelphia ship, attended by the “vast crowd.” The band “discoursed most eloquent music” as the Cadets marched down through the city. On their way the Cadets also “received, _a la militaire_, the prize flag.” The had won this flag two months earlier for successes at Camp Baltimore, an elaborate and long-planned militia muster that drew volunteer units from throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Encampment, drill, parade, culminating in the Boston adventure – all in all, it had been a most successful summer for the Maryland Cadets, and with “three hearty cheers” from the crowd, they sailed for the northeastern cities.

The impromptu ceremonial departure of the Maryland Cadets illustrates the importance of patriotic performance to everyday life in the middle of the nineteenth century. On a lazy August evening, city residents turned out for entertainment and for a civic ritual. As much as precise drill, the music was crucial to the militia’s public ritual: the “exquisite martial music” as another observer called it. Martial music performed by both amateur and professional military bands had by 1842 come to occupy a central role in the American national imagination.

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1 The “prize flag,” a specially-designed national standard costing $100 (raised through contributions from Baltimore militiamen), was presented to the “best drilled and most soldier-like company which shall be present in the encampment.” It was a “splendid American Flag composed of the most elegant silken materials.” See _Salem (MA) Register_, August 8, 1842; _Niles’ Weekly Register_, October 20, 1841; _Baltimore Sun_, October 22, 1841; Thomas J.C. Williams, Folger McKinsey, _History of Frederick County, Maryland_, vol. 1 (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1910, reprint 1967), 264-265.

2 _Baltimore Sun_, August 2, 1842. As print reportage of militia activity, especially in the _Sun_, will be an important source in this chapter, it should be noted that its publisher at least avowed at its founding in 1837, in the words of a contemporary historian, to be “the organ of neither party in politics…and to rely entirely upon its devotion to the common good.” See J. Thomas Scharf, _History of Baltimore City and County_ (originally published in Philadelphia, 1881; reprint Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1971), 618.

3 _Baltimore Patriot_, August 2, 1842.
This chapter explores white volunteer militia culture and its music in the early 1840s, the heyday of the volunteer militia movement. The year of 1842 was a particularly important one for Baltimore’s white militia companies, owing to the excitement generated by Camp Baltimore in May and the lengthy preparations leading up to it. The round of events that the Maryland Cadets engaged in during the summer of 1842 was typical of volunteer militias. Volunteer companies, like the Maryland Cadets or Baltimore Independent Greys, as well as militia bands like the band of the Baltimore Independent Blues, performed a regular round of social, civic, and military activities throughout the year, all accompanied by music. In this chapter, I connect militia culture to broader musical culture, and explore how a technological revolution in musical instrument technology made military bands throughout the country the central vessel for evoking emotions associated with the patriotic sublime.

The young men of the volunteer militias created a patriotic narrative that appealed to the visual, aural, and tactile senses, and was reinforced by print. This narrative was open for interpretation by its performers, the militia members and their bands, and their audiences. These audiences were comprised of a broad cross-section of urban society, although their precise composition is difficult to determine. White males took part in civic festivities most actively, and attempted to relegate African Americans to the status of observers. The presence of women as spectators was a vital part of the story of the militia. Their presence, although largely as observers, helped confirm the patriotic narrative that was the militiamens’ objective: the “perception of a unified, virtuous
Audiences flocked to the civic spaces where bands performed, taking part in affective patriotic rituals that claimed to embody consensual attachment to nation.

In the national and local civic rituals that so prominently featured the military band, performers and audiences collectively commemorated the heroes of the revolutionary era, their martial exploits, and the republican virtues that made their exploits possible. These commemorative rituals also imbued those who participated in them with something of the valor and virtue of their civic ancestors. They did so not least because the patriotic signifiers that evoked the heroes and founding events of the past, such as flags, uniforms, firearms, and, always, patriotic music, soon coalesced into a matrix of symbols and practices easily transferable to celebrations of contemporary events with national and local significance. By the early 1840s, practices in militarized public spaces had coalesced into a “mythic present.” Laden with familiar aural and visual signifiers and well-integrated into local civic life, they fused a glorious (if recent) history with a proudly martial present, one pregnant with opportunities for the nation’s future expansion. The volunteer militias and their bands had a central place in the enactment of this mythic present. With their gleaming uniforms, precision drilling, and disciplined bodily bearing, they were the tastemakers of the patriotic sublime in its military mode. They stood for manly martial courage, discipline, and skill, and could be observed by their fellow citizens in camp, drill, and parade.

Military bands participated in a broad range of public events taking place in civic spaces. Such events included annual national holidays, but also encompassed important local or regional celebrations like the Baltimore encampment in 1842 and, as we have

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seen, the dedications of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad and the Cincinnati Observatory, as well as more prosaic everyday events, such as the Maryland Cadets’ departure for Boston. And all featured music. The 1842 Baltimore encampment and the Maryland Cadets’ trip to Boston richly illustrate the centrality of volunteer militia companies and their music to urban cultural life. The bands were ubiquitous, performing in streets on parade, accompanying drills in public squares, supplying music at encampments, and featured during tours and excursions to other cities and neighboring towns. One historian, referring to New Orleans, cites an observer’s estimation of ten militia processions every Sunday.\(^5\) Militia bands also performed commercial concerts in theaters and public gardens, and entertained elites at evening parties. Urban newspapers were replete with reports of a seemingly endless series of militia balls, excursions, concerts, parades, drills, and musters, the music of wind bands breathing throughout. These bands were, then, probably the most familiar public performers of patriotic music in America, and central to the dissemination of the emotionally-charged patriotic music that I am exploring throughout this dissertation.

As the sonic qualities of band music changed and became more brilliant with the development of instrument technology, it afforded auditors the ability to create meaning through the qualities of the music and its sound. For example, scholars have associated the physical phenomenon of marching with emotional arousal and with “social cohesion”: “muscular bonding,” as one scholar has termed it.\(^6\) Even in a social setting like a concert, marches and other kinds of martial music “can serve as a resource


for...reconfiguring bodily conduct,” conduct involving both thought and action. As with a national song performed at the theater, for example, neither the venue or even the song was inherently patriotic. Instead, music and its performance in particular contexts “created an aesthetic climate conducive to the formation of knowledge about self-identity.” Band music, especially as bands increasingly switched to a higher proportion of new kinds of brass instruments, created a climate that listeners commonly reacted to with fervent emotion. The patriotic sublime, seen glimmering over the ramparts of Fort McHenry in 1814, was by 1842 embodied in the martial pomp of the proud volunteer militia performing in many settings.

Elite, Artisan, and Professional: Social Reach of the Volunteer Militia

The antebellum federal government spent decades trying, and mostly failing, to institute a successful statutory militia system, which would make available during wartime masses of trained militia drafted, theoretically, from all ranks of society. By 1842, the statutory militia, while still formally authorized, had been supplanted in the public mind by volunteer militia companies that more effectively symbolized the nation’s readiness for war. They were also a setting for white male citizens to form masculine bonds. With their concentration on associational life and precise drills, they presented a public image far removed from the unwilling statutory militia of earlier decades. Their music had changed as well. In Chapter One, we explored the importance of field music (the regular marching and camp music of fife, drum, and bugle) to the early national military. By 1842, the social roles of the militia and military bands had

greatly expanded, encompassing a variety of public and sociable activities far beyond the militia muster. They presented a public face that seemed to answer the myriad, widely condemned problems of the statutory militia in the past, which included widespread absenteeism, poor discipline, and drunkenness.⁸

The volunteer militia units were more effective public examples of America’s martial prowess for several reasons. As independent self-funded companies, they required the volunteer to purchase uniform and equipment and pay dues and various other social costs (ball tickets, excursion fees, and the like) that were beyond the means of the working man on the state’s roster for militia duty. The volunteers were thus socially and culturally distinct from the statutory militia, and thanks to their expenditures they appeared different. With their precision drills and martial music the white volunteers looked and sounded like a genteel corps of competent, virile defenders of the nation. Finally, the masculine respectability they strived for did not extend to black Americans. Black citizens responded to this racial exclusion by forming their own militia companies and bands, a phenomenon I will return to in the next chapter.⁹

Historians of the militia have tended to classify the volunteer companies as “elite,” but this is an oversimplification.¹⁰ In fact, members of the volunteer militia were drawn from diverse social and occupational backgrounds, including artisans and small shopkeepers, as well as elite professionals, larger manufacturers, and merchants. For

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⁸ Lawrence D. Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812, 179-212; Marcus Cunliffe, Soldiers & Civilians: The Martial Spirit in America, 1775-1865; Mahon, History of the Militia and the National Guard; Richard Bruce Winders, Mr. Polk’s Army: The American Military Experience in the Mexican War (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 19970, 66-69.
craftsmen and shopkeepers, the militia represented one important way to claim genteel status. It is possible to create a partial occupational profile of two of Baltimore’s most prominent volunteer militias, the Maryland Cadets and Baltimore Independent Greys. Their captains, Archer Ropes and James O. Law, were both attorneys, and Baltimore’s merchants and professionals were well-represented, especially lawyers and commission merchants.11 In fact, increasing industrialization meant that old occupational categories describing the Early Republic’s middling artisans now referred to an increasingly wide range of professional experiences. In 1840, 72% of Baltimore households were engaged in “manufacturing and trades,” a broad category to which many militia members belonged. Another 21% were in the categories of “commerce” or “learned professions and engineers.” Volunteer militia companies were useful vehicles of upward mobility for both young local elites and for men of the emerging middle class, anxious to demonstrate their genteel respectability.12

The occupations of other members were varied. They included a bookseller, a clerk, a confectioner, a painter, a “locksmith and bell hanger” (who acted as the Cadets’ gunsmith), and a tailor, among others.13

12 Sixth Census or Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States (Washington, D.C., 1841), 31; Minute Book, Independent Greys, 1841-1848, MS 479, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, passim (hereafter cited as “Independent Greys Minute Book”); Record Books [Maryland Cadets], 1842-46, 1861, MS 2165, Special Collections, Maryland Historical Society, muster roll August 1842 (hereafter cited as “Maryland Cadets Record Books”). See also Rockman, Scrapping By, 16-44; Browne, Baltimore in the Nation, chap 4.
13 Stuart M. Blumin, The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760-1900 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 71-83. Blumin estimates the non-manual proportion of Philadelphia’s adult male population at one-third in 1860. It would certainly have been less, perhaps significantly less, two decades earlier (Blumin’s detailed analysis does seem to some extent to elide this passage of time). A “tailor” might be a skilled artisan working on individual commissions out of his own shop, perhaps in his home, or a white-collar businessman who sold imported clothes out of a large shop and employed other artisans.
of the Independent Greys and one of its three lieutenants (in 1844, he was also Vice President of the Independent Fire Company), was listed as a “fancy and windsor chair man.” He was a small manufacturer who had a “chair factory” on Gay Street, which sold, according to his advertisement in the city directory, “CHAIRS of every variety” both “finished to order” and “constantly on hand.” Joshua Dryden, a Private in the Maryland Cadets, was listed in the city directory as a “merchant tailor” operating on North Liberty Street. Shutt, who in later years commanded the Greys and was promoted to Colonel, and Dryden were examples of the blend of manufacturer and small-scale producer that one historian has argued was characteristic of Baltimore’s economy from the 1820s through the 1840s.

The volunteer militiamen of the mid-nineteenth century were complex representatives of masculinity, as befits an era in which, as one historian has written, “for every example of hypermasculinity, many countervailing ones of gushing sentimentality can be found.” The models of manliness on display by the militias varied with the spaces and occasions on which they performed. As with that other well-known outlet for male sociability, the volunteer fire company, the genteel Victorian sense of masculinity blended with a rougher male fraternity. Genteel comportment at balls and concerts

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15 Ibid, 145. No dwelling is listed, making it possible his shop was also his home.
16 Browne, Baltimore in the Nation, 86-87.
blended with their displays of martial strength at public drills, and the roaring conviviality of dinners between host and guest companies on tours.

The members of wind bands attached to volunteer militias took part in their companies’ masculine rituals and mirrored their social composition. For example, the members of the amateur band of the Independent Greys, formed in 1842, were drawn from a similar social mix as the company at large. Their first leader, Joseph Perine, was part of an unspecified “firm” operating on Pitt Street. Other members included two shoemakers, a painter, and the owner of V.L. & J. Confectioners: “wholesale and retail dealers in fruit, and western manufacturers of confectionary, lemon syrup, jellies, etc.”

Professional musicians occupied similarly varied social strata. Furthermore, the ranks of professional musicians in America were greatly swelled by immigration, particularly from Germany. Baltimore was one of the most important locations for this wave of immigration, which in the 1820s led to a proliferation of occupations, including musical ones. In 1842, professional musicians were the equivalent of artisans, relying on a varied menu of performing, teaching, and composing to earn a wage.

Then as now, professional musicians lived gig to gig.

Musical events, including public celebrations, associated with the volunteer militia had always been one important source of work for professional musicians. But by the 1840s the military band was a far cry from the fife and drum of the revolutionary and republican militias, and even from the familiar “band of music” comprised of woodwinds and straight brass. A technological revolution in band instrumentation, beginning in the

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19 Independent Greys Minute Book, November 25, December 9, 1842; January 20, march 3, April 21, June 9, July 25, 1843; Matchett’s Baltimore Directory, 1842; Craig’s Business Directory and Baltimore Almanac (Baltimore: Daniel H. Craig, 1842).

20 Browne, Baltimore in the Nation, 88; Rockman, Scraping By, 28-29; Richard Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 149-151, 173, 184-185.
1830s and surging into the next decade, meant that band music required greater skill to perform, but was consequently more brilliant, stirring, and evocative. The brass band had begun to make its mark, in tandem with the growing visibility of the volunteer militia. Together they cemented the patriotic sublime as a central mode of American nationalism.

**Wind Band to Brass Band**

At a December 1841 concert at the Assembly Rooms, a popular Baltimore venue for instrumental and vocal concerts, prominent local musician James Deems led the band of the Independent Blues, one of Baltimore’s many volunteer militias, in his own “Baltimore Fireman’s March,” and rather remarkably, performed two of his own compositions on the cornopean, an early version of the modern cornet, while accompanying himself on piano.\(^{21}\) Deems had become the leader of the band after returning from musical training in Europe. As captained by Deems, the Blues band had a local reputation for high quality performances, even though it was probably composed largely of amateurs.\(^{22}\) Hiring such amateur bands was one option for militia companies in need of musical accompaniment for a parade or other event. Companies could also rent another militia’s band. For example, the Maryland Cadets hired the Independent Blues’ band for their journey to Boston and for other events. They could also hire a professional band not attached to a specific militia company, or a company could attempt to form its own band by admitting new, musically-trained members.

Mid-century militia bands might seem *ad hoc* and informal compared to the professionalization of wind bands in the age of Sousa later in the century, but they were

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\(^{21}\) *Baltimore Sun*, December 16, 1841

\(^{22}\) See for example *Baltimore Sun*, June 15, 1840; January 12, 1841.
better able to play than they had been earlier in the century more demanding and brilliant marches, quicksteps, and dance forms: genres far beyond field music. Moreover, uniformed and marching in step with their militia colleagues, they looked the part of soldiers. This was evident in the great encampment near Baltimore of 1841, and in the Maryland Cadets’ journey to Boston. To get to that point required a kind of musical practice that both referenced past military music-making and represented striking innovation. These were proto-professional bands.23

Thanks to the convergence of music, instrumentation, and the martial culture of the volunteer militia, militia bands were exemplars of the patriotic sublime: patriotic sentiment its audiences could hear, see, and even feel through their bodies. They were also good representatives of the scope and flexibility of America’s musical culture, in their ability to adapt to multiple spaces and genres of music. The local story of the band of the Baltimore Independent Blues is an excellent case study that shows the increasing presence of the brass band in national life.

The transition from martial music using solely fife and drum, or mixed woodwind and early brass instruments, to the brass band was a technological transformation that changed the way people heard music. It was a sonic revolution. Military music had long been associated with specific sounds: the tramp of marching feet, the sounds of infantry drill, the boom of cannon. Music acts directly on the body as sound. Apart from the emotional effects inhering in music as a result of its formal construction, music as sound

had “physical properties….It is fast or slow, regular or erratic…loud or soft.”

“Basic variables in human audition” such as loudness, timbre, and motion (i.e. tempo or speed) elicit “distinct results” in emotional activation. Even the seemingly simple fact of loudness is important to the emotional impact of music. Studies have linked increased volume in music to emotional expressions such as excitement, triumph, joy, intensity, and strength or power. In partnership with associated visual and other sensory information (the flag snapping in the breeze; the whiff of gunpowder, and so forth), these elements evoke “feelings…which [were] then given emotional and/or metaphorical interpretations.”

In the mid-nineteenth century, new kinds of brass instruments were amping up such basic musical elements as loudness and timbre. Purely as sound, martial music was transformed by new advances in instrument technology.

Contemporaries also thought about music in these terms. They held that music acted directly on the emotions and the body. The listener evoked an emotional response because the sound was inherently “beautiful or sublime” and had “associations of grandeur or terror, tenderness or a remembrance of the past,” as one commentator wrote in 1825. Writers for literary magazines made this a common theme: music was “the best recreation[…]exercising] at once both…body and…soul.” Improvement included

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24 Tia Denora, After Adorno, 99. Simon Frith distinguishes a “biological” approach from musicological readings that more fully embrace cultural and social signifiers, writing that “if music is meaningful in emotional terms it is therefore largely as an effect of cultural rather than psychological conditions.” I agree, but the physiological effects of music are a factor. Frith virtually admits as much when he says that meaning is “largely” the effect of culture. See Frith, Performing Rites: On the Value of Popular Music, 102-103.

25 Juslin and Sloboda, Handbook of Music and Emotions, 384-393.

26 Frith, Performing Rites, 104. As historian Mark Smith has said, sound was “socially constructed and mediated.” Smith, Listening to Nineteenth-Century America, 264.


28 Bishop Beveridge, “Music a Devout Recreation,” The Episcopal Watchman, May 7, 1831, 408. Such language recalled the link between the emotions and refined sensibility so familiar to people like Francis
physical health, which music promoted both by direct action on “the lungs and other vital organs,” and from the “general flow of spirits which it is the especial prerogative of music to bestow.” Martial music evoked the sublime as it made the feet move and the lungs resound. These writers thought it an ideal example of “the salutary influence of animating music,” especially as the sound of bands grew progressively louder and more brilliant with the advent of new brass instruments.

