

# Traveling with “Ancient Music”: Intellectual and Transatlantic Currents in American Psalmody Reform

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Soon after arriving in Europe in 1806, Joseph Stevens Buckminster, the twenty-two-year-old pastor of Boston’s Brattle Street Church, wrote home to his father. Upon witnessing the splendor that was Paris—including the courtly grandeur of a Te Deum service at the Notre Dame cathedral—Buckminster was filled with a dizzying sense of inadequacy for the new American republic:

I only wish I could let my friends in political life in America know how mortifying, how disgusting, how low, how infamous, appear the animosities and wicked calumnies, with which our American papers are filled. I am called every day to blush for the state of society among us, and attempt, but in vain, to say something in our defence. There is nothing I have more at heart than to impress upon the minds of my countrymen the grievous injury which we suffer in Europe from the complexion of

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our newspapers, and the brutality of our party spirit, the infamy of our political disputes. Of what advantage is our boasted freedom, if it is only consistent with such a state of animosity as now exists in New England?<sup>1</sup>

Buckminster was not alone in lamenting New England's current cultural climate, one in which relentless political partisanship throttled civil discourse. His embarrassment was shared by his contemporaries, a generation of scholars at once exhausted by post-Revolutionary animosity and ashamed of the intellectual vacuum it created.

Upon his return to the United States, Buckminster called the young thinkers of New England to arms. In an 1809 address to Harvard's Phi Beta Kappa Society, "The Dangers and Duties of Men of Letters," Buckminster bemoaned America's current state of cultural affairs: "Our poets and historians, our critics and orators, the men in whom posterity are to stand in awe, and by whom they are to be instructed, are yet to appear among us." But in this room of Harvard-educated scholars, a budding collection of New England Federalists, Buckminster saw promise: "You, my young friends, are destined to witness the dawn of our Augustan age, and to contribute to its glory."<sup>2</sup>

Buckminster's speech—reprinted in *The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review*, the house journal of the New England elite—resonated with these young men-of-letters. Scholar George Ticknor heard in it "the sound of a trumpet" that would rescue Bostonians "from the enthrallment and degradation of party politics and party passions." Edward Everett, who would go on to serve as governor of Massachusetts and secretary of state, "felt all the power of Mr. Buckminster's influence."<sup>3</sup>

The power of that influence resounded in the world of American hymnody. Within a year of his lecture, Buckminster gathered local musicians and members of his congregation to compile *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship*, a major hymnal in the "Ancient Music" reform movement that reintroduced European sacred music to the United States in the early nineteenth century. Buckminster was not the only member of the New England elite to take on psalmody as a side project. Several years earlier, linguist John Pickering, the son of Secretary of State Timothy Pickering, had co-compiled *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*, one of the earliest hymnals in "Ancient Music" reform. These reform movements grew out of the kind of transatlantic anxieties

<sup>1</sup> Letter to Buckminster's father dated 12 November 1806, reprinted in Eliza Buckminster Lee, *Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Buckminster, D. D., and of his son, Rev. Joseph Stevens Buckminster* (Boston: W.M. Crosby & H.P. Nichols, 1849), 279.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 388.

<sup>3</sup> Responses printed in Marshall Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy: Federalist Intellectuals and the Shaping of an American Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 71.

expressed in Buckminster's 1806 letter, an intellectual attempt to revitalize American hymnody by returning it to its European origins.

Beginning in the 1790s, American psalmody underwent a Europeanizing process. Hymnal compilers turned away from the Revolutionary era style of Yankee tunesmiths—epitomized in the rustic harmony and fusing tunes of composers such as William Billings and Jeremiah Ingalls—and toward a foreign aesthetics. Several compilers opened their hymnals with prefaces apologizing for their inadequacy as untrained American composers.<sup>4</sup> But a more significant shift of repertoire and rhetoric came in the first decade of the nineteenth century with the birth of a movement that espoused so-called “Ancient Music”: a proposed return of American psalmody to its pre-Revolutionary, European origins.<sup>5</sup> The “Ancient Music” reformers emphasized the classic pedigree of older and simpler tunes, such as Loys Bourgeois's “Old Hundred,” as well as the elite musical training and so-called scientific harmony of Handel and others. “Ancient Music” was marked by these scientifically composed and solemnly homophonic hymns rather than the lively and virtuosic fusing tunes of the recent past, and guided by clergy and intellectuals rather than composers.

For reformers, the centuries-old tension between artistry and religion played itself out in reference to the American character of hymnody. Clergy felt that the style of native composers—as epitomized by the fusing tune—was responsible for rampant secularism. American music

<sup>4</sup> See Richard Crawford, *American Studies and American Musicology: A Point of View and A Case in Point* (New York: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1975), 19–27.

