

THE BIRTH OF LIBERTY: Music of the American Revolution

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Music of the American Revolution: The Birth of Liberty

by Richard Cranford

It may be attractive to imagine that before and during the Revolution American composers bent their efforts to create new music for a new country. In fact, the Revolution inspired only a handful of new musical compositions. Moreover, from the standpoint of the music that most Americans know more than two centuries later, the war's legacy is meager. James Fuld's *Book of World - Famous Music* lists only three tunes associated with the war: "British Grenadiers," "God Save the King," and "Yankee Doodle." The first two are British, the third of unidentified origin. (Oscar Sonneck's seventy-page-plus essay traces every theory about "Yankee Doodle"'s provenance and arrives at no firm conclusion.) Thus, by one scholar's measure at least, our nation's struggle for political independence left only a trio of anonymous melodies, at least two traceable to "enemy" sources. Surely some explanation is needed, and a brief one can be offered. Its details will appear in due course. The essentials can be summarized as follows: culturally as well as politically, pre-Revolutionary America was a colony of Great Britain; several different kinds of music-making flourished in the colonies, but the most widespread creative response of Revolutionary-period Americans to the war lay in making verses to well-known tunes rather than in composing the tunes themselves.

Hearing music that Americans sang and played during these times can be entertaining. The music is in every sense "popular"--of and for the people--and it presents few difficulties for the twentieth-century listener. Understanding the musical traditions that helped produce it requires something more. The way today's listener perceives and thinks about music is very different from the way Americans of two centuries ago did. The essentials of the difference lie not so much in the degree of naiveté or sophistication present in either period, but in the very conventions and assumptions of each period. The present listener's perception of music is no more natural or historically inevitable than any other: it is rooted in a set of temporary conventions stemming from twentieth-century experience and, like earlier perceptions, will eventually yield to others. The more fully a listener recognizes his own age's conventions and understands how they differ from those of an earlier age, the more likely he is to be able to set them aside. Then he becomes freer to enter another framework and to encounter the earlier music on something more closely approaching its own terms.

Unlike much music today, music in eighteenth-century America was not intended for concert performance. Concerts imply skilled professional performers who sing and play for an audience. The audience assembles expressly to hear the performers, and it has often paid money for the privilege. It expects to be entertained, perhaps even moved and edified. Composers have traditionally been experts at diverting and moving audiences. During the eighteenth century, as public concerts became a major forum for music-making, European composers increasingly used techniques calculated to affect audiences: sudden changes in dynamics, tuneful and pathetic melodies, colorful changes in timbre and range, unexpected modulations. By the end of the century, both a concert-music vocabulary and the tradition of public concerts were established.

The music of the American Revolution reflects almost none of this. Some of it could have been performed in concerts, yet none was written with concert performance in mind. The music of the

American Revolution was functional, not artistic. The instrumental pieces were played not only for entertainment and dancing but also for marching. The solo vocal pieces, with tunes taken from the British musical stage, were propaganda songs performed at home and in small gatherings to affirm patriotic feelings with sarcasm and fervor. (John Adams's phrase for the songs' purpose was "cultivating the Sensations of Freedom.") The choral pieces come the closest to concert offerings, chiefly because of their length and difficulty. (Only a skilled group of singers could negotiate, for example, Billings' "Independence.") Yet they were published mostly in collections of sacred music designed for singing schools and choral societies, and thus, as didactic and devotional as well as artistic efforts, they belong in a tradition of participatory choral music, not of music to be sung for a nonparticipating audience. The music of the Revolution, though presented on this disc as if in concert performance, was composed not so much to be listened to as to be sung, played, marched to, and danced to.

Although eighteenth-century Americans had some access to music in print, a good part of the musical life relied on oral tradition. Taking the types of music represented on this recording: The instrumental pieces, except for the harmonized band music, could easily have been picked up by ear; the tunes to which the patriotic ballads were sung were not printed, but were circulated orally and sung to texts usually printed in newspapers. Only the choral pieces and harmonized band pieces would have required notation in print or manuscript.

To summarize and amplify slightly: When the Colonies went to war with Great Britain, a small amount of new music was composed to commemorate the struggle; a larger amount of propagandist verse was written and sung to well-known British tunes; and an even larger amount of traditional Anglo-American dance music, song, and hymnody having nothing particular to do with the war continued to be played and sung and enjoyed, creating a musical continuity that later observers seeking the new and topical are apt to overlook. The present recording gathers up the several different strands, emphasizing especially pieces that can demonstrably be linked with the war. The listener should recall some of the ways most of the music on the recording differs from music heard now in the concert hall. The music was functional, and hence existed in an irreproducible social context. It relied heavily on oral means for its circulation; its creators' identity was a matter of indifference to its performers. (The songs are likely to be timely parodies rather than original creations.) It addressed a cultural need and was hence accessible. The people whose feelings it expressed were preoccupied with survival rather than art, anxious to feel morally superior to their enemy, willing to be diverted and entertained.

Surprisingly, the only tradition that during the Revolution produced new compositions by identifiable composers was psalmody—literally the singing of psalms, but by the time of the Revolution the term included the practice of *all* sacred music. Although in some ways the devotional purpose of psalmody separated it from secular music, it was an important kind of eighteenth-century American popular music-making. Psalmody is the genre best documented in printed sources, and most of the central issues of popular music-making—including the oral tradition—affected it. A brief survey of its development should help illuminate some of these issues.

From the mid-sixteenth century, Protestants followed the Scriptural injunction to sing psalms. English Protestants made the psalms accessible by setting them in the vernacular and casting them in the verse forms of popular balladry. The psalm verses were published; they also circulated orally through the practice of lining-out, in which the text is read line by line by a deacon or precentor and sung back in

answer by the congregation. The earliest English colonists sang psalms in church as a continuation of British practice. The first book printed in the colonies was the *Whole Booke of Psalms*, nicknamed the *Bay Psalm Book*, a New England versification of the psalms, published because the settlers believed the existing British versions were insufficiently faithful to Scripture. The format of the *Bay Psalm Book* was standard for such publications. It was pocket-sized and easily portable. It set the psalms in strophic verse, using familiar metrical patterns. It carried no music; the user was referred to British publications for tunes—Ravenscroft's *Whole Booke of Psalms* (London, 1621), for instance—or he could sing the psalm texts to tunes he already knew. In 1698 tunes were added for the first time to the *Bay Psalm Book* (ninth edition), and their separateness from the texts is dramatized by the book's physical arrangement. It begins with the versified psalms; then, tucked in at the back with brief instructions of how the texts are to be fitted to them, are the thirteen tunes. The book's format shows that different texts were sung to the same tune. Moreover, so small was the variety of verse patterns in the *Bay Psalm Book* that singers knowing a mere half-dozen tunes could sing through the entire psalter. The evidence is that around the end of the seventeenth century many congregations actually knew no more than that. A practice requiring so small a stock of tunes would hardly seem to require musical notation. Thus early notated psalmody ought to be seen as a fixing and preserving of tunes in a specific form for the musically literate minority rather than as a necessity for every person who might sing the tune.

During the eighteenth century psalmody proliferated in print. The *Bay Psalm Book* appeared in nearly thirty New England editions by 1760, and most of those after the ninth had a tune supplement in the back. Brady and Tate's *New Version of the Psalms of David* (London, 1696) went through many American editions as well, and Watts's *Psalms of David Imitated in the Language of the New Testament* (London, 1719), and his *Hymns and Spiritual Songs in Three Books*, made up a standard repertory of devotional poetry, with a new American edition of one or the other published nearly every second year after around 1750. All these items share the format of the *Bay Psalm Book*.

An overwhelming majority of the editions were exclusively wordbooks. However, between 1720 and 1760 separate tune books—small collections of textless psalm and hymn tunes, usually harmonized for three voices—began to appear, mostly in the form of a supplement suitable for binding in at the end of a metrical psalter. The same period saw the issue of several instructional tune books, collections of textless tunes introduced by an explanation of the so-called rudiments of music: solmization (the use of syllables—do, re, mi, and so forth—to denote the tones of the scale), how to read notes, how to sing properly. These publications were inspired, at least in part, by the establishment of singing schools—instructional sessions in note reading and singing that began to be formed early in the eighteenth century, chiefly in response to the outcry of the clergy and others about what they felt to be the low state of singing in New England.