The first transformative instrument came from Britain in the form of the keyed or “Kent” bugle, invented in 1810. The natural or straight bugle was already long familiar in the military, but these valveless instruments were limited to the five notes of the harmonic scale in whatever key they were pitched to. The keyed bugle broke through this limitation with a series of five to twelve keys located at various points along the length of the instruments’ cylinder (Figure 4.1). This allowed higher-pitched brass instruments to play, for the first time, the complete chromatic scale (and thus act as a melodic voice). Still, the sound of these early keyed instruments has been described by modern scholars as “mellow and woolly,” and according to one, they were “rather delicate [and] not given to the rigors of field duty.” Finally, the keyed bugle, and brass instruments in general,

Scott Key earlier in the century. Middle-class uplift and the democratization of sensibility, it was thought, now made such emotions available to a broader public. See Knott, Sensibility and the American Revolution, 222.


30 “Music, Dancing, and Exercise, As Affecting Health,” The Water-Cure Journal, July 1, 1846, 46.

The keyed bugle, with its conical bore characteristic of the bugle family, required a high level of expertise to master. In the right hands, it was the first widely produced brass instrument able to perform complex melodies. Joe R. and Joella F. Utley Collection, National Music Museum.
were not yet standardized, and required a high degree of expertise to play. What was wanted were sturdier, standardized, brass instruments with more brilliant voices.

Valved brass instruments, first developed in Germany, were the central innovation in the rise of the brass band and gradually replaced the keyed bugle and other keyed brass instruments. James Deems’ cornopean, an early term for what became the modern cornet, was one such instrument (see Figure 4.2). Valved instruments like the cornet were both easier to master and better adapted for marching band use than the older equivalents. Keyed instruments lingered until the Civil War but quickly faded away in postbellum America. The shift to valved instruments in higher registers, such as trumpets and cornets, was accompanied by an equivalent transformation in brass instruments of all kinds. Low register woodwind instruments such as the bassoon gradually gave way first to keyed brass equivalents (primarily the ophicleide) then to valved instruments, especially the family of saxhorns, which existed in all registers and became the quintessential Civil War-era brass instrument.

The proportion of brass instruments in volunteer militia bands rose steadily throughout the first half of the nineteenth century (see Table 4.1 below). Regular Army bands used more brass after an 1832 edict cut the number of musicians allowed in

34 The saxhorn was developed during the 1830s and patented by Adolphe Sax in 1845. It was just being adopted in the United States in the mid-1840s, but its tonal flexibility and ease of use meant that it quickly came to dominate brass bands. For example, by 1851 the celebrated Boston Brass Band had transitioned entirely to a variety of saxhorns for the lower registers.
Figure 4.2. Cornopean, 1843, on right. On the left is an early two-valved trumpet. The valves on both are of the rotary variety. The cornopean, an early version of the modern cornet, had a slightly warmer tone than bright notes of the trumpet, but both, unlike earlier straight brass, could play complicated melodic lines. Joe R. and Joella F. Utley Collection, National Music Museum.
regimental bands to eleven (half as many as previously, in some cases). Army bands responded by jettisoning woodwinds in favor of the new brass, seeking their big sound.\textsuperscript{35}

### Table 4.1: Proportion of Brass Instruments in Wind Bands, 1801-1851

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oboe</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Key Bugle</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bassoon</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Cornet</td>
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<td>Trumpet</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trumpet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French Horn</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Alt. Saxhorn\textsuperscript{1}</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serpent\textsuperscript{1}</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bas. Saxhorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trombone</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Trombone</td>
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<tr>
<td>Triangle</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ophicleide</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bass Drum</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarinet</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Conductor</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>Cornet</td>
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<td>Trumpet</td>
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<td>Posthorn</td>
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<td>Key Bugle</td>
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<td>Trumpet</td>
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<td>Horn</td>
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<td>Alt. Saxhorn\textsuperscript{1}</td>
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<td>Serpent</td>
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<td>Ten. Saxhorn</td>
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<td>Bass Horn</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Bar. Saxhorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Bass Saxhorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cymbals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Side Drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brass:</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>

The increasing numbers of brass instruments, as well as their concentration at the expense of woodwinds, did more than make bands louder: it made their sound more uniform and brilliant as well. These new sounds undoubtedly contributed to the popularity of military bands and the high profile of their music, and contemporary critics claimed that brass band performances enraptured a public quite willing to be carried along on the emotional tide.

Among some critical observers, brass band performances ran afoul of emerging norms separating “refined” music from the merely popular, and we can glean something from the naysayers about their sonic power. When British phrenologist George Combe gave a series of lectures at the Museum of Natural History in Philadelphia, he felt compelled to write a letter of complaint to the museum’s director about the noise from

\textsuperscript{35} Hansen, \textit{American Wind Band}, 24.
the brass band concert upstairs and the raucous behavior of the audience: “the music is so loud that it often drowns my voice, and when the audience above applaud with their feet, I have no alternative but to stop till they have done.”

“Verily it is the age of brass,” wrote a correspondent to Dwight’s Journal of Music, lamenting the “present surcease of all quiet, temperate, unfeverish music.” He admitted that brass bands were suitable for some “noble function[s]” and grudgingly acknowledged that “there are good musicians in our principal brass bands.” But he associated their sounds with the cacophony of urban street life: it was the “natural accompaniment” for all the “vulgar noises, heats and smells of crowded, dirty city streets.” Yet, he did not deny its capacity to mobilize powerful sentiment:

By all the power of Brass, in league with Gunpowder, we publish and proclaim our patriotism. With the unthinking multitude the first attribute of patriotism is the war-like spirit; and war-like music is predominantly brass. The military brass band sets the key to all the music of our national rejoicing. Witness the ‘stunning’ programme of the Grand Military Concert, which is to lift the patriotic souls of thousands upon wings of glory...

Evocatively confirming the emotional impact of band music, the observer also highlights the linkage between patriotism, musical sound, and martial noises like cannon fire.

By the time the observer in Dwight’s Journal weighed in, the volume of sound and jarring but thrilling timbre of brass and its association with war was solidly ensconced in literature. Transcendentalist Christopher Pearce Cranch linked these characteristics to warfare in his sonnet “Trumpets and Trombones:"

36 Combe estimated the crowd at the concert to be between two and three thousand people. George Combe, Notes on the United States of North America During a Phrenological Visit, vol. I (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1841), 316.
37 Anonymous, “The ‘Heated Term,’” Dwight’s Journal of Music, July 3, 1858, 109-110. It is entirely possible that this editorial was written by John Sullivan Dwight himself. The program for the “Grand Military Concert” (for the Fourth of July) included “The Star Spangled Banner,” “Yankee Doodle,” “The Marseilles Hymn,” and other patriotic favorites, some set to cannon fire. On the comparison to urban street noise, see Upton, Another City, chapter 4.
A band of martial riders next I hear,
Whose sharp brass voices cut and rend the air…
Those arrowy trumpet notes so short and bright,
The long-drawn wailing of that loud Trombone,
Tell of the bloody and tumultuous fight…38

Another writer wrote simply that “assuredly there is no instrument of such…martial
correct commission, but he was, like the correspondent in Dwight’s Journal, critical
of its emotional wallop:

There are doubtless individuals of a waltz-like frame of mind, who prefer the
soothing too-tooting of a flute to the inharmonious trump of the brazen
instrument…..[but] it is a fact that one blast from the trumpet of Fame will make one
and all of them turn up the white of their eyes in the most ecstatic delight…39

These observers reinforced the martial associations of trumpets and other brass
instruments, and did not have far to look to see and hear them confirmed, since one of the
brass bands’ most visible functions was to accompany soldiers on the march.

A satirical anecdote about a Battle of the Bands, one with old-style
instrumentation and the other a brass band, led respectively by the musicians “Higgs” and
“Bigger,” confirms the cultural associations of brass and its big, booming sound with the
rowdy outdoors. Bigger’s band “entirely drowned the squeaking tones of Higg’s band
with the clang of sounding brass” at the militia parade, but Higgs had the advantage
indoors:

‘It seems to me that them sweet tones of Higg’s are the best,’ said judge No 1.
‘Yes, but see how strong Bigger does it – music ain’t good if it ain’t loud,’ said judge
No 2…”But we will see! this is the last piece.” [said judge No. 3.]
The tune selected was ‘Yankee Doodle.’ Higgs excelled himself; it was certainly
‘music,’ said the ladies; never had this great ‘national march’ been played so
sweetly….But Bigger had a chance yet. Great was the noise, and rapid was the

38 Christopher Pearce Cranch, Poems (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1844), 115. The sonnet is from a series
called “Sonnets on Musical Instruments.”
39 Anonymous, “The Art and Mystery of Blowing Your Own Trumpet,” American Whig Review,
December 1852, 536-537.
execution of the air, by the leader of the ‘Independent;’ the Higgsonians said it was like a locomotive, with the steam whistle in full blast…

The punchline was that the loud sound of his brass band scrambled Bigger’s brains: Bigger becomes an “idiotic individual” who could be found years later wandering the streets of the town. (The anecdote also reveals the complex valences that patriotic songs like “Yankee Doodle” could have in different settings: “sweetly” musical in indoor heterosocial spaces or a “brazen” proclamation when played by a brass band in the streets.)

An observer reviewing Ned Kendall’s Boston Brass Band, probably the most famous band in the country (Figure 4.3), in 1839 also drew a sharp distinction between indoor and outdoor spaces, reserving the brass band’s legitimate use for the latter only:

The Brass Band have given three well attended Concerts….We like to hear their music in its proper place; that is, in the open air, at the head of one of our handsome volunteer companies, for instance: for we know that they have some very good performers among them. Neither do we blame them for making money when they can. But that performances on such instruments, in the concert room, where they cannot but be heard to the greatest disadvantage, should meet with greater success than any others offered to the public, presents indeed a humiliating picture of the public musical taste.

Critical as he was of the brass band’s indoor use and of the unrefined “taste” of a public who would pay to see one play in a concert hall, the critic confirmed brass band’s significance in outdoor civic rituals accompanying a “handsome militia.”

Other observers, happy to see the brass band in both settings, disagreed. An ensemble like the Boston Brass Band could exhibit indoors the same sweetness as the apocryphal Higgs’ band. Its music, “though in a small hall, sounds perfectly soft and

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40 Joe Miller, Jr., “Blowed His Brains Out,” *Spirit of the Times: A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage*, July 18, 1846, 244 (reprinted from the St. Louis Reveille).


42 Ibid.
Figure 4.3. Boston Brass Band, 1851 (Gleason’s Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion, August 9, 1851). Note the variety of over-the-shoulder Saxhorns and the band’s trim, professional, and martial appearance.
smooth… We notice in the B.B. Band a perfect uniformity in the different parts—no instrument is allowed to predominate, but the melody and accompaniments blend smoothly together…”\textsuperscript{43} Disagreements about whether the setting was proper to the militia band disclosed its importance to different kinds of audiences in both commercial and civic spaces.

Professionals and amateurs alike played in the touring bands that spread the sound of the new brass instruments into their own cities’ hinterlands and throughout the country. Some brass bands were professional outfits, like the Boston Brass Band, who hired themselves out for public events of all kinds. However, most militia bands, like the band of the Baltimore Independent Greys, were filled largely by amateurs. In any case, the line between musical amateurs and professionals was not clearly demarcated. Most amateurs lacked formal training, and what training there was in the United States still followed an apprenticeship model. The professionals who did play in militia bands usually worked at other musical occupations as well, such as teaching and music publishing. (They also sometimes traveled to Europe for musical finishing. The transatlantic flow in the other direction was also significant. Musicians emigrating from Europe, especially England and Germany, were a sizeable proportion of music professional in the antebellum era.)\textsuperscript{44}

As with many musical developments, the rise of brass started in New England and New York but quickly made its way throughout the country. The Boston Brass Band and Boston Brigade Band, along with Thomas Dodworth’s eponymous band in New York, all

\textsuperscript{43} “Playing in the Band,” \textit{Boston Musical Visitor}, October 24, 1843, 186.
started as quasi-professional outfits independent of militia companies. They became nationally famous and toured throughout the country by the 1840s. Their bandleaders and soloists, particularly the renowned Edward “Ned” Kendall, became public superstars: “as experienced bandsmen listened to Kendall play music which was impossible to play, an aura of magic mysticism grew up around him.”\footnote{Dudgeon, The Keyed Bugle, 82. See also Hansen, The American Wind Band, 19-36; Robert E. Foster, Wind Bands of the World: Chronicle of a Cherished Tradition (Delray Beach, FL: Meredith Music Publications, 2013), 55-62; Edward Franko Goldman, The Wind Band: Its Literature and Technique (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1961), 34-44.}

Associations like the Salem (Massachusetts) Brass Band were more typical of the burgeoning band culture. Started as early as 1800, it grew in size and gradually switched to brass instruments over the decades. The Salem band toured (for example, with a “circus and menagerie”) to improve its musicianship, and by 1855 had become a fully professional band under the baton of the celebrated impresario Patrick Gilmore.\footnote{Salem Register, February 18 and 22, 1841; Salem Gazette, June 1, 1841; Salem Reigster, December 23, 1841; Hazen and Hazen, The Music Men, 29-37.} This process of professionalization and the knitting together of cities and regions through martial music occurred in urban centers throughout the nation, including Baltimore.

\textit{James Deems and Baltimore’s Militia Bands}

The band of Baltimore’s Independent Blues militia company was led in the late 1830s and early 1840s by James M. Deems. Deems and his band exemplified the traits of the antebellum militia band. It contained professionals trained in the \textit{ad hoc} music industry of the pre-Civil War era; moved easily between differing performance spaces and distinct audiences; and spread patriotic music as it performed at the 1842 Baltimore encampment and traveled with the Maryland Cadets to Boston. Along with the still-
gestating band of another company, the Independent Greys, and a number of other militia bands, the band of the Blues filled the street, concert halls, and other public spaces of Baltimore with martial music.

James M. Deems embodied the musical training of the era. Born in 1818, he displayed musical talent as young as five. His early musical training was informal: he studied the clarinet and French Horn with William Rountree, captain of his father’s militia company, learned the bugle (including the keyed version), piano, and organ, and was playing in an orchestra at the age of thirteen. As a young man, he followed the path of many young musicians to Germany, where he finished his musical education and studied composition and the cello. Back in Baltimore, he became an integral part of the musical and social community.47

Deems was not only familiar with militia culture but a member of Baltimore’s elite. His father Jacob Deems was a well-known local citizen and one of the Old Defenders (having captained an infantry company in the Battle of North Point in 1814). Jacob Deens made his living as a tanner and leather merchant and eventually became a civic leader. He was a Justice of the Peace, captain of the Union Yagers militia, officer in the United Hose and Suction fire company and several other civic organizations, and was even proposed as interim mayor when Jacob Small resigned the office in 1831.48 The elder Deems was the dedicatee of a piece of sheet music, “Captain Deems’ March,” printed and possibly composed in 1824 by the leading Baltimore music publisher John

48 Baltimore Patriot, March 1, 1815, March 2, July 2, 1819; January 17, 24, 1820; Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, February 15, 1831; J. Thomas Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County, 92, 253.
Cole, who was a famous compiler of sacred tunebooks and also a militia band leader and clarinet player during the War of 1812.\textsuperscript{49} Familiar as he was with marching music, Cole included pointers in his sheet music so the home performer could visualize the piece as performed on the march by a militia band. In effect, the piano player at home could “hear” the public voice of the music (Figure 4.4).

The march’s figurations, like the trumpet fanfare that opens the piece, betray its band origins. Although scored for piano as most sheet music was, its individual sections show the performer the intended wind band parts. The left hand mirrors the marching rhythms in the syncopated, triumphal melody, which is strongly on the beat and composed mostly of simple fifths, sevenths, and octaves. It is certainly not pianistic, and the effect is to mimic the march as originally played by a wind band (whose parts would have been written out on small pieces of paper or memorized). The publisher also helpfully notated the original instrumentation at several points, so the pianist at home could easily imagine the trumpets playing the ringing fanfare, and the bugle with its solo in the second section. “Captain Deems’ March” demonstrates how martial music could move from public to private space, since both the printed sheet music and the parlor piano sound contained visual and aural reminders of its public performance.

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, the younger Deems\textsuperscript{50} and his band demonstrated the flexibility of the band repertoire in a broad range of performance


\textsuperscript{50} Deems had an elder brother, Jacob Deems, Jr., who was also a musician and a member of the Independent Blues, and was perhaps James Deems’ original introduction to the company. Jacob Deems, Jr. did not make the impact of his brother musically and left little trace in the historical record. See Baltimore Sun, September 1, 1838.
Figure 4.4. “Captain Deem’s March,” sheet music (Baltimore: John Cole, 1824). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
venues. In each, the Blues band represented the resplendent patriotism of their venerable volunteer company, which had been founded as early as 1792 and had been long known for their “natty dress and excellent drill.”  

Deems’ evident talent and high social standing allowed him to assume command of the band of the Independent Blues as early as 1836, when he was just eighteen. At twenty he was playing in the orchestra at the Holliday Street Theatre. Deems and his band were conspicuous at concerts and balls. A ball sponsored by the Independent Blues in 1836 was opened with a “grand Military March” (composed by Deems) from the band, which “stood deservedly high in the estimation of the citizens.”  

The same year, they performed at an outdoor fireworks display, where “artificial Bomb Shells” accompanied the “splendid Band” and its leader, who performed “several Voluntaries and Variations” on the keyed bugle. Events like these combined the martial symbolism of military dress with polite sociability, including dancing. They strengthened through music the links between elites and middle-class Baltimoreans inside and outside the military.  

A concert in December 1841 organized by and featuring James Deems shows how musical styles and cultural signifiers blended together in a single performance space. Some of the city’s brightest musical lights (“many of the most distinguished professors and amateurs in the city”) assisted, including Henry Dielman, violinist, flutist, conductor, and music director of the Baltimore Theatre; Frederick Lucchesi, flutist, band member, master of the piccolo and music teacher (especially voice and bass), and Michael Pfaff, a

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51 Scharf, *A History of Baltimore City and County*, 668.  
52 *Baltimore Gazette*, April 4, 1836.  
53 The fireworks display was intended as a family event: admission was only 25 cents per person, but the organizer promised that “an efficient Police has been engaged, who will preserve order, and prevent the admission of improper characters.” While not as exclusive as a ball, the organizers of the fireworks display made a conscious attempt to control access, unlike more public events such as parades. *Baltimore Gazette*, April 4, August 4, 1836.
clarinet (and harmonica) expert and piano merchant. The musical expertise and variety of musical professions on display demonstrates the catholicity of interconnections among musicians and suggests the artisanal nature of music education. The program featured a mix of popular airs, incidental music from the theater (for example, an overture from Ferdinand Herold’s comic opera *Zampa*), gleeas, virtuoso showpieces for Deems and others, and music with military themes or martial style. The latter, besides the “Baltimore Fireman’s March,” consisted of the “Winslow Blues’ Quickstep,” a piece written for a Boston-area volunteer militia company probably in 1836 and popularized by Ned Kendall (see Figure 4.5). The inclusion of martial music and the militia band on a concert program was not unusual and indicates the popularity of the genre in multiple performance spaces.