<sup>5</sup> The term “Ancient Music” is a neologism first used by Nathaniel D. Gould in his 1853 *Church Music in America* to describe the hymnody reform movement circa 1806: “Societies and associations began to be formed soon after the present century, for the purpose of reviving ancient music.” Nathaniel D. Gould, *Church Music in America* (Boston: A.N. Johnson, 1853), 69. Although the leaders of the reform movement did not use this label, hymnal prefaces and advertisements emphasized the ancient pedigree of the music that appeared in the newly-published compilations; for example, an 1808 advertisement for *The Deerfield Collection of Sacred Music* announced that “The principal object of this compilation, consisting entirely of foreign music, was the restoration of those ancient melodies which have been long exiled from most of our temples of worship.” Quoted in Allen Perdue Britton, Irving Lowens, and Richard Crawford, *American Sacred Music Imprints, 1698–1810: A Bibliography* (Worcester, MA: American Antiquarian Society, 1990), 245. Drawing on the work of Richard Crawford, I use “Ancient Music” as a blanket term to refer to a New England reform movement based on shifts in repertoire that re-introduced older European hymns as well as new tunes written in a similarly homophonic, solemn style (with so-called “scientific” harmonic writing based on European rules of counterpoint as a key feature). Crawford writes, “‘Ancient Music,’ then, is an apt if slightly anachronistic label for the European repertory that was put forward as an antidote to secularization.” Richard Crawford, “‘Ancient Music’ and the Europeanizing of American Psalmody, 1800–1810,” in *A Celebration of American Music: Words and Music in Honor of H. Wiley Hitchcock*, eds. Richard Crawford, R. Allen Lott, and Carol J. Oja (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 234. “Ancient Music” also functions as a way to distinguish chronologically between this stage in the Europeanization of American psalmody and the “Better Music” movement that emerged in the 1820s, driven by Lowell Mason.

had drifted off-track in recent decades; only in seeking out the “Ancient Music” of Europe, with its proven record, could psalmody be righted.<sup>6</sup> The prefaces of new hymnals inveighed against the fugging tune and the “crudities of half-learned harmonists.”<sup>7</sup> By reining in American composition, European-minded compilers of hymnals believed they were redirecting church music back toward the devotional sphere. In looking to the Old World as a model for native psalmody, these reformers represented an early instantiation of a transatlantic trend that continued through the next two centuries, a recurring pattern in American cultural history: a Eurocentric obsession with domestic uplift that emphasized the superiority of foreign music. Within decades of its creation, the purportedly native musical style developed by American composers was deemed inferior to European practices.

Whereas earlier hymnals were compiled and signed by major American composers, including Billings, Andrew Law, and others, the language of “Ancient Music” reform was couched in a voice of anonymous authority. The preface of *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes* (hereafter referred to by its more commonly known name, the *Brattle Street Collection*) attributes its compilation to “the advice and assistance of gentlemen, whose names, if it were necessary to mention them, would add authority to the work.”<sup>8</sup> These names were no longer exclusively those of composers and singing school masters, but instead those of preachers and members of the socioeconomic elite. Along with restoring European repertoire, “Ancient Music” compilers also restored the clergy’s jurisdiction over sacred music.

That jurisdiction was shaped in part by transatlantic experiences, which opened the eyes and ears of young New England literati such as Buckminster (1784–1812) and Pickering (1777–1846), who felt a new sense of the inadequacy of their prized Boston within the broader context of the Atlantic world. Upon their return from Europe, Buckminster and Pickering sought to improve the cultural life of New England based on what they witnessed abroad, and sacred music fell under this general

<sup>6</sup> As we will see below, “Ancient Music” repertoire was not exclusively antiquated; alongside older hymn tunes by composers from Luther to Handel, compilers also included contrafacta of recent instrumental works by composers such as Ignace Pleyel, who at the time was one of the most widely published composers of secular music in America. More important than the strictly chronological “ancientness” of the tunes’ origins was their appropriate harmonic setting. As Nicholas Temperley has shown, the fugging tune was itself an import from England; “Ancient Music” reformers asserted an exclusively American origin of the fugging tune in order to contrast it with solemn, European hymns that were more appropriate to worship. Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> Preface to *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*, reprinted in Britton, Lowens, and Crawford, *American Sacred Music Imprints*, 537.