Therefore, sacred music in New England, which in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had been "committed and entrusted to the uncertain and doubtful Conveyance of Oral Tradition"—the words are those of Thomas Walter, a Boston clergyman and important musical reformer—began to work its way back into written tradition. The publications that appeared in the first six decades of the eighteenth century, however, suggest that the practice of psalmody was affected little by the change. The repertory grew very slowly, with most tune books carrying the same small core of British psalm tunes. (In thirty-odd publications of sacred music issued in the English-speaking American Colonies before 1760, only seventy-five different tunes were printed.) Moreover, the tunes were invariably printed without text; it was left to the user of the book to match a text to a tune. By mid-

century, print was being used to carry forward a practice that retained many earmarks of oral tradition.

If the notion of vocal music as an art implies that a musician composes particular music for a particular text, notates it, and circulates it, whether in manuscript or in print, then 1759 saw the birth of vocal music as an art in the American Colonies. In that year Francis Hopkinson, a recent graduate of the College of Philadelphia (University of Pennsylvania), set to music the secular poem "My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free," and James Lyon composed music for an ode sung at his graduation from Princeton. In the early 1760s both Hopkinson and Lyon were active in psalmody. Lyon compiled *Urania*, a large collection of sacred music, and published it in 1761; Hopkinson brought out his *Collection of Psalm Tunes* in 1763. *Urania* is a landmark. It is far larger than any preceding American musical publication (its 198 pages contain ninety-eight compositions); it represents the earliest American printing of anthems (extended settings of prose text), set-pieces (through-composed settings of poetic text), fuguing tunes (psalm tunes with at least one section involving text overlap), and hymn tunes (settings of nonscriptural devotional text); it is also the earliest work to identify compositions as "new"—that is, composed in the colonies (six pieces in the collection are so identified). Perhaps *Urania's* most significant innovation is that twenty-eight of its pieces are underlaid with text. It is the first American publication to print text with music.

Urania was modeled after tune collections by mid-century British psalmodists—among them John Arnold, William Tans'ur, William Knapp—whose names are now familiar only to scholars. Taken together, its innovations show American psalmody beginning to change from the practice described so far—rooted in oral tradition, resistant to change, devoted to anonymously composed music—to one relying on notation and therefore on musical literacy, one in which music is composed as a setting of a particular text, hence one calling for composers to produce expressive settings of sacred texts. Signs are unmistakable that psalmody was radically altered in the 1760s. The publication of tune collections boomed (the decade 1761-70 saw some twenty issues of sacred music, compared with slightly more than thirty for the period 1698-1759), the repertory grew quickly (from seventy-five tunes around 1760 to more than five hundred by the end of 1770), elaborate lengthy anthems appeared together with simple psalm tunes, tune books began to carry composer attributions. Seldom does an observer find so clear an example of the origin of a historical process. Before 1758 psalmody was perceived in one way. By 1761 several things inconsistent with that perception had occurred. And by 1770 psalmody was clearly very different from what it had been a decade earlier.

The traits noted here are symptoms of a basic transformation: Americans in the 1760s came for the first time to recognize psalmody as an art, as an activity demanding creative inspiration (composing) as well as performance (singing) and requiring technical proficiency of both creator and performer. Psalmody was no longer an inherited tradition of fixed repertory but an expanding, changing practice relying less and less on memory and more and more on music-reading and personal taste. Formerly a repository of old tunes, it had provided only one opportunity for the skilled, inventive musician: embellishing the tunes in performance. Now it swung sharply in the direction of the new, and the 1760s saw a flood of pieces by British parish psalmodists printed for the first time in America. Moreover, the new attitude touched at least one young American who came of age in the 1760s—William Billings (1746-1800). In 1770 it bore spectacular fruit in the appearance of the first collection of entirely American music: *The New-England Psalm-Singer*, containing 126 pieces, all by Billings, a Boston tanner.

Billings is the major figure on the present recording. (His career and his pieces recorded here will be described presently.) Almost alone among Americans he composed music specifically celebrating events of the Revolution. Billings unquestionably saw psalmody as an art and himself as an artist. He was the first American musician who did.

Given Billings' status as the first prolific publishing native American composer, how "American" was his music? Or, more generally, did Billings, with his bold public debut, establish an American music different from the English musical tradition? (Gilbert Chase's prefatory remark in *America's Music* is symptomatic of the desire of Americans to identify non-European traits in their music: ". . . if you ask me what do I mean by 'important,' I will answer . . . 'different from European music.'") The answer to the Billings question is yes. The reasons may lie partly in his considerable talent and originality. But other American psalmodyists were writing music by that time, and theirs, too, is easily distinguishable from the mid-century British psalmody on which it and Billings's music was modeled.

Trying to explain fully why American-composed psalmody took the form and style it did is beyond the scope of this essay. However, a trait that at first might seem merely a technical detail was a major determining force: psalmody in Colonial America was set for voice without accompaniment.

Calvinist opposition to instruments in church, which dated from the Protestant Reformation, continued through much of the eighteenth century. Organs existed in certain colonial Anglican churches from the early eighteenth century, but so strong was Calvinist resistance that the earliest organ in a Boston Congregational church was not installed until 1785. By the 1790s organs were introduced into urban Congregational churches, and both urban and small-town churches began to sanction the accompaniment of choral music by other instruments—bass viol especially, and sometimes treble instruments, like the clarinet. Colonial singing schools were held in a variety of locations, but certainly none with an organ, and most likely none with a keyboard instrument of any kind. American composers active before the 1790s seem to have composed also without the use of the keyboard; their medium was the unaccompanied four-voice chorus.

Most European music of Billings's time is accompanied by a keyboard instrument, and the presence of a keyboard implies tonality, in which one pitch serves as a point of gravitation for the rest and sorts them into a hierarchy. In tonal music a set of harmonic relationships reflects the pitch hierarchy. Tonality functions in music somewhat the same way perspective functions in the visual world: It provides a fixed aural vantage point. Tension and release are created as melody and harmony play around that point. Polyphonic music is linear—composed of many voices. But with a keyboard present setting forth the harmony on which the voices are based, an orderly governing force is asserted.

The music of Billings and his American contemporaries lacks this underpinning. Tonality is not everywhere absent, but neither can it be assumed. It appears and disappears without consistency. We know from Billings's own tune book prefaces that he composed "successively" rather than "simultaneously"—that is, he wrote a melody and added other voices one at a time, building up his compositions in layers and giving primary attention to the integrity and individuality of each voice rather than to the way it fit into the whole. There is no evidence that any Colonial American composer in the psalmody tradition studied with a musician who understood the rules of through bass on which the tonality of the period was founded. Billings and his compatriots seem to have relied for their theoretical knowledge chiefly on collections of British psalmody, some of which prefaced their music

with "rudiments," including suggestions for composing. What seems most likely is that when Billings and the others examined the instructions and compositions in British tune books they grasped the polyphonic ideal of the four-voice chorus but, having little exposure to the keyboard or to accompanied music, missed the music's harmonic basis. It is no wonder, especially since, for example, the rules for composition in John Arnold's *Compleat Psalmody* (London, many editions, 1741-77) deal chiefly with part writing and with distinguishing the musical intervals as consonant (acceptable) or dissonant (unacceptable). Arnold's rules assume accompaniment, hence tonality, but they never illustrate or mention it; the Americans' reading took Arnold literally, and the hierarchical ordering of the harmonies was lost. This peeled away an important layer of the British tradition and, by depriving the American composer of one of the main conventions of the style he was imitating, caused him to write music of a very different sound. Most commentators on American psalmody have called attention to its archaic quality, noting its resemblance to Renaissance music. Billings and his American contemporaries, bypassing the harmonic innovations that stemmed from the introduction of keyboard accompaniment in seventeenth-century Europe, felt their way instinctively to a successive layered approach to composition that in Europe was already old-fashioned by the sixteenth century. When reformers advocating "better music" began in the 1790s to criticize American psalmody on stylistic grounds, the religious scruples that had kept the organ out of Calvinist worship were breaking down. Once organs were introduced, the days of the Yankee idiom were numbered. The smooth tonal harmonic progressions conceived at the keyboard exposed the linear ungainliness of the music of Billings and his comrades. By around 1810 the native repertory stood condemned as crude and even irreligious by advocates of the transplanted European style.

Having established that the lack of a keyboard instrument can be a decisive determinant of style, it will be clearer why secular music, rooted in a tradition of melody with keyboard accompaniment, is stylistically distinct from most American psalmody. Several kinds of secular song circulated in eighteenth-century England and the Colonies. The oldest was oral-tradition English and Scottish balladry, which was unaffected by topical currents. Of more recent vintage was broadside balladry, which flourished from Elizabethan times into the eighteenth century and was the earliest commercial popular music. Broadside balladry depended partly on written practice. Texts circulated in broadsides—single sheets printed on one side and sold cheaply—and also in collections, occasionally with melodies, but more often only with tune indications. The ballad opera, which began in London in 1728 with John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*, brought broadside-ballad tunes into the theater, harmonizing them and adding to them new sets of words that fit the dramas. (The detachable words and music form a parallel with the technique of psalmody.) The heyday of the ballad opera lasted only into the 1730s. But it helped establish the vernacular English musical theater, which provided the third kind of secular song that circulated in the Colonies.

Francis Hopkinson is the only native-born American musician in the Colonies before the Revolution—or, for that matter, during it and for some years after—who can be called a composer of secular music. Oscar G. Sonneck's early (1905) but still valuable essay *Francis Hopkinson and James Lyon* provides considerable background on Hopkinson's musical training. He began to study harpsichord in 1754 (when he was seventeen) and performed as a harpsichordist and organist through much of his life; in 1755 he copied a number of songs and instrumental pieces, mostly with figured bass, by Italian, French, and English composers; in 1759 and 1760 he copied a large collection of accompanied songs, most of them by European composers but half a dozen by himself, including the landmark "My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free"; and at some time he also copied a volume of instrumental music—

dances, marches, overtures, concertos, and other pieces—arranged for the harpsichord. So far as we know, the written music the psalmodists encountered was mostly psalmody in singing schools and churches. Hopkinson had considerable early experience of a very different kind: playing the harpsichord and perhaps singing European theater and salon music. He had even achieved sufficient grasp of the idiom to compose a few songs himself. By his early twenties Hopkinson had attained a level of skill apparently not matched by other Americans of his generation—at least not to the point where they could compose songs that sound very much like those of the successful English professional theater composers of the day.

Even Hopkinson's involvement in sacred music supports the notion of him as a "secular" composer in the sense claimed here. The *Collection of Psalm Tunes . . . for the use of the United Churches of Christ Church and St. Peter's Church in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 1763), published anonymously but traced by Sonneck to Hopkinson, was intended for Anglican congregations. Its preface predicts, "It is highly probable there will be Organs erected in both our Churches, before long," and accordingly the compiler included figured bass with all tunes, a rare practice in American published psalmody of the period.

The need to master the conventions of European tonal harmony and the fact that keyboard skill is the most logical avenue to it indicates that few native-born Americans of the eighteenth century combined keyboard ability with creative aptitude, for few composed secular music. (Timothy Swan, a Massachusetts and Connecticut composer, is one of the rare psalmodists who tried it. The awkwardness of harmony in his secular *Songster's Assistant* suggests that his grasp of the principles was shaky.) Most of the published secular music composed in America before 1800 was by European-born and trained musicians such as James Bremner, William Selby, William Tuckey, and, after the war, Alexander Reinagle, Benjamin Carr, and Hans Gram. Native-born composers made their greatest contributions to psalmody, which, once peace was restored, began to flourish remarkably, with dozens of composers contributing to a growing number of published pieces.

To summarize again: Two musical traditions existed in Colonial America that provided the opportunity for composers to write pieces. Neither established anything more than a tenuous existence before the war. Psalmody began to emerge as a vigorous practice only in the 1760s, and William Billings was the only American to contribute significantly to the prewar written repertory. Secular music was performed in households having the necessary instruments, especially keyboards. Public concerts devoted mostly to secular music can be documented in American cities from the 1730s on. Yet, except for Francis Hopkinson's song of 1759 and a small scattering of his pieces over the next decade, little or no secular music was composed by Americans before the war. The psalmodists Billings and Abraham Wood made a modest contribution of new music once the war broke out, and a small handful of newly composed secular pieces also appeared. But by far the most widespread and characteristic vocal music of the war was a repertory of songs based on tunes originating in England.

We have noted the kinship between oral and written traditions in psalmody. It is also true that while secular music originated as notated, accompanied song, its melodies were quickly detached from both accompaniment and notation to circulate orally. Psalmody and secular music, for all their differences, share another property: reliance on texts and tunes independent from each other. Americans were used to singing a variety of sacred texts to a small number of psalm tunes. They also were likely to know by heart a stock of secular tunes from the English theater and from the broadside-ballad tradition, and to be accustomed to singing those tunes to old and new texts. It became customary in the years just prior

to the Revolution to issue "songsters"—wordbooks printing the texts of favorite songs with and indication of the tunes to which they were to be sung. Although psalmody and secular music were worlds apart in technique, their anthologies took the same form, with words published but tunes left to oral tradition. However, in the 1760s, approximately when the repertory of psalmody began to grow rapidly, an important and roughly parallel change took place in topical secular music. Once the growing differences of opinion between Britain and the colonies began to enlist songs as carriers of political sentiment, texts began to be firmly wedded to specific tunes, creating topical songs in the modern sense: settings of poetic texts to particular tunes.

At the dawn of the events that were to lead to the Revolution, the American Colonists enjoyed a tradition of topical song fully equal to responding to the break with the mother country. The idea of musical creativity barely existed in the Colonies, and there were almost no composers who could produce new tunes; but that was merely a detail. A "song" in the eighteenth century was a set of verses that could be read or sung. When it was sung, the music did not need to be new. In fact, patriotic songs would circulate much faster if sung to familiar tunes. Once a tune came to carry a specific emotional connotation, as did many British topical tunes of the 1760s, an added emotional dimension was open to the American song-maker. If the original tune was a setting of a patriotic British outburst, the anti-British sentiment in the new text might take on a parodistic edge. Moreover, why should the Colonists have thought of their stock tunes as "enemy" property? Oral-tradition music belongs to whoever sings it. The Colonists must have felt that the tunes, whatever the details of their origin, were theirs.

Instrumental music is obviously less well suited than vocal music to carry specific messages. Certain tunes can take on particular connotations because of the words associated with them; but the sudden changes of political loyalty, coupled with Colonial musical traditions, made it unlikely that more than a handful of melodies could be widely understood to imply the same message. Therefore, instrumental music was more neutral in meaning than vocal, and would be affected less by political events.

Most instrumental music in Colonial America was for solo instruments such as violin, fife, or flute. Much of the repertory was dance music of the kind first set down in John Playford's *The Dancing Master; or, plain and easie rules for the dancing of country dances, with the tune to each dance, to be played on the treble violin*. (The second edition, published in 1652 in London, is the earliest that survives; the collection went through at least eighteen editions, added a second volume, grew from about one hundred tunes to about nine hundred, and last appeared in print in 1728. It helped stimulate the printing of many similar compilations.) As suggested by Playford's title, a typical published collection of dance music consisted of unaccompanied melodies drawn from the oral repertory. As the English musical theater of the eighteenth century grew in influence and assurance and in stock of melody, it made increasing impact on the instrumental dance repertory—both in the dances it contributed and in the tunes of songs that instrumentalists became fond of. A popular mid-century English publication of instrumental music was the "tutor" or "preceptor," with instructions for playing the violin or flute or other instrument followed by melodies, probably unaccompanied. Some were dance tunes and marches, others were popular songs. Many of the tunes that appeared in the tutors circulated orally as well. Built in regularly phrased melodies and repeated strains, the tunes were relatively easy to learn, and many fiddlers and fifers surely had no need of notation, picking up their tunes from hearing others play and sing them.