From its beginning, march music has been intended to do just what the name describes: evoke and accompany the rhythmic, repetitive physical movement of march steps. The quickstep was a much-loved variant, in duple instead of quadruple time, and like the march proper described a military maneuver, marching at the quickstep—that is, in double time. The middle of the nineteenth century was the beginning of the heyday of the march as popular music. Marches like the “Winslow Blues’ Quickstep” abounded. They were musically straightforward, relying on strong repeated rhythms and heavy periodic accents: “essentially an ornamentation of a fixed, regular and repeated drum rhythm,” as one scholar has said. The quickstep, like the Winslow Blues piece, was a march variant, perhaps sprightlier than a regular march in common time. Phrases are

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short and choppy, consisting largely of two bars. Note also this quickstep’s characteristic straight eighth-note pair that ends each phrase in the introduction, followed by a short rest: the effect is a sense of forward propulsion. The tempo mark is “spiritoso,” that is, with spirit.\textsuperscript{56} When played by a brass band of, conservatively, more than a dozen members in an indoor space, the sound of the spirited, up-tempo march must have been overwhelming. Finally, the iconography exhibited on the cover of the “Winslow Blues’ Quickstep” is significant. It depicted the encamped company, drawn up in its serried ranks, straight as a ruler, in their neat, stylish uniform coats and white pants, the star and stripes waving over all. Although concert attendees would not necessarily have seen this particular piece of sheet music, they could see the band of the Independent Blues right in front of them. The sound of the music combined with the visual iconography of the military band made the mythic present easy to imagine.\textsuperscript{57}

The band of the Independent Blues was an example for Baltimore’s other militia companies. One company that took up the challenge of forming its own band was the Independent Greys. The Greys, a young company founded in 1836, were one of Baltimore’s most active, engaging in a regular round of public drills and parades, excursions down the Chesapeake, balls, and more.\textsuperscript{58} In the fall of 1841, the company seems to have become involved in a dispute with the band they had been hiring for these

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\textsuperscript{56} Crawford, \textit{America’s Musical Life}, 275-277.
\textsuperscript{58} The Greys were captained by James O. Law, a prominent local attorney very familiar with male volunteer organizations. As a young man he had marched with the Washington Society on July 4, 1828 during the landmark cornerstone celebration of the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. Concurrent with his militia service, he was elected mayor of Baltimore in 1843, serving for only a year, and subsequently became President of Baltimore’s Independent Fire Company. Independent Greys Minute Book, M, \textit{passim}; Wilbur F. Coyle, \textit{The Mayors of Baltimore: Illustrated from Portraits in the City Hall} (Baltimore, 1919), MdHS; Scharf, \textit{History of Baltimore City and County}, 247-249; \textit{Detailed and Correct Account of the Grand Civic Procession in the City of Baltimore on the Fourth of July}, 1828, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD, Special Collections.
Figure 4.5. “Winslow Blues’ Quickstep,” sheet music cover (Boston, 1836). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
occasions, Murray’s Brass Band, so they appointed a committee to “to take into consideration the propriety of dismissing Murrays Brass Band,” which recommended that they be “discharged without delay.” The company passed an official Resolution to do so, including instructions that the “Band Committee be directed…to make the necessary arrangements relative to their uniforms and equipment as yet unpaid for.” Given the studiously formal proceeding leading to the separation and the mention for the record of outstanding debts, it is likely that the members of the band had stretched its credit with the company too far. For most of the next year, the Greys hired music for specific occasions, such as the July 4th parade, a late-summer excursion down the Patapsco to Bear’s Creek, and Defender’s Day on September 12.

By forming their own band, the Greys indicated the increasing importance of reliable musical performance to volunteer militias. That they were even willing to provide uniforms for a hired band (for the militiamen themselves, this was an individual expense, and a potentially heavy one) also indicates the importance placed by militia companies on integrating the band into the visual pageantry of the company on parade. Hired bands were common in large part because of the scarcity of trained brass musicians, especially as instrument technology changed, so it is no surprise that given the opportunity a company like the Greys would have leaped at the chance to produce

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59 This was apparently a professional or quasi-professional band that was hired by militia companies and for a variety of similar entertainments and celebrations. In the summer of 1842 they were very active providing martial music for excursions on the Chesapeake and Patapsco as “Murray’s Military and Cotillion Music.” See for example Baltimore Sun August 15, 1842.

60 Independent Greys Minutes, Meetings on September 17 and October 8, 1841.

61 The Company netted $67.38 from the Bear’s Creek excursion. Independent Greys Minutes, December 3, 1841; May 27, June 10, August 12, 26, September 5, 16.

62 A Massachusetts private paid $21 for his uniform in 1821. Mahon, History of the Militia, 83-84.
reliable music from within their ranks.\textsuperscript{63} That opportunity came in October of 1842, apparently due to a family connection, when a member of the Greys, a Mr. Farburton, proposed hiring a band that was “very anxious to join the company.”\textsuperscript{64} The Greys immediately formed another committee to see about the possibility of “procur[ing] uniforms for the Band.”\textsuperscript{65} Private Farburton, already the company’s “trumpeter” (i.e. bugler), appears to have formed the Band with the help of his father, another militiaman. The plan was approved just a week later: “the proposition of the band is that the men become members of the company & be subject to the Captain’s orders, except the bearing of arms.”\textsuperscript{66}

The public comment quickly embraced the new band. After the original eight band members (including Private Farburton with his bugle) paraded with the company on November 21, an observer gushed: “their ranks were very full, and their appearance quite martial and effective….The company was preceded by their new band, which is now completed, organized, and uniformed, and from the ‘taste of their quality’ which we enjoyed yesterday, we promise ourselves a welcome accession to the musical corps of our city.”\textsuperscript{67} In highlighting their “martial” appearance (pointing out their new uniforms and organization, for example), the observer confirmed the visual and musical effect the Greys aimed for. The “taste” of “quality,” might have meant approval of the band’s musical abilities, but could also be read as broader approval of their refined and martial

\textsuperscript{63} Kenneth E. Olson, \textit{Music and Musket}, 20-22.
\textsuperscript{64} Independent Greys Minute Book, October 21, 1842.
\textsuperscript{65} The Farburtons, father and son, have been otherwise lost to history, except an entry in the city directory listing “Wm. Farburton” as a tinner. See Independent Greys Minute Book, October 28, 1842; \textit{Matchett’s Directory}, 1842.
\textsuperscript{66} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{67} Independent Greys Minute Book, November 2, 4, 11, 1842; \textit{Baltimore Sun}, November 22, 1842.
masculine comportment. After this successful debut, the Greys’ band continued to grow, boasting a robust twenty members by the following summer.

The Greys’ band also labored to keep up with the transition to more modern keyed and valved brass instruments. We have only hints of their instrumentation, but these are instructive. Soon after the parade on November 21st, the company was hunting for new instruments to rent, and approached the lodge of the Improved Order of Red Men to “ascertain what price they asked for the instruments which they hold.” Thanks to Baltimore’s web of male volunteer and fraternal organizations, their inquiry yielded fruit. The lodge was willing to let the Greys buy their instruments on “instalment [sic],” the first one to be paid upfront, allowing “cr[edit] on the balance.” Expenses were ever a concern, however. The music committee refused to elect a Mr. Glenn to the band without assurances that he would pay for his own instrument and uniform, and similarly refused to elect an “offclyde” [ophicleide] player “until the company is able to pay for the necessary expense.” But by obtaining instruments from the Order of Red Men and carefully considering new admissions with an eye toward growth, the company got its band and introduced new instruments.

The Independent Greys and its new band could look to James M. Deems and the band of the Independent Blues as a model of a successful militia band. Deems was a respected professional and the band was engaged in a constant round of activity, both with its own company, the Independent Blues, and as a hired group. 1842 was especially busy for Deems and his band. That year encompassed not only the usual public parades

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68 Independent Greys Minute Book, November 25, December 9, 1842.
69 Ibid.
70 It is probable that one or more of the Greys was also a member of one of the two Baltimore lodges of the Red Men, founded in 1834 and 1838. See Ibid; see also Charles H. Litchman, ed., Official History of the Improved Order of Red Men (Boston: The Fraternity Publishing Company, 1893), 247-255.
and drills, summer boat excursions, and concerts that were the military band’s typical fare, but also a grand encampment and a highly publicized trip to Boston with the Maryland Cadets.

_Camp Baltimore: Military Encampment as Performance_

The volunteer spirit was a check on the perceived ineffectualness of the standing militia. For every criticism of the country’s militia system in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, there was an encomium to the volunteer companies to counter it, and as American musical culture grew, so too did the importance of volunteer militia bands in shaping the perception of military prowess. Even foreign chroniclers noted this fact. A British colonel, observed a New York corps with a “splendid band at their head,” and told his British readers that “the cavalry volunteer corps are…equal in every respect to your Yeomanry at home, while the bands…are far superior.” As I have shown, the militia band participated in many different kinds of musical activity, performing at elite social events and commercial venues, as well as in civic events of many kinds.

Encampments were a prominent part of militia culture. As events of intense and prolonged interaction, they strongly reinforced fraternal ties. They also had a public function: they were popular destinations for local leisure seekers, places for civilians to observe a “real” military camp, socialize, and carouse. The encampment was also meant to inculcate discipline in the volunteers, who demonstrated their skills and their patriotism through drills, parades, successful sentry duty, and even the regularity of their tents. The ideal encampment was thought to be a bracing facsimile of actual military

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71 Cunliffe, _Soldiers and Civilians_, 216-217.
service, where onlookers saw military techniques and heard martial sounds, all performed amidst familiar patriotic signifiers.\textsuperscript{72}

By 1842, the public had become accustomed to encampments as social events. Local encampments of individual companies lasting for a day or two, often on the Fourth of July, prepared the ground for much more extensive events like Camp Baltimore. In both 1840 and 1841, the Maryland Cadets had encamped for two days on the grounds of the country estate of Chauncy Brooks (near what is now Druid Hill Park) to celebrate the Fourth of July. The festivities in 1840 included a reading of the Declaration of Independence, a shooting contest for a piece of silver plate, and infantry exercises, including “skirmishing by bugle sounds.”\textsuperscript{73} The following year, the Cadets informed the public that they would “be gratified to receive visits of ladies and gentlemen at any time during the encampment—we presume, however, that it would be more agreeable to visitors to witness the ‘dress parades’ of the company” before 11am and after 4pm each day.\textsuperscript{74} Like parades, the encampment emphasized the ritualized performance of battle maneuvers. Dress parades, with the company in full regalia accompanied by fife and drum or, better, a brass band, were especially thrilling examples of martial drill.

Music and other martial sounds permeated encampments. They including everything from the pageantry of a familiar patriotic tune played by a military band to the roar of cannon fire, and the bugler or drummer sounding the call to breakfast.\textsuperscript{75} Daily

\textsuperscript{72} See Harry S. Laver, The Kentucky Militia and Society in the Early Republic (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 30-32.
\textsuperscript{73} Baltimore Sun, July 2, 1840.
\textsuperscript{74} Baltimore Sun, July 3, 1841.
drum calls, “the clock of the camp,”⁷⁶ drills and mock battles. Drills approximated the experience of men on the frontlines: military manuals covered them, including the drum, fife, and bugle tunes that initiated and controlled their timing, in minute detail, because they duplicated the maneuvers of soldiers under fire. Field music was central in the public imagination to professional soldiering. For example, the ideal unit would engage twice a day in the “dress parade,” during which

A signal will be beat or sounded half an hour before troop or retreat [i.e. the beginning and end of the working day, of course signaled by the music], for the music to assemble….Ten minutes after that signal, the Adjutant’s call will be given, when the companies will be marched (the band playing) to the regimental parade, where they will be formed in their relative positions in the order of battle, arms ordered and at rest….The music will be formed in two ranks on the right of the Adjutant, and from the Adjutant’s call to troop or retreat, the band will play….⁷⁷

With every movement and segment of the day punctuated by drum, fife, or bugle, traditional military instruments in their serried ranks made a vivid impression. “The music” formed in “two ranks” could describe just the drummer and fifer of each company, but the new innovation of the all-brass band could also easily fit those instructions. This twice-daily parade was just one moment when military music accompanied martial discipline during camp duty.

Planning for the great 1842 encampment stretched over a year and encompassed myriad details. Reports were suffused with eager paeans to the spirit of the volunteers, Baltimore civic leaders’ promotion of their city, and the planning of martial symbols. The impetus came after a “public-spirited citizen,” hearing of another proposal for an

⁷⁶ Gustav Kobbe, “The Trumpet in Camp and Battle,” The Century Magazine 56 (1898), 537-543, quote on 537.
⁷⁷ Samuel Cooper, Alexander McComb, A Concise System of Instructions and Regulations for the Militia and Volunteers of the United States, comprehending the exercises and movements of the infantry, light infantry, and riflemen; cavalry and artillery... (Philadelphia: Robert P. Desilver, 1836), 3, 257.
encampment near Frederick, Maryland, was moved to propose Baltimore instead. He wrote, “Let our military be up and doing... we could have 10,000 fine uniformed volunteers among us from the various States of the Union.” He continued in the spirit of civic boosterism: “It would create a spirit which would fill our regiments; bring men together; associate fine feelings; improve the business of our city; demonstrate the rapid progress of internal improvement; in a word, it would do much for the good of our general country.”78 As the date for the event neared, local merchants were reminded that “next week an immense number of strangers will be in Baltimore, and bargains should be offered to induce them to leave as much money in the city as they have to spare.”79 Such an encampment could boost Baltimore’s commerce and enhance the visibility of Baltimore’s railroad and canal infrastructure.

Members of Baltimore’s volunteer militias picked up the planning from there, burying themselves in the nuts and bolts of the encampment including the expense of rations, the command structure, fare deductions from local railroads to and from the encampment, collections for expenses from local companies, the order of drill, and the loan of “tents and camp equipage” from the federal government.80 Anticipation started to mount: the Sun hoped that “the camp of course will be a scene of beauty and fashion, and thousands of visitors will submit to it.”81 A Philadelphia paper reported “the military companies of Baltimore are all agog about the great encampment that is to be held next

78 Baltimore Sun, July 23, 1841.
79 Baltimore Sun, May 14, 1842.
81 Baltimore Sun, November 12, 1841.
week near that city. From the country round, a good number of companies are coming in.”

The scene of the encampment was one of visual and aural grandeur. Visitors were treated to the thrilling sight of dozens of volunteer companies accompanied by the sounds of drill and music. Thirty two companies, sixteen from Baltimore city, the rest from other parts of Maryland, Washington D.C., and Pennsylvania, took part, many of them having paraded to the grounds west of the city between the turnpike to Frederick and the Baltimore & Ohio railroad on Monday, May 16. The volunteers presented a picture of attractive masculinity: “bright eyes beamed responsive to the arms that gleamed in the sunshine, and military plumes nodded assent to the invitation of the wavy locks that adorned the brow of beauty.” This rapturous observer also couched the initial parade from Baltimore City out to the encampment site in intensely emotional terms, complete with an appropriate musical reference:

The young ‘defenders of Baltimore,’ men ready at any moment to emulate the heroic deeds of ‘the old defenders,’ were to be [at the encampment], and all were going there to see and admire them; and having seen and admired them, their hearts swelled proudly at the sight, and they felt that so long as such soldiers are to be found in the country,

The star spangled banner in triumph shall wave,
O’er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

In noting the readiness of the “young” volunteers and linking them to the locally revered War of 1812 veterans, the observer evoked the mythic present. His portrait of the scene

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82 Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 13, 1842.
83 Easton (MD) Gazette, May 7, 14, 1842; Philadelphia North American and Daily Advertiser, May 16, 1842; Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 16, 1842; Baltimore Sun, May 17, 1842. If we assume 40 to 50 men per company (the Maryland volunteers 1841 report to the Assembly recommended no more than 72 in any single company; the Maryland Cadets 1842 roster listed 57 members, a handful of whom were likely absent from the camp), a rough estimate of the troops in the encampment would be 1,300 to 1,600. For other descriptions of encampments, c.f. Philadelphia Public Ledger, May 17, 1842; Baltimore American, May 17, 18 1842; New York Weekly Herald, May 21, 1842. Estimates of numbers of spectators throughout the encampment ranged from 10,000 to 15,000 each day (depending on the day).
84 Baltimore Sun, May 17, 1842. Italics in original.
combined the sight of the virile contemporary volunteers with the “Star Spangled Banner’s” evocation of the tattered flag flying in victory over Fort McHenry in 1814.

The band of the Independent Blues reinforced the connection to favorite patriotic songs: their music “enliven[ed] the camp on all proper occasions, with the music which is familiar to the ears of the city.” The military precision proclaimed by observers was strengthened by the ubiquitous music: drills were “enlivened with the sound of the drum, the shrill fife, and various other martial instruments of music.” An observer from a Washington D.C. paper enthused about the sounds of marching and music during preparations for the march from the capital to the encampment:

The colonels, captains and soldiers in this neighborhood are all preparing to march to the Baltimore encampment! The drum and fife is heard in all directions, and squadrons of horse, with bugles and clattering feet, are pouring down from the mountains of Maryland to join in the pageant on the grand review day. Vive le militaire…!

One description of the encampment setting used an analogy to theatre: it was an “amphitheatre formed by the gentle acclivities running from the stream that bounds the camp ground on the west,” which “presented a beautiful scene of life in mingled repose and activity.” Commentators did not neglect the sounds that augmented the martial nature of the grounds. The artillery (including that of the regular army artillery, on hand from Fort McHenry) that saluted the Governor of Pennsylvania during his official review was particularly noticeable. The Sun reported “the noise of their ‘big guns’ created a sensation

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85 *Baltimore Sun*, May 20, 1842.
86 *Baltimore Sun*, May 18, 1842.
of almost fear among the more timid in their immediate neighborhood, while it was a matter of delight to the more distant spectators.”

The “magnificent spectacle” of the encampment was complicated by its other face: a space for men and women to congregate for entertainment, including picnicking and drinking. The “Camp City” adjoining the actual grounds sold $3 licenses for liquor booths, and even music reminded the public of this bacchanalian quality – and hinted at much-denigrated militia muster of old.

Two versions of sheet music for the “Maryland Cadets’ Glee” (published in 1838 and 1839), the piece performed at James Deems’ farewell concert in 1838, evocatively illustrate the janus-faced public functions of encampments. In the first, an encampment, with neatly aligned tents and the American flag flying, appears in the background. But the cadets in the foreground are roaring drunk (Figure 4.6). One has half-collapsed and four of them, cups empty, stare hopefully at a fifth soldier who is peering at the dregs in one bottle. Meanwhile, another cadet is intently engaged in opening a new one. The second piece published a year later shows a similar camp, with the soldiers in the background, drawn up in serried ranks (Figure 4.7). The bucolic scene emphasizes the encampment as a polite tourist destination. One group has arrived in a carriage and its members peer around, looking into the tents and observing the soldiers, amidst a scene of almost pastoral beauty.

