Music in the Academical Village: 1819-1919

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Each year, thousands of university students, faculty, and guests traverse the brick paths through the University of Virginia’s Academical Village, admiring Thomas Jefferson’s architectural design: a masterful blend of maximal diversity and cohesion. During alumni weekends and football games, families crowd the Lawn, peeking inside the residential pavilions and dormitories which flank its sides. Most visitors to the Village are struck by the Classical nobility of the Rotunda’s massive dome, the novelty of tiny dorm rooms with exterior bathrooms, and the sense that, unlike modern university campuses, the Academical Village transports them to another time, into the unfamiliar territory of the past.

Novelist L.P. Hartley wrote that “the past is a foreign country. They do things differently there.” Indeed, the past is a foreign country, but it is also a foreign soundscape where men and women heard different things and heard familiar things differently. The twenty-first century is a hyper-saturated sonic environment. From the persistent humming of household appliances to omnipresent and intrusive cell phone ring tones, from car stereos to the roaring of jet engines, the contemporary soundscape is cluttered with noise pollution, much of which we have learned to ignore or at least normalize. In The Way Early American Sounded, Richard Cullen Rath contrasts this modern soundscape with that of early America and finds, not surprisingly, a quieter world where particular sounds—bells, for instance—carried important information and marked the boundaries of communities.¹ Further, he posits that while many natural sounds like thunder probably sound much the same today as they did in the sixteenth century, as cultural contexts shift and time passes, the metaphors with which people describe such sounds lose their meaning, become obsolete, or assume new significance. Thus, a sixteenth-century account describing

thunder like the beating of laundry means little to those of us accustomed to the mechanical
clank of a washer and dryer, and the physical barriers of modern towns, cities, and even
rationality rely less on the ability to hear the town bell ringing due to changes in transportation,
media, and communication technologies.

If for Lowenthal the past is a foreign place, for theater historian Katherine Peterson, it is
also a messy one. In an insightful article on musical theater prior to the twentieth century,
Peterson helps arrange some of the clutter of eighteenth and early-nineteenth century
music/theatrical practices.² While we are quite comfortable, for example, marking clear
distinctions between classical music (the “Bach-to-Brahms” canon of works familiar to
symphony, opera, and recital audiences, for example) and popular music (anything from the
Beatles to Britney Spears, hip hop, country, jazz, and folk), these genre distinctions were less
stable in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.³ According to Peterson, earlier eras utilized a
frustratingly elastic (at least to modern scholars) generic paradigm in which the same work might
be classified using radically different categories. Furthermore, the oft-reified internal cohesion of
a musical work, an idea from which generations of scholars have developed complex apparatuses
for describing music, was challenged in performance as individual singers inserted songs and
arias of their choosing into works by composers of musical theater and opera.⁴

³ Sociologist Paul Di Maggio locates one of the first instances of high/low art divisions in US culture in the late-nineteenth century when the Boston Brahmins founded the Boston Symphony and Museum of Art. Initially open to
the public, these institutions gradually inaugurated a process of exclusion that alienated working class men and women. Di Maggio suggests that this act represents the exercise of cultural power, one of the last remaining arenas
⁴ This practice was also quite common in European operatic traditions throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
If the past is a foreign country, anyone who visits this particular foreign country knows, you enter the past a stranger who, to borrow from singer/songwriter Paul Simon, “holds no currency, doesn’t speak the language, [and is] surrounded by the sound.” Writing about the past’s inherent unknowability, Henry Lowenthal states that “a past beyond recovery seems to many unbearable. We know the future is inaccessible, but is the past irrevocably lost? Is there no way to recapture, re-experience, relive it?” We travel back in time for myriad reasons: to experience an exotic antiquity, to live in what we perceive as superior times, to witness history, and to influence the present. Lowenthal positions memory as critical to the concept of the past and describes it as a simultaneously collective and personal phenomenon. We alone possess our memories; they reside within us and remain private unless shared with others. And yet many of the events we remember are inherited from others, or from other narratives. Indeed, our very sense of ourselves as individual, historical beings depends on “the odds and ends of parental and grandparental memory” without which “we should have to invent a greater portion of ourselves.”

While the past works on us, history is also a construction site, and we work on the past in a variety of ways: identifying, displaying, reconstituting, moving, readapting, duplicating, re-enacting, copying, emulating, and commemorating. While we can never know the past in its complex wholeness, we attempt to contain and constrain it, to impact it, to shape and to mold it into something we can apprehend. Lowenthal describes the work of historians as an endeavor to “knit together discontinuous recollections into narratives.” As material phenomena, sounds a present particular difficulty for historical knitting projects. Ephemeral and invisible, sounds

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7 Lowenthal, 197.
8 Lowenthal, 198-200.
escape traditional historiographic methods. In our efforts to contain and understand the complexities and ephemera of bygone eras, historians can collapse or eradicate the subtle texture of the past so that it fits a conceptual paradigm. In considering the soundscape of the University of Virginia in the nineteenth century, it is tempting to imagine a world of rolling hills, dutiful students, devoted professors, and happy townspeople going about their daily affairs. However, the soundscape of UVA in the nineteenth-century was far from a pastoral idyll.