<sup>8</sup> “Advertisement” in *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1810).

purview. Beginning in 1805, with the publication of reform hymnals *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick* and *The Middlesex Collection of Church Music*, academics and clergy took up the cause of psalmody with new fervor. In investigating hymnody in the context of Europe and the new United States, this article contends that the “Ancient Music” reform movement was grounded and shaped not in an abstract gaze across the Atlantic but in the actual, lived experiences of American elites who visited Europe.<sup>9</sup> Uncovering the roles of Buckminster and Pickering, whom scholars had not previously connected with New England musical life, fills important gaps in the history of American psalmody reform. This study offers a fresh perspective on how the New England elite viewed Europe in the early nineteenth century and provides concrete examples—European hymn repertoire and rhetoric—of the cultural products with which they returned from their transatlantic travels, demonstrating that foreign music and ideas reached the new republic by way of intellectuals and clergy as well as composers.<sup>10</sup> Music can thus join contemporary developments in literature, linguistics, and biblical criticism, the

<sup>9</sup> Other cultural changes fueled the “Ancient Music” movement, including the arrival of a new wave of European émigrés such as Gottlieb Graupner, Hans Gram, and the Carr family, which resulted in the expansion of local concert and print cultures, the evolution of singing schools and church choirs into the model of musical societies, the “conversion” of native composers like Law to writing in European musical styles, and the decline of doctrinal Calvinism among New England clergy and congregations. Unlike the role of transatlantic travel, these phenomena have been well documented. Michael Broyles has pointed out Graupner’s role in Boston concert culture, though he was not directly involved in sacred music reform. See Michael Broyles, “*Music of the Highest Class: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston*” (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 112–13. The role of the Carrs in “Ancient Music” reform was also indirect but important. Though the family mostly performed and wrote tunebooks for Anglican and Episcopalian churches in Philadelphia and Baltimore, the repertoire that they published in their print shops was built on the same rhetoric of European-favoring elitism as the hymnody reform movement. Stephen Siek has shown how their advertising in the *Musical Journal of the Piano Forte* emphasized the pedigree of European compositions; see Stephen Siek, “Musical Taste in Post-Revolutionary America As Seen Through Carr’s ‘Musical Journal for the Piano Forte’” (Ph.D. diss., University of Cincinnati, 1991). Specific hymns that were important in “Ancient Music” reform, such as “Pleyel’s Hymn” (also known as “German Hymn”), also arrived in the United States for the first time via the Carrs, before finding their way into tunebooks like the *Brattle Street Collection*. See William Robin, “Pleyel’s Hymns Across the Atlantic: Migration, Travel, and American Psalmody Reform in the Early Nineteenth Century” (MA thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> Elites, it had been presumed, were largely indifferent towards music. Broyles, for example, writes, “The socioeconomic elite generally remained aloof from public musical activity,” and notes that “What little interest the socioeconomic elite manifested in public music was as patron, not performer.” Broyles, “*Music of the Highest Class*,” 120, 121. In a 1991 article, Broyles dates the emergence of the socioeconomic elite’s involvement in Boston’s musical life to the mid 1830s, when Samuel Atkins Eliot—scion of a prominent Boston family, a Harvard graduate, and later a member of the U.S. House of Representatives—became president of the Boston Academy of Music. Michael Broyles, “Music and Class Structure in Antebellum Boston,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 44, no. 3 (Autumn 1991): 451–93.

establishment of institutions including the Boston Athenaeum and its Anthology Club, and the founding of journals such as the *Monthly Anthology* and *North American Review* as the tangible results of the cultural anxieties produced by transatlantic travel.<sup>11</sup>

These shifts in perspective reflected a post-revolutionary development that Kariann Akemi Yokota has described as “unbecoming British.”<sup>12</sup> Although the New England elite attempted to construct its own American identity in the decades following the Revolution, it engaged in a complex dialogue with the former colonial ruler. “The importation of material culture, ideas, and experts from the mother country,” Yokota writes, “was an integral part of a provincial people’s attempt to construct a ‘civilized’ nation on the periphery of the transatlantic world.”<sup>13</sup> American identity was forged in exchange with the Old World, whether in the case of material goods imported from Britain, “practical tourists” who visited factories overseas to replicate their manufacturing processes at home, doctors who acquired their training abroad, or hymns by Pleyel and Handel introduced to New England congregations.