Musically, “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” was a fairly simple version of the genre, with little harmonic or rhythmic complexity and much easy-to-follow stepwise

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88 *Baltimore Sun*, May 19, 1842. On the 21st, the *Sun* advertised a “lithographic print” of the encampment for sale.
89 As one Philadelphia paper reported it: see *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 20, 1842.
91 Note also the Cadets’ uniforms, which are probably true to life.
Figure 4.6. “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee,” sheet music cover (George F. Cole: Baltimore, 1838). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
Figure 4.7. “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee,” sheet music cover (Baltimore: George F. Cole, 1839). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
movement: a song likely intended for amateur soldiers to sing themselves. The lyric to “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” combined two features of the encampment. The first verse emphasizes its convivial masculine sociability:

A soldier’s life is always gay, always gay,
His home is on the tented field…
Drink, drink my boys, drink, drink my boys,
Dream not of the morrow,
Woman and wine’s the toast divine
We’ll drown all thoughts of sorrow…

But in the second and third verses the sentiment swings to include the soldier’s patriotism and heroism, even to death in battle:

‘Tis you ‘tis I may chance to fall, chance to fall
When the drum beats to arms we know no retreat,
Rather our Flag, be our winding sheet
A Soldier’s proudest heritage, his proudest heritage…

The song continues in this vein, including an oath to “the Girls we love,” recalling the important subset of patriotic music emphasizing the soldier longing for wife or mother, or the mother mourning her brave son lost in battle. Combining the pathos of the home front with warlike sentiment, and throwing in copious drink for good measure, “The Maryland Cadets’ Glee” encapsulated the combination of entertainment and patriotic sentiments that made up the encampment experience.

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92 A glee was a partsong in four-part harmony, for much of its history intended for four male voices—in this case, two tenors and two basses. Interestingly, this scoring eliminates the alto part, which would have been sung in falsetto. One wonders if the scoring was a nod to the self-constructed masculinity of militia members. In the nineteenth century, glees were increasingly scored for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass, thus including women in their performance. See David Johnson, “Glee,” Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed September 7, 2014, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11269.

Militiamen at Camp Baltimore also used martial music subversively in an impromptu burlesque performance at night. An observer from Philadelphia described the event in a lengthy laudatory missive about the encampment. The burlesque took place on a night of pouring rain that transformed the grounds into a “duck-pond on a large scale, a picturesque exhibition of pool and quagmire.”\(^94\) The rain seems to have produced a slacking off of discipline. At any rate, it prompted the burlesque, complete with cross-dressing and music:

Several companies were parading with all sorts of costume and equipments – some with blankets over their shoulders, some with bedquilts and calico coverlids, one had on an old woman’s gown, and several of the officers had military cloaks made of coonskins with the tails of the animals hanging in rich profusion around their persons. Their arms were as strikingly diversified as their dresses; – one shouldered a fence-rail, another a corn broom; domestic implements of all kinds were substituted for muskets; swords were represented by soup ladles, cartouche boxes by coffee mills, epaulettes by dishcloths, &c. Thus arrayed they went through a number of military evolutions, marched and counter-marched to the sound of martial music, and appeared to enjoy themselves exceedingly.\(^95\)

The burlesque lampooned the much-publicized peccadilloes of the statutory militia. Even as late as 1842, many Americans continued to criticize militia musters as scenes of crude debauchery (temperance reformers were especially vociferous in their attacks). Their jeremiads singled out the lack of refinement and proper civic virtues at musters, more so than military unpreparedness. Volunteer companies answered both criticisms: their elite and upward-striving middle class members self-consciously labored to present themselves as genteel and capable soldiers. Still, in moments like Camp Baltimore’s


\(^{95}\) Ibid.
nighttime burlesque they reminded onlookers and themselves of the bacchanalian face of the militia. \(^{96}\)

The scene the next morning was very different, even “brilliant”—a return to martial virtue. The troops were now “very imposing and splendid” in their “tasteful uniforms,” and performed their maneuvers “with great regularity.” \(^{97}\) By satirizing the revered patriotic symbols of music, uniform, and military maneuvers on Friday night then demonstrating their proper forms for the (much larger) crowd the next day, the volunteers emphasized their distance from the ineffectual militia of the past. But the caricature also speaks eloquently to the tension between the mythic present of martial vigor and skill on one hand, and the awareness of the militia’s perceived failures over the previous decades on the other. The burlesque could have been interpreted as ridiculing militarist patriotism and its signifiers: the sublime turned ridiculous.

*The Maryland Cadets in Boston*

Camp Baltimore was representative of the periodic large-scale encampments that fired patriotic sentiment across regions. A Philadelphia paper reported that it had “been productive of much good feeling between men from the different States, who are prepared to stand shoulder to shoulder, should their services ever be required in defending our common country.” \(^{98}\) Visits between locales by individual volunteer companies, in which a host company and its city feted the travelers for a day or several days, had the same effect, and were more common. Newspapers covered the visits closely

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\(^{97}\) “Camp Baltimore,” *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, May 21, 1842.

and associated them with the patriotic sublime. In August 1842, the Maryland Cadets undertook just such a visit: a journey up the East Coast to Boston, with brief stops in Philadelphia, New York, and Providence. The patriotic sentiment that accompanied them was the emotion of the mythic present, afforded in part by the musical events of the Cadets and their band. The progress of the prize-winning Maryland Cadets up the east coast is an ideal case study of patriotic music and the use of civic ritual to promote sectional ties.

Their Boston destination was a homecoming of sorts, and illustrates the workings of inter-regional fraternal bonds. Augustus H. Newman, a merchant and New Englander by birth (while still resident in Boston, he had been the captain of Boston’s Independent City Greys), moved to Baltimore and founded the Maryland Cadets in 1835. In 1842, Newman was promoted and his former first lieutenant, Arches Ropes, was promoted to captain. Ropes was likely the driving force behind the trip to Boston, not only because he knew Newman so well, but because he too was a New Englander from Salem, Massachusetts.99

Relations between the Maryland Cadets and the Independent Blues were very cordial, and so it is not surprising that the band of the Independent Blues accompanied the Cadets to Boston. They had both participated in Camp Baltimore earlier in the year, and the band had escorted the Cadets on their parade back to the city after they won the prize flag at the encampment. Later that summer, the Cadets recorded an official

99 Baltimore’s volunteer companies were officially organized into regiments: Newman was promoted to colonel of the 53rd Regiment, to which the Cadets were attached. Newman died (apparently on a merchant voyage at sea) while the Cadets were in Boston. They hurried home for the funeral observances as a result, cancelling brief engagements in Providence and Philadelphia. Ropes, who had been Acting Captain during the Boston trip, was officially promoted to captain of the company soon after. See Salem (MA) Register, August 8, 1842; Boston Daily Atlas, August 11, 1842; Maryland Cadets Record Books.
resolution of enthusiastic thanks and brotherhood with the Independent Blues (passed at one of their meetings), and invited their band to go on the tour to Boston. Cordial links between militia companies, even between different kinds of fraternal organizations (as with the Greys’ rental of musical instruments from the Order of Red Men) played an important role in the spread of patriotic musical culture.

The Cadets and their borrowed band took ship on the evening of August 1, and, with a brief stop in Philadelphia, arrived in New York City the next day. They were hosted by the New York Light Guard and spent the day parading, being reviewed by the Mayor, and feasting with the Light Guard. Their short stay of ten hours or so in New York thus encompassed the city’s civic spaces and fraternal mingling with the New York company. Their departure, “amid the strains of sweet music, the roar of artillery, an immense concourse of citizens, and the Light Guards,” was a colorful event indicative of the highly publicized nature of even so short a visit, as well as the real feeling it engendered. A naval vessel did the Cadets an unusual honor as they passed, as the Cadet’s journal of the visit noted: “the yards and rigging were manned and a passing salute of three hearty cheers was given by all hands on board of the ship. The Cadets in line at a present [arms] and the [Blues’] band playing ‘Hail, Columbia;’ on passing up East River the view of the City and shipping then in port was sublime.” The Blues’ band likely performed in both this public setting and the semi-private space of their mid-day collation with the Light Guard. The manning of the naval vessel and the band’s performance of the rousing patriotic favorite climaxed the short visit.

100 Captain Ropes had sent a letter of thanks to the Blues after the encampment, singling out “Capt. Deems and the Independent Blues Band for their voluntary, kind and flattering escort” following the Cadets’ victory. Maryland Cadets Record Books, 7-17.
101 Maryland Cadets Record Books, 34-35.
Brief stops in Philadelphia and Providence\textsuperscript{102} sandwiched the stirring New York sojourn, and their journey culminated in their arrival in Boston. The Boston Independent Cadets met the “banner corps of the late Maryland Encampment” with an artillery salute and escorted them to their encampment on Boston Common. The Maryland corps was “a fine looking set of young men, in a most superior state of discipline.” Upon arrival, they gave an example of drill, “going through the manual at the tap of the drum in a most beautiful style….Their dress consists of a dark blue coat, trimmed with gold lace, white pantaloons, black leather cap, initials M.C. on it in front, brass visor, and black fountain plumes.”\textsuperscript{103} Commentary about precise details of militia uniforms was common in notices of drills or performances that featured martial music: militia uniforms were a central visual element in their public image.

In fact, there was so much interest in such details that Philadelphia publisher William Huddy published \textit{The Military Magazine} in Philadelphia for three years, which focused on the uniform, composition, and history of individual militia companies. The entry for the Philadelphia National Greys from 1839, for example, details visits to small cities in Pennsylvania as well as to Boston and New York, accompanied by a “very superior Brass Band, composed of excellent musicians, and got up at the expense of the Greys.” The description of this militia band as a “Brass Band” is significant. At this early date in the revolution in brass instrument technology, the band of the Philadelphia National Greys apparently already featured a high proportion of brass instruments, and

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\textsuperscript{102} The Philadelphia and Providence stops were cut short by unforeseen civic trauma. Philadelphia was still recovering from a race riot, and in Providence the “present unsettled state of affairs” caused by the Dorr rebellion resulted in a quick return to their steamer.

the writer for the *Military Magazine* readily noted it, signaling the terminological shift from “band of music” to “brass band.” An 1841 entry for the York Pennsylvania Rifle (they maintained the singular, for unknown reasons) noted its close relationship with Baltimore’s Independent Blues and detailed the Rifle’s uniforms including its “gilt buttons, stamped with bugles…patent leather liberty cap…[and] tomahawk and scalping knife.”

Stylish uniforms identified companies, and the trimly uniformed militiaman and band member linked performance spaces and was himself a patriotic signifier.

The account of the trip written down by the company’s secretary overflows with light-hearted descriptions of convivial occasions enlivened by music. Patriotic feeling suffused reportage of the Cadets’ public appearances in Boston and surrounding areas, but just as important to the Cadets themselves was the sociability provided by the trip and their hosts. Just as with the May encampment and their other local activities, the volunteers created a masculine space set apart from everyday concerns. Constant dinners, balls, and mid-day collations marked nodes on the network connecting militia volunteers with compatriots both regional and national. The ardent patriotic sentiments, often accompanied by music, expressed at such events served as public examples of sectional union. For example, at a dinner at Porter’s Hotel in Cambridge on August 4 (“Such a Dinner. The world could not beat it”) for the Cadets and the Boston City Greys, the companies arranged themselves along a long table with the captains at one end and the music (probably a combination of the Independent Blues band and Boston musicians) at the other. The dinner was a performance, observed by “the smiling beauty of the Fair in the Gallaries [sic] above.” The Cadets’ chronicler noted the “fine” music – “Songs hard

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to get over” – and the “appropriate” toasts, which were “cross firings over the Champaigne.”

A dinner in Charlestown later that afternoon was a similar public performance, despite the inconvenience of its being a temperance affair. Four and a half hours of feasting, speeches, and music included a new minstrel song, “Lucy Long,” which “edified the company much.”

This song, whose provenance is uncertain, later became one of the best-known minstrel tunes: it was part of the Virginia Minstrels’ “Ethiopian Concert” at Boston’s Masonic Temple in March 1843, which historians regard as the first complete performance of the classic form of the minstrel show. “Lucy Long” is typical of early minstrel tunes in its simple, repetitive structure. The misogynist and racist lyric, of which there are many widely varying versions, usually portrayed Lucy as either a powerless sexual possession or a sexually promiscuous predator. We do not know what version the Maryland Cadets might have heard in 1842 (or what they found “edifying”), but its inclusion in the dinner is fascinating evidence of the reach and rapid spread of popular music into many different forms and spaces of entertainment, including in this case a convivial, fraternal meal surrounded by patriotic signifiers.

Parades were, as we have seen, the public event that most closely connected musical performance and patriotic feeling. Each day of the Cadets’ visit to the Boston area was punctuated by parades, the central rituals of the volunteer militia’s patriotic narrative. The rousing atmosphere of the parade was, by 1842, heightened by the technological revolution remaking wind bands into brass bands. Such was the case after

105 Maryland Cadets Record Books, 41.
106 Hans Nathan, Dan Emmett, 114-120.
107 Charles Hamm, Yesterdays, 125-127; William J. Mahar, Behind the Burnt Cork Mask, 307-312. There are many sheet music examples; see for example “The much admired and popular song of Miss Lucy Long,” (Philadelphia: George Willig, 1842). Levy Collection, Box 20, Item 45.
the Cadets’ well-lubricated feast at Porter’s Hotel during a day trip on August 5th to Cambridge, after which they and the Boston Greys climbed aboard the train back to Charlestown. “Loud Huzzas…from the Crowd” greeted them “along the roads,” and when they arrived in Charlestown, the two companies joined up with a third, the New England Guards, “thus forming one of the handsomest Battalions in the country,” for the march back to the Boston. No less than three “splendid Bands” accompanied this parade, including the two most celebrated in the country, the Boston Brigade Band and the Boston Brass Band. The Cadets’ chronicler reported precise numbers of musicians: twenty one in the Brigade Band, twenty five in the Brass Band, and sixteen in Deems’ Blues band, led by the cornopean of James Deems and Ned Kendall’s celebrated keyed bugle. The ensuing parade, with its “stirring music of the bands,” was duly reported in the Daily Atlas and other papers the next day. It “came off in beautiful military style” and was an “elegant and imposing show.”

Newspapers usually described parades, drills, and public reviews as mobbed by crowds of citizens. The Daily Atlas described the Cadets’ drill on the Common at the end of the August 5th parade: “a vast concourse of people.” A parade route from Boston to Charlestown and Bunker Hill, where the Baltimore company’s prize flag had been placed atop the almost-completed Monument, included a short trip by railroad “passing several manufacturing towns the inhabitants of which appeared delighted to see us, while passing they made the welkin [i.e. sky; firmament] ring with loud Huzzas.” One of these towns had placed a banner alongside the tracks that read, “A Yankee Welcome to Southern

109 Ibid. All other quotes in this paragraph are from the Cadets’ own description of these events in their record books: Maryland Cadets Record Books, 1842-46, 1861, 35-45.
110 Boston Daily Atlas, Aug 5, 1842; see also the Boston Evening Transcript of the same day.
Friends.” Bostonians seemed anxious to elide regional difference: during the Cadets’ day trip to Salem the newspaper similarly described them as “our Southern friends,” as well as the “Maryland boys” and the “Marylanders.”111 Such report reinforced regional ties between volunteer companies and other participants in their public events. The Cadets’ chronicler wrote that “the waving of the Handkerchiefs by the Ladies together with their beautifull [sic] smiles made the Cadets feel quite at home.”112 The brief railroad jaunt seemed to confirm to the Baltimoreans the atmosphere of unity between regions that saturated the entire trip.

The climax of the Cadets’ Boston journey brought together brass band music with the martial sounds and music of drill. Their visit to Salem, Captain Ropes’ boyhood home, provided a fitting end both to the journey itself and to the narrative of patriotic feeling the Cadets’ trip to Boston provided. The Salem Independent Cadets hosted the Baltimore company, and the Salem Brass Band, still in the process of professionalization, joined the Independent Blues Band to provide music. The Cadets encamped on Salem’s common and then paraded for the review of the governor of Massachusetts. Their example at drill greatly impressed the local reporter, who had earlier evinced the fear that the Cadets’ reputation was overblown: it “astonished some who were not aware of what military science can do for a corps. The accuracy, and precision, and oneness…with which they went through the manual of arms – the facings, halfings, and even complicated maneouvres at the tap of the drum merely, without any word of command, was wonderful…”113 This wordless tattoo, so ingrained in the militiamen, was at one end

111 Salem (MA) Register, August 8, 1842.
112 All quotes in this paragraph are from Maryland Cadets Record Books, 39-40, except where otherwise noted.
113 Salem (MA) Register, August 8, 1842.
of the spectrum of military music. The other end was in evidence at the dinner that followed at the Town Hall, where music was provided by the joint forces of two brass bands. Finally, there was more drilling on the Common, “at the tap of the drum [and] by bugle signal” in front of another crowd. The public events continued until the Cadets’ return to Boston the next day. The whirlwind day and a half was the highlight of the trip, and reports of the Cadets’ exploits appeared not only in the Boston area, but also in Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York over the following two weeks. The ring of brass instruments in America’s public spaces was replicated in print discourse.

Two years later, in the “excessive heat” of a Baltimore July, the Boston City Independent Greys paid a return visit to their “brother company,” the Maryland Cadets. Replicating the Cadets’ itinerary in reverse, the Greys traveled through Providence, New York, and Philadelphia en route to the Monument City, arriving on July 19, 1844. As with the Cadets’ Boston visit, the convivial aspects of the trip were overlaid with the rhetoric of military discipline and preparedness. The captain of the Boston company went as far as to request “only soldier’s fare” for their encampment: “preferring salt beef, bread, and coffee from the camp kettle, on a camp stool, than any more delicate fare.”

The Cadets’ chronicler, a new secretary who surpassed his 1842 predecessor in flowery rhetoric, equally emphasized the martial connection. He described the Cadets’ “Forty Nine Muskets and Seven Officers,” accompanied this time by the Baltimore Independent Greys’ band, marching to the train station “with steps firm as Warriors marching forth to bloody fields of War.” The Boston company arrived and formed up, marching past the Cadets, who were drawn up in line. Here the chronicler was carried

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114 Ibid.
115 Maryland Cadets Record Books, 1842-46, letter copied from Captain Thompson, Boston City Independent Greys Jun 26, 1846.
away by the moment’s sublimity: “as they passed the Boston Brass Band broke forth in Strains which seemed to rend the Heavens, every man’s heart beat full, and the unconscious tear almost dimmed the Soldier’s eye, for there is that about Sweet Music, and happy recollections to make even the stoutest heart sympathetic.” Escort by the Cadets and several other Baltimore companies, the Boston Greys paraded to their encampment, erected in Mount Vernon Place. “Camp Washington” was hard by the Washington Monument, “so that the shadows of that majestic pile which had been erected to the ‘Father of his Country,’ might be looked upon by the Soldiers of this day in remembrance of his wish[,] in Peace prepare for War.”