When the university opened its doors in March of 1825, many of its iconic architectural features, notably the Rotunda, were still under construction. Inevitably, the sounds of construction saturated the Academical Village. The noise of hammers, nails, axes, bricks & mortar, horses, workmen, wagons comingle with the sounds of students moving between classes and leisure, professors giving lectures, bells marking off the hours, cooks preparing meals, slave labor and song, and the sounds of industrialization in the growing communities around and outside the University. Continuity, identity, and community are intrinsically bound for Lowenthal, and it is in such a spirit that this work progresses.

In what follows, I consider a specific subset of the UVA soundscape, what Rath refers to as “sounds made with human intent.” I am particularly interested in the musical sounds of the University of Virginia between 1819 and 1919. Part historiographic essay and part program notes, what follows proceeds with the intent to document what information we have about particular people, ensembles, and repertoire constituted musical life at UVA. I am admittedly less interested in theorizing what such performances may have meant than highlighting the fantastic diversity of musical experience at UVA in the nineteenth century, a time when a profusion of categories, genres, and performance styles seem to coexist in ways that seem highly problematic to our late-twentieth and twenty-first century schema, taxonomies, and our powerful
sense of hierarchy within art. I conceived of this project as an exercise in collective memory, seeking to knit together these discontinuous recollections of UVA’s musical past into a narrative through which we can arrive at a more complex sense of ourselves as members of this particular academic(al) community.

**An Overview of Music at The University of Virginia**

Thomas Jefferson included music in the University’s curriculum from its inception. According to his plans, specific rooms were set aside in the Rotunda for music lessons and performance, and the University hired its first music instructor soon after classes began in the 1825. Mr. Bigelow remained at UVA until at least 1833, according to Alexander Bruce. In his multi-volume *History of the University of Virginia: 1819-1919* (YEAR), Bruce writes that

> [m]any of the students cultivated a taste for music. In 1825, a teacher was licensed to give lessons on the violin. Perhaps, this was the citizen of Staunton, who, crossing the Ridge, distributed many prospectuses among the hotels with the view of obtaining a sufficient number of pupils to make a class.\(^9\)

Whether this violin teacher is Mr. Bigelow is unclear, but from Bigelow’s departure until the 1920s, we can recover only a scattering of names, courses of instruction, concert programs, and other ephemera related to musical performance at UVA. In John Hammond Moore’s *Albemarle: Jefferson’s County 1727-1976*, the author lists music instructors from the Albemarle County area who had some connections with UVA students. These are listed in Figure 1 below. Among the information in UVA’s archives is a course listing for the summer of 1918 that details the music classes offered by Aden L. Fillmore (Director of Music and Supervisor of Music in Pittsburg Public Schools), Elizabeth H. Tennant (Supervisor of Music at West Chester Normal School in Pennsylvania), and Daisy Wingfield (Superintendent of Music for Roanoke Public

\(^9\) Bruce, p.
Schools). The summer program offered courses for first and second-year students in sight singing, pedagogy, vocal production, theory, composition, and performance on piano, organ, and violin.

From these sources, we can gather than no music professor was paid a salary by UVA until the 1920s, when the McIntire Department of Music was officially founded. During the first century of its existence, the University of Virginia offered its music instructors room and board in a hotel on grounds in exchange for services rendered. The instructor’s duties ranged from teaching music theory, music history, composition, performance on various instruments, and at times dance and fencing! Fees were paid directly to the music instructor from students.

Figure 1: List of instructors:

- Mr. Bigelow hired to teach music at UVA in 1825 until 1833(?)
- Mrs. Spencer of New York offered pianoforte lessons in the 1820s
- Samuel O. Hendren taught sacred music in a room on Main Street in Charlottesville
- J. H. Hoffman offered lessons on various instruments in the Jefferson Hotel or in-home
- C. T. Frey gave music lessons to women at the Piedmont Female Institute
- J.M. Deens offered singing lessons at the Albemarle Female Institute
- E. Teltow offered instruction on violin, guitar, flute, clarinet, and coronet in the mid-1800s
- Aden L. Fillmore, Elizabeth H. Tennant, and Daisy Wingfeld, summer 1918

Similarly, dance was considered part of a complete education during this time, and dance instructors such as Thomas W. Vaughan offered their services in the form of private lessons in the home for ladies during the day, gentlemen at night, and only with the consent of both parties’ parents were co-ed lessons given, and then only after the third day of instruction.
The UVA German Club and Dance

During the nineteenth century, German immigrants brought their language, cuisine, music, and dance to America. So-called German clubs and societies provided a space to both preserve and disseminate German culture throughout the United States. Such organizations ranged from singing and gymnastics clubs to philanthropic societies. According the memoirs written by former University of Virginia students, the UVA German Club held an elaborate
dance—referred to as the spring German—at the end of each academic year. A small ensemble or orchestra provided music for dancing, and young women from Charlottesville and nearby women’s colleges such as Augusta Women’s Seminary, now known as Mary Baldwin College.

While many dance styles, including reels and galops, were popular in the nineteenth century, the waltz ranked foremost among them. Though its origins remain somewhat obscure, the word “waltz” stems from the Latin verb volvere, which indicates a turning or rotation. Throughout the eighteenth century, the waltz was indistinguishable from other triple-meter couple dances like the Ländler, Spinner, and Deutscher, the names of which refer to specific geographic regions of the German state rather than specific choreography.

Among the myriad composers who contributed to the development of the waltz were the elder Johann Strauss (1804-1849), Josef Lanner (1801-1843), Franz Schubert (1797-1829), Carl Maria von Weber (1786-1826), and Frederick Chopin (1810-1849). Schubert (1797-1828) published the first collection of works specifically designated as Waltzen, and Weber’s popular “Aufforderung zum Tanz” (1819) initiated the dance’s aesthetic ascendency, which survived in Vienna until the twentieth century. In 1905, Franz Lehár’s (1870-1948) operetta The Merry Widow created a multi-media sensation. Peterson describes the Widow’s influence on music, dance, fashion, and even product branding on everything from hats to household cleaners. The impact of The Merry Widow on popular culture was such that it was soon lampooned in satirical cartoons. While the waltz became a genre in which composers invested a great deal of creativity and originality, it nonetheless retained its practical use in ballroom situations.

“The Flora Waltz” appears on a program for the opening concert at UVA’s Public Hall, in the Rotunda Annex, on 17 December 1891. On the program, C.W. Flemming is listed as the
composer or arranger of several pieces performed by the Banjo, Guitar, & Mandolin Club (discussed below). No evidences suggests that Flemming was the actual composer of any of the pieces, as there exists no “Flora Waltz” written in the nineteenth century attributed to him; however, many waltzes and waltz collections bear a dedication to Flora, an assortment of which appear below.
FLORA'S FESTIVAL
WALTZES
Composed
by Lohitsky.
As performed by the
Cincinnati Amateur Society
Piano
Miss Mary H. Taylor
Arranged for the
Misses Schuyler to
by
HENRY D. SOFGE.

Printed according to Act of Congress of 1831, by W. C. Peters in the City of Cincinnati, Dept. of 12.

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Musical Ensembles at UVA

Like most nineteenth-century universities, UVA had a lively student-run musical community. Throughout the first century of its existence, numerous musical ensembles came and went, some within the space of a single academic year while others continue into the present. Founded in 1871 as The Cabell House Men, the Virginia Glee Club is the University’s oldest musical organization and the second oldest student organization on grounds. In 1895, the group changed its name the University of Virginia Men’s Glee Club, and in 1988, it became known as The Virginia Glee Club. It is now and entirely independent, student-run choir that has garnered acclaim for performances around the world. An offshoot of the Glee Club, The Virginia Gentleman began as an a cappella octet in 1953, followed in 1977 by the oldest all-women’s a cappella ensemble, The Virginia Belles.\(^\text{10}\)

The Banjo, Guitar, and Mandolin Clubs comprised an active portion of UVA’s musical community during this time, often performing in concert with the Glee Club. Indeed, many students appear on the rosters of both organizations. Such clubs were common at American universities during this time, and the history of the banjo—an instrument typically associated with African American and working class culture—deserves a short discussion.

Often considered a quintessential American instrument, the modern banjo developed across national and cultural lines as a result of the African diaspora. The earliest western descriptions of one of the banjo’s forerunners appears in Sir Hans Sloane’s *A Voyate to the Islands of Madeira, Barbados, Nieves, St. Christopher, and Jamaica* (1668) and depicts two

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\(^{10}\) These organizations and many other singing groups at UVA maintain websites with images, audio files, and historical information. For the Virginia Glee Club see [www.virginiagleelclub.org](http://www.virginiagleelclub.org); for the Virginia Gentlemen, see [http://scs.student.virginia.edu/~vagent/](http://scs.student.virginia.edu/~vagent/); for the Virginia Belles, see: [http://www.vabelles.com/](http://www.vabelles.com/).
Jamaican “strum–strumps” with long necks and skin covered gourd bodies. By the eighteenth century, the banjo or banjer could be found throughout North America. In his Notes on the State of Virginia, Thomas Jefferson describes enslaved Africans as “more generally gifted [in music] than whites, with accurate ears for tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch. Whether they will be equal to the composition of melody or of complicated harmony is yet to be proved.” Though often cited as an example of eighteenth-century essentialism and racism, Jefferson’s passage also provides modern readers with an important piece of the soundscape of his time. In a often-overlooked footnote, Jefferson adds “the instrument proper to them [Africans] is the banjo, which they brought hither from Africa, and which is the original of the guitar, its chords being precisely the four lower chords of the guitar.” According to Jay Scott Odell and Robert B. Winans, this passage suggests two possible tunings for the banjo. The guitar was, during Jefferson’s time, typically tuned C-e-g-c’-e’-g’, so Jefferson’s comment could mean either that the banjo was tuned C-e-g-c’ or g-c’-e’-g’.

The banjo became an important part of minstrel shows and was thus introduced to white society and other musical traditions including ragtime, bluegrass, and old time. It was used in chamber music and often accompanied singing and/or dancing. By the 1850s, the banjo made its appearance in genteel parlors of North America and Europe where it was played by large numbers of middle class women, as it was considered less vulgar than the guitar. At the same time, banjo clubs and orchestras formed at universities around the country, including UVA.


Other musical organizations had shorter lives but nonetheless contributed to the soundscape of the university. These include the Mozart Club, the College Choir, Claribel (a small band of troubadours who serenaded the ladies of Charlottesville), the West Range Sextette, and various manifestations of an orchestral and band consisting of a variety of instruments available at the time. The existence of these motley instrumental ensembles further suggests that, as Peterson describes above, musical performances throughout the nineteenth century relied less on a fixed notion of the “work” than a flexibility that accommodated whatever resources were at hand. In my research, I found few extant or surviving programs from concerts by these short-lived ensembles, and these corroborate Peterson’s claims.

Figure 2: Musical Ensembles listed in UVA *Corks and Curls*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Ensembles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>University Glee Club; West Range Sextette; Instrumental Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>University Glee Club; East Range Orchestra,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>University Glee Club, University Banjo Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>University Orchestra; Banjo, Mandolin, Guitar, &amp; Glee Club,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893</td>
<td>College Choir; The Mozart Club; Glee, Banjo, Mandolin, &amp; Guitar Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>UVA Glee, Banjo, Mandolin Club with dates/locations of their winter tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Glee, Banjo, Mandolin Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>College Choir; Glee, Banjo, &amp; Mandolin Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>College Choir; Glee, Banjo, &amp; Mandolin Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Glee and Mandolin Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Hot Feet Club; Chapel Choir; Glee, Banjo, &amp; Mandolin club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>Glee Club; Mandolin and Guitar Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1905</td>
<td>Glee Club w/ separate Quartet; Instrumental Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Chapel Choir; Glee Club; Instrumental Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>Chapel Choir; Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>Choir; Glee Club; Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Choir; Glee Club; Band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1915</td>
<td>Glee Club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>Glee Club; Mandolin Club</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gaps reflect missing volumes in the UVA collection of *Corks & Curls*
THE COLLEGE CHOIR.

HARRISON RANDOLPH, Organist,                     Leader.

FIRST TENOR.
S. H. McKIM,
M. M. KRİSE,
C. M. ABBOT,
E. A. CRAIGHILL, Jr.

SECOND TENOR.
P. O. ADAMS,
P. M. BULLWINKEL,
W. B. EAGLES,
P. O. LANDIS.

FIRST BASS.
R. E. L. MARSHALL,
PAUL PETTIT,
B. W. MOORE,
H. B. KANE.

SECOND BASS.
HERBERT OLD,
GEO. AINSLIE,
R. B. TAYLOR,
J. H. ALDRICH.
An Extensive archive of Glee Club programs and recordings can be found in the University of Virginia Music Library. However, these programs and recordings cover a period from the mid-twentieth century to the present, thus lying outside the bounds of the present research.

All images found in The University of Virginia yearbook, **Corks & Curls** in Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library and Alderman Library.
UVA Banjo, Guitar, & Mandolin Club Late-Nineteenth Century
Light Opera and Minstrelsy

Comic opera is an umbrella term encompassing a number of genres including French opéra comique, German Singspiel, Spanish zarzuela, English operetta, and Italian opera buffa. Comic operas rank among the most enduring and popular of the operatic canon, and many have retained their mass appeal since their premieres in the nineteenth century. One such comic opera, Gaetano Donizetti’s (1797-1848) *La fille du régiment* opened in Paris on 11 February 1840. A comic opera in two acts based on a French libretto by Jules-Henri Vernoy de Saint-Georges and Jean-François Bayard, *La Fille du régiment* was first performed in the US in New Orleans in
1843 then frequently around the country in English, French, and Italian translations. The opera is perhaps most (in) famous for its fiendishly difficult tenor aria, "Ah! mes amis, quel jour de fête!,” with its phenomenal nine high Cs.

Similarly, English operetta like Gilbert and Sullivan’s *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879), and *The Mikado* (1885) were staples in nineteenth-century theater. Touring and student groups performed these works and excerpts from them frequently, and the operetta template inspired student composers at North American universities like Columbia, Yale, and UVA to contribute their own efforts to the stage.

The libretto to an operetta by UVA student Jack Mosby called *The Flirt*, which poked fun at university professors, appears in *University Magazine* in 1889. *The Flirt* featured a chorus of professors in two concentric circles “revolving slowly in opposite directions while the sages chant in unison:

For years collectively we’ve sought
to see if we could find
a single great or little thought
unknown even to our mind,
yet not one instance can we spot
or find the smallest grain
of knowledge that we haven’t got.
We’ve sought for more in vain!
We know it all, we know it all, we’ve sought for more in vain.¹⁴

On 29 April 1905, UVA students performed *Khan of Kathan*, a comic opera with music and libretti by Columbia University students Kenneth Seymore Webb and H. W. Albert. *Khan* appears to have made the rounds among many universities during this time; however, only one

¹⁴ The full text of *The Flirt* can be found in the archives of *Arcade Echoes*:
http://www.archive.org/stream/arcadeechoessele00woodrich/arcadeechoessele00woodrich_djvu.txt
manuscript survives. It is housed in the British National Library, and I was unable to obtain a copy of the score for consultation for this research. From the libretto, it seems to participate in the tradition of Orientalist opera of the time including Leo Delibes *Lakme* (1880), Guiseppe Verdi’s *Aida* (1871), and Gilbert and Sullivan’s *The Mikado* (1885). Schubert’s one-act singspiel *Die Verschworenen* (1820) was performed during this time as was Gounod’s *Faust*. (1859).

According to the 1907 *University Record*, the UVA dramatic club mounted a production of that “merry Mexican comedy” *La Serena* on 24 April 1907 to the delight of audiences. Katherine Preston notes that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, almost any play—whether intended to function as a musical experience or not—was interspersed with song and dance so frequently that the practice solidified into a widespread performance convention. While no archival evidence to date reveals the extent to which theatrical works at UVA were given a musical treatment, it would be a historical aberration indeed if dramatic works presented either by UVA’s various theatrical troupes and visiting artists contained no music.

Both Alexander and Culbreth also describe performances by the University Minstrel Troup during their time at UVA. Minstrelsy was, according to Eric Lott, one of the most pervasive and problematic performance traditions of the nineteenth century. A wildly popular farce of African American culture, minstrel shows appear in every major US city and tour most small cities and towns. A typical show consisted of three acts. The first played on stereotypes of the black dandy figure; the middle section, or olio, consisted of a variety of acts including acrobatics, physical feats, and culminated in a “stump speech” given by a simple-minded

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16 *University Record* 1/1 (1907). http://books.google.com/books?id=nKggAAAAIAAJ&pg=RA1-PA46&dq=La+Serena+UVA&source=bl&ots=k2zUZSVW4u&sig=GLIXU9Bs4RzpZ8-S0P9g5gKzXwXw&hl=en&ei=drSwTNeVKMWblgej6cDoDw&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=2&ved=0CBUQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false
character with grandiose aspirations. The third act was a plantation scene with singing and dancing. Bruce describes the University Minstrels as “a light-hearted band…organized by George D. Fawsett” and notes their frequent performances in town hall. Culbreth also recalls the town hall performances as “highly entertaining, well-patronized by University and town people, and [as having] served to develop among the participants not only a strong personal loyalty but a certain self-assurance from stage contact which could not have been obtained elsewhere.”

Figure 3: Minstrel Troupe Program

Overture

Part I

Overture Jingle Bells
Opening ChorusChimes of Normandy
I am Waiting for my Love’s Return Mr. Bickell
Down by the Deep Sad Sea Mr. Hains
Paddy Duffy’s Cart Mr. Jones
Good Night but not Good-Bye Mr. Echols
“University” Mr. Galt
White Wings (by request) Mr. Hobson
For Goodness Sake Don’t Say I Told you Mr. Jones
Temperance union Messrs. Galt, Tyler, and Jones

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18 Bruce, p. 125.
Part II

The Eboy Quartette Club
Messrs. Pearshall, Brickell, Whitfield, Kimbal

University Quartette Club
Messrs. Galt, Hains, Hobson, and Bickell

Cheese Notes
Messrs. Tyler, Jones, Mosby, Saunders, and Pearshall

Stump Speech
Mr. Tyler

Part III

Berlesque of *Mikado* (Libretto by Messrs. Galt and Thomas)*^20*

*Mikado* (Gov of VA) Mr. Galt

Nanki-Poo Mr. Brikell

*Koko* (Lord High Mayor of C’ville) Mr. Jones

Poo-Bah (“ of everything else) Mr. Thomas

Pish-Tush Mr. Corbett

Yum Yum

Pitti Sing three Little Maids from Meade’s Mr. Dabney, Hains, and Minor

Peep Bo

Katisha (old maid from Richmond) Mr. Tyler

Chorus of School Girls, Students, Etc.

Program for 1886/1887 UVA Minstrel Troupe Performance

Despite the apparent frequency with which musical-theatrical and operatic performance took place at the University, the quality of these performances was much-debated. Alexander Bruce recalls that there were occasional productions of comic opera like *The Mikado* but “the

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*^20* According to Peterson, the burlesque in the nineteenth century had less of the “girlie” show connotation with which we associate it today. While this eventually became part of the genre, it originally indicated a satire or parody of existing works, political situations, and cultural issues of the day.
strictly professional entertainments…were not of the highest histrionic or musical quality.”

Similarly, an 1871 *University Magazine* editorial complained, “no great orators or singers ever delight our ears and eyes. The proof of the great want is the immense success of any small, insignificant, and paltry troupe that comes to town.” By contrast, David M. R. Clubreth, a student at UVA during the late-nineteenth century, recalls that students “did not hesitate to manifest displeasure at any exhibition falling below our fancied standard or to indulge in noisy demonstration at that which specially pleased, even though sometimes it annoyed the police authorities.”

Culbreth also notes that ladies seldom attended public concerts, which allowed the men to be “unrestrained in [their] enthusiasm by any refining influence save that inherently possessed by some and fortunately not thoroughly forgotten under such emergencies.”

The conduct of students at musical and theatrical performances resulted in faculty interjection. For example, in 1867, the faculty denied permission for the students to produce *Lady of Lyons*, a play which they felt would lead to neglect their studies. Musical activity outside the concert hall also fell under faculty jurisdiction. Bruce describes an interdiction by the faculty to ban the use of musical instruments during “the hours of lecture and throughout Sunday [a prohibition carried further in 1831 when] all musical instruments were to be laid aside after two o’clock at night.” That these prohibitions were taken quite seriously can be demonstrated by the dismissal of an obstinate student who persisted in playing his violin during the prohibited time frame.

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21 Bruce, Vol. IV p. 125.

22 This quote is used to suggest that the Cabell Hall Men formed in response to the absence of quality music at UVA on the Virginia Glee Club homepage: [http://www.virginiagleeclub.org/](http://www.virginiagleeclub.org/)


24 Culbreth, 465.
Popular Song

The term “popular music” represents something of a moving target for historians. What qualifies as “popular” varies between analysts along three vectors: (1) scale of activity, typically sales figures; (2) means of dissemination, typically with recourse to mass media, print, recordings, television, and lately, the internet, and (3) social group, typically positioning the working class against elites. Prior to the nineteenth century, an evening of musical performances in any city in the United States might involve an array of what we now know as classical music—popular arias from opera, art song, overtures—and what we call popular music—minstrel songs, sentimental ballads for voice and piano, folk songs, Irish jigs. Notions of popular and elite genres of music in the United States began to solidify only in the nineteenth-century.

Sociologist Paul DiMaggio’s work on Boston Brahmins presents a clear and deliberate instance of the formation of cultural taste hierarchies in the US. According to DiMaggio, the founding of the Boston Symphony and the building of the Boston Museum of Art began as social projects aimed to provide aesthetic experience for all Bostonians. With time, the Brahmins—whose economic hold on the city was threatened by the growing middle class—exerted influence on the shape of both institutions, deciding what works featured in the exhibit halls and what

piece constituted the concert programs. Gradually, their tactics resulted in the exclusion of working and lower-class Bostonians from these two institutions.\textsuperscript{26}

Closer to home, Thomas Jefferson left behind a number of tickets and programs from decades of concert and theater attendance. From these, Helen Cripe constructs a snapshot of a typical evening out for the founder of The University of Virginia, which would typically include a program that mixed serious and comic theater, studied and vernacular music, sentimental drama and bawdy humor.\textsuperscript{27} An examination of concert programs from venues around the US reveals a similar mixture of genres and styles. Furthermore, even Jefferson’s own sheet music collection—housed at The University of Virginia’s Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library—contains everything from a full-score edition of Weber’s Der Feischutz to popular songs for voice and piano/guitar.

Similarly, concert programs from in and around The University of Virginia demonstrate willingness (or perhaps an expectation) that a particular evening would bring together diverse aesthetic experiences. During a Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin, and Glee Club program from the 1800s, for example, one might hear arrangements of Stephen Foster songs played by a string band, a Donizetti chorus from La Fille du Regement, sentimental parlor songs for solo voice and piano, adaptations of Mozart or Haydn symphonic movements for guitar, Schubert lied translated into English, and novelty performances of well-known pieces by “serious” composers.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{26} Paul DiMaggio SOURCE
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Programme

Part I

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer</th>
<th>Ensemble</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Invincible Guard March 1887</td>
<td>Bert E. Shattuck</td>
<td>Banjo Club</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Invitation to Waltz</td>
<td>C. W. Fleming</td>
<td>Mandolin Club</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Soldiers’ Chorus</td>
<td>Ritterberger</td>
<td>Double Quartette</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Darkies’ Patrol</td>
<td>G. L. Lansing</td>
<td>Banjo</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>“Waltz Song” (Faust)</td>
<td>Gounod</td>
<td>Whistling Solo</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>Last Night</td>
<td>Kjerulf, Halfdan</td>
<td>Double Quartette</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>It’s a Long Lane that Has No Turn</td>
<td>Lyons</td>
<td>Mixed Quartette</td>
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Part II

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Composer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Triumph March</td>
<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>Banjo</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Flora Waltz</td>
<td>C. W. Fleming</td>
<td>Mandolin</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Silently We Steal Away+</td>
<td>Mozart</td>
<td>Quartette+</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>Darkey’s Dream</td>
<td>G. L. Lansing</td>
<td>Banjo</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>Dream Faces</td>
<td>Molloy</td>
<td>Double Quartette</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mandolins</td>
<td>Mattei</td>
<td>Mandolin</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Imogene Donahue</td>
<td>Thompson</td>
<td>Glee Club</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>On the Mill Dam (Galop)</td>
<td>A. A. Babb</td>
<td>Banjo, Mandolin, and Guitar</td>
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Finale

Program for 17 December 1871 Town Hall Concert
12 February 1894 Glee, Banjo, and Mandolin Concert (8884-h box 23)

Programme

1. Here’s to old Virginia (glee club)
2. Triumph March (banjo club) Lansing
3. Love’s But a Dream—Waltz (Mandolin) Arling Shaeffer (wrote an 1895 guitar method book)
4. Merry Poverty (Glee) Kremser

Part II

1. Alvarado-Spanish Serenade (mandolin) Henlein (Charles Henlein, Mandolin School MT602 .H4 1891 v.1)
2. Phantom Band (quartet and glee) Thayer
3. Normandie March (banjo) Armstrong
4. British Patrol (mandolin) Asch (Georg Asch)

Part III

1. Andalusia—Valse Espanole (mandolin) Le Thierra*
2. The Owl and the Pussy Cat (Mr. Buthe and Club) De Koven
3. But One Vienna (Banjo) Schrammel

Program for 12 February 1894 Glee, Banjo, and Mandolin Concert

Across the nineteenth century, many varieties of popular song emerged and gained popularity, particularly as the music publishing industry made sheet music widely available. Popular or “hit” songs from stage shows were often sold outside a performance, often with slogans like “as sung by” or “as made famous by” a particular star emblazoned on the covers. Many of these songs were written for voice and instrumental accompaniment and feature catchy, easy-to-sing melodic lines supported by pleasing, functional harmonic progressions. As the influence of African American music grew, the rhythms and harmonies of ragtime made their way into popular song. In an age before recordings were available, in-home music making was

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28 Peterson discusses this in her “American Musical Theater before the Twentieth Century.”
one of the primary ways in which people experienced music. The availability of relatively inexpensive pianos, banjos, and guitars facilitated domestic music-making.

European art song was performed on numerous occasions during the nineteenth century at UVA. The archive of concert programs lists titles in English, which suggests they were sung in translation. Singing translations for different audiences occurred commonly during this period, and a thoughtful translation could facilitate an audience’s understanding and experience of vocal music, whether opera, choral works, or more intimate settings for voice and piano. Furthermore, the translated text opens avenues to new meaning in relation to the existing musical text.

Norwegian composer Halfdan Kjerulf (1815-1868) began studies in law before becoming a journalist. After the death of his father, Kjerulf supported his family through journalism and studied music theory and composition on the side, eventually publishing his first collection of songs—the genre with which he is most associated—in 1841. After studying in Leipzig and Copenhagen, Kjerulf returned to Norway to teach piano and compose. His songs show the influence of the German lied tradition of Schubert and Schumann with their sensitive accompaniments that evoke the atmosphere and imagery of the lyrics; they also betray the influence of Norwegian folk music through characteristic dance rhythms, modal inflections, and melodic profiles. Predominantly strophic in form, the songs also showcase the singing voice against which the piano’s preludes, interludes, and postludes provide evocative commentary. Kjerulf established a Norwegian art song tradition that opened pathways for the vocal works of Edvard Grieg.

“Sehnsucht” is exemplary of Kjerulf’s writing for voice and piano. A simple melody comprising mostly scalar passages set syllabically over the text sings over an unobtrusive
arpeggiated accompaniment. Moments of subtle chromaticism suggest the singer’s longing for an absent beloved, and the song’s repeated strophes, with their inevitable return to the same melodic material, mirror the singer’s inability to forget this lost love.

Scottish born Arthur Lloyd (1839-1904) was a composer and performer in the British dance hall tradition. The child of two celebrated performers, opera singer Eliza Horncastle and actor Horation Lloyd, Arthur Lloyd became one of the most esteemed music hall personalities, known for both his humorous songs and performances. He is considered by many to be the first lion comique. His comic song “For Goodness’ Sake Don’t’ Say I Told You” is typical of the music hall genre. Written for voice and piano accompaniment, its simple harmonies and uncomplicated rhythms lend themselves to adaptation to whatever instrument or ensemble in use at a particular venue.

American composer Stephen Foster (1826-1864) was raised in the Pittsburg area and, despite family and class objections, pursued music as a profession. He is considered the first American composer to support himself solely on the basis of music sales, though he often sold his compositions outright rather than signing contracts for royalties. Problems with drinking and an unhappy marriage led to what we might today call depression and a suicide attempt. Foster composed many beloved pieces that have become part of American musical heritage.

The basis for much of his music comes from both popular ballads and minstrel traditions. His ballads often focus on romance, nostalgia and longing for home, and these sentimental preoccupations made “Beautiful Dreamer,” “Gentle Annie,” and “Jeanie with the Light Brown Hair” immensely popular. Other songs that draw on minstrel traditions include “Oh, Suzanna!”
“Old Black Joe,” and “Camptown Races.” In total, Foster left nearly 300 songs for voice and accompaniment on piano or guitar.

As Deane L. Root observes, rather optimistically, the composer’s use of sentimental texts and often wistful melodies “appealed across all boundaries of ethnicity, race, national origin, economic level, and class.” While we may debate the accuracy of Root’s sweeping
generalization, Foster’s music was wildly popular in the United States and doubtlessly constitutes an important part of music in the Academical Village.

Informal Musical Life
Music formed an important aspect of university life according to memoirs by several alumni. In his charming and sentimental book, *In the Days of My Youth as a Student at The University of Virginia*, James South describes a few sound scenes from the University in the late-1800s. Southall lived on Monroe Hill, where he recalls two roommates both from Mississippi, Jim Stevens and Boyle, who were “inseparable as Siamese twins.” Amateur musicians, Stevens and Boyle were

as wedded to their art as they were devoted to each other. Banjo or guitar, mandolin or zither, never for a moment, day or night, so at least it seemed to me, were not both of them plucking one instrument or the other as if they were alone together in the wide, wide world, and it mattered not how long the performance lasted…but for good or evil, anybody who lived on Monroe Hill in the sessions of 1888-1889 simply had to get used to their playing for there was no escape short of murder or suicide.”

Culbreth remembers that students “who were musical often spent the evening hour in some one’s room where several of the more skilled performers enjoyed separate and concerted practice, much to the delight or disgust of those within audible range.”29 And the editors of *University Magazine* noted that “although it was acknowledged that there was no want of trained singers and skillful violinists in the ranks of students,” that university had no musical clubs as of 1871.

Students bring their musical talents (or their aspirations of talent) along with their academic gifts to any University. Many cultivate a love of music prior to enrollment, while others discover new musical worlds as part of their university experience. As anyone who has spent much time in an undergraduate dormitory can attest, teen today, dormitories around the globe pulse with the sounds of music made by students, with varying results.

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29 Culbreth, p. 468.
Conclusion

As a person who spends most of his time listening to Joni Mitchell records and attempting to parlay them into a dissertation topic, I found myself on unfamiliar terrain last spring. In a music department seminar led by the fearless and fierce Professor Bonnie Gordon, a class of eager graduate students interrogated the soundscape of Jefferson’s America. Our inquiries into the sounds of the eighteenth and nineteenth century led to, among other things, discussions of Jefferson as early folklorist and song collector, the music of enslaved African Americans, tavern songs, fiddle tunes, the relationship between music and travel, and the effects of music pedagogy on the body. The impetus for the current research stemmed from a note I scribbled on the bottom of a page while reading: What was the soundscape of the University of Virginia?

When I received a Kenan Fellowship for Research on the Academical Village in the spring of 2010, I had three things: 1. a research question, 2. funding, and 3. just enough experience doing archival research to be very dangerous. Over the summer, I intended to delve into the Jefferson Music Collection, various University papers, letters, diaries, and correspondences from alumni, and a plethora of other materials housed in the Albert & Shirley Small Special Collections Library. My straightforward goal: to construct a neat and tidy chronology of music at UVA during the first century of its existence, leading up to the founding of the music department in 1920. A naïve historian, I marched into the archives, fully expecting the past to obey, but as anyone who spends much time dealing with history can attest, the past also has a healthy inclination toward unruliness. It seldom does what we want it to.
Expecting that I would find precise names, dates, repertories, salaries, and various other information about UVA’s musical communities among the papers left by preceding generations, it soon became undeniable that such information was unavailable. Thus, I spent several very unproductive days fretting about how to proceed, to put it mildly. Finding scant information to respond to my inquiries about the history of music education at UVA per se, I unmoored my research instincts, allowed them to float relatively freely, and that is when I began to actually listen to the past.

A few things we do know: Thomas Jefferson envisioned music as part of the curriculum at UVA. His passion for music is well-documented and can be summed up with a quote from a frequently cited letter to Giovanni Fabbrioni in which Mr. Jefferson declares, “Music is the passion of my soul.” According to Alexander’s multi-volume *History of the University of Virginia: 1819-1919*, music instruction in performance, theory, and composition took place in one of the classroom spaces in the Rotunda. Alexander even tells us that the University’s first music instructor, Mr. Bigelow, stayed at UVA until at least 1833. During this time, he was paid directly by his pupils and received room and board in a University hotel. From the University’s yearbook, *Corks & Curls*, we find evidence of an active and diverse musical community at UVA that included at times a banjo, guitar, and mandolin club, the Men’s Glee Club, several short-lived chamber music ensembles, a West Range band, chapel choirs, dance bands for the annual spring “German,” theatrical ensembles that included music as part of their productions, and for a short while, even a University Minstrel Troup.

A few things we do not know: While we do know that music instruction was happening at UVA between 1819 and 1919, very little survives about these instructors. She/he was usually paid directly by the students rather than a University salary. Thus, the music instructor becomes
a sort of phantom in the archive. A few names serve as markers along the trail, but there appears to have been a high turnover among instructors after he left UVA around 1830 until the founding of the McIntire Department of Music in 1920.

We also do not know precisely how these university ensembles sounded. Few were recorded, and of those that might have been, the recordings have been lost. However, we are not entirely at a loss for descriptions of the sound of the era. Correspondence and memoirs contain eloquent passages that detail the sonic environment of UVA or a UVA-related concert. We also know a good bit about musical practices among various social groups in the nineteenth century. Young men—the university was an all men’s institution until 1892, when it began to admit women under certain conditions, and it was not until 1970 that women were admitted without qualification—from middle and upper class families often studied an instrument. Indeed, during this time, literacy in western musical notation and performance was more pervasive perhaps than today, and of course, even the elite classes were steeped in folk, popular, and African American musical practices. Following Annette Gordon-Reed’s style of historically informed speculation, I hope the preliminary information outlined in this essay will help capture the ephemera of UVA’s musical past and enable us to imagine something like the soundscape of the Academical Village.
Bibliography