The transatlantic study of “Ancient Music” also illuminates an overlooked era in American hymnody: the transition between the age of Billings and that of antebellum reformer Lowell Mason, whose “Better Music” movement marked the most influential shift toward European-style hymnody in American sacred music. Scholars have focused predominantly on native musicians such as Billings, Law, and Mason, neglecting non-composer figures such as Buckminster.<sup>14</sup> Looking for the musical

<sup>11</sup> These broader trends are documented in Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy*. Peter S. Field has described the cultural implications of the establishment of the *Monthly Anthology* and its rival journal, *The Panoplist*, which was more overtly concerned with religious issues. Field writes that the journals participated in “the emerging bifurcation of New England’s ministerial ranks into an urban elite with great literary pretensions intent on creating a Catholic high culture and a more provincial orthodox party that just as ardently defended the traditional religious order.” Peter S. Field, “The Birth of Secular High Culture: ‘The Monthly Anthology and Boston Review’ and Its Critics,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 17, no. 4 (Winter 1997): 578.

<sup>12</sup> See Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America Became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>14</sup> J. Murray Barbour, *The Church Music of William Billings* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1960); Richard Crawford and David McKay, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth-Century Composer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Richard Crawford, *Andrew Law: American Psalmist* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1968); and Carol A. Pemberton, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1985). Two recent studies by Glenda Goodman and Karen L. Shadle investigate methods beyond the composer-based approach. See Glenda Goodman, “‘The Tears I Shed at the Songs of Thy Church’: Seventeenth Century Musical Piety in the English Atlantic World,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 65, no. 3 (2012): 691–725; and Karen L. Shadle, “Singing with Spirit and Understanding: Psalmody as Holistic Practice in Late Eighteenth-Century New England” (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2010).

roles of non-composers fleshes out the historiography of American music in the early nineteenth century, provides a bridge between Billings and Mason, and attests to Irving Lowens's tenet that the history of music in the United States is shaped as much by the music performed by Americans—regardless of origin—as it is by the music of American composers.<sup>15</sup>

A transatlantic view of hymnody reform in the early nineteenth century dovetails with recent approaches to American music. In a 2011 colloquy in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, several scholars considered possibilities for pushing the boundaries of American music beyond its traditional borders, investigating what George E. Lewis described as

A global perspective—not so much a comparative, border-drawing methodology, but an integrative one that implicitly recognizes the permanence of permeability, the transience of borders, and a *mestizaje* that draws its power from dialogue with an American trope of mobility.<sup>16</sup>

In considering Lewis's call for a broader, integrative approach to American music studies, this article examines the mobility of transatlantic travel in the early nineteenth century as an agent in psalmody reform. The global perspectives of the American socioeconomic elite were informed by firsthand knowledge of European cultural life, and an understanding of the major shifts in native hymnody requires us to consider how international viewpoints informed local developments.<sup>17</sup> Although travel was restricted to an elite few—and it is not clear whether other hymn reformers of this era reached Europe until Lowell Mason's better-known visits to the continent in 1837 and 1852–1853—the journeys

<sup>15</sup> Irving Lowens, *Music in America and America's Music: Two Views of the Scene* (New York: Institute for Studies in American Music, 1978).

<sup>16</sup> George E. Lewis, "Americanist Musicology and Nomadic Noise," in "Musicology Beyond Borders?" colloquy, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 64, no. 3 (2011): 692.

<sup>17</sup> Broyles has investigated the transatlantic travel of Lowell Mason, who attended concerts and observed congregational singing in Europe in 1837; Mason, significantly, did not contrast American and European psalmody practices and in fact was surprised at the low quality of congregational singing in England. Broyles is thus correct in his skepticism toward "transatlantic cultural distinction" in the early nineteenth century due to the clear ties between America and England and the hymnody traditions of dissenting churches in both countries. See Michael Broyles, "Lowell Mason on European Church Music and Transatlantic Cultural Identification: A Reconsideration," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 38, no. 2 (Summer 1985): 333. Following Temperley's work, Broyles points out that fusing tunes were in fact a transatlantic phenomenon: "Rather than indicating a break with British tradition, they reflect the opposite, the continuing influence of British thought and practice upon musical America." That said, the "Ancient Music" reformers clearly constructed an idea of superior European music in contrast to native practices of psalmody, even if those native practices were indebted to British traditions. *Ibid.*, 335.

of Pickering and Buckminster make clear that hymnody reform was part of a broader set of transatlantic practices among New England intellectuals in this period.