The enthusiastic chronicler’s last phrase referred to a line in George Washington’s fifth annual address to Congress in 1793: “If we desire to secure peace, one of the most powerful instruments of our rising prosperity, it must be known that we are at all times ready for war.” Was the chronicler referring to the troubles coalescing in the Southwest, where Texas’s admission to the Union and the American sense of manifest destiny would spark war with Mexico two years later? The available records do not seem to support such a contention: the Cadets and the Baltimore Independent Greys went blithely about their business during the middle years of the decades, and took no notice of the possibility of war in their records. Another interpretation of the passage would be that he is describing an idealized present in which America’s militia volunteers demonstrated their martial valor and skill in the safety of peacetime. This mythic present was marked by the rich symbolism of the Washington monument and the sublime music of the brass bands.

116 Maryland Cadets Record Books 1842-46, July 1844 entry, unnumbered.
The musical genres or styles that a historian might consider available for patriotic performance in antebellum America appears remarkably similar to the list of *popular* genres during the same period: a broad category subsuming commercial music and what Richard Crawford has termed “traditional” music.¹ Such a list might, in fact, seem a facsimile of the running lists of songs that publishers printed on sheet music covers during the period. These series enabled home performers to enjoy the satisfaction of completing a collection at the same time that they demonstrated the breadth of their performing skill to visitors. Early on in the sequence such covers might list only two or

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three songs, but they could grow much longer, like an 1842 example from Philadelphia titled “Evenings at Home: A Collection of Popular and esteemed Airs arranged as Duetts on the Piano Forte” (Figure 5.1). For 25 cents apiece, the collector could own any of fifty different songs in the series, ranging from various kinds of dance music and tunes probably inspired by the rage for quartet singing (“Alpine Melody”), to minstrel tunes, in this case the popular “Lucy Long,” sung that same year by the Maryland Cadets during their Boston tour, and march forms like “Major Hillen’s Quick Step.”

1842 was an important year in American music: it was the year Abby Hutchinson joined her brothers onstage and the Hutchinson Family Singers began their meteoric rise to fame as touring musicians performing for the antislavery and temperance causes. The brass revolution, as we have seen, meant that martial music seemed to reverberate in every urban street and village hamlet. And by 1842, blackface minstrelsy was poised on the edge of its mid-century period of greatest success and significance: propelled into popularity by T.D. Rice and his “Jump Jim Crow” in 1828, the full-fledged minstrel show was about to emerge with the premier in late 1842-early 1843 of Dan Emmett’s Virginia Minstrels. At first glance, minstrelsy and reform music might seem irreconcilable: the highly secular music of blackface minstrels, with its broad mockery of contemporary social mores, its alternately nostalgic and parodic representations of slavery, and its focus on commercial entertainment, set against the sacral antislavery and moral messages of the Hutchinsons and their ilk. Yet both kinds of music found common ground in nationalist sentiment.

Performers like the Hutchinsons and Dan Emmett offered an entrée into nationalist sentiment through music that tapped into the fervor of the patriotic sublime,
Figure 5.1. “Evenings at Home,” sheet music cover (Philadelphia, 1842). Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
but was predicated on dissenting visions of American society. African American musicians like Philadelphia’s Francis Johnson used the patriotic sublime, in the form of their own musical ensembles, on both national holidays and alternate patriotic celebrations like New York’s Emancipation Day. Minstrelsy, reform music, and African American patriotic music thus intersected in distinct ways with the mythic present that was being consolidated by white militia bands and their audiences. Minstrel music’s easy appropriability meant that its popular tunes could be fitted to patriotic lyrics. The outlook of evangelical reformers, with their vision of the perfectibility of the American character and their “religion of the heart, not the head,” was suited to the patriotic sublime.²

Performers as diverse as blackface minstrels, black band musicians, and antislavery singers borrowed and blended tunes from the same sources, and performed their music in similar, even shared, spaces and to overlapping audiences. As politically disparate as their constituencies could be, their music still included similar patriotic valences. Furthermore, the Hutchinsons and Dan Emmetts of America rose to prominence along with the proliferation of brass and militia bands: minstrel music as well as abolitionist and temperance songs pivoted around the extraordinary mélange of band music in the streets. Indeed, band music joined minstrelsy and the politics of slavery with the phenomenon of free black musicians and bands. This chapter argues that even music representing contemporary social and political extremes tapped into the fervor of patriotic expression.³

Minstrelsy relied on burlesque and a specifically northern white vision of black culture. White citizens, particularly urban working class whites, used it to ridicule southern slaves and northern free blacks, as well as what they saw as the pretentious striving of some other whites for refinement and moral improvement. With their crude black caricatures like “Jim Crow” and “Zip Coon,” their “stump speeches” mocking the jumped-up political speech of middle class moralizers, and their parodic sketches of plantation life, minstrel shows were the racist fruit of the Jacksonian Democracy and its imperialist vision of white supremacy. This valence of white superiority, over other races and encompassing the geography of America itself, aligned it with regional/national discourses like that of the burgeoning West that we explored in Chapter Three.

Minstrelsy, having appropriated elements of black culture for its music while claiming to represent that culture, was itself easily appropriable. Its tunes were commercial entertainments that were readily available to be borrowed for purer purposes, as the Hutchinsons would prove by appropriating the minstrel tune “Old Dan Tucker” for their antislavery anthem “Get Off the Track.”

Indeed, the popularity of minstrelsy and the performers of moral reform music highlights the importance of commercialization in nineteenth-century musical culture. In the 1790s and the first two decades of the nineteenth century, the nascent sheet music industry still catered largely to elites, simply because of cost. By the late 1820s, the sheet music trade was producing as many titles per year as it had in the entire period from 1787 (the date of the first sheet music publication in America) and 1800. This pattern was mirrored by the availability of pianos, which were being domestically produced as early

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as 1810 in Baltimore and by the 1840s were broadly available to the public, with its ever-burgeoning desire to demonstrate refinement through consumption. Simultaneously, commercial entertainments at an increasing profusion of live venues (including new venues like steamboats that reflected innovative transportation technology) all offered music in diverse genres. The boom in musical products for home consumption and the availability of commercial entertainments coincided with the crazes for minstrelsy, vocal quartets like the Hutchinsons, and the brass band revolution.5

Ready availability of music in print stimulated the market for live music. As we have seen, musicians and theatrical performers traveled lengthy circuits as early as the late eighteenth century: John Durang’s journey to Canada and the peregrinations of performers like Sol Smith and Noah Ludlow in the new West provide ample evidence. But their picaresque accounts, particularly in retrospective memoirs, took great pains to represent the difficulty of early travel. By the 1830s and 1840s easier travel, more and better performance spaces, and not least the increasing availability of sheet music combined to make live performance both more available across the nation, more standardized between regions, and more transferable to the home.6 Popular commercial acts like minstrel companies and the Hutchinson family took full advantage of this environment, moving easily among American urban centers and traveling to England and other European countries.7 Moreover, popular entertainers, especially the blackface

5 Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 230-236; Sanjek, American Popular Music and its Business, 7, 47-49; Scharf, History of Baltimore City and County, 403-404; Bushman, Refinement of America, chap. 8-9.  
7 Easier travel was especially evident by the 1850s: historian Katherine Preston notes the importance of new technology, the railroad, in facilitating the activities of traveling opera troupes, another important commercial genre of music in the mid-nineteenth century. See Katherine Preston, Opera on the Road, 212.
minstrels, continued the eclecticism of earlier traveling performers like John Durang: their shows featured a wide-ranging mix of different kinds of music, physical comedy, and melodrama.

The eclecticism of live performance combined with widely available commercial products like sheet music to reinforce the interconnection of popular musical forms and the ease of infusing them with nationalist sentiment. Music, even when associated with potentially divisive political issues like slavery, provided a distinctively flexible conduit between print and live performance, in a variety of public venues and in the ostensibly private space of the home, where the ready availability of patriotic songs in the form of sheet music turned the home into its own kind of civic space.\(^8\) Popular genres like minstrelsy thus circulated easily from commercial and public performance to home performance.

Private performances of patriotic music; minstrel songs in medleys or sets played at home or on the commercial stage; patriotic signifiers like flags and banners omnipresent on celebratory days, and informing the daily round of commercial performances as well as festooning sheet music illustrations; military band music set to minstrel melodies and sold as sheet music; tunesmiths in blackface appropriating patriotic language and symbols for broadly comic purposes: the various combinations multiplied and permeated American musical culture. At mid-century, it was not surprising to find a song appropriately titled a “Universal Medley,” that segued from “Dandy Jim from Caroline,” a minstrel song that burlesqued black dialect, straight into a “traditional” Irish tune, then into the ever-popular “Home Sweet Home” (from an English comic opera) and

\(^8\) David Waldstreicher, “Two Cheers for the ‘Public Sphere’…and One for Historians’ Skepticism,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 61 no. 1 (Jan 2005): 109-110.
Dan Emmett’s “Old Dan Tucker,” only to finish with “Hail Columbia” and “The Star Spangled Banner,” all in a rapid succession of two, four, and eight-bar phrases, relying on the performer’s familiarity with quick bursts of melody to unify these otherwise disparate elements (Figure 5.2). This mélange, including its sources’ race, class, and region, ironically created opportunities for affective patriotism to flourish nationwide.

*Minstrelsy and Patriotism in Popular Song*

As befitted a militiaman and veteran of the War of 1812, Abraham Emmett of Mount Vernon, Ohio named his two sons after celebrated war heroes: Lafayette, born in 1822, and his eldest son, Daniel Decatur, born in 1815. Daniel Decatur “Dan” Emmett, known today mostly as the author of 1860’s “Dixie,” national anthem of the Confederacy during the Civil War, was one of the progenitors of blackface minstrelsy, but his long career also demonstrates the intricate links between patriotic performance and popular music. Emmett began his musical career in the military, learning the fife and drum. When he later helped pioneer the minstrel show, he brought with him a deep knowledge of patriotic music. Just as theatrical figures like John Durang and Sol Smith had, Emmett’s life and music shaped popular conceptions of patriotic sentiment and national identity. Emmett and others like him attached blackface to patriotic music, influencing it through

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9 “Universal Medley,” Levy Collection, Box 51, Item 105.
Figure 5.2. “Universal Medley” (Boston, 1853). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. On a single page the medley shifts from “Home, Sweet Home,” to “Hail, Columbia,” to “Old Dan Tucker.”
the complex and racially fraught performance and imagery of minstrelsy, the popularity of which constituted one of the nineteenth century’s most important musical legacies.\textsuperscript{10}

In 1828, Thomas Dartmouth “Daddy” Rice, prompted a craze with his “Jump Jim Crow” song and dance, an early depiction of a stock slave character who could be, in different incarnations, naïve and stupid, a swaggering southwestern frontiersman, and even a trickster character—often more than one of these at the same time.\textsuperscript{11} The typical slave character’s northern counterpart, an exaggerated caricature of a free black dandy made ridiculous by his pretension, followed in short order, popularized especially by George Washington Dixon’s performances of the song “Zip Coon.” These central stock characters and others, popularized by individual artists and songs, were amalgamated into what became the minstrel show.

While minstrelsy first gained an audience thanks to individual songs and performers, its first incarnation as an ensemble show can be traced to Dan Emmett and three compatriots, who formed the Virginia Minstrels in New York in late 1842 or early 1843 (then performing in Boston in March 1843, as we saw in Chapter Four). In this classic form the four main performers, each with characteristic instrument (fiddle, banjo, tambourine, and “bones” (a set of bone castanets) were the central figures in a three-act show. Featuring comic, sentimental, even patriotic music, skits, speeches, juggling, and usually a third act send-up of southern plantation life, the minstrel show was an amalgamation of entertainments and a vehicle that encompassed the breadth of music and

\textsuperscript{10} Hans Nathan, \textit{Dan Emmett}, 101-104.

\textsuperscript{11} Rice insisted that his song and dance was based on those of an actual black man he chanced upon in the streets of Cincinnati (some accounts say Louisville), although this story is most likely apocryphal. The trickster element – Jim Crow figures “getting one over” on their masters – is perhaps most familiar in the later children’s incarnation of Br’er Rabbit from the \textit{Uncle Remus} stories. See Lott, \textit{Love and Theft}, 58; Nathan, \textit{Dan Emmett}, 52.
Although this classic ideal of the minstrel show has tended to dominate historical analyses of the form, in practice minstrel performance was highly flexible. Blackface minstrels programmed their burlesques to comment on a wide variety of other genres, and thus incorporated many kinds of music in their shows, which they put on in a variety of spaces. In addition, as befitted such commercial music, it was responsive to audiences’ desires. As one historian has described minstrelsy, “it had no set script, character development, plot, or musical score, allowing more of [audiences’] participation.”

Popular minstrel songs and their race, class, and gender stereotypes incorporated the ambivalence of blackface minstrel performance. In his classic treatment of the minstrel phenomenon, Eric Lott describes this ambivalence as “a simultaneous drawing up and crossing of racial boundaries:

Minstrel performers often attempted to repress through ridicule the real interest in black cultural practices they nonetheless betrayed – minstrelsy’s mixed erotic economy of celebration and exploitation…what my title loosely terms ‘love and theft.’ The very form of blackface acts – an investiture in black bodies – seems a manifestation of the particular desire to try on the accents of ‘blackness’ and demonstrates the permeability of the color line. If permeable, that line was ambivalent as well: minstrelsy was also the performance of whiteness. Historian David Roediger has argued that blackface minstrels were “the first self-consciously white entertainers in the world.” While ostensibly appropriating, even championing, “authentic” black culture, their disguises actually heightened their

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12 See for example Toll, Blacking Up, 25-36; Crawford, America’s Musical Life, chap. 11; Hamm, Yesterdays, chap. 6.
14 Lott, Love & Theft, 6. I follow Lott in noting the key concept of “ambivalence” from the scholarship on postcolonialism, as described by Homi Bhabha. See Homi K. Bhabha, “The Other Question…” Screen 24, no. 6 (November 1983): 29.
15 Roediger, Wages of Whiteness, 117.
whiteness: especially when, for example, minstrel playbills printed pictures of “respectable” white performers alongside their crudely caricatured blackface personas.16 The tunes were also ambivalent: the music heightened the impact of their racial mockery, but some minstrels insisted that it was drawn from black culture and intended to celebrate it.17

Minstrel stereotypes like the figure of the urban dandy Zip Coon encoded a racialized critique of class hierarchies (see Figure 5.3). Costumed in lavishly fine clothes and twirling a pair of spectacles on his finger, his outlandish dress and exaggerated stance highlight his social pretension: Zip Coon claims a refined, genteel status disallowed by his race. The caustic commentary’s racial ridicule targeted free blacks, but Zip Coon’s pretensions also lampooned the upper-class white dandy and all those strove too hard for refinement. As minstrel historian Dale Cockrell aptly puts it, “the genius of the song [“Zip Coon”], from the perspective of the white working-class audience, was its ability to ridicule both up and down the social ladder simultaneously.”18

The pliability of the minstrel form meant that it easily encompassed a patriotic valence, incorporating national symbols like flags among its cornucopia of cultural symbolism. Its typologies of region, like the sentimentalized plantation sketch that usually constituted the final act of the classic minstrel show, and its burlesque of regional characters like Jim Crow, who blended the submissive slave with the admirable qualities of the rough, self-sufficient Westerner, the urban Zip Coon, and even the prototypical white Yankee, could be pitched to nationalist purpose, signaling, even in parody, e

16 Ibid, 117. Roediger notes one example where these side-by-side images were labeled “As Plantation Darkeys” and “As Citizens.”
17 Toll, Blacking Up, 36; Nathan, Dan Emmett, 159-188.
18 Cockrell, Demons of Disorder, 94, chap. 4 passim. See also Toll, Blacking Up, 71-72.
Figure 5.3. “Zip Coon,” sheet music cover (New York, 1834). Music Division, Library of Congress.
Minstrel music was entering a conversation about whether “authentic” black music was an expression of an American national character.\(^{19}\)

Finally, minstrel performers and their audiences were attuned to the patriotic sublime, and, reciprocally, minstrel music, like most kinds of music, became an important part of patriotic practices. The complexity of minstrelsy as a cultural form, with heartfelt patriotism as one important strand, can be seen in one of the outcomes of the 1834 antislavery riots in New York. A protest at the Bowery Theatre, prompted by an English actor’s insults, was finally quieted when the manager ran on stage waving a pair of American flags and calling for impromptu performances of “Yankee Doodle” and “Zip Coon.”\(^{21}\) His action was no surprise, given how highly attuned minstrel performers were to their audiences. Of course, in the end, audiences wanted entertainment and the excitement of patriotic celebration was, in minstrelsy, a key part of the fun.

Dan Emmett’s \textit{ad hoc} vocational training as a musician during his childhood in a frontier town and his formative years in the young West embodied the easy interpenetration of musical forms in everyday life, as well as the deep influence of the military on musicians, professional and amateur, in the United States. Militia drums and fifes formed the aural background of his rustic childhood, along with hymns and the fiddle dances that were omnipresent in taverns, as well as gatherings such as weddings.


\(^{20}\) The degree to which minstrels borrowed musical structures from African Americans is still debated. Their songs also had Irish, Scottish, and English antecedents. See Hans Nathan, \textit{Dan Emmett}, esp. chap. 12; Lott, \textit{Love and Theft}, 6.

\(^{21}\) The British actor, George Farren, had, it was reported, “punched a local butler, insulted the American flag, ‘cursed the Yankees, and called them jackasses, and said he would gull them whenever he could.” The 1834 riot foreshadowed the infamous 1849 riot at the Astor Place Opera House, which was also sparked by a perceived slight from a British actor. See Lott, \textit{Love & Theft}, 136; Sean Wilentz, \textit{Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850} (Oxford, [1984] 2004), 265.
and even impromptu events, such as fiddle music played as an accompaniment to brawls. Emmett was a self-taught musician. He enlisted as a fifer in the U.S. Army in 1834 while working at a printer’s office in Cincinnati: only eighteen, he lied about his age to appear eligible. Emmett was stationed originally at the barracks just across the river from the city in Newport, Kentucky, “the then school of practice for the western department.” Not limiting himself to the fife, he “practiced the drum incessantly…and made myself master of the ‘Duty’ and every known ‘side beat’ then in use.” This encompassed the range of intricate drum beats that governed life in a military camp, from the “reveille” early in the morning to the day-closing “tattoo” at 9:00 P.M.