No American published instrumental tutors survive. (During the war tutors for violin and fife were advertised in Philadelphia newspapers as just published, but no copies have been located.) The

repertory can be determined, however, from English instrumental tutors of the time (for example, Thompson's *Compleat Collection of 200 Favourite Country Dances*, first published in London, c. 1755), from later collections published in the United States (for example, Willig's *Compleat Tutor for the Fife*, Philadelphia, c.1805, and the encyclopedic two volumes of Riley's *Flute Melodies*, New York, c. 1816-20), and, best of all, from manuscripts copied by American musicians.

A final topic that needs some discussion--military music during the Revolution. Raoul F. Camus in his doctoral dissertation, "The Military Band in the United States Army Prior to 1834," points out the customary eighteenth-century distinction between "field music" (the drummers, fifers, and sometimes trumpeters who were paid enlisted men and who played music to signal and direct the troops) and "bands of music," or *Harmoniemusik* (groups of six or eight wind players hired by officers to play harmonized chamber music and serenades as well as military music). *Harmoniemusik* in European armies was typically played by pairs of oboes, horns, and bassoons, perhaps with a pair of clarinets added. Fifers and drummers were attached to all fighting foot regiments; the more elaborate *Harmoniemusik* was introduced in certain regiments whose officers were especially interested in it. Thus the military, in which music might seem to have been purely functional, fostered an artistic instrumental practice dependent on musical notation.

The music fifes and drums played can be identified from published tutors and from tune books written out by the players themselves. A good example of the latter is *Giles Gibbs, Jr. His Book for the Fife* (1777), from which all the fife melodies on the present recording are taken. Gibbs (1760-1780) set down a variety of melodies (including "Yankee Doodle"—here unaccountably called "Thehos Gendar") useful to an army: military signals and marches, dances, songs, and hymns. The range of sources is wide: some come from military tradition, some from country dance sources, some from the English stage, a few are even from British psalmody. The collection seems as appropriate for a British soldier as for an American one, which demonstrates that the tradition of instrumental music stood apart from topical mutability in something of the same way psalmody generally did. These traditions were too deeply rooted—in memory, in worship, in instrumental technique—to be swayed by the rush of events.

The situation of military bands playing *Harmoniemusik* in Boston gives an idea of their eighteenth-century role and how it differed from that of the later concert band. In the fall of 1768 British troops landed in Boston to protect crown officials who were being harassed by local citizens and could not carry out their duties. The British regiments had bands of music attached to them. By 1769 these bands were participating in public concerts. The programs included symphonies, concertos, overtures, and songs—not military music, but typical eighteenth-century concert fare. For example, the *Boston Evening Post* on May 13, 1771, advertised a concert featuring "vocal and instrumental musick accompanied by French horns, hautboys, etc. by the band of the 64th Regiment." Included in the program were several songs, an anonymous piece for violin, overtures by Handel, Schwindl, and K. F. Abel, symphonies by J. C. Bach, Stamitz, and Pasquale Ricci, a concerto by John Stanley, and additional instrumental pieces. (Some military musicians played strings as well as winds.) The concert was organized and directed not by a British bandmaster, but by a Boston psalmist, Josiah Flagg (1737-1795), who in a later concert advertisement (*Boston Evening Post*, October 11 and 18, 1773) claimed to be the "First Founder, [who] at great expense of Time, Trouble, etc. instructed a Band of Music to perform before the Regiment of Militia in this Town." Whether Flagg's was an already existing British band is not known. However, his last documented Boston concert, at Faneuil Hall, October 28, 1773, involving "upwards of 50 performers," ended with the "Liberty Song" sung on the present recording, and it is questionable

whether a British regimental band would have performed that inflammatory piece.

When the war broke out, Americans organized their military units along British lines, and military musicians were part of the plan. A Continental Army, consisting of one artillery and twenty-seven infantry regiments, was formed from the various state militias. Each regiment had eight companies of ninety officers and men, including two fifers and two drummers. Drum majors and fife majors were also appointed in many regiments to instruct and lead the field music. The organization thus provided positions for small armies of fifers and drummers themselves—448 of each. Whether or not all fife and drum positions were filled, military music had a forcible impact on the atmosphere of American towns and cities after the outbreak of the war, as noted by a diarist in Virginia:

The Drum beats & the Inhabitants of this Village muster each Morning at five O'clock... Mars, the great God of battle, is now honoured in every part of this spacious Colony, but here every Presence is warlike, every Sound is martial! Drums beating, Fifes & Bag-Pipes playing, & only sonorous & heroic Tunes.

The British military also had its field musicians. Moreover, by 1775 most British regiments established in the Colonies had bands of music attached to them; the German mercenaries imported by the British in 1775 and 1776 brought their own bands; and by 1777 at least two regiments of the Continental Army had accomplished bands playing *Harmoniemusik*.

From around 1770 to the end of the war, the most characteristic instrumental ensembles in America were the various bands connected with the military.

THE RECORDING

The pieces on this disc have been chosen to illustrate some of the different kinds of music sung and played in the Colonies around the time of the Revolution. Sources for the music and texts of the pieces recorded are original wherever possible. No attempt has been made to recapture the untutored roughness with which much of the music was surely performed in its time. Rather, the goal has been to record polished performances by skilled singers and players.

Track 1

The "Brickmaker March" was a popular dance tune in American fife manuscripts. It is presumed British in origin, though it has yet to be located in British printed sources. Like the other fife pieces on the recording, the tune is taken from Giles Gibbs's book and the drumbeats from Kusel's *Marching Drummer's Companion*.

Track 2

Billings's "Lamentation Over Boston" commemorates the British occupation of the city. Between the Battle of Bunker Hill in June 1775 and the evacuation in March 1776, Boston was oppressed by its status as a garrison of British troops. Billings's text gains effectiveness by drawing on Scripture to express the citizens' bitter reaction. "By the River of Watertown," his text begins, paraphrasing Psalm 137, which sings of the Jews in captivity ("By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion"). Later portions of Billings's text paraphrase other verses from the same psalm. Billings also draws on another Biblical lamentation, Jeremiah (3:21 and 31:20).

One of Billings's primary strengths as a composer is the effective way he set words to music, seen in his declamation, his felicitous explorations of the rhythmic possibilities of words and phrases. Almost alone among American psalmidists of his time, Billings was a poet; he introduces into psalmody new texts of his own and other poets. Even more remarkably, he showed that psalmody, heretofore an adjunct to worship, could reflect events in Americans' daily lives. The unbridled tone of Billings's "Lamentation," which moves from a convincingly heartfelt grieving to a solemn vow, expresses enormous vitality. The music is calculated at every turn to intensify the delivery of the words.

The "Lamentation Over Boston" first appeared in Billings's *Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, 1778), and it is found in all four editions of that work. However, though many of Billings's other pieces were borrowed by other tunebook compilers of the period and became favorites, no other eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century collections include the "Lamentation." Its failure to enter the repertory despite its obvious merits demonstrates both that topical music is perishable and that it had only a peripheral place in psalmody.

By the Rivers of Watertown we sat down and wept, when we remember'd thee, O
Boston.
As for our Friends, Lord God of Heaven, preserve them, defend them, deliver and restore
them unto us.
For they that held them in bondage requir'd of them to take up arms against their brethren.
Forbid it, Lord.
God forbid! Forbid it Lord, God forbid! that those who have suck'd Bostonian Breasts should
thirst for American Blood!
A Voice was heard in Roxbury which echo'd thro' the Continent, weeping for Boston because
of their danger.
Is Boston my dear Town, is it my native Place? For since their Calamity, I do earnestly
remember it still.
If I forget thee, if I forget thee, yea if I do not remember thee, let my numbers cease to flow,
then be my Muse unkind; then let my tongue forget to move and ever be confin'd.
Let horrid Jargon split the Air and rive my nerves asunder; let hateful Discord greet my Ear, as
terrible as Thunder.
Let Harmony be banish'd hence and Consonance depart; let Dissonance erect her Throne and
reign with my Heart.

Track 3

"March for the 3rd. Regt. of Foot, Lord Amherst's" exemplifies the *Harmoniemusik* tradition around the time of the Revolution. Although British in origin, it can be linked circumstantially to American martial music of the period. Composed by General John Reid (1721-1807), a Scottish musician and military man who served in North America in the 1760s under Lord Jeffrey Amherst, the piece was first printed in Reid's *Set of Marches for two clarinets, hautboys, or German flutes, two horns & a bassoon* (London, 1778). Like all of the *Harmoniemusik* on the recording, it is performed here with two oboes, two horns, and bassoon—just as it appears in Reid's *Set*. It and two other marches from the same collection were later printed without the horn parts in *Martial Music* (Albany, 1807), compiled by Timothy Olmstead (1759-1848). Olmstead was a Connecticut psalmidist and composer. He also was an instrumentalist during the Revolution, serving both as a fifer and as a member of a Connecticut regimental band of music. Raoul Camus believes that, despite its late date, Olmstead's *Martial Music* preserves music

performed by British and American bands during the Revolution.

Tracks 4 & 5

"British Grenadiers" demonstrates that some of the same tunes that served for topical songs also appeared in the fife repertory. The text of "A Song on Liberty," now usually called "Free America," is traditionally attributed to Joseph Warren (see note on Warren below, Track 16), though without documentation.

The comparisons with past civilizations urged Colonists to perceive their American identity as separate from their British identity. The classical framework also provides an element of parody, for the English words compare the British soldier to great warriors of the classical past:

Some talk of Alexander,
And some of Hercules,
Of Hector and Lysander,
And such great names as these;
But of all the world's brave heroes
There's none that can compare,
With a tow, row, row, row, row, row, row,
To the British Grenadier.

The text sung here is from the Worcester *Massachusetts Spy*, May 26, 1774. A broadside version under the title "The New Massachusetts Liberty Song" is dated 1770 by responsible scholars. For all its defiance, the song still contains a verse, not sung on this recording, that seems to accept the possibility of continued colonial status—under the right conditions:

The land where freedom reigns shall still
Be masters of the main,
In giving laws and freedom
To subject France and Spain;
And all the isles o'er ocean spread
Shall tremble and obey
The prince who rules by freedom's laws
In North America.

The origins of the tune have been debated. William Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* relates it melodically to certain songs of the seventeenth century. The earliest printed reference to it by title is in a British musical drama of 1706, but the version sung here dates from no earlier than 1750s. An undated song sheet from the Marshall Collection in the Harvard University Library provided the score for the performance.

The seat of science, Athens,
And earth's proud mistress, Rome,
Where now are all their glories?
We scarce can find their tomb.
Then guard your rights, Americans,

Nor stoop to lawless sway,
Oppose, Oppose, Oppose it,
For North America.

Proud Albion bow'd to Caesar,
And numerous lords before,
To Picts, to Danes, to Normans,
And many masters more;
But we can boast Americans
Have never fall'n a prey,
Huzza! huzza! huzza! huzza!
For free America.

We led fair Freedom hither,
And lo the desert smil'd,
A paradise of pleasure
New open'd in the wild;
Your harvest, bold Americans,
No pow'r shall snatch away,
Preserve, preserve, preserve your rights
In Free America.

Torn from a world of Tyrants,
Beneath this western sky
We form'd a new dominion,
A land of liberty;
The world shall own we're freemen here,
And such will ever be,
Huzza! huzza! huzza! huzza!
For love and liberty.

* * * * *

Lift up your hearts, my heroes,
And swear, with proud disdain,
The wretch that would ensnare you
Shall spread his net in vain;
Shall Europe empty all her force
We'd meet them in array,
And shout huzza! huzza! huzza!
For brave America.

* * * * *

Track 6

The music of "General Scott's March" dates at the latest from 1771, for it appeared in a British

collection published that year. Its title, which apparently refers to General Winfield Scott (1786-1866), who served in the War of 1812, appears in a much later American publication: J. L. Rumrille and H. Holton's *The Drummer's Instructor* (Albany, 1817). The recording is made from the version published in *A Second Collection of XXIV Favourite Marches in 7 parts as they are performed by His Majesty's Foot and Horse Guards* (London: C. and S. Thompson, 1771). The seven parts are two horns, two oboes, and bassoon, with two clarinets, doubling the oboes.

Track 7

The "Junto Song" dates from the war's first year. It lampoons British avarice, reducing the cause of the war to England's desire for more revenue. The "junto," here meaning a small group with conspiratorial aims, is generally thought to be the trio of generals—William Howe, Henry Clinton, and John Burgoyne—who arrived in Boston Harbor on the British ship *Cerberus* on May 25, 1775, to take over British military operations. The text sung here is from *Holt's Journal*, New York, September 7, 1775; it dates from before the generals' arrival in Boston, however, having been published in the *Pennsylvania Ledger*, Philadelphia, on May 20, 1775. The New York printing suggests that it be sung to "A-begging We Will Go," a tune also known under other titles and popular in the British broadside tradition. It is sung here to "A-hunting We Will Go" or "The Dusky Night," composed for a 1777 London revival of *The Beggar's Opera*. According to Fiske's *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century*, the tune may well have been the last composition by Thomas Arne (1710-1778), the leading English theater composer of his generation. It was published after the war in the *American Musical Miscellany* (Northampton, 1798).

'Tis money makes the member vote,
And sanctifies our ways;
It makes the patriot turn his coat,
And money we must raise.

(Chorus)

And a-taxing we will go,
A-taxing we will go,
A-taxing we will go.

One single thing untax'd at home,
Old England could not shew,
For money we abroad did roam,
And thought to tax the *new*.

(Chorus)

Shall we not make the rascals bend
To Britain's supreme power?
The sword shall we not to them send,
And leaden balls a shower?

(Chorus)

Boston we shall in ashes lay,
It is a nest of knaves;
We'll make them soon for mercy pray,
Or send them to their graves,

(Chorus)

We'll force and fraud in one unite,
To bring them to our hands;
Then lay a tax on the sun's-light,
And King's tax on their lands.

(Chorus)

Track 8

"Lovely Nancy," a song by the Scottish composer James Oswald, was first published in his collection, the *Caledonian Pocket Companion*, Vol. II (c. 1745). It appeared in the ballad opera *The Jovial Crew* when it was revived in 1760. By the time of the Revolution the melody was being used by the military as a signal for retreat. The harmony part on the recording, though not in the Gibbs fife book from which the tune is taken, was composed in a style similar to such second parts of the period.

Track 9

The "American Vicar of Bray" appeared in a leading Loyalist newspaper, James Rivington's *New York Gazette*, on June 30, 1779. Its mocking treatment of the legendary vicar, called by one writer "this amiable paragon of adaptability," focuses attention on the Revolution as civil war as well as a fight with foreign enemy. The American vicar begins as a Tory, becomes a Patriot in response to the tea tax, abandons that cause when General Howe enters New York, then returns to the Patriot fold when momentum swings away from the British. However comically the vicar's vacillations may be pictured here, many American colonists, especially those in cities like Boston and New York, found it difficult to stand wholeheartedly with either side.

Rivington printed ten stanzas, of which only six are sung here. The tune, called "Country Gardens" in eighteenth-century sources, can be traced back to a theater work, *The Quaker's Opera* (London, 1728), though its earliest printed form dates from about 1740. Percy Grainger's slightly varied version of the tune has enjoyed twentieth-century popularity.

When Royal George rul'd o'er this land,
And loyalty no harm meant,
For Church and King I made a stand,
And so I got preferment.
I still opposed all party tricks,
For reasons I thought clear ones,
And swore it was their politics,
To make us Presbyterians.

(Chorus)

And this is law I will maintain
Until my dying day, Sir,
That whatsoever king will reign
I'll be a Vicar of Bray, Sir.

When Stamp Act pass'd the Parliament

To bring some Grist to Mill, Sir,
To back it was my firm intent,
But soon there came repeal, Sir.
I quickly join'd the common cry,
That we should all be Slaves, Sir;
The House of Commons was a sty,
The Kings and Lords were Knaves, Sir.
(Chorus)

Now all went smooth, as smooth could be,
I strutted and look'd big, Sir;
And when they laid a tax on tea,
I was believ'd a Whig, Sir:
I laugh'd at all the vain pretence
Of taxing at this distance.
And swore before I'd pay my pence,
I'd make a firm resistance.
(Chorus)

When Howe with drums and great parade,
March'd thro' this famous town, Sir,
I cried, "May fame his temples shade,
With laurels for a crown, Sir."
With zeal I swore to make amends
To good old Constitution;
And drank confusion to the friends
Of our late Revolution.
(Chorus)

But poor Burgoyne's denounced my fate,
The Whigs began to glory,
I now bewail'd my wretched state,
That I was e'er a Tory.
By night the British left the shore,
Nor cared for friends a fig, Sir;
I turn'd the cat in pan once more,
And so became a Whig, sir.
(Chorus)

I call'd the army butch'ring dogs,
A bloody tyrant King, Sir;
The Commons, Lords, a set of rogues,
That all deserved to swing, Sir.
Since Fate has made us great and free,
And Providence can't falter,
So Cong [*si*] till death my King shall be,

Unless the times should alter.

(Chorus)

Track 10

William Billings's "Independence," like the "Lamentation Over Boston," is a setting of a text by the composer. It is one of his longer pieces, and it never leaves D major. Dissonances occur only on weak beats or afterbeats; they are not used to support expressive musical events. In the *Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, 1778), the collection in which "Independence" was published, Billings proclaimed his commitment to consonance. The introduction contains a skillfully satirical address "To the Goddess of Discord," which begins:

Dread Sovereign, I . . . discover that some evil-minded persons have insinuated to your highness, that I am utterly unmindful of your Ladyship's importance; and that my time, as well as my talents, was wholly taken up in paying my devoto to your most implacable enemy and strenuous opposer, viz. the Goddess of Concord.

Billings admits the charge, but he ends his address by presenting to the Goddess a work that should "fully compensate for my former delinquency and remissness." It is the brief joke piece, "Jargon," which, after a consonant opening chord, proceeds in a succession of awkward dissonances to the end.

"Independence" manifests Billings's love for consonance and harmonic stability. There is never any question what the tonic pitch or key note is. But neither is there a strong sense of progression of the kind that root movement in fourths and fifths creates. Billings's harmonies provide only minimal sense of direction. The dominant-tonic progression is the only real formula, and the restriction in a piece as long as "Independence" to such a small range of harmony, and all in a single key, puts the burden of maintaining musical interest on other elements. As in the "Lamentation," and, indeed, most of the rest of his music, the text and its delivery are responsible for the work's powerful effect. After a contrapuntal opening section with the text continuously overlapping, the piece continues with the text clearly declaimed by single voice parts or by the entire chorus in block chords. A flexible refrain pervades and unifies the long middle section: "To the King they shall sing Hallelujah," which turns into "They shall sing to the King, Hallelujah" and finally "Let us sing to the King, Hallelujah." Having extended the stately middle section over about a hundred measures, including a lengthy repeat, Billings begins a new section with a fanfare-like "God is the King." Then the tempo abruptly quickens, and, with rapid-fire syllabic delivery of several folksy verses in block chords, Billings generates his typical exuberant closing momentum.

The states, O Lord, with songs of praise shall
in Thy strength rejoice,
And blest with Thy salvation raise to Heav'n
their cheerful voice.
To the King they shall sing Hallelujah.
Thy goodness and Thy tender care have all our
fears destroy'd,
A covenant of peace Thou mad'st with us
confirmed by Thy word,
A covenant Thou mad'st with us and seal'd it

with Thy blood.
To the King they shall sing Hallelujah.
And all the continent shall sing: down with this
earthly King,
No King but God.
To the King they shall sing Hallelujah.
And the continent shall sing: God is our
rightful King, Hallelujah.
And the continent shall sing: God is our
gracious King, Hallelujah.
They shall sing to the King, Hallelujah.
Let us sing to the King, Hallelujah.
God is the King, Amen,
The Lord is His name, Amen.
May His blessing descend, world without end,
On ev'ry part of the continent.
May harmony and peace begin and never cease
And may the strength increase of the continent.
May American wilds be filled with His smiles
And may the natives bow to our royal King.
May Rome, France and Spain and all the
world proclaim
The glory and the fame of our royal King.
God is the King, Amen,
The Lord is His name, Amen.
Loudly sing that God is the King.
May His reign be glorious, America victorious,
And may the earth acknowledge God is the
King. Amen.

Track 11

The "March of the 35th Regiment" is the longest and most elaborate march on the recording—and by far the crudest. Though binary in form like the rest, it has a somewhat distinct middle section, complete with a full cadence in the relative minor. The printed version recorded here is an undated broadside in the New York Public Library (Drexel 15883). George Willig's *Compleat Tutor for the Fife* prints the piece along with other items popular during the war.

Track 12

The "Liberty Song," probably the most instantly popular American song of propaganda, was written in 1768 by John Dickinson (1732-1808) of Pennsylvania to the British patriotic tune "Heart of Oak." The song's acceptance was surely aided by its parody of the source, with its resonant British patriotism—

Heart of oak are our ships,
Heart of oak are our men.
We always are ready.
Steady, boys, steady.
We'll fight and we'll conquer again and again.

The original, by David Garrick with music by William Boyce, had been sung on the London stage in 1759 to commemorate British victories over the French in The Seven Years' War. It quickly became a British favorite. Thus Dickinson's song—by no means a plea for independence, but rather for the maintenance of Americans' rights as British subjects—caught public fancy by its twisting of the familiar. In addition, it appeared at a time when the Colonies were inflamed over the Townshend Acts, which had placed stiff import duties on many items.

The version sung here is taken from the *Boston Gazette*, July 18, 1768. The "Liberty Song" is one of the very few propaganda songs to have had its tune printed with its text. Both appeared in Bickerstaff's *Boston Almanac* (Boston, 1769).

Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
And rouse your bold hearts at fair liberty's
 call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just
 claim
Or stain with dishonor America's name.

(Chorus)

In freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll
live,
Our purses are ready, steady, boys, steady.
Not as slaves, but as free men, our money
we'll give.

Our worthy forefathers, let's give them a cheer,
To climates unknown did courageously steer;
Throu' oceans, to deserts, for freedom they
came,
And dying bequeath'd us their freedom and
fame.

(Chorus)

The tree their own hands had to liberty rear'd;
They lived to behold growing strong and
rever'd.
With transport they cry'd, "Now our wishes we
gain,
For our children shall gather the fruits of
our pain!"

(Chorus)

Then join hand in hand, brave Americans all,
By uniting, we stand, by dividing, we fall,
In so righteous a cause, let us hope to succeed,

For heaven approves of each generous deed.
(Chorus)

This bumper I crown for our Sov'reign's
health,
And this for Britannia's glory and wealth
That wealth, and that glory immortal may be,
If she is but just, and if we are but free.
(Chorus)

Track 13

"Lady Hope's Reel," a fiddle tune designed to accompany a reel—a dance in which a line of men and a line of women face each other—is found in many American fife manuscripts of the Revolutionary period. Though no contemporaneous printings have been found, John Ives's *Twenty-four Figures of the Most Fashionable Country Dances* (New Haven, 1799), a book of dance instructions, lists "Lady Harriet Hope's Reel" as one of his dances. The tune almost surely originated in the British Isles.

Track 14

The "Parody Upon a Well-known Liberty Song" ("Come Shake Your Dull Noddles") followed the "Liberty Song" into print by less than three months. It is sung here to "Heart of Oak" from a text published in the *Boston Gazette*, September 26, 1768. There it was headed "Last Tuesday, the following song made its Appearance from a Garret at Castle William" (a British army garrison on an island in Boston Harbor). The tone of the text is extreme, a fact partly explained by the precarious position of British officials in Boston, whose attempts to carry out their duties were met with mob violence led by the Sons of Liberty.

Come shake your dull Noddles, Ye pumpkins
and bawl,
And own that you're mad at fair Liberty's Call;
No scandalous Conduct can add to your
Shame,
Condemn'd to Dishonor Inherit the fame—

(Chorus)
In folly you're born, and in Folly you'll live,
To Madness still ready,
And stupidly steady,
Not as Men, but as Monkies, the Tokens
you give.

Such Villains, such Rascalls, all Dangers
despise:
And stick not at Mobbing when Mischief's the
Prize;
They burst thro' all Barriers, and piously keep,
Such Chattels and Goods the vile Rascalls

can sweep.

(Chorus)

Your Brats and your Bunters by no Means
forget,
But feather your Nests, for they're bare
enough yet;
From the insolent Rich, sure the poor Knave
may steal,
Who ne'er in his Life knew the Scent of a Meal.

(Chorus)

Then plunder, my Lads, for when Red Coats
appear,
You'll melt like the Locusts, when Winter
is near;
Gold vainly will glow; Silver vainly shine;
But, Faith you must skulk, you no more shall
purloin.

(Chorus)

Then nod your poor Numbskulls, Ye pumpkins
& bawl,
The De-il take such Rascalls, Fools, Whoresons
and all.

Your cursed old Trade of purloining must
cease,

The Curse and the Dread of all Order
and Peace.

(Chorus)

Track 15

The "March for the 76th Regt. Lord Macdonald's Highlanders," like the "March for the 3rd. Regt." (Track 3), was composed by General John Reid, and published in his *Set of Marches*, and later appeared without the horn parts in Timothy Olmstead's *Martial Music*. It's form--two brief sections, each repeated--is typical of eighteenth-century marches in this tradition, which share the binary plan with a good deal of dance music.

Track 16

"Warren," by Abraham Wood (1752-1804) of Northboro, Massachusetts, is a lament for Joseph Warren (1741-1775), a patriot leader and army officer who died courageously at age thirty-four in the Battle of Bunker Hill. It is one of the most evocative pieces in the repertory, noteworthy because of its specific instructions for changes in dynamics, its expressive harmony, and its unusual depiction of the verb in the line "Let melting music tremble on thy strings." It is not known when Wood's piece was composed. It did not appear in print until 1793, when Joseph Stone and Abraham Wood's *Columbian Harmony*, probably published in Worcester, included it; no later printings have been found. The text,

with its neoclassic tone and identification of the hero as "Alpheus," is American, but it dates from long before the Revolution. It is printed as the first eight lines of a poem "To the Memory of a Young Commander Slain in a Battle with the Indians, 1724" in Mather Byles's *Poems on Several Occasions* (Boston, 1744; p.32). All that links the piece specifically with the Revolution is its title.

Descend, immortal muse, inspire my song,
Let mournful numbers gently flow along.
And thou, my lyre, in solemn notes complain,
And in sad accents speak thy pain.
Let melting music tremble on thy strings—
While in concording sounds the goddess sings:
Sings hapless Alpheus in the gloomy grave:
Alpheus the gay, the beauteous and the brave,
Who with the thirst of glory fired,
Courageous in his country's cause expired.

Track 17

"Stone Grinds All," played on the recording by unaccompanied fifes, is a Scottish tune of which no pre-Revolutionary printings have yet been discovered. In James Johnson's *The Scots Musical Museum*, Vol. V (Edinburgh, 1788), the tune is published with a bass to Robert Burns's text "Here's His Health in Water." It also appears in *Aird's Selection of Scotch, English, Irish and Foreign Airs adapted for the fife, violin, or German flute*, Vol. III (Glasgow, c. 1795), under the title "The Job of Journey Work."

Track 18

"The King's Own Regulars," a comic Patriot text tracing the supposed cowardice of the British troops through the French and Indian Wars and down to the 1775 rebellion, appeared in the *Boston Gazette*, November 27, 1775. The newspaper printed fifteen stanzas; eight are sung here. Benjamin Franklin has often been credited with the text, but Bruce I. Granger, in *Political Satire in the American Revolution* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1960), reports that he has been unable to confirm the attribution. As "The Queen's Old Courtier," the English original can be traced back to the time of James I, and it was a popular British broadside ballad through the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries, apparently always as a piece of drollery. The tune was modeled after an Anglican chant, which explains its nonmetrical structure and parlando quality. Since it is so simple and static, and so rhythmically free, it was seldom printed with accompaniment. The keyboard part here is inspired by the one printed in Chappell's *Popular Music of the Olden Time* (London, 1859; p. 300).

Since you all will have singing, and won't be
said nay,
I cannot refuse where you so beg and pray;
So I'll sing you a song—as a body may say,
'Tis the King's Regulars, who ne'er run away.

(Chorus)

O the old Soldiers of the King, and the
King's own Regulars.

At Preston Pa. we met with some Rebels one
day,
We marshall'd ourselves all in comely array;
Our hearts were all stout, and bid our legs stay,
But our feet were wrong-headed and took
us away.
(*Chorus*)

To Monongahela, with fifes and with drums
We marched in fine order, with cannon &
bombs:
That great expedition cost infinite sums;
But a few irregulars cut us all into crumbs.
(*Chorus*)

To Ticonderoga we went in a passion,
Swearing to be revenged on the whole French
nation.
But we soon turned tail, without hesitation,
Because they fought behind trees, which is not
the fashion.
(*Chorus*)

Grown proud at reviews, great George had no
rest;
Each grandsire, he had heard a rebellion
supprest.
He wish'd a rebellion, look'd round and saw
none,
So resolv'd a rebellion to make of his own--
(*Chorus*)

The *Yankees* he bravely pitch'd so, because he
thought they would not fight,
And so he sent us over to take away their right,
But lest they should spoil our review cloathes,
he cried braver and louder,
"For God's sake, brother kings, don't sell
the cowards any powder."
(*Chorus*)

For fifteen miles they follow'd and pelted us, we
scarce had time to pull a trigger;
But did you ever know a retreat perform'd
with more vigour?
For we did it in two hours which saved us from

perdition,
'Twas not in *going out* but in *returning*
consisted our *expedition*.
(*Chorus*)

As they would not get before us, how could
they look us in the face?
We took care they should not, by scampering
away apace;
That they had not much to brag of, is a very
plain case.
For if they beat us in the fight, we beat them
in the race.
(*Chorus*)

Track 19

"Washington's March" was first published in the United States in 1794 and enjoyed popularity as both a keyboard piece and a piece for instrumental ensembles. Its authorship has long been a matter of interest and conjecture. In *Francis Hopkinson and James Lyon*, Oscar G. Sonneck offered evidence that Francis Hopkinson might have composed the piece. Recently, however, Raoul Camus has discovered in *A Second Collection of XXIV Favourite Marches* that the unnamed March No. 16 is very similar to the piece later called "Washington's March." The recording is made from this version.

Track 20

"A Hymn on Peace" by Abraham Wood appeared in 1784, the year after the Treaty of Paris officially ended the Revolutionary War. The poem, unattributed and of untraced authorship, had been published earlier in Andrew Law's *Collection of Hymns* (Cheshire, Conn., 1783), where it was designated to be sung to Wood's psalm tune "Worcester." "A Hymn on Peace" circulated in an unusual form: not, as was customary, as part of a larger collection of sacred pieces, but as the sole contents of an eight-page pamphlet—one of the rare occasional pieces to appear in pre-Federal America. It was never reprinted nor anthologized in any American tune books. The Boston *Independent Chronicle*, May 6, 1784, advertised it as "just published" and to be sold by Wood in Northboro "and by William Billings, near Liberty Pole, Boston," thereby providing the only known link between America's leading psalmodist-composers of the Revolution.

"A Hymn on Peace" packs considerable variety into its through-composed setting of eight stanzas of short-meter verse (that is, stanzas with lines of six, six, eight, and six syllables). After a beginning stanza set in block chords, a fuguing section enlivens the second; a tempo increase and frequent text repetition heighten the third; a brief modulation to the relative minor and another fuguing section appear in the fourth; a return to block chords distinguishes the fifth and sixth, which are full of textural and declamatory variety and make a rousing conclusion.

Behold arrayed in light,
And by Divine command,
Fair Peace, the child of Heav'n, descends
To this afflicted land.

Like the bright morning star
She leads, O glorious day,
And o'er this western world extends
Her all-reviving ray.

Your swords to plowshares turned,
Your fields with plenty crowned
Shall laugh and sing, and freedom spread
The voice of gladness round.

O sing a new-made song,
To God your hymn address,
He ruled the hearts of mighty kings
And gave our arms success.

He check'd our haughty foe,
And bade the contest cease,
Here and no further shall thou go;
Be all the world at peace.

No more shall savage war
Fall on the hostile band,
No more shall suff'ring captives mourn,
Or blood pollute the land.

Confess Jehovah's pow'r
And magnify His name.
Let all the world, with one accord,
His wondrous works proclaim.

Let us with hearts devout
Declare what we have seen,
And to our children's children tell
How good the Lord hath been.

Acknowledgments: Special thanks to Kate Van Winkle Keller, of Coventry, Connecticut, who provided information from her research on fife music and helped supervise the fife-and-drum performances on the recording; and Raoul F. Camus, of Queensborough Community College, Bayside, New York, who helped choose the wind music and supervise the wind-band performances.

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American Fife Ensemble: John Benoit, John Ciaglia, Barlow Healy, Edward Jesinkey, Craig Stopka, fifes; Daniel Mullen, snare drum.

The Liberty Tree Wind Players: Ronald Roseman, first oboe; Virginia Brewer, second oboe; Donald MacCourt, bassoon; A. Robert Johnson, William Purvis, French horn.

Sherrill Milnes appears courtesy RCA Records and Tapes

AMERICAN REVOLUTION: TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS

1764

April 5. Parliament passes the American Revenue Act (Sugar Act), the first law whose major purpose

was to tax the Colonies for the benefit of the Mother Country.

1765

March 22. Stamp Act becomes first internal direct tax levied by British Parliament on Colonies. It taxed newspapers, almanacs, and legal documents, as well as dice and playing cards. It is resisted by Colonists organized as Sons of Liberty, who refuse to allow ships from England to unload the stamps, impose a boycott of British goods, and force stamp distributors to resign their commissions.

1766

March 18. Pressure from British merchants brings about Parliament's repeal of the Stamp Act, but it still asserts, in the Declaratory Act, its absolute authority over the Colonies.

1767

June 29. Townshend Acts again levy taxes on Colonists--import duties on tea, paper, paint, lead, and glass. Colonial merchants resist the acts by refusing to import British goods.

1770

March 5. Boston Massacre. British troops, confronted by Boston mob, shoot into the crowd, killing five of its members.

1772

June 9. Band of Rhode Islanders, led by merchant John Brown, seize British revenue schooner *Gaspee* near Providence and set it afire.

1773

March 12. Virginia House of Burgesses chooses Committee of Correspondence to communicate with other Colonies.

December 16. Boston Tea Party. Samuel Adams, Paul Revere, and others lead a group of Colonists dressed as Indians to British tea ship *Dartmouth*. They dump all three hundred and forty-two chests of tea overboard in protest against the virtual monopoly on tea exports to the Colonies, which Parliament in April had granted to the British East India Company.

1774

March 31. By Boston Port Act, Parliament closes the town to all trade until it pays for the tea thrown overboard three months earlier.

May 20. Massachusetts Government Act takes away many of the Colony's traditional rights of self-government.

September 5-October 26. Delegates from twelve Colonies, meeting at Philadelphia as the First Continental Congress, adopt nonimportation and nonexportation agreements against Britain, to be enforced by local committees within each Colony.

1775

April 19. War breaks out at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts.

May 29. Second Continental Congress asks Canada to join the Colonists.

June 15. George Washington chosen Commander-in-Chief of Continental army.

June 17. Battle of Bunker Hill. Although New England troops are defeated by the British, who take

the hill, the latter suffer ten times as many casualties.

1776

January 9. Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" attacks the institution of monarchy, praises republicanism, and urges the Colonies to declare independence, winning many converts to the cause of American liberty.

March 17. British troops, surrounded by Continental artillery, evacuate Boston.

June 7. Following instructions from the Virginia legislature, congressional delegate Richard Henry Lee proposes a resolution "that these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States."

July 2. Congress votes for independence, twelve states to nothing (New York abstains).

September 15. British troops occupy New York.

December 26. George Washington surprises and defeats Hessian troops at Trenton.

1777

September 26. British troops capture Philadelphia. Congress flees.

1778

February 6. France and the United States sign treaties of amity, commerce, and alliance.

July 4-February 25, 1779. Colonel George Rogers Clark captures Northwest Territory for the United States.

1779

September 23. Captain John Paul Jones's *Bonhomme Richard* captures British warship *Serapis*.

1780

May 12. American troops under Major General Benjamin Lincoln surrender Charleston, South Carolina, to British commander Sir Henry Clinton: the most disastrous American defeat of the war.

August 16. American forces under General Horatio Gates are routed by the British at the Battle of Camden.

1781

March 1. Articles of Confederation become first American Constitution.

October 19. Overwhelmingly outnumbered by a combined Franco-American land force and trapped by Admiral de Grasse's fleet in Chesapeake Bay, Lord Cornwallis surrenders his army to General Washington at Yorktown, Virginia.

1783

September 3. Definitive Treaty of Peace between United States and Great Britain is signed at Paris.

November 25. British troops evacuate New York.

December 23. Washington resigns as Commander in Chief of Continental armies.

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- 1 Traditional: *The Brickmaker March*
American Fife Ensemble
- 2 William Billings: *Lamentation Over Boston* (Publ. C. T. Wagner)

- The Continental Harmony Singers, conducted by Thomas Pyle
- 3 Traditional: *March for the 3rd. Regt. of Foot, Lord Amberst's*
The Liberty Tree Wind Players
 - 4 Traditional: *British Grenadiers*
American Fife Ensemble
 - 5 Traditional: *Song on Liberty*
Sherrill Milnes, baritone; Jon Spong, harpsichord
 - 6 Traditional: *General Scott's March*
The Liberty Tree Wind Players
 - 7 Traditional: *Junto Song*
Seth McCoy, tenor; James Richman, harpsichord
 - 8 Traditional: *Lovely Nancy* (harmonization by John Ciaglia)
American Fife Ensemble
 - 9 Traditional: *American Vicar of Bray*
Sherrill Milnes, baritone
 - 10 William Billings: *Independence*
The Continental Harmony Singers, Neely Bruce, conductor
 - 11 Traditional: *March of the 35th Regiment*
The Liberty Tree Wind Players
 - 12 Anonymous: *Liberty Song*
Sherrill Milnes, baritone; Jon Spong, harpsichord
 - 13 Traditional: *Lady Hope's Reel*
American Fife Ensemble
 - 14 Anonymous: *Parody Upon a Well-known Liberty Song*
Seth McCoy, tenor; James Richman, harpsichord
 - 15 Traditional: *March for the 76th Regt.*
The Liberty Tree Wind Players
 - 16 Abraham Wood: *Warren*
The Continental Harmony Singers, Neely Bruce, conductor
 - 17 Traditional: *Stone Grinds All*
American Fife Ensemble
 - 18 Traditional: *The King's Own Regulars*
Seth McCoy, tenor; James Richman, harpsichord
 - 19 Traditional: *Washington's March*
The Liberty Tree Wind Players
 - 20 Abraham Wood: *A Hymn on Peace*
The Continental Harmony Singers, Neely Bruce, conductor

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