Recent scholarship has connected the study of early American sacred music with the interdisciplinary field of Atlantic history, as pioneered by historians such as David Armitage.<sup>18</sup> I draw on Armitage's "cis-Atlantic" model, one that studies "the history of any particular place . . . in relation to the wider Atlantic world."<sup>19</sup> A cis-Atlantic approach to American hymnody offers a local perspective on European travels, considers the implications of the foreign origins of the "Ancient Music" repertory, and places the rhetoric of American reform in dialogue with similar, earlier shifts in Britain. "Ancient Music" reform was a one-sided exchange—I have not discovered evidence that British practices were influenced by American developments—but the model of cis-Atlanticism offers valuable insights into the work of the American reformers by examining their indebtedness to the earlier rhetoric of their British counterparts. The "wider Atlantic world" of hymnody reform was not, however, very wide, for the American reformers (and their critics) constructed a concept of "European music" by contrasting just a handful of cities: Boston, Salem, London, and Paris. Yet considering New England in relation to the Atlantic world places "Ancient Music" into a broader landscape and recognizes a continuing relationship across the ocean, one in which ideas about music traveled from the prefaces of London hymnals to the editorials of Boston newspapers.

By concentrating on the role of two traveling intellectuals, this study examines how European rhetoric and repertoire reached the United States. The effect of the "Ancient Music" movement was immediate and long-lasting: participants in "Ancient Music" reform, such as Ebenezer Withington, Bryant P. Tilden, and Nahum Mitchell, helped found significant cultural institutions, including the Philharmonic Society and Handel and Haydn Society, shaped Mason's "Better Music" agenda, and forged an elitist rhetoric favoring European music that endured well into the twentieth century.

<sup>18</sup> Glenda Goodman, "American Identities in an Atlantic Musical World: Transhistorical Case Studies" (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 2012), 15–22.

<sup>19</sup> David Armitage, "Three Concepts of Atlantic History," in *The British Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, ed. David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 22. Armitage writes that cis-Atlanticism "studies particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world and seeks to define that uniqueness as the result of the interaction between local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparisons)." *Ibid.*, 21. Cis-Atlanticism is also a historical concept that dates back to the eighteenth century, though it had a slightly different meaning; in 1785 Thomas Jefferson referred to American developments as cis-Atlantic, to distinguish them from transatlantic Europe. *Ibid.*, 22–23.

*The Rise and Fall of American Psalmody*

For several decades preceding the reforms of “Ancient Music,” a native form of hymnody developed in the United States, fostered by a burgeoning American print culture and the emergence of local composers of sacred music. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the dominant form of music-making in the Puritan church was the so-called Old Way of singing, a type of call and response in which a member of the congregation “lined out” tunes for the unaccompanied worshippers to imitate.<sup>20</sup> The result was slow, ornamented, and heterophonic renditions of hymn tunes, led by clergy members who were often not trained in music. Beginning in the 1720s, Harvard-educated ministers attempted to combat the Old Way, which they considered a degenerate form of sacred music. This “Regular Singing” reform movement advocated for a musically literate congregation, which fueled the establishment of local singing schools. Itinerant musicians formed the schools to educate lay people in reading music, and the singing school in turn created demand for new American hymnals with printed tunes.

Before 1760, most of the music published for use by the singing schools and churches came from Britain; the 1761 publication of James Lyon’s *Urania*, the first tunebook compiled by an American composer, marked a shift toward native hymnody, though it was still dominated by tunes of English origin. In the 1770s, Billings, Law, and others issued collections of their own compositions, further popularizing native sacred music and tying it to the spirit of the Revolution. In the 1780s, American and European compositions were published in equal numbers, but by the 1790s, American tunes outweighed European ones by a ratio of two to one.<sup>21</sup>

The denigration of native hymnody began in the decade in which its local production was most prominent: the 1790s. Richard Crawford’s examination of hymnal prefaces shows that beginning in 1791 composers started apologizing for their lack of training. That year, Samuel Holyoke opened his *Harmonia Americana* with a self-effacing confession:

<sup>20</sup> For a comprehensive history of the Old Way, see Nicholas Temperley, “The Old Way of Singing: Its Origins and Development,” *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 34, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 511–44.

<sup>21</sup> Crawford has charted the proportion of American and European sacred music published in the United States between 1760 and 1810. See Crawford, ““Ancient Music.”” For an extensive discussion of statistics in the core repertory of American hymnody, see also Crawford, ed., *The Core Repertory of Early American Psalmody* (Madison, WI: A-R Editions, 1984).

The advantages for studying the principles of harmony being, in this country, so limited, it cannot be expected that a composition of this nature can stand the test of criticism.<sup>22</sup>

Holyoke and others omitted fusing tunes and openly criticized them in their prefaces; American composers had started to recognize their differences with Europe and adopted what Richard Crawford calls a “rhetorical etiquette” for excusing them. With the exception of Billings, who unapologetically defended his untrained style well into the 1790s, American musicians guided psalmody, as Crawford explains, from a “freely-chosen, heterogeneous practice into a self-conscious, increasingly homogenous category.”<sup>23</sup>

The rhetoric of these composers resonated with similar developments in the Protestant church. New England clergy felt that the singing school, led by music teachers rather than pastors, fostered an environment of secular virtuosity instead of solemn worship. Although the schools were established to promote educated congregational singing, they led to the formation of church choirs, which often had more authority over music sung in service than the ministers themselves. Choirs met outside of religious services and trained to perform more complicated music, such as the fusing tunes of Billings and Ingalls.