After being discharged from the army when officials discovered he was underage, Emmett remained interested in military music throughout his life. Military music pervaded his own career and influenced his minstrel music, drawing it into the orbit of patriotic musical performance. Emmett drafted, although did not publish, a drum instruction manual sometime before the Civil War, and was coauthor of the Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide, published in 1862, while he also worked as a drum and fife instructor on Governor’s Island in New York during the day while performing for Christy’s Minstrels at night.

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22 Nathan, Dan Emmett, 102-106; N.N. Hill, Jr., History of Knox County, Ohio (Mt. Vernon, Ohio: A.A. Graham, 1881), 220, 350.
23 Quoted in Galbreath, Daniel Decatur Emmett, 8-9, 47.
24 Nathan, Dan Emmett, 107-108.
25 He also spent time traveling with circuses as a band musician, including in the troupe of Dan Rice at one point. See Galbreath, Daniel Decatur Emmett, 9.
His guide illustrated the pervasive influence of brass bands and the easy exchange between styles as diverse as military field music, brass band music, and minstrelsy. A fiddler on the minstrel stage, Emmett, an expert drummer and fifer, was also quite familiar with brass instruments. The collection’s many quick steps indicate the martial origin of that popular brass band march genre. Like others, Emmett named his tunes after places, many of which involved battle victories and military figures, like “Fort McHenry,” “Col. Robertson’s Welcome,” or “Major Riley’s.”

A historian of field music identifies in Emmett’s book the “extraverted [sic] brass band virtuoso style of the then famous cornet soloist Edward Kendall,” including its “widespread arpeggiations, and some of the harmonic language of the brass bands.” Flashy arpeggiation, a difficult technique for amateur wind musicians, showcased the brilliance of the new brass sound. The songs in the collection also “hint at...harmonic refinements that were the common musical language of the mid-nineteenth century,” in lieu of the “rustic character” of older modal melodies. Readers of printed military field music were thus reminded of the new and astonishing virtuosity of professional brass musicians like Ned Kendall, in a harmonic language that was familiar not only in band music, but also in minstrelsy and many other forms.

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27 Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide (1862), Emmett Papers, OHS.
28 Clark, Connecticut’s Fife and Drum Tradition, 99-101. An arpeggio is a figure in which the notes of a chord are played in sequence. A common figuration for piano and other stringed instruments, it was a noticeable element of wind band music (whose instruments could only sound one note at a time and thus relied on ensemble playing for chordal figurations). Arpeggiation with keyed instruments also bore resemblance to the horn calls or fanfares in the harmonic sequence, figures common to the old natural brass instruments. It could thus look back to an older style at the same time it was familiar in its present configuration among the new bands, with their keyed or valved instruments. See Anthony Baines, Brass Instruments: Their History and Development, 4th Edition (Don Mills, Toronto, Ontario, 1993), chap. 5; Keith Polk, et al, "Band," Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online. Oxford University Press, accessed March 4, 2015, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40774. cf. Charles John Vincent, The Brass Band and How to Write for It (New York: T.J. Donlan, 1908), 125.
Among his manuscripts, Emmett saved at least one individual brass band part until his death. Such evidence representing actual band instrumental practice is rare: these handwritten scraps were copied out for individual player’s reference and then usually discarded. This one records a “reveille” bugle call apparently written for an E flat cornet or cornopean, a high-soprano-pitched valved brass instrument.²⁹ Emmett’s lifelong familiarity with the elements, materials, and practices of military informed his music – and through it musical culture writ large.

One of Dan Emmett’s most famous songs, “Old Dan Tucker,” shows the reciprocal influence of blackface minstrelsy and patriotic music.³⁰ Blackface representation in patriotic song was not new: As early as 1814, “Backside Albany” depicted the American naval victory over Britain on Lake Champlain in the words of a black sailor in an exaggerated “negro” dialect. The song, extolling the might of American arms, foreshadowed the discursive influence of minstrel music on patriotic culture, and vice versa.³¹ “Backside Albany” was even reprinted in sheet music as late as 1837.³² “Old

²⁹ Cornet/cornopean part, Box 2, Folder 21, Daniel Decatur Emmett Papers, Mss 355, OHS.
³⁰ The authorship of the tune of “Dan Tucker” (not the lyrics) is disputed, and in fact Emmett may have borrowed the tune himself. Like many minstrel songs, there is argument as to what extent it is based on African American or Anglo American oral tradition (or entirely new). Its traditional origin story, in which Emmett wrote the song during his teenage years in Ohio and performed it in blackface for a traveling show – interestingly, on the Fourth of July – was told by Emmett to his first biographer and is possibly apocryphal. As Charles Hamm writes of early minstrelsy as a whole: “[minstrel songs] were undoubtedly drawn from traditional Anglo-American melodies stored in his memory, single tunes or several patched together; if any were original, they were patterned closely on the same tune tradition….Thus Emmett and other early minstrel performers were more adapters than composers.” Hamm, Yesterdays, 130 (and chap. 6 passim); Robert B. Winans, “Early Minstrel Show Music,” in Glenn Loney, ed., Music Theatre in America (Westport, Conn., 1984); Roediger, Wages of Whiteness, 128n10; see also H. Ogden Wintermute, Daniel Decatur Emmett (Mt. Vernon, OH, 1955), 27; Hal Rammel, Nowhere in America: The Big Rock Candy Mountain and Other Comic Utopias (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 91.
³² This sheet music version belied the patriotic content of the song in favor of capitalizing on the then-current minstrel craze by illustrating it with a stock “Jim Crow”-like figure, sans patriotic imagery of any sort. See “Backside Albany: A Comic Song,” (New York, 1837), Levy Collection, Box 18, Item 12. Printed in New York.
Dan Tucker,” Emmet’s original showpiece for the Virginia Minstrels, is a song familiar to Americans even today, and was one of the most popular songs of the mid-century minstrel boom, as evidenced by its appropriation for seemingly every conceivable musical use, including the patriotic.33

Musically, “Dan Tucker” lent itself to borrowing, and to the strong emotions often associated with patriotic display. Like most minstrel songs, it is repetitious and simple, relying on an insistent rhythmic pulse leading to the “climactic point of arrival” of the refrain’s shouted call-and-response “Get out de way!, Ole Dan Tucker:” an “offbeat jolt” that represents an emotional release from the rhythmic drive of the verse. Its melody is almost non-existent; Richard Crawford observes that “nearly three-quarters of its syllables are sung on the same note.” This has the effect of turning whatever text is set to the tune (and there were many) into a rhythmic recitation or declamation.34 It was a very malleable tune: not only easy to sing and sing along to, but also suitable for multiple appropriations and inclusion in medleys.

One medley of minstrel tunes (rather unimaginatively titled “Negro Medley”) published by a Baltimore printer in 1844 was a piano arrangement that included “Dan Tucker” and other favorites, mimicked the rhythmic snap of the original with its simple chords. In the “Dan Tucker” section, the arrangement’s dynamic markings emphasize the forceful and joyous release of the refrain: the melody of the verse is marked piano, with a

33 “Old Dan Tucker” has outlived its initial minstrel phrase to become, like the “Arkansaw Traveler,” a well-known piece of folk or vernacular music in twenty-first century America. The extent to which it has become subsumed into American folk culture can be seen in Bruce Springsteen’s version, part of his 2006 Seeger Sessions album of covers of Pete Seeger’s œuvre. In Springsteen’s hands, the song with its cleaned-up lyrics has become a joyous, medium-tempo anthem and sing-along: a live performance in Italy by Springsteen’s multiethnic Seeger Sessions band shows the Italian crowd singing the refrain without prompting (see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S-GHbDFrwIU).
34 Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 207-208.
sudden shift to fortissimo in the first measure of the refrain (in a version with words, this corresponds to the “Get out de way!” phrase), then suddenly back to piano (“Ole Dan Tucker”), again fortissimo (“Get out de way!”), back to piano again in the next measure, and a final sudden shift to fortissimo for the triumphant end of the refrain, comprising the entire line of the lyric at a markedly loud volume: “Get out de way!, Old Dan Tucker, you’re too late to get your supper.”

The music, as an aural artifact, was part of a larger cultural construct. This fact is evident in its printed form: its dynamic markings were meant to be read by the pianist, probably at home. The construct included, moreover, reminders of public performance: the medley was arranged by G.W. Minnick, a member (possibly the leader) of the recently-formed band of the Independent Greys (see Figure 5.4). Its cover trumpeted the medley’s military association almost as prominently as the song title itself: “as performed by the Independent Greys Band.” The arrangement’s construction, with its insistent rhythm and sudden fortissimos, were aural markers for a remembered performance by the military band, linking the home to public performance. Examples of the routes traced by music through performance and commercial spaces abound, as did their circulation in print. For example, an 1844 “advertorial” plugged another piano arrangement, a highly topical piece called the “Tariff Quick Step” (a march), from 1844. Advertised, like the

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35 In one set of lyrics; there were many different variations of the lyrics during the period.
36 “Negro Medley,” (Baltimore, 1844), Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 52. Amazingly, the previous year (1843) saw another appropriation of “Dan Tucker” from a Baltimore militia band: in this case, James M. Deems Independent Blues Band. In this case, Deems was both composer and arranger of a quickstep based on Emmett’s tune, the “Old Dan Tucker Quick Step.” Like the Minnick piece from the following year, Deems’ arrangement was prominently advertised “as performed by the Independent Blues Band.” See “Old Dan Tucker,” (Baltimore, 1843), Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music, ca. 1820 to 1860, Music Division, Library of Congress.
Figure 5.4. “Negro Medley,” sheet music cover (Baltimore, 1844). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
“Negro Medley,” “as performed by the Independent Greys Band,” it was written amidst the rancorous political atmosphere engendered by the Tariff of 1842.  

Popular minstrel tunes like “Dan Tucker” were widely adapted for use as partisan political songs. As illustrated by songs like “Adams and Liberty,” which borrowed “Anacreon in Heaven” long before Francis Scott Key did, such political uses of tunes had long been common practice, and partisan campaigns continued to make claims of patriotic virtue throughout the nineteenth century by using well-known patriotic tunes. In the politically contentious mid-nineteenth century, political use of commercial music was especially colorful, and a catchy popular song like “Dan Tucker” could even serve opposing political forces. Henry Clay supporters renamed it “Old Kentucky” in 1844, under which name it was published as sheet music and in songsters. In one songster (the *Clay Minstrel: Or, National Songster*) of that year, “Ole Dan Tucker” appeared three times with different lyrics, setting the tunes “Whigs of the Union,” “The Little Red Fox” (mocking the “Kinderhook Fox,” Martin Van Buren), and “Old Kentucky” (here listed as “Get Out of the Way!”) In his apologia for the songster, the compiler hints at the ease with which songs could be appropriated: “the *Songs* are by various authors. Some of them have been written expressly for the Minstrel; others have been gleaned from the public journals, and other publications of the day.” Another sheet music medley from the 1844 campaign compiled several patriotic songs supporting Clay, including one

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37 The article engages in a series of heavy-handed tariff puns: “Being a piece of ‘domestic manufacture,’ and therefore not chargeable with ‘import duty,’ the fair patriots of the piano will feel it to be their ‘duty’ to purchase the article, and thus afford substantial ‘protection’ to the artist in the increase of his ‘revenue.’ Go a-shopping, and convert Minnick’s ‘tariff quick step’ into ‘a tariff for revenue, with incidental protection.’” *Baltimore Sun*, July 20, 1844; “Tariff Quick Step,” Music Division, *Music for the Nation: American Sheet Music*, ca. 1820 to 1860, LOC. A song also published in Baltimore during an earlier tariff controversy in 1833 had lyrics in the minstrel negro dialect, and was sung by a minstrel character: “Uncle Sam’s Cuffee.” See “Save the Union!” (Baltimore: John Cole, 1833), Levy Collection, Box 16, Item 4.

called “Clear de Way for Ole Kentucky” that was a minstrel knock-off of “Dan Tucker,” resembling the more famous song rhythmically and lyrically. This edition advertised its versatility as an appropriate tune in both public and private settings: it was “written and adapted for the parlour and public meetings.” Such far-flung uses speak to the plasticity of both song and the musical world in which it traveled so widely. “Dan Tucker” traced a spatial path that illustrates how the patriotic sublime spread from civic spaces into ostensibly private ones, and among partisan groups, unifying them culturally if not politically through music.

The adaptability of “Dan Tucker” was matched by its staying power. In 1848, it became “Rough and Ready / A Patriotic Song” in support of Zachary Taylor, extolling “Ol’ Rough and Ready”’s heroism in the Mexican War. “Ole Dan Tucker” was used, to give only a handful of examples, by supporters of John Fremont to attack James Buchanan in 1856; by supporters of both Abraham Lincoln and George McClellan during the Civil War; and as late as 1900, as a campaign song for William Jennings Bryan. Instead of the musical contrast of the 1790s, when Democratic Republicans sympathetic to France were roused by the “Marseillaise,” while Federalists who supported Britain had “The President’s March,” nineteenth-century political partisans happily set different rancorous verses to the same well-known strains of Emmett’s tune. And the divergent

39 “Clear de Way for Ole Kentucky,” (New York: George F. Nesbitt, 1844), Levy Collection, Box 4, Item 15.
political uses of just this one song represents only one example of the realm of the patriotic sublime.

Patriotic celebration pulled in minstrel tunes alongside other forms of patriotic music without distinction. Recall, for example, the impromptu singing of the minstrel tune “Lucy Long” at the militia dinner in Boston in 1842. Minstrel tunes were performed in more formal settings as well. Wind band concerts commonly featured song medleys like the “Negro Medley” mentioned earlier. A different “Negro Medley” was scored sometime around 1840 by Raphael Triay, leader of the United States Marine Band (this was variously titled “Negro Medley Overture” or “Ethiopian Medley Overture”). It is likely the piece listed as “Negro Medley” and played by the “celebrated” Washington Brass Band at an 1844 concert in Philadelphia.41

This long concert was itself a medley of myriad styles of popular ballads, comic songs, and patriotic music, including “Washington’s March” and a medley of “National Airs” which likely encompassed some of the best-known patriotic songs like “Hail Columbia,” “Yankee Doodle,” and “The Star Spangled Banner.” Played by a brass band in a military arrangement, the “Negro Medley” was part of the grand pageantry of the occasion. A similar concert in Baltimore in 1848, at the Universalist Church on Calvert Street, featured the Independent Blues Band (no longer led by James Deems at this point) and yet another “Negro Medley Overture” as the concert’s finale.42 For the audience,

41 Philadelphia Public Ledger, December 25, 1844. This score featured the keyed bugle in prominent solo parts. See Dudgeon, Keyed Bugle, 173, 213n32; see also the web page of period performers Olde Towne Brass of Huntsville, Alabama at http://www.otbrass.com/PublishedMusic/Notes/E_Page.html (accessed 1/27/2015).
42 Baltimore Sun, February 28, 1848. It is impossible to determine if this “Negro Medley Overture” is the 1844 piece arranged by the Baltimore Independent Greys’ G.W. Minnick, the Triay score, or another piece entirely. Variations of the title were used for many medleys, including, for example: “Ethiopian Medley,” New York, 1848, Music Division, Library of Congress, http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1848.101930/; and “Ethiopian Medley no. 1,” (Baltimore, 1846), Music Division, LOC,
such musical events juxtaposed patriotic music and symbols with popular music: the familiar sonic qualities of the martial brass band merging with the infectious rhythms of minstrel tunes and other popular forms.

Among their many kinds of burlesque, minstrels lampooned the “refined” style of European virtuosos. But these imitations tended also to elicit approval of the minstrel’s skill.\(^{43}\) The Congo Melodists, a popular minstrel troupe, toured with a child violin prodigy who performed in blackface as Little Ole Bull: they joined the “Dan Tucker” phenomenon with a similar song in the mid-1840s titled “Ole Bull and Ole Dan Tucker.”\(^{44}\) At least one of the Melodists’ performances while touring in Baltimore advertised the martial genre of “Quick Steps” as an attraction among the songs on offer, while a reviewer in New York focused on Little Ole Bull’s expertise and the success of his and the Congo Melodists’ concert: “everything went off with the greatest éclat. Little Ole set free all but one of his strings, and played some beautiful strains on the violin.”\(^{45}\)

By the early 1850s, minstrelsy had cemented its place as a highly popular cultural form. It was also infused with patriotic performance to the point that contemporaries evidently thought of it as a kind of national music. Sheet music from the early 1850s, in the popular medley genre, illustrates the interpenetration of patriotic music and commercial blackface tunes. The “Real American Polka” was almost entirely minstrel tunes, including Dan Emmett’s “Going Ober the Mountain” and “Old Dan Tucker,” as well as “the celebrated Railroad Overture as performed by Jullien’s Band,” themed to

\(^{43}\) Vera Brodsky Lawrence mentions a “Negro Medley credited to Daniel Emmett” performed by a brass band in New York at Castle Garden during the summer of 1844: see Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 283.


\(^{45}\) *Baltimore Sun*, May 31, 1844; *New York Herald*, December 26, 1844.
promote America’s new transportation technology.\textsuperscript{46} These tunes, it is apparent, were thought to represent American national culture. Another piece of sheet music, titled “Music for the Millions” and printed in New York, San Francisco, and London, included Stephen Foster’s parlor minstrel song “Old Folks at Home” among patriotic favorites like “Hail to the Chief” and “Yankee Doodle.”\textsuperscript{47} Sheet music productions like these inculcated affective patriotism not only by placing minstrel songs alongside well-known patriotic tunes, but also by associating them in memory with nationalist images like flags, banners, and patriotic transparencies so common in live performances.

\textit{Black Musicians, White Audiences}

As white actors and musicians blacked up to perform their racist burlesques, black musicians worked as valued, even celebrated musicians in martial settings. If white minstrels in blackface were performing whiteness at the same time they purported to represent authentic black music, then black musicians, by playing patriotic music, were performing both their blackness and their status as citizens. By playing patriotic music, they asserted membership in the national community, and at the same time attempted to undermine that community’s white supremacy. Black musicians performed as military field musicians, in marching bands for national holidays (including specific African American holidays), and even in genteel concert settings and their own volunteer militia.


\textsuperscript{47} “Music for the Millions” was actually a renamed version of Louis-Antoine Jullien’s “American Quadrille.” “Old Folks at Home” is still familiar today, often as “Swanee River” after its first line. See “Music for the Millions,” (New York: S.C. Jollie, 1853), Levy Collection, Box 14 Item 035.
units. They did so despite frequent white disparagement of their accomplishments and tensions over mixed race participation in civic celebrations.  

Free black Americans were soldiers, and especially musician-soldiers, going back to the Seven Years War, and were prominent during the Revolution. For example, one Juba Freeman, who served in the Continental Army’s Connecticut Line during the Revolution,\(^49\) was a drummer. A Virginia Act from 1776 stipulated that blacks “shall be employed as drummers, fifers, or pioneers.” The names of these black musicians were rarely known: typical citations simply referred to, for example, “a negro man” or “Negro Bob, drummer.” But the evidence points to the importance of black drummers and fifers to both the regular army and the militia. For example, a black drummer named Jordan B. Noble was congratulated by Andrew Jackson himself after the Battle of New Orleans in 1815: he reportedly “beat his drum during all and every fight, in the hottest hell of the fire.”  

After the War of 1812, as the brass band revolution gathered momentum nationwide, blacks formed their own bands in New York, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Charleston, Michigan, Ohio, and the New England states.  

When the young printer’s assistant Dan Emmett joined the army in 1834, he benefitted immediately from black musicianship. According to his account, he “practiced

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\(^{49}\) *Revolutionary War documents for Juba Freeman*, Gladstone Collection, Manuscript Division, LOC.  


the drum under the tuition of the renowned John J. Clark, also known as “Juba.”  

Emmett’s relationship with Clark was not just as teacher to student: Clark was almost certainly his superior officer, as the name of a quickstep in his 1862 fifer’s manual attests: “Drum Major Juba Clark’s Army Quickstep.”  

By 1834, Emmett had already written at least one minstrel song, likely more than one, salted with the crude dialect typical of minstrelsy. But for Emmett, respect, even friendship, for his black military tutor was not incompatible with his comic blackface renditions. This is Eric Lott’s “love and theft” not only in representation but in musical practice. Emmett, as a minstrel performer, believed himself to be honoring the authenticity of what he and others considered a form of music that borrowed from traditional black music, but now appropriated for commercial entertainment and profit. Perhaps patriotic music allowed Emmett (and Juba Clark, for that matter) to express openly the aspirations toward refinement and middle-class uplift that the commercial minstrel stage tended to mask or ridicule.

The intersection of race and patriotism at varied sites of musical performance reached its apotheosis in the person of Francis Johnson of Philadelphia, who was probably the most celebrated antebellum black musician and the best-known brass band leader in the country before Boston’s Ned Kendall. Johnson’s astonishing musical career, centered in Philadelphia, but resounding nationally and internationally, celebrated the patriotic sublime at the same time it reflected societal ambivalences about race, national

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52 Quoted in Nathan, Dan Emmett, 105; this quote is from the manuscript to his unpublished drummer’s guide. See also Gilbert Chase, America’s Music, 269; Mark Knowles, Tap Roots: The Early History of Tap Dancing (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 2002); “juba, n.2”. OED Online. December 2014. Oxford University Press. http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/101821?rskey=37ek2a&result=2&isAdvanced=false (accessed February 01, 2015). “Juba” or “Juber” was also a dance form.

53 Emmett, Drummer’s and Fifer’s Guide, Emmett Papers, OHS.
identity, and patriotic celebration. Johnson’s success can be traced in large part to two things: first, his own musical genius, and second (thanks to his talent) his status as protégé to some of the most powerful families in Philadelphia, most notably Phoebe Ann Ridgway Rush (wife of James Rush, the son of Benjamin Rush). Rush, as well as the Willing, Biddle, and Wharton families, “were but a few of the families that avidly admired Johnson’s music-making and demanded that he and his band preside over their balls and levees.”

The position of Johnson’s band as an equal to white bands was reflected in public notices and advertisements in Philadelphia and across the country, which were for the most part indistinguishable from those pertaining to the band’s white counterparts.

“The Francis Johnson’s unrivalled band” was a key selling point in an 1839 ad for a “Grand Military, Firemen’s, and Citizen’s Ball” in Philadelphia – the ad also emphasized the event’s proud patriotism with an opening encomium to “The Star Spangled Banner, the Pride of the World.” Similarly, Johnson’s Baltimore engagements in 1831 were preceded by anticipatory praise, in language familiar to audiences of white performers:

THE MILITARY BAND, attached to Capt. Page’s Company of State Fencibles of Philadelphia, and led by Francis Johnson, the celebrated performer on the Kent Bugle, will visit this city…for the purpose of giving CONCERTS. We learn that the performances of this body of musicians have been very successful and highly spoken of in New York, Boston and many other cities. Their leader is well known to the

54 Charles K. Jones, Francis Johnson, 57-60. Jones’s is the only extant biography of this fascinating and surprisingly little-known figure; the other invaluable resource is the University of Pennsylvania Library system’s online exhibit about Johnson, drawing from their physical holdings, at http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/music/fjohnson/fjohnson.html (last accessed March 4, 2015). In broad musical histories of the period, Richard Crawford’s comprehensive work gives Johnson a brief but sensitive examination (see Crawford, America’s Musical Life, 279;423-425).

55 It should be noted that this ball, a club fund-raising event titled “The Star-Spangled Banner, the pride of the world,” was an example of a patriotic event not associated with any particular national celebration. See Philadelphia Public Ledger, October 13, 1839.
fashionable world, and his talents…are such as to elicit the favourable opinion of the community, and will no doubt meet with liberal support and patronage.\textsuperscript{56} Johnson and his band, whether playing marches and other martial music or the steady stream of dance music that flowed from his pen, seemed to meet with success everywhere.

The same ad may also have been a covert demand, against a background of prejudice, that Johnson receive proper patronage despite his race. Indeed, white resistance to Johnson’s civic performances in public spaces usually occupied by white bands, occurred despite (or perhaps because of) his success. Johnson’s race was never forgotten. A laconic note in a New Orleans paper on news reported trouble in New York when Johnson’s band accompanied a New York militia company on a July 4\textsuperscript{th} outing to Albany: “The Gothamites…would not let the colored band play along the streets, and another was employed.”\textsuperscript{57} Whites in Baltimore were similarly resistant when white volunteer militia companies began hiring black bands for public events: an editorialist reported that black bands’ “appearance on the parade-ground, has occasioned many unpleasant occurrences.”\textsuperscript{58} Johnson’s untimely death in 1844 elicited glowing memorials that openly referenced the prejudice he faced. A “special meeting of the Young Men of the city and county of Philadelphia” adopted a forceful resolution in his honor, which read in part “[Johnson] has eminently and successfully proved that genius is sufficiently powerful to overcome even prejudice.”\textsuperscript{59} Even in his native city, and despite his glittering

\textsuperscript{56}\textit{Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser}, October 26, 1831; see also \textit{Baltimore Patriot}, November 4, 1831.
\textsuperscript{57}\textit{New Orleans Times Picayune}, July 14, 1838.
\textsuperscript{58}\textit{Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser}, October 6, 1835.
\textsuperscript{59}\textit{Philadelphia Public Ledger}, April 10, 1844; italics in original. The prestigious Philomathean Society of the University of Pennsylvania published a separate memorial of “their late fellow member, Capt. Francis Johnson.” The resolution lauded Johnson for his “unflinching integrity and correct deportment as a man,
connections, Johnson faced racial prejudice when he and his band performed the same patriotic practices as white bands like those of Baltimore Independent Blues and Greys.

Indeed, genteel whites could engage in racial stereotyping of the refined Johnson: appreciation (like Dan Emmett’s for his early tutor Juba Clark) could be tinged with condescension or outright scorn. Isaac Mickle, a genteel young Philadelphian and eager scholar who hired Johnson for violin lessons wrote in his diary that when he first met “the famous Frank Johnson” at a fashionable riverboat excursion in 1841, “Frank and I got pretty well acquainted and I found him to be very intelligent for a negro.” At his first appointment with Johnson, he was led upstairs by a servant, whom he described offhandedly as a “young ape.” While Mickle noted Johnson’s air of refinement, the tone of his diary entry was one of casual racism. Others could be even cruder. During Johnson’s British tour in 1837, which was generally well-received, one commentator wrote: “Who will now say that niggers cannot be cultivated?...We will swear that this is a saintly speculation; and it will not be long before we have some genuine sable persons. We are informed that they are self-taught, as frogs are to croak…” Johnson’s fame made such blatantly racist dismissals rare in his case, but tensions were not uncommon when black musicians played for white audiences, possibly because black musicians

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61 Ibid, 196.

62 Mickle also provided an interesting verbal sketch of the musician’s workspace, full of a profusion of musical accouterments including “bass drums, bass viols, bugles and trombones…in admirable confusion on the floor.” Johnson, like Dan Emmett and most other musicians, was proficient with multiple instruments. See Mackey ed., *A Gentleman of Much Promise*, 196.

63 Quoted in Jones, *Francis Johnson*, 161.
playing skillfully in civic arenas were making serious claims to civic manhood that belied the containment strategies of minstrel stereotypes.

Minstrel audiences were eager sheet music consumers: its vivid portrayals of racist stereotypes allowed many whites to insulate themselves against black civic claims. Covers of the “Crow Quadrilles” from New York and Baltimore feature a medley of blackface caricatures including the Jim Crow and Zip Coon figures (Figure 5.5). They also depict a black marching band in fine uniforms and an array of brass instruments, but prancing and stumbling around as they march. Black dandy figures including Zip Coon watch from the sidewalk.64 In another sheet music cover caricature, black musicians representing the “dandyism of the northern states” are compared to the “Ethiopians of the Southern States,” also musicians (Figure 5.6). The northern blacks in their long-tailed finery and the rustic slaves are all portrayed with typically crude facial features and in exaggerated motion, prancing like the marching band in the “Crow Quadrilles.”

The crude burlesque of another song, “Jim Brown” (from 1837), is equally direct (see Figure 5.7).65 A grinning, wide-eyed black man, Jim Brown, with typically exaggerated physical features plays his stylized over-the-shoulder brass instrument and wears an ornate military uniform. Meanwhile, a child marches around the room with a broomstick, mocking militia musters. The lyric lampoons the pretensions of the black band leader who “plays upon de fife [and] de drum,” and at the same time hints at the danger his black masculinity poses to white women:

I den goes to de Mayor, I ax for a commission,
To lead de famus Brass Ban I show him my petition;

64 “Crow Quadrilles,” (Baltimore: George Willig, n.d.), Levy Collection, Box 17, Items 15,19. A copy of the same quadrille set from 1837 has a slightly different depiction of a marching band, with trumpet players marching in an exaggerated chair step (Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 16).
65 “Jim Brown,” (New York: Endicott, 1836), Levy Collection, Box 17, Item 112.
Figure 5.5. “Crow Quadrilles,” sheet music cover (Baltimore, ca. 1837). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. Note the marching band at bottom center, with black figures in foppish outfits watching from the sidewalk.
Figure 5.6. “The Celebrated Ethiopian Melodies,” sheet music cover (New York: C.G. Christman, 1843). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. The image contrasts “the dandyism of the northern states” to exaggerated caricatures of southern slaves.
Figure 5.7. “Jim Brown,” sheet music cover (New York: Endicott, 1836). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University. The image burlesques black militia musicians and militia musters, but occurs in the domestic space of the home.
He say he tink me first rate, he beg me take a seat,
Wide all de Corporation, I dar set down to eat.
   I plays upon de Trombone, to see wat dey would say.
   One Alderman he bawls out, Jim Brown sound your A. lalle doodle &c.

... Since Music in dis city, now be all de rage,
I’ll teach de scientifical an sing upon de stage;
O den I’ll hab de encores, from all de lubly sex;
An wen I choose one for my wife, O, de rest ob dem be vex.
   I plays on de Piano, I teach dem dance so gay.
   O shaw, I lub de charmin gals, any time ob day. lalle doodle &c.

These lyrics allowed some whites to see black musicians like Francis Johnson, who used music to claim a citizen’s voice, as a jumped-up, sexualized blackface caricature. Such characterizations were the musical versions of the racist reactions to Johnson’s performances, and that generated conflicts between white militiamen and black musicians. Johnson himself was not averse to using minstrel tunes or appearing alongside minstrel acts. In 1843 or 1844 Johnson arranged the popular minstrel song “Dandy Jim,” and in that same period he and his band appeared in Philadelphia in a “grand concert of vocal and instrumental music” (a stock description going back at least to the 1790s) alongside a blackface minstrel performer.67

Symbolic figures like the militia band musician “Jim Brown” reflected conflicting attitudes on the minstrel stage and in actual black patriotic usage. For example, Christy’s Minstrels, like older minstrel troupes, provided “Jim Brown,” who had become a stock figure, with a mock patriotic speech, part of the typical minstrel performance (usually


67 Annemarie Bean et al, eds., Inside the Minstrel Mask, 46-47.
appearing in the second act of the show) that historians call the “stump speech.” The stump speech was a burlesque of the ornate patriotic or political oratory of the day, rife with malapropisms. A small sample of “Jim Brown’s Address to He Soger’s” as performed by Christy’s Minstrels gives the flavor:

FELLER-CITIZENS AND BRUDDER SOGERS!
I hab the super infilicity ob undressing a few words of millumtary tictacs to your magnanimously insignificant and superbly extinguished corpse. Brudder sogers! from dem days of de future dark ages, wat has passed down de ascending stream of neber-to-be-forgotten oblibium, to de long-past moments of de resent time, de darkies….68

I wish to call particular attention to two elements of this passage. First, it (and the “stump speech” genre as a whole) obviously mocks both the purple prose of white orators and the presumed pretense of the black militiaman. Second, the passage’s malapropisms address the mythic present of militia culture: The “long-past moments of de resent time” and “neber-to-be-forgotten-oblibium” lampoon the mythic present’s veneration of the nation’s past.

As a burlesque, “Jim Brown’s Address” is certainly not in the mode of the patriotic sublime. It is a descendant of the criticism of the statutory militia we saw in Chapter Four, and recalls the nighttime burlesque of the white volunteer militiamen at Camp Baltimore in 1842. Its temporal allusion to “long-past” time satirizes the mythic present of the white volunteer militias’ republican fraternities. In what was probably another version of a stump speech at an 1843 concert in Philadelphia, Dan Emmett’s Virginia Minstrels lampooned a militia muster called Camp Jackson: “the celebrated COOL WHITE will appear as the Dandy Nigger of Chestnut Street, and give a description

of the appearance, movements, and review of *Camp Jackson*.”69 That same year, a slave celebration on a South Carolina plantation became, according to William Cullen Bryant, “a sort of burlesque of our militia trainings, in which the words of command and the evolutions were extremely ludicrous.”70 In the slaves’ hands, this was a clever inversion of minstrelsy, in which white performers in blackface mocked African American’s political acuity with “ludicrous” words.

Black musicians and black audiences also practiced patriotic celebration without irony, engaging the patriotic sublime along the way. This included celebration on national holidays. Even if forcibly excluded from July Fourth events staged by whites, black Americans often celebrated independence on the Fifth of July, glossing the day with pointed references to their own far from complete freedom. This was the case in a July Fifth celebration in 1827 in Rochester, New York, in which a “gaudily dressed colored band, discoursing elegant music, moved through the principal streets to the Public Square.”71 From the mid-1830s on, northern blacks, often in the company of white abolitionists, celebrated West Indian Emancipation Day with all the pomp and in all the forms of the Fourth of July.72 A correspondent of the Baltimore Sun noted a black militia’s celebration of the Fourth itself, in Alexandria, Virginia: a “company of colored men, with a band of music.”73

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72 See, for example, the *Emancipator and Republican*, Boston, August 7, 1844.
73 *Baltimore Sun*, July 6, 1850.
Long before this—as early as 1770—black men in Boston marched in military uniform after an earlier white parade:

About nine o’clock, in the evening of the same day, a number of Negro Grenadiers, gathered up in the common, and from thence, under commanders (flushed with a military spirit) took it upon them to patrol several streets in the town, with a drum beating, fifes playing and other music, until some of the inhabitants, fearing the ill consequences from such unlawful assemblies, broke their drum, and quickly dispersed them, ordering them to go peaceably home to their masters.74

Whether this parade emulated white celebration or mocked it, both free black and enslaved communities early on engaged in the same patriotic rituals as whites, sometimes in parallel celebrations, sometimes in protest and parody of white practice, and sometimes alongside whites. Their participation, whether in unison with whites, like that of Francis Johnson, or in counter practices, took place within the framework of the patriotic sublime.75

White reception of black band performance was mixed: it depended in part on the specific audience. Descriptions of reception, emotional, intellectual, or otherwise, from contemporaries were exceedingly rare for popular music performed by blacks. An unusually revealing editorial from Baltimore, published in 1835 just as volunteer militia activity was multiplying quickly in the Monumental City, is thus doubly valuable. This was the same editorial that related clashes between white militiamen and black band members. After praising the fine performance of the band of the Independent Blues, the editorialist calls for strict separation between white and black militias and their bands:

Taking facts as they are, without pretending either to repudiate or defend them, it seems to be certain that the negro bands will not suit the state of feeling in this

74 Massachusetts Spy, Boston, September 27, 1770. Italics in original. “Masters” is probably an ambivalent word in this context; the marchers could have been slaves, free blacks, or both.

city…our own white citizens who have formed bands, refuse to parade in line with them; the same objection was made by the band from Boston, and the other day the musicians who accompanied the troops from New-Jersey took the like course. We would suggest, under these circumstances, that gentlemen engaged in forming companies, should have a certain number of young men instructed on such instruments as they may prefer, upon condition, that those who are at the expense of their instruction, shall have the use of their services for a certain time.  

In other words, the commentator felt that white militias should hire and train their own white bands, as the Independent Blues had done and the Independent Greys would do several years later. In addition, the article describes tension between the white and black band musicians themselves, not just the audiences or the militiamen. Talented black militia musicians were evidently a common enough sight to constitute a threat to their white counterparts.

Conversely, white antislavery audiences were willing to accept and praise black band when they played at abolitionist events, as at a speech by William Lloyd Garrison in the late 1840s or at a celebration in Boston for the British abolitionist George Thomson in 1851. In fact, Francis Johnson’s band garnered praise in the abolitionist press regardless of the occasion. A tour to Cincinnati elicited the same sort of breathless encomium as was common for white musicians: “their instruments seem a part of themselves, and the spirit they throw into their performances never flags. We advise our city readers who love music to avail themselves of the privilege of hearing, before the band leaves.”

The terrain of the patriotic sublime, distilled into its purest form by militia band culture, was contested. For some whites the idea of a black military band was a bridge too far. Yet many audiences responded with fervent patriotic emotion to Francis Johnson and other

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76 Baltimore Gazette and Daily Advertiser, October 6, 1835.
77 Liberator (Boston), Aug 20, 1847, Jun 20, 1851.
78 Cincinnati Philanthropist, May 3, 1843.
black bands: either because they favored racial equality or because the popularity and skill of the musicians could trump the ideological reaction prompted by skin color.

Blackface minstrelsy raised another question for its white audience: was it “national music”? Elite commentators who spent the most ink on the matter disliked it, lamenting the popularity of blackface minstrel shows at the perceived expense of better music: “Christy’s Minstrels attract overflowing audiences every night, whilst the Germania band and a host of fine talent play and sing to empty benches. We sincerely believe that...the public would rather pay twenty-five cents to hear negro melodies, than listen to true music for nothing.”

Elite commentary like this made an aesthetic judgment about minstrelsy; it also engaged in the condescension and class snobbery fundamental to such “high-brow” judgments about what counted as “true” music. Meanwhile, audiences voted with their pocketbooks: minstrel music, including its many uses of patriotic music, was as “national” as any other.

Minstrel performers and their audiences mostly reinforced the idea that nationality was at least in part racial, but the performance of minstrel music, with its cultural masks, could complicate this proposition. This was spelled out in what purported to be a history of “Nigger Music in England,” in a recollection of the British tour of the Ethiopian Serenaders in 1846, led by minstrel comedian Gilbert Pell:

At first, a few unreasonable grumblers endeavored to stem the popularity of Mr. Pell’s company by declaring that the artists were not real blacks, but only white musicians with blackened faces. This pretended discovery was no discovery at all. Far from wishing to pass themselves off for veritable niggers, Pell and Co, as free-born American citizens, would have bitterly resented the suspicion that they had the least drop of black blood in their veins; so they lost no time in publishing portraits of

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themselves, with the white faces bestowed upon them by nature, in addition to others in which they wore the sable hue of their profession.\textsuperscript{80}

The Ethiopian Serenaders asserted their whiteness and their citizenship through these portraits. At the same time, audiences considered the “various negro melodies” they played to be national music.\textsuperscript{81} They played other popular music, like selections from Bellini’s much-loved opera La Sonnambula, that was well-received, if thought a little out of place because of the minstrel show’s mostly burlesque content: one critic found it “sweetly harmonized, and neatly executed” but perhaps a little “distorted and unreal” as if played by “a vinous violin.”\textsuperscript{82} The “national melodies” or “negro” songs they played were “charmingly arranged and executed with great taste.”\textsuperscript{83} This critic saw authentic national music in the Serenaders’ black masks: their “dark sublimity, and utter obliviousness of things mundane.”\textsuperscript{84}

In America, minstrel music became an important part of the debate about “national music.” This dialogue considered minstrelsy, like Irish or Scottish music, to be popular or vernacular music: either a distasteful craze, like the critic’s interpretation of Christy’s Minstrels’ audience, or a genuine product of black culture. Critics who disdained minstrelsy thought that while it might be “a national characteristic of the United States,” it was still inferior: “it cannot but be feared [as] detrimental to the purity and dignity of the Art.”\textsuperscript{85} A similar critic condemned it with faint praise: “We have seen some slight demonstration of a national music in our ‘Ethiopian Minstrelsy’ and local airs,

\textsuperscript{80} Albion, June 15, 1861; Edward Le Roy Rice, Monarchs of Minstrelsy, from “Daddy” Rice to Date (New York: Kenny Publishing, 1910), 48.
\textsuperscript{81} The Morning Post (London), January 20, 1846.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
but these are far removed, in point of aesthetic and scientific character, from operatic composition."

Abolitionists were perhaps the group most willing to approve of minstrelsy as a national music. Consider a letter from an abolitionist in a Cincinnati journal responding to criticism of minstrelsy in a Pittsburgh publication:

…the editor of the [Cincinnati] Herald will state, that the concert he commended, he would certainly commend again in similar circumstances; and that the music he praised, he still praises – not the words, for they are senseless – but the Music, which for real, heart-touching melody – is scarcely surpassed. If what are called negro-melodies have been derived from the Southern plantations, we know of no one, except a man thoroughly penetrated with colorophobia, who can find fault when we give slaves the credit for them….we know of but two National airs that equal them, and certainly none that surpasses them.87

The writer was suggesting that blackface minstrelsy should be credited with popularizing authentic black “folk” music. No matter that it was whites who played and sometimes burlesqued that music, and also judged its authenticity by standards that were mostly a white construction to begin with. Minstrel songs were at once commercial songs and American ones.88 In 1837, an earlier authority stressed the remarkable popularity of the genre, both American and black at one remove:

We were wrong when we said that we had no more native songs than those we mentioned. We forgot the music which is at present making the most important figure in the American minstrelsy. We mean those sublime effusions of which “Jim Crow,” “Zip Coon,” and the “Raccoon Hunt,” are the best specimens. These have had an unparalleled popularity. Every boy in the street sings them. The most polished belles in the city have not disdained to carrol [sic] the sapient and polished language of Messrs. Crow & Coon at their piano fortes.89

86 “American Opera,” Dwight’s Journal of Music, Boston (vol. 5 1855), 140.
88 Lott, Love and Theft, 30-41, chap. 4 passim.
89 Portsmouth (NH) American, July 15, 1837; see also Roediger, Wages of Whiteness, 117.
This was a new thought: minstrelsy could be popular with the “boy in the street” and the refined “belle” with her sheet music collection. This writer recognized the routes of print and oral transmission fundamental to minstrelsy’s popular success, and was aware, at least implicitly, of its influence across the different but related spaces of musical performance. If anything in the 1830s and 1840s was a “national music,” it was minstrelsy—at least in much of white America.

_Reform Movements and Patriotic Musical Performance_

The mid-nineteenth century was the beginning of a seemingly never-ending sequence of crazes in American popular music: for minstrelsy, for band music, for foreign virtuosi like Ole Bull and Jenny Lind. The Hutchinson Family Singers were as popular as any of them, capitalizing on a vogue for singing groups in four-part harmony that began in the 1830s with the Rainer family’s American tour. The Hutchinsons, a rural family from New Hampshire, began performing as a group in 1840, but it was not until 1842 that they caught fire, when the Hutchinson brothers’ young sister Abby joined three of the brothers on stage. First in New England, then in the entire country and finally in Europe, the Hutchinsons became one of the century’s most popular musical acts over the following two decades.

Wildly popular for their non-political songs, the Hutchinsons were also controversial: their apparently passionate antislavery sentiment and performances for the temperance movement engaged them with groups who had dissenting visions of American identity. In any venue, however, their singing could engender passionate
emotion. The same year as the Hutchinsons first performance, 1840, six men who had
“adjourned from a tavern to attend (and ridicule) a temperance meeting [instead] found
themselves converted” – they formed the first Washington Temperance Society. In the
following several years, Washingtonianism would sweep across the nation, becoming
perhaps the most visible public voice of the already popular temperance movement
before flaming out, hamstrung by excessive moralism and partisan political activism.

Antebellum reform movements were profoundly shaped by the waves of
Protestant evangelical revivalism that swept the United States during the early nineteenth
century. Revivalism, whatever its theological antecedents and precepts, was in practice a
highly emotional form of religious worship, relying in part on vivid word-painting to
influence listeners. Francis Asbury, paraphrasing Jonathan Edwards, exhorted preachers
to “preach as if you had seen heaven its celestial inhabitants and had hovered over the
bottomless pit and beheld the tortures and heard the groans of the damned.” A witness to
singing at a camp meeting described it as powerfully emotional, to the extent that the act
of singing, and its sound, seemed to cause mass movement: “the power of God came
down, and pervaded the vast assembly, and it became agitated – swelling and surging like
the sea in a storm.”


\[92\] Quotes in this paragraph from Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 137, 151; see 135-161 *passim*.
Revivalism lent its passion to reform movements and moved in tandem with the rising tide of nationalist sentiment. Reflecting their national scope, reform movements aimed to improve national character. In fact, one historian has called the temperance movement “the unifying reform, drawing support from countless middle-class Protestants, from skilled artisans, clerks, shopkeepers, laborers, free blacks, and Mormons, as well as from many conservative clergy and southerners who were otherwise hostile to reform.” While abolitionists could never be called “unifying,” they joined the temperance movement in appropriating music from many sources, including minstrelsy, and patriotic musical practices associated with brass band culture.

The Hutchinson family built a public image of purity, refinement, and fidelity to family, nation, and cause. Still, their success was inseparable from the burgeoning commerce of music. Hutchinson sheet music flooded the market, and almost all of it engaged with or appropriated other popular forms like minstrelsy, and also patriotic signifiers. Their earliest successes capitalized on that image of purity in songs about home, family, pastoral nature, and motherhood. Yet even a song such as “The Cottage of My Mother,” a solo vehicle for Abby Hutchinson, “as sung with rapturous applause…in all the concerts of the family” hinted at the “notes of liberty…o’er the distant mountains.” The Hutchinsons most enduring favorite, “The Old Granite State,” an up-tempo romp from 1843 in infectious four-part harmony, was an autobiographical song about their family and home state of New Hampshire. It leaves no doubt as to its patriotic feeling or its authors’ antislavery sentiment: “Liberty is our motto…We despise oppression / And we cannot be enslaved.” A later verse declares their temperance allegiance “We are all

93 Steven Mintz, Moralizers and Modernizers: America’s Pre-Civil War Reformers (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), quote from 72; see also Walters, American Reformers, 32-33.
Washingtonians, / Heav’n bless the Washingtonians...” 94 The family was finely attuned to their market: their invaluable journals, most of the entries written by Asa Hutchinson, are replete with accounts of concert income. Its first entry reads “Money taken about—$9.00.” 95 Some audience members walked out on their performances, and publishers worried about their baldly antislavery numbers. But their allegiances propelled their popularity among others. The Hutchinsons caught the wave of reform at its crest.

The Hutchinsons borrowed freely from minstrel music in their antislavery and patriotic songs, as did the abolitionist movement as a whole. “Uncle Sam’s Farm,” a patriotic paean to the nation’s industry and “bountiful natural wealth,” borrowed the tune to “Walk in de Parlor and Hear de banjo Play.” The Hutchinsons best-known antislavery song, “Get Off the Track,” set its forceful lyric to Dan Emmett’s “Old Dan Tucker.” The lyric, reinforced by the pictorially vivid cover explicitly warned politicians and other public figures (Henry Clay, most specifically) to “Get Out of the Way!” of “Freedom’s Car, Emancipation” (Figure 5.8). 96 Compilers of songsters would borrow well-known patriotic tunes along with popular songs for new lyric antislavery lyrics: “Hail to the Cause of Liberty” set to “Hail to the Chief,” and “Ye Sons of Freemen” to the tune of the “Marseilleise.” 97

94 “The Cottage of My Mother,” (New York: Firth & Hall, 1843), Box 18, Item 59, Levy Collection; “The Old Granite State,” (Boston: Oliver Ditson, 1843), Box 20 Item 102, Levy Collection.
95 Cockrell, Excelsior, 3 (and n1).
Figure 5.8. “Get Off the Track!,” Boston: published by the author, 1844). Lester H. Levy Collection, Johns Hopkins University.
Performers borrowed minstrel tunes and patriotic favorites for two pertinent reasons. First, they were popular everywhere and thus facilitated oral transmission of their reform message. Second, their musical elements, from the driving pulse of “Old Dan Tucker” or the thrilling cadence of the “Marseilleise,” seemed to be associated with rousing, emotional responses from audiences. A remarkable description of a performance by the Hutchinsons at the New England Antislavery Convention in 1844 of “Get Off the Track” demonstrates this and deserves to be quoted at length. Their “outburst,” says the witness,

Is absolutely indescribable in any words that can be penned. It represented the moral railroad in in characters of living light and song, with all its terrible enginery and speed and danger. And when they came to that chorus-cry, that gives name to the song, when they cried to the heedless pro-slavery multitude that were stupidly lingering on the track, and the engine ‘Liberator’ coming hard upon them, under full steam and all speed, the Liberty Bell loud ringing…the way they cried ‘Get off the track,’ in defiance of all time and rule, was magnificent and sublime. They forgot their harmony, and shouted one after another, or all in a confused outcry, like an alarmed multitude of spectators….But I am trying to describe it, I should only say it was indescribable. It was life—it was nature—transcending the musical staff….It was the cry of the people….The multitude who heard them will bear me witness, that they transcended the very province of mere music.98

This description is wonderful evidence of performance practice: the apparent power of “Get Off the Track!” in live performance owed much to the Hutchinsons’ awareness of “when and how to ignore the notes on the page.”99 But more than that, the commentator reacted to the performance exactly as Isaac Munro had reacted to “The Star Spangled Banner” in 1814, constructing a series of vivid mental images—a narrative—that informed his reaction to the music. This included the patriotic image of the “Liberty Bell,” and the railroad tracks and loud, onrushing engine that stood in for military


imagery and reflected the perceived sublimity of new technology. His insistence that “Get Off the Track!” “transcended” music in fact speaks to the ways music was culturally constructed as an intense affect that was difficult to even describe. The language of reception was composed of hidden meanings that were taken as evidence of strong emotion.

The Hutchinsons were themselves witnesses to the affective construction of the patriotic sublime, and partakers of it. Their diary contains a remarkably specific description of the reaction to patriotic music at a concert they attended during a tour to Baltimore in 1844. This was a seemingly tame reformist affair: a concert showcasing the talents of blind pupils from the New York Blind Institution. Asa Hutchinson’s diary entry details the instrumentation of the band and goes on to describe the impact of their patriotic music:

The music by the band was the best part, comprising the following instruments: one fife, castanets, one trumpet, two French horns, two trombones, one bass drum, one pair cymbals. No martial music have I heard so good as theirs since I heard the Boston Band [i.e. probably the Boston Brass Band]. Their ‘Washington March,’ ‘Star Spangled Banner,’ and numerous other favorites were performed with great truth and beauty and were well appreciated by an audience of 500….the band winding up with the still stirring strains of ‘Yankee Doodle’ aroused the whole audience from their stupor and lethargy [caused, in Asa’s view, by a stretch of bad vocal music during the long concert] to fiery animation. Oh, the powers of music!100

What is to modern sensibilities a tiny band was to Asa Hutchinson powerful enough to sweep the audience to a passionate display. The band’s sonic qualities combined with the familiarity of the music, and the stories it signified, to embody the patriotic sublime. As

100 Cockrell, Excelsior, 210. Such heated language, with creative variations, was familiar to the Hutchinsons from print descriptions of their own audiences’ reactions. For example, a concert in Philadelphia that same year produced a similar furor. As an encore, Asa records, “we returned with Abby and sung ‘The Origin of Yankee Doodle.’ Oh! what excitement this produced. Must repeat. No! Yes! No! Yes! After thunderous applause returned and sung ‘Good Morning.’ Great applause. Variations on piano, good. We closed the concert by singing the ‘Old Granite State.’ A panic-struck audience.” (Ibid, 182).
we have now seen, such displays tied together militia parades, theatrical performances, concerts, even styles and venues further afield, such as minstrelsy, to constitute a web of patriotic sentiment. It is, in fact, difficult to find an antebellum social or reform movement or group that was not drawn to the lodestone of public patriotic display. This included the temperance movement, one segment of which provided some of the most colorful such displays of the period.

The explosive growth of the Washington Temperance Society, their very name a patriotic signifier, was, like the career of the Hutchinsons, thanks partly to the expansion of oral and print transmission networks. In January 1841, Cincinnatti’s *Western Temperance Journal* reported the Washingtonian excitement in Baltimore for the first time. In a pattern that would be repeated elsewhere, Cincinnatians were waiting for a Washingtonian – an initiate or proselytizer, as it were – to bring the good news west. That had happened by July, and “almost immediately the city’s meetings were filled to overflowing; at least one, and sometimes two or three, were held every night.”101 Meanwhile, Washingtonian sheet music and songsters multiplied: the “Washingtonian Pocket Songster” was published as far afield as Utica. The tiny three inch by five inch volume contained a full complement of new temperance songs set to familiar patriotic tunes, starting with “Defence of Fort Temperance,” the first two lines of the lyric recalling its forebear, “Defence of Fort McHenry.” There were temperance songs set to “Hail Columbia,” the newer favorite “America,” and the still-popular “Marseillaise.”102

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101 Dannenbaum, *Drink and Disorder*, 34.
102 W. Frederick Gould, arr., *Washingtonian Pocket Companion*, Johns Hopkins University Special Collections, Baltimore. Handwritten notes in the back of the volume list what are likely either favorite songs or songs for particular use: the list includes the tunes based on “America” and the “Marseillaise.”
During their brief heyday, these uses of patriotic music set the Washingtonians squarely within the normative orbit of the patriotic sublime.

Washingtonian use of the patriotic sublime was virtually indistinguishable from the broader martial culture of the volunteer militia and brass band, and like those events, Washingtonian celebrations were widely and ecstatically reported in print media. In Salem, Massachusetts in June 1842, a site just two months later for the Maryland Cadets visit, the local Washingtonians celebrated their first anniversary in the company of the Salem Light Infantry and Salem Brass Band. The procession included the separate female Washingtonian society and the so-called “Cold Water Army,” a children’s auxiliary of the larger movement: the term’s application could on occasion shift to the movement as a whole (Figure 5.9). Washingtonians also celebrated in this style on the Fourth of July and Washington’s Birthday: the July Fourth event in Whittingham, Vermont had the usual band alongside both “flags of freedom” and “banners of temperance.”

In the birthplace of Washingtonianism, the third anniversary of the movement was celebrated with a massive, mile-long procession through the streets of Baltimore, a “day of triumph [added] to the history of the age.” Volunteer militia companies escorted the procession and “the fine band of the Independent Blues came next to the carriages, performing during the route, six new tunes, composed and practised for this occasion, and never played in our streets before. Their admirable music elicited frequent exclamations of delight.” The martial pomp of the Washingtonian procession was both an immediate demonstration of affective patriotic sentiment and a reminder of the yearly profusion of

103 Salem (MA) Register, June 13, 1842.
104 Hampshire Gazette, July 11, 1843; Connecticut Courant, February 14, July 23, 1843.
105 Baltimore Sun, April 6, 1843.
106 Ibid.
such events, constant reminders of patriotism, “when the brilliant pageant of yesterday shall have faded in the retrospect, or been obscured by still brighter emanations of the same glorious cause.” The Washingtonian movement could deploy the patriotic sublime in celebration of their specific cause because the elastic web of musical venues, print forms, and performance practices made that passionate mode of celebration immediately available and meaningful to them on that April morning in 1843 – just as it was full of meaning for an antislavery audience the next year in Massachusetts.

When Dan Emmett was training on the drums with Juba Clark in 1834 in Cincinnati, his own most famous musical contribution to the patriotic sublime was still almost thirty years in the future: “Dixie,” which was carried to battle by both Union and Southern soldiers during the Civil War. But Emmett was already well aware, as a sensitive musician, of the emotional impact his performances could have. Any of the countless antebellum descriptions of thrillingly emotional patriotic celebration accompanied by music could have been written by Dan Emmett. Both his military training and his career in minstrelsy positioned him to understand that martial music and minstrelsy elicited such responses, and that patriotic songs and minstrel songs were reused over and over for patriotic purposes. Black musicians understood this too, and performed patriotic music for similar purposes. They also knew that the white majority, at least the portion committed to white racial superiority, did not subscribe to a patriotic sublime that unified white and blacks under the same civic banner, so they promulgated the patriotic sublime as their own claim to citizenship, and sometimes for their own national days.

107 Ibid.