MINSTRELS, MUSICIANS, AND MELODEONS

A Study in the Social History of Music in Vermont, 1848-1872

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AT mid-century in Vermont, music as distinguished from folk singing, which had had a vigorous life since early settlement, was beginning to be made and listened to for its own sake, and to have as secure a place in secular gatherings as in the church. Traveling musical companies began to compete successfully with other kinds of shows. Occasionally one of their members would detach himself from the troupe and set himself up in a town as a musical jack-of-all-trades. He often provided the leadership for the local amateur choruses and such musical conventions as took place near by, as well as for the brass bands which developed with the martial spirit preceding the Civil War. Village jewelers and watchmakers began to deal in musical instruments, and with the booksellers, to serve as agents for the itinerants. Concert handbills and programs were prepared by the local printers, who occasionally published the teachers' efforts at dance music or sacred composition. The changes in the social history of music in this period took place in the larger towns, along the railroads which tied them to the large cities.

For two bits, barnstorming companies operating out of New York and Boston offered the following attractions: plays; panoramas and dioramas of New York City, Civil War battle scenes or the Holy Land; readings; comic dialogues; ventriloquists; prestidigitators; contortionists; gymnasts; glassblowers; Wild Men of Borneo; Siamese twins—and concerts. Most of these shows had their musical interludes or accompaniments. The usual concert was a show with a large proportion of music. Audiences were more taken by the novel and comic than by the musical.

Tours of minstrel shows and popular singers were planned

to reach the country towns in the seasons of light farm work, particularly from September until the weather made it too hard to get to the town hall, and in spring before and after "mud time." The "long hair" artists, on the other hand, came between May Day and Hallowe'en, since their winter season was in the cities. The organgrinder, a separate species, had his own reasons for waiting until the weather had thawed the villagers from their stoves.[1]

Admission to these popular concerts was almost universally 25 cents, half price for children and sometimes for ladies, until the Civil War boosted general admission to 50 cents and reserved seats to 75 cents. Minstrel shows sometimes preferred to pack the house at 15 cents. The highbrow teams limited their efforts to Rutland, Burlington, Montpelier, and a few other large towns; but for the comic ballad singers and minstrels, almost any village with a hotel and a printer was worth a try. The agent distributed posters and handbills in advance, and arranged with the local paper to give the artists a boost in the news columns in return for advertising the program.

The people liked "cork opera" best. They liked Dandy Jim, "the Virginia Rattler, greatest banjoist ever," and his "sublime and ludicrous" lecture on phrenology. His "celebrated Ethiopian Serenaders" passed through from Montreal on their way South, giving as advertised, "a Grand, Chaste, and Miscellaneous Concert," complete with bone castanets, fire tongs and dances.[2] Pell and Mulligan's "Original Metropolitan Opera Troupe" supplied "burlesques, queer sayings, fancy dances, jigs, reels, . . . Life in old Virginny."[3] A cut in the Brattleboro

[1] Most of the information for this article comes from a large number of newspaper items, especially in the Burlington *Free Press*, Middlebury *Register*, Montpelier *Vermont Watchman and State Journal*, Rutland *Courier* and Rutland *Herald*. Files of the Bellows Falls *Times*, Brattleboro *Eagle*, Montpelier *Green Mountain Freeman*, *Patriot* and *Vermont Christian Messenger*, as well as the New York *National Anti-Slavery Standard* and the Boston *Liberator* were also used. References to specific statements are fully documented in the author's original manuscript.

[2] Burlington *Free Press*, May 17, 1844.

[3] Rutland *Herald*, December 30, 1853.