These trends were outlined by one of the reform movement’s eyewitnesses, the singing-school instructor Nathaniel D. Gould. In his 1853 history *Church Music in America*, Gould described a “dark age” of psalmody, in which the authority of clergy in shaping worship was “wrested from them . . . by those who apparently had no higher object in view than to please, astonish, and amuse.”<sup>24</sup> The authority of the singing master encroached on that of the clergy, and the nature of the singing school itself—an institution outside the church, in which young men and women could meet, unsupervised—acquired an air of immorality.<sup>25</sup>

#### *“Ancient Music” and Boston’s Elite*

At the same time that Billings, Holyoke, and Law debated the merits of American psalmody in their tunebook prefaces, native amateur musicians

<sup>22</sup> Crawford points out that many of these apologetic hymnals were issued by Boston publisher Thomas & Andrews, concluding that they comprised a kind of “house policy” for the firm. Quoted in Crawford, *American Studies and American Musicology*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>24</sup> Gould, *Church Music in America*, 58–59.

<sup>25</sup> For a more detailed description of the morality issue in the singing school, see John Bealle, *Public Worship, Private Faith: Sacred Harp and American Folksong* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997), 51–52.

looked to Europe as an ideal source of music and thought. This literate elite grew up in a Federalist tradition that had diminished in political force but maintained a hold on the learned culture of New England. In her seminal study of Americans born after the Revolution, Joyce Appleby discusses Buckminster's generation as one of reformers "confronting the irreparable shredding of older ties," who formed new organizations to transform the social order of the nation. Appleby, in fact, draws on the contentiousness of Samuel Gilman's 1829 *Memoirs of a New England Village Choir* to point out the "volitional character of participation" in the new republic, one marked by heated partisan debates of the kind that Buckminster and his fellow intellectuals disparaged (when they were political) but still participated in (when they were intellectual).<sup>26</sup>

Marshall Foletta has described the close links between Buckminster's European-minded contemporaries, whom he calls "Federalist sons of privilege": they met frequently for wide-ranging scholarly discussions at Buckminster's home or the clubhouse of the Anthology Society and published together in the *Monthly Anthology* and its successor, the *North American Review*.<sup>27</sup>

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The sons of privilege broke with their fathers. Buckminster, for example, rejected his father's doctrinal Calvinism and became a Unitarian preacher.<sup>28</sup> Many of these figures traveled to Europe to witness foreign culture firsthand, and their experiences reshaped their perspectives on domestic life. Foletta describes the jadedness that this young generation felt about its home:

<sup>26</sup> Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 22, 130. Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan has pointed out how the debates among these intellectual institutions grew out of (and against) the heated political climate of the post-revolutionary era: "By creating the *Anthology* and the *Athenaeum*, the Anthology Society sought to create, out of the hyper-politicized realm of the early republic, elements of life and individual liberty which might transcend interest, power, and choice. In doing so, the Society participated in the division of literature from politics, and more broadly in what David Waldstreicher has deemed the decline of the classical public sphere." See Catherine O'Donnell Kaplan, "'We Have Joys . . . They Do Not Know': Letters, Federalism, and Sentiment in the New Nation, 1790–1812" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 1998), 164; and David Waldstreicher, "Review of *Habermas and the Public Sphere*," *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 1 (1995): 176.

<sup>27</sup> Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy*, 47.

<sup>28</sup> These philosophical breaks were internal, however, and did not significantly rupture the New England socioeconomic elite. Even as sons struck out new positions in contrast to their fathers, New England Federalist intellectuals still rallied together against the Jeffersonian republicans, who had taken control of the government in the first decade of the nineteenth century and asserted their identity as the true heirs of the Revolution in contrast to the threat of the Southerners. See David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776–1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

By this time [1823], this theme of disaffection had become a familiar refrain. European and domestic travel, personal crises, unsatisfying careers, and family differences had yielded a widespread awareness among these young Boston intellectuals that the world of New England Federalism was far from perfect. Its career options were too narrow, its institutions were overblown, its provincial biases were restrictive, and its conceits were ill founded. As men of letters they were embarrassed by the resulting mediocrity of Boston's cultural institutions. As sons of Federalist activists, they were embarrassed by the resulting myopic partisanship of their fathers' politics.<sup>29</sup>

Foletta cites the case of George Ticknor, a friend of Buckminster whose encounters with European universities in the 1810s shook his faith in American exceptionalism. Studying in Göttingen, Germany, Ticknor felt newly ashamed of the Harvard library, calling it a "closetful of books" in comparison; he saw a "mortifying distance" between the scholarship of America and that of Europe.<sup>30</sup> The sharpness of Buckminster's own anti-American invective, as evidenced in his 1806 letter, shaped the institutions that he formed upon his return. The speech that Buckminster gave in 1809 spoke to a generation of Harvard graduates who worried that American letters had been hijacked by partisan politics, and who turned toward Europe for a different perspective. Their cosmopolitanism created an inferiority complex about American cultural life that spilled over into the world of sacred music. European hymnody became another refined good, a counterpart to the high-quality china and cloth that elites imported.<sup>31</sup>

In *Church Music in America*, Gould identified Andrew Law, Oliver Holden, Samuel Holyoke, Jacob Kimball, and others as musicians who helped shift the style of native hymnody. Gould also noted the involvement of those who were not composers or professional musicians, citing the "decided and efficient exertions" in the towns of Salem and Middlesex, led by the Reverends Samuel Worcester and Daniel Chaplin, respectively. Gould's subsequent comment is particularly noteworthy, given the climate of the time:

Clergymen and other professional men taking an active part, made the associations appear rather formidable; and no wonder that the whole movement was denounced as aristocratic, by those who had previously managed the public singing; and as most of the members, when they

<sup>29</sup> Foletta, *Coming to Terms with Democracy*, 59.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>31</sup> For a description of the post-revolutionary exchange of refined goods between the United States and Britain, see Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 62–114.

came together, were found to be of a political party called Federalists, their meetings were pronounced by many as a political combination.<sup>32</sup>

Whether or not the “Ancient Music” movement was itself part of a Federalist political conspiracy, its participants grew out of the elitist culture of the Federalist Party in New England.

Crawford notes that the “collective and anonymous authorship” of the *Salem Collection* and *Middlesex Collection* granted a sense of ancient, communal authority to the tunebooks.<sup>33</sup> Yet, as an examination of contemporary memoirs and correspondence reveals, their authors were neither ancient nor communal. We can now identify one of the compilers of the *Salem Collection* and understand the full significance of its rhetoric-laden preface.

#### *John Pickering and The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*

The extensive preface to *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*—one of the lengthiest of American tunebooks in the early nineteenth century—railed against “a general and most deplorable corruption of taste in our church musick.”<sup>34</sup> Although its anonymous creators originally planned the *Collection* for the use of the First Church of Salem, it became a broader project in response to the apparent interest of other local congregations. In the end, the compilers decided to “accommodate as many societies as possible with a convenient and accurate selection of tunes adapted to the various metres now in use.”<sup>35</sup>

The repertoire of the *Salem Collection* is entirely European, comprising eighty-four solemn, homophonic tunes in the style of “Old Hundred,” the emblematic hymn of the reform movement. (Gould referred to the reformers as “Old Hundred singers.”<sup>36</sup>) Several of the tunes, however, were not as ancient as the sixteenth century “Old Hundred”; Ignace Pleyel’s “German Hymn,” for example, came from a 1788 string quartet, transformed into a hymn in Britain only fifteen years before the *Collection*’s publication. We see here the beginnings of a trend that would emerge more fully in the 1820s and 1830s, when Mason crafted his “Better Music” style by rearranging Beethoven and Haydn

<sup>32</sup> Gould, *Church Music in America*, 69.

<sup>33</sup> Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 133.

<sup>34</sup> Preface to *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*, reprinted in Britton, Lowens, and Crawford, *American Sacred Music Imprints*, 537.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* For further discussion of amateur music-making in Salem, see Broyles’s description of the diaries of William Bentley. Broyles, “*Music of the Highest Class*,” 122–24.

<sup>36</sup> Gould, *Church Music in America*, 119.

melodies into hymn tunes in compilations such as *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Collection of Church Music*.

In discussing the *Salem Collection*, Gould mentioned the Reverend Samuel Worcester, who preached at Salem's Tabernacle Church from 1803 to 1821, but I have not found any other direct connections between Worcester and the *Collection*.<sup>37</sup> The biography and correspondence of another figure active in the area help enlighten aspects of Salem music reform. John Pickering, a linguist and one of the founders of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, played music recreationally and, according to a eulogy by Daniel Appleton White, "became so well versed in the science of music, that in later life he took much pleasure in explaining its principles to his young friends."<sup>38</sup> He studied at Harvard several years before Buckminster; lived in Portugal and England from 1796 to 1801; traveled through Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam; and returned to Salem for the remainder of his life, where he practiced law and philology. In Europe, Pickering also acquired a library of more than two thousand volumes, from which he incurred enough debt that he was forced to sell them in public auction upon his return to the United States; White, however, remarked that the auction's distribution of books "gave an important impulse to the pursuit of ancient learning," and that it provided the germ of the Boston Athenaeum's famous library.<sup>39</sup>

In Lisbon, Pickering enjoyed Italian opera, attended orchestra concerts, and played flute in amateur chamber music. Pickering's daughter later wrote that he "acquired the correct taste and cultivation which were at that time impossible to be obtained in his own country."<sup>40</sup> Upon his return, Pickering attempted to apply that taste and cultivation to Salem's church music; he was a leading member of the First Church of Salem, for which the *Collection* was originally intended.

I have uncovered an 1806 exchange between Pickering and his father, Timothy, who served as secretary of state under George Washington and

<sup>37</sup> A biography of Worcester, written by the minister's son, attests to an interest in music: Worcester's family sang sacred music recreationally at home, and he apparently led a singing school as a minister at New Ipswich Academy in the 1790s. Unfortunately, the memoir offers no insight into Worcester's involvement in sacred music in Salem itself, and does not mention the *Salem Collection*. See Samuel Melancthon Worcester, *The Life and Labors of Rev. Samuel Worcester, D.D.* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1852), 210.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel Appleton White, *Eulogy on John Pickering, LL. D.* (Cambridge, MA: Metcalf and Company, 1847), 30.

<sup>39</sup> White, in fact, compared Pickering's library to that of Buckminster, who amassed a similarly large collection of books abroad (see below): "The classic Buckminster soon after imported, on his return from Europe, a similar collection, which, at his deplored death, were in like manner dispersed through our literary community." White, *Eulogy*, 38.

<sup>40</sup> Mary Orne Pickering, *Life of John Pickering* (Boston: John Wilson and Son, 1887), 152ff. Alas, neither the biography nor Pickering's letters (from which it quotes extensively) discuss whether the linguist attended church in Europe or whether he heard or participated in any congregational singing.

John Adams, which reveals the younger Pickering's involvement in the *Salem Collection*. Citing a recent issue of Boston's *Repertory* that printed two articles about church music, one of which was the preface to the *Salem Collection*, the elder Pickering bemoaned the "light and paltry compositions" of native sacred music to his son:

My disgust has been so great, I have wished for the expulsion of psalmody, unless an entire change of music can be effected. Many years past I have thought that the only means of rendering church music generally pleasing and useful would be to practice plain, solemn compositions.<sup>41</sup>

He complained about the virtuosic organ playing at his son's church, remarking that it interrupted "the sense of the sacred hymn."<sup>42</sup> Timothy Pickering wished that his son would introduce his ideas in Salem, in the hope of hearing "some rational music" in the future.

In his startling response, John Pickering announced to his father that he himself wrote the preface to the *Salem Collection*. It is the only direct admission of authorship I have found for one of these "anonymous" hymnals. He continued:

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We are endeavoring to extirpate the vile compilations now in vogue here, and to correct the taste in music; and this Collection is the first step in our plan. I send you one of them . . . that you might introduce it to the notice of some gentlemen whose influence might be of service to those very deserving men, the publishers; at the same time that their countenance of this work might, I should hope, have a tendency to promote a just musical taste.<sup>43</sup>

The linguist's active statement—making clear his intention to replace native hymnody with a more cultivated European alternative—reveals the personal motivations behind an anonymous movement. Like those of Buckminster, Pickering's musical tastes were shaped by his extended visit abroad. Here we see the local results of a single figure's interaction with Europe, a cis-Atlantic example of the influence of an international perspective on musical life in Salem.

It is understandable why earlier scholarship did not identify the specific participants who shaped "Ancient Music" or engage with the

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in *ibid.*, 226–27. The articles in question came from the 31 December 1805 issue of the *Repertory*.

<sup>42</sup> Timothy Pickering objected less to the presence of the organ than the style in which it was played: "Though that is a noble instrument, I thought if I could not get this absurd mode of performing essentially changed, and it were in my power, I would remove the organ from the church." He cited as the best form of sacred music that of German churches in Philadelphia, in which "all have organs, and apparently the whole congregations joined, and filled the houses with the solemn songs." Pickering, *Life of John Kickerling*, 227.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 227–28.

musical practices of Pickering and other intellectuals. The biographies of Buckminster, Pickering, and others mention music mostly in passing; of the hundreds of pages written about them in eulogies and memoirs, scant few