Eagle of October 20, 1854, of a bent figure with a funny face under a wrinkly dunce cap attracted crowds to hear Mr. and Mrs. L. V. H. Crosby, musicians and delineators. "That comical Brown" performed at Quechee and Woodstock with a balladist, "an educated dog Scothi" and a musical novelty, Prof. G. Goodwall Merck, guitarist, harmonica player and violinist, who played nine instruments at once.[4] "The Bards of Ossian" led by Ossian E. Dodge, "wit, humorist and poet-vocalist," were likened to Samson because they brought down the house. Dodge paraded his quartet, an alto and three men, around the hotels, selling subscriptions to the Boston *Literary Museum*. He sometimes used the device of passing out a sheet of music to every female attending, to secure a respectable audience. Negro tunes and buffoonery were essential to success. But even this level of art did not always pay, for Gaylord and Stimpson's Opera Troupe left Rutland after what the paper called a "mongrel" concert, with their printer's bill unpaid, looking "as if they had not seen a washerwoman in two months."[5] Woodstock was a rigid blue-law town where for twenty years before 1866, most exhibitions, plays, and circuses were barred. In 1867 the authorities refused to let Dan Worcester's Combination Show play in Woodstock, and when a minstrel show was allowed to try its luck, windows and blinds were rattled, and the performers were brayed and hooted at.

There were other types of singers. Frank amateurs, such as the Amherst College Glee Club, occasionally took short trips. Families of singers could afford to perform in the villages and hamlets because man, wife and children all contributed toward one income. The Barkers, the Luca family from New Haven, Connecticut, the Swiss family of Peaks, "vocalists and Germanian bell-ringers," all made excursions among the Green Mountains. But none were so popular as the singing Hutchinsons.

These were regular performers at anti-slavery conventions,

[4] Woodstock *Spirit of the Age*, February 2, 1861, and December 19, 1867.
[5] Rutland *Herald*, November 23, 30, 1855.

and on hand to promote other reforms, as well as to sing on their own. Already well known in 1850, they were still coming back in 1870. The large family diminished, as Jesse was last heard of in 1853 at a water cure near Cincinnati; Judson J. committed suicide in Lynn, Massachusetts, in 1859, and Jesse's son Andrew died insane in 1860, at South Boston. That left Asa B., Lizzie C., and three of their children: Abby, Freddy, and Oliver Dennett. Old Asa was given to tiresome introductory remarks and buffoonery, but those who liked the anti-slavery songs endured this. Audiences even professed to like the male Hutchinsons' beards, which were not fashionable until the Civil War. "Kingdom Comin', or the Year of Jubilo," "The Slave's Appeal," and "The Old John Brown Song" were their favorites. No other troupe was so well known that it did not have to be explained. "The Tribe of Asa" had only to have its oddities excused.

It is difficult to classify these itinerant artists, but their repertories are the best index. Those who specialized in English, Scottish, and Irish ballads and "gems from opera" were most numerous in the sixties. They dispensed Verdi and Meyerbeer, Schubert and Auber, sandwiched between "The Last Rose of Summer," "A Man's a Man for A' That," and an original burlesque of Yankee Doodle. The prima donna was usually assisted by a basso and a pianist, violinist, flutist or cornetist. One blind "sub-bass singer," Professor W. A. Carns, advertised in the Montpelier *Watchman* in June, 1863, that he had a range of four octaves and could perform on the cornet and melodeon. Perhaps the best talent to tour Vermont was the eccentric Norwegian violinist, Ole Bull. He visited the United States frequently and made a fortune between 1843 and 1879. Jenny Lind's tour of 1850-1852, equally successful under the management of P. T. Barnum, apparently did not include Vermont, but Vermonters interested in music followed her performances with enthusiasm.

Instrumentalists had to be good to give a concert without aid of vocalists. Two Boston organizations, the Germania Band

and the Mendelssohn Quintette Club, were well enough received to return off and on throughout the period. In 1859 the Germania Band played for Commencement at Middlebury College, offering some of the best contemporary music—Donizetti, Flotow, Verdi—as well as Mozart. The quintet, consisting of two violins, two violas doubling on clarinet or flute, and a 'cello, appeared in Vermont in the late fifties. The first violinist, William Schultze, violin teacher at the Boston Music School, had been the leader of the Germania Musical Society.[6] The quintet had few changes in personnel; all but one of the members were German.

Some visiting musicians decided to settle in Vermont. Fales of the Germania Band gave twenty-four dancing lessons for five dollars in Rutland and two years later was teaching brass or strings, Boston or New York dances, selling instruments, and supplying quadrille bands to Montpelier. J. B. Holmberg came from Sweden in 1850 with Jenny Lind's orchestra. Advertised as "one of the best Clarinettists in the world," he played in Middlebury quadrille and cornet bands.[7] Later, he was scraping up a living as violinist, music dealer with H. L. Storey, private music teacher, and as instructor for the cornet bands in Burlington. His son Bernard followed the musical profession in Burlington after him. Professor Joseph Wassemer optimistically advertised "all kinds of music lessons," announcing that he had taken up permanent residence in Rutland.[8]

But these musical fellows were notoriously transient. Moses Cheney of Barnard, who taught singing school in Montpelier in the winter of 1862-1863, was later reported lecturing on music "out West." Vermonters, though hospitable, were suspicious of transients and foreigners, whether from Europe or from New York. The musician and dancing master, with his

[6] This was not the Germania Band, but a choral group performing the music of Weber, Rossini, Meyerbeer, Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven in Montpelier and Burlington, in 1850.

[7] His advertising card was printed in the Middlebury *Register* from December 1, 1852 through April 6, 1853.

[8] Rutland *Herald*, August 11, 1864.

city ways, was only one step above the French dandy who ran up bills and absconded, or Professor Melchior, who got a written marriage contract with a wealthy belle and was run out of town by his rivals on the eve of the wedding.[9] Musicians were suspect as representatives of the wicked cities; but to the newly rich, or those fond of urban ways, they could sell their talent. Russell B. Walker, after a few weeks in Rutland, published his card as a violinist, guitarist, and dancing master. "Particular attention paid to the improvement of manners, stoops corrected, gaits improved, the polite accomplishments of the social circle, etiquette of the street and ballroom taught, making dancing as it should be, an innocent and instructive recreation."[10]

The music "professors," however, gave most of their attention to pupils studying piano, then organ, violin, and voice. To make a living, they had not only to teach a little of everything, but to perform at concerts and dances, and serve as organists and choirmasters. The minister was glad to have them earn a little from the tuition of singing schools, because they might develop a new tenor for the choir, or at least improve congregational singing. The church connection not only provided a small, regular income, but was a sign of respectability.

Probably the best illustration of the qualities and activities needed to succeed as a professional musician in Vermont is the career of George A. Mietzke in Rutland County. For over thirty years he taught people to love music.

He was born on August 23, 1835, in Neustrelitz, Germany, capital of the small principality of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, north of Berlin, almost as big as Rutland when he first knew it. His grandfather, father and three uncles all played in the Grand Ducal Orchestra; and his father, Carl Mietzke, achieved fame as a solo violinist.[11] For a short time affiliated with the Royal Academy of Music in Berlin, George Mietzke came to

[9] Middlebury *Register*, February 2, 1853, and Rutland *Herald*, December 12, 13, 1865.

[10] Rutland *Herald*, July 15, 1853.

[11] *Program* of the Fourth Annual Rutland Music Festival, 1887, p. 21.

the United States about 1858, and for the next three years was director of music at Castleton Seminary. Here was a musical missionary to the cultural frontier, trained for his profession in Germany, then the capital of the musical world. The conditions of his profession were fundamentally changed when he crossed the Atlantic. No longer supported by aristocratic patronage, he would have to find a broader base of support in the people. Eventually, the democratic state through its public schools would become the patron.

Young Professor Mietzke enthusiastically promoted the ideal of music for every one. "Every one should learn music," he wrote in 1860, "for God has given every person talent, with a very few exceptions." Start the children young. Make the fees in the public schools low enough for any one. (It was too early even to mention the possibility of free public instruction.) Foster Sunday School singing and soon the whole congregation will do justice to the hymns. The quartet has no monopoly, to warrant its looking down its nose at any one singing in the pews. (Here spoke a man familiar with the Lutheran tradition, where congregational chorales are an integral part of worship.) Let there be "singing societies" in every town, with low rates of instruction and cheap admission to their entertainments. A strong enough love of singing good music will take away the jealous rivalry of members. Public leaders in church, school, and state owe the cause their support. With proper instruction in the seminaries, aided by good instruction books and music libraries, young ladies can learn how to practise the hard parts first, polish the details, and even find the essential exercises interesting. Then they will not close the piano for good, tired of the few pieces they learned by heart, because they will know how to learn new pieces. Mietzke called attention to the important place of music in the great civilizations of the Greeks and the Hebrews. Music can become popular in America, he concluded, so that the piano in the parlor will be something more than a decoration.[12]

[12] Mietzke's letter to the editor of the Rutland *Courier*, January 13, 1860.

Established at Castleton, he went aggressively after higher musical standards. Coöperating with Schultze and Fries of the Mendelssohn Quintette Club, he soloed on the violin at classical concerts in Castleton and Rutland. "Alpha" in the Rutland *Courier* of September 1, 1858, confessed that Castleton "still . . . prefers sharpers and negro melodies to honesty, talent, and the music of Beethoven." The crowd was small. Mietzke collected references around Rutland and started teaching there for 50 cents a lesson. His first winter in Rutland County must have been busy but discouraging. A Rutland "Academy of Music" which he and professional singers from Rutland, St. Johnsbury, and Boston promoted, performed a sacred concert in Castleton, with Mietzke at the piano. But the weather was very cold, the hall was hard to heat, the chorus was inexperienced and had not sung together long. There was talk of lowering admissions to 15 cents and forming a permanent musical society which could manage Handel, Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven. The Professor closed his first seminary term with a successful concert, and toured the country during the February holidays, giving concerts at Poultney, Brandon, Salem (New York), and Rutland, assisted by Miss Lena Ehle. He played the piano for a 148-couple dinner-dance at Barnes's Hotel, West Rutland, appeared again in March at the Rutland Town Hall, and with another Castleton teacher, prepared the Seminary chorus of twenty-five to give parts of Haydn's *Creation*. His own compositions, performed by his pupils or himself, appeared on some of these programs.

On December 15, 1859, he was married by the Reverend Aldace Walker, minister of the West Rutland Congregational Church, to Nancy L. Mead of West Rutland. At twenty-four, he had decided to settle down in Vermont and had married into the strongest denomination in the state. Nancy was a singer who taught and performed with him for several years.

During the Civil War, the Mietzkes were at North Granville (New York) Ladies' Seminary and Ripley Female Seminary at Poultney, Vermont, later the Troy Conference Academy. The

list of his compositions grew—mostly patriotic pieces, marches, dances and songs, printed in Rutland and sold by E. N. Merriam, book dealer and show agent.[13]

In 1866, Mietzke moved to Rutland, and with his wife took charge of the Congregational Society's new organ and choir. He continued to give lessons, teach singing school, perform, and compose. Mietzke had taken root. His later compositions, a *Te Deum* in the solid, nineteenth-century German idiom and a *Mass in G*, perhaps indicate a Lutheran liturgical background. His greatest achievement in later life was the organization of the Rutland Music Festival in 1884. He was a faithful agent in the transit of European civilization to the United States.

There were many other musical missionaries beside Mietzke,[14] and the local efforts they developed had a good start before the railroads gave them a boost. A musical convention to promote sacred music was held at West Poultney in December, 1843. An amateur Handel and Haydn Society was started in Burlington in the spring of 1847. Results shown in their first concert, although "unfinished," were "creditable," the reporter said, considering the performers' inexperience. Of course, they took liberties with the tempo, the sopranos "sharped," the male quartet "flatted," the piano accompaniment lacked taste and delicacy, and the singers could not control their facial contortions. The hall was too small; the platform too high and crowded.[15] They tried again the next year

[13] Representative titles include:

1861 *Grand March*, dedicated to John B. Page of Rutland, later Governor of Vermont.

1862 *Columbia*, a cantata for mixed voices. Words by Adrian T. Gorham.
The Volunteer's Return, a series including "The Army March," "The Stars and Stripes," "When the Ship Came in," and "The Soldier's Return."

1865 *Happy New Year's Polka*.
Charleston Is Ours, published by Horace Walters, New York, N. Y.

[14] For example, Charles Jerome Hopkins, son of Bishop John Henry Hopkins, Episcopalian leader, was a teacher, organist, and composer in Burlington and New York City.

[15] Burlington *Free Press*, July 9, 30, 1847.

and were better reviewed, though worse attended. The proceeds went to buy better anthem music.

The emphasis throughout the fifties continued to be on sacred music, and among the principal organizers, promoters, and performers were ministers, organists, and choir directors. If any money was made over expenses—and the performers usually "donated" their services—it went to the cause of better church music. H. A. Scott of Vergennes developed a juvenile chorus that performed in several towns. During political campaigns, glee clubs entertained with secular music. The Welsh, with a fine tradition of choral singing, used choir concerts in the slate region of Rutland County to help pay for their churches at Fair Haven and at Middle Granville, in New York. Choruses had a somewhat irregular existence during the Civil War. They revived after the war stronger than ever, with Mendelssohn and Gounod among their favorites. The popularity of such cantatas as George F. Root's *The Haymakers* and *The Flower Queen, or the Coronation of the Rose* in the late fifties and in the sixties shows a trend away from sacred music.[16]

Institutional efforts to foster music took the form of musical conventions, or institutes. "Delegates" would gather at a county seat for two to four days, and sing under the direction of a city professional. Interest was lively from Burlington to Rutland, where the Western Vermont Musical Association maintained an organization almost continuously for eighteen years.[17] Organized in 1857 at Burlington under the direction of George F. Root, it held its most successful meetings in Rutland County. It had five hundred members and could assemble choruses of two hundred voices. Membership cost $1.50 for gentlemen, and $1.00 for ladies. Railroads, of course, granted half-fare rates, and members were usually boarded and lodged with private families at 50 cents, or in hotels at $1.50 a day. The 1866 convention in Rutland performed Haydn's *Creation*

[16] Root was a New York composer, director of musical conventions all over the country during the fifties.

[17] Records of its secretary and treasurer are in the Sheldon Museum, Middlebury, Vermont.

and parts of Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*, assisted by the Mendelssohn Quintette Club. Perhaps because of the balance after the expenses of $1,000 had been paid,[18] the organization launched the *Vermont Musical Journal*, edited by H. L. Storey of Burlington. This sixteen-page monthly, selling at a dollar a year with a piece of music in every issue, was short-lived.

Outstanding leaders of these conventions were Benjamin Franklin Baker, principal of the Boston Music School, and J. E. Perkins of Boston; Lowell Mason,[19] George F. Root, Isaac B. Woodbury, and William Batchelder Bradbury of New York. They were the composers of the most popular church music of the day, conductors and soloists—the pioneer American musicians. They used their own glee books and anthem collections, with plenty of new music every year to keep up interest. They could usually be relied on to address the convention on voice production and the techniques of hymn and anthem singing, and to shepherd resolutions affirming the importance of sacred music as a vehicle of truth. Professor Baker, for example, who returned every few years from 1850 to 1865, took the part of Goliath in the "Oratorio of David" at an interstate convention at Walpole, New Hampshire, in 1853. Stout Professor Perkins rendered in his ponderous voice "Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep" at the convention of 1866. The bizarre could still run off with the praise, as when a West Rutland gentleman eclipsed the soloist at Castleton with the "wonderful musical feat" of singing the Marseillaise in falsetto. Some of the leaders' influence was resisted and ridiculed by local critics. Church organists were reprimanded for playing operatic music, and warned not to set sacred words to popular tunes. The latest fashion of "scientific" choir music was said to demand the pronunciation of every vowel as "aw."

Select schools, female seminaries, and academies often had a married couple teaching voice, piano, and sometimes "thor-

[18] Proceeds of the Montpelier convention of 1866 totaled only $390.
[19] Mason had just moved from Boston the year he visited Burlington.

ough bass." The St. Johnsbury Academy of Music was the only music school in Vermont at this time that was more than the name of a hope. It was incorporated in 1858, backed by the leading business men of the town, including Erastus and Horace Fairbanks, scale manufacturers.[20] Obviously the town prospering on the manufacture of scales would support music education. The faculty, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Claude H. Clarke, principals, J. H. Paddock, "State Organist" at the Montpelier Congregational Church, and John O. Worcester, pupil of the German pianist, Leonhard, offered instrumental, vocal and harmony instruction for $20 per eleven-week quarter. Board, room, fuel, lights, and washing cost about $3 a week, rent of piano, $5 per quarter, and the students were expected to provide their own books and music. All were to learn enough on the piano to accompany, and students of thorough bass were to play church music daily. Clarke had played in bands and orchestras in New York and Boston, and directed the production of *The Flower Queen* at Montpelier in 1861. Every Saturday afternoon members of the school would perform for their families and friends, with a big concert at the end of each quarter. Graduates were guaranteed good teaching positions.[21] Unfortunately, times were hard, and the Civil War took Clarke into the army.

The rise of the cornet band, although stimulated by the martial spirit of the sixties, was a development of the preceding decade. One wonders if the new German immigration into the United States, and the tours of such organizations as the Germania Band did not create a love for blaring brass which contributed to the belligerent spirit of the years just preceding the War.

In the old days of June training, men and boys were turned loose with a noisy band and strong drinks to raise their spirits. Their conduct brought the militia into disrepute and June training was finally ridiculed and sermonized to death. About

[20] *Laws of Vermont* (Bradford, 1858), 176-177.
[21] Advertisement in the Rutland *Courier*, September 23, 1859.

1855 militia training began to be revived by private, social companies. Back came the cornet bands to assist their parades and musters, and the quadrille bands to provide music at their soirées and balls. By 1860 there were at least thirty bands in the State. During the Civil War they were in demand at recruiting rallies, sword presentations, at Vermont barracks of volunteers on their way to the front, at military levees for returning veterans, and at soldiers' reunions later. With the inauguration of Memorial Day in 1868, bands accompanied the G.A.R. to decorate the graves of their comrades,[22] although in some places there were no speeches or fanfare the first year or two.

The Rutland Brass Band, trained by Professor Bond of Boston, offered a series of evening concerts in 1859 and 1860. Funds raised by subscription were sufficiently large to build two stands in the parks near the hotels, where a piazza audience could always be found. In the winter the band accompanied sleigh-ride parties to neighboring towns.

The Burlington Cornet Band throughout the eighteen-fifties furnished music for lake excursions, gave concerts in the Town Hall and in the parks, and played for the University commencement. By 1858 they had prospered enough to buy ten instruments costing nearly $1,000 and to become incorporated.[23] The next year they played at the anniversary of the battle of Hubbardton on the scene of battle. After a lapse of nearly ten years, during which the personnel was probably scattered, the new Queen City Cornet Band was organized, with a practice room, new instruments, and J. B. Holmberg still in charge. A year later, sixteen French Canadians bought $300 worth of instruments and formed the Lafayette Cornet Band under the leadership of a medical student at the University.

Aside from the occasional opening of a new hotel, probably the most regular jobs for bands when they were not providing

[22] Rutland *Herald*, June 10, 1868, quoting St. Johnsbury *Caledonian;* Burlington *Free Press*, May 23, 1870; Woodstock *Age*, June 2, 1870. A summary of exercises held all over the State appears in the weekly *Free Press*, June 7, 1872, with bands mentioned as participating in nearly every ceremony.

[23] *Laws of Vermont*, 167-168.

martial music for the militia were at state and county fairs. When State Fair grounds were laid out at Brattleboro, provision was made for a bandstand in front of the race track gallery. The competition of a calliope was sometimes overpowering. In 1856 one was advertised for the State Fair in Burlington; it was said to play *Hail Columbia* loud enough to be heard ten miles.[24] The Hinesburgh seventeen-piece band bid $75 and expenses for the Addison County Fair's two-day job in 1866, and expected a better price at the Champlain Valley Fair in Chittenden County. At the Woodstock fair, the music was supplied by four bands competing for $175 in prizes.

The ten to twenty pieces of each band were all brass and drums in this period. There was a preponderance of cornets, a few "tenors," and three or four baritones and basses. Tenor horns were something like the modern upright alto and baritone horns, but longer, higher pitched, and with a smaller bore and bell than the baritone. The woodwind choirs of modern bands, which take the place of strings in the orchestra, did not exist. The fingering of the nineteenth-century clarinet, principal instrument of this group, was hard to master. European bands had used clarinets considerably before 1850, but none was made in the United States. Consequently their expensiveness, as well as their difficulty, made clarinets rare in country towns. The bands remained without direct municipal support, depending on contributions, benefits, and fair and other contracts until the twentieth century.

The quadrille band had equally simple instrumentation, since it was designed for two- and three-part tunes, played hour after hour for the traditional square dances. It included from two to six pieces; one or two fiddles, a string bass, and a clarinet were most frequently found. F. J. Farr's band of Rutland was a favorite at picnics, cotillions and other "Terpsichorean Festivals" for miles around.

[24] Middlebury *Register*, September 10, 1856. The "steam organ," "mechanical band," or "automatodeon" appeared in Vermont about 1850 with circuses. Montpelier *Watchman*, September 5, 1850.

Related to studying, making and enjoying music, was the small business of making keyboard instruments. The manufacture of pianos and melodeons was still a branch of cabinet making in 1850. It depended on hand labor, sometimes aided by water power. The shops, capitalized at from $250 to $2500, employed from two to ten men at $20 to $36 a month. The table of instrument makers on page forty-seven illustrates the state of the trade.[25]

There was a musical instrument maker in the village of Montpelier in 1836. Jehiel Munson of Burlington was in the woodworking business in 1844, making pianos in 1848, and in 1860 received a patent for an improved method of making piano-hammers. James Richardson of Poultney was also a cabinet maker. Greene, Bailey and Company only made the parts in Poultney, "ready for putting together and tuning."[26] The Poultney Academy of Music was incorporated in 1856 primarily "for the purpose of manufacturing and selling musical instruments," and incidentally "for the cultivation of the science of music."[27] The firm of Pond and Morse was making Carhart patent melodeons in Poultney that year, although neither member was a corporator of the Academy of Music.[28]

Jacob Estey of Brattleboro was making lead pipe and pumps in 1850, and renting part of his space to Jones and Burditt. When they got the California fever, he bought them out, and peddled his annual output of fifty to seventy-five instruments by wagon through several states.[29] Their real expansion took place after the plant burned in January, 1864. By the next fall, the new factory was going full blast, employing forty-five men, and making twenty-five melodeons a week. The next year, a

[25] This information is taken from the Industrial Schedule of the MS. Census in the Vermont State Library. All industry for each town is recorded together. Under power, "h" stands for hand power, "w" for water power, "s" for steam.

[26] MS. Census in the Vermont State Library.

[27] *Laws of Vermont* (Montpelier, 1856), 186-187.

[28] Perhaps Morse was a member of the firm of Ross & "Moss" listed in the table on page 69.

[29] Walter H. Crockett, *Vermont, the Green Mountain State* (New York, 1921-1923), V, 596.

Date	Operator	Power	Capital	Cost of Materials	No. of Instrs. Made	Kind	Value of Product	No. Hands	Mo. Wage
					Burlington				
1850	Jehiel Munson	–	$ 2,000	$ 500	9	pianos	$ 2,100	2½	$ 36
					Brattleboro				
1850	J. Woodbury	h	300	—	–	musical instruments	500	self	35
1850	Jones & Burditt	h,w	2,500	2,000		melodeons, organs, seraphines		10	33
1860	Estey & Green	s	18,000	15,114	600	melodeons	44,000	25	44
1870	Jacob Estey & Co.	s	300,000	95,610	3168	organs	344,874	195 men 5 women	50
1880	Jacob Estey & Co.	s	800,000	300,000	——	cottage organs, & materials	675,000	365 men 35 women	43
					Poultney				
1850	James Richardson	h	225	175	8	reed organs	800	3	20
1850	Greene, Bailey & Co.	h,w	750	——	75	aeolian organs	2,900	6	20
1860	Ross & Moss [sic]	w	2,000	480	60	melodeons	6,000	7	30
					Montpelier				
1860	Nye, E. D. & G. G.	h,w	3,500	1,046	36	musical instruments	3,960	5	26
1870	Nye, G. L. & E. D.	–	2,000	780	15	melodeons	1,875	2	100
					15	reed organs	2,250		
					Bellows Falls				
1860	William Nutting, Jr.	w	2,000	1,200	8	pipe organs	4,000	3	40

branch factory was established in Chicago, and Julius Estey, Jacob's twenty-year-old son, went out to get it started. He returned in 1866 to become treasurer of the company. The Brattleboro Melodeon Company was organized in the fall of 1866, but it did not survive to appear in the 1870 Census. The Esteys' monthly payroll rose to $10,000 in 1868, when it reported a total manufacture of over 17,000 instruments since its establishment. Levi K. Fuller, who came to the company in 1860 as a machinist and engineer, became a partner in 1866, supervised manufacturing, and took out numerous patents improving the product.[20] He helped secure the general adoption of a uniform pitch for musical instruments. While other shops stayed in the cabinet-making, handicraft stage, Estey changed to steam power, expanded his plant, collected a large pool of skilled labor, and won a prominent place in the national market.

Vermont's musical development in the third quarter of the nineteenth century was part of the process of urbanization, an outgrowth of railroad development. Railroads ended the self-sufficient or barter economy which was at its peak a generation earlier, when banks scarcely existed in the State. The towns that prospered because of rail connections had the cash, the halls, and the potential audience. Traveling musicians could reach them by train more cheaply and quickly than before, by stage or boat.

The railroads carried the new immigrants from the seaports to the Middle West, but a trickle from the main stream came to Vermont. The Welsh, a singing people, came to the slate quarries opened up when rail freight facilities became available. The tune-loving French Canadians poured in after the Civil War. A few isolated Scandinavians and Germans, like Mietzke and Holmberg, found livelihoods. Equally important was the influence of Europeans on the culture centers of Boston and New York, indirectly affecting their satellite towns in Vermont. These cities sent professionals to perform and teach. The German band, the German string ensemble, the foreign soloist,

[20] *Vermont, the Green Mountain State*, IV, 226.

the native who had studied with a European teacher, reinforced the instruction by resident professors from the old country.

Improved transportation multiplied musical activity at home while it increased the stimulus from abroad. It was easy to hold meetings when half fare on "the steam-cars" was offered. More conventions in general provided a greater market for the music of choruses and bands. They entertained, and stirred the sentiments of the members, whether assembled for religion, reform, militia training or politics. More frequent musical conventions were possible, with wider participation and first-class leadership. The small-scale maker of musical instruments could not meet the national competition developed by the railroads. Yet out of his experience with handmade, wagon-peddled melodeons, Jacob Estey was able to survive because the railroads could bring his coal and materials, and ship his organs.

The dawn of the machine age, while promising to destroy conditions for a lively folk culture, began to make possible Vermont's integration into the musical life of the nation. All over the country, on the chains of towns linked by the railroads to the large cities, a similar development was taking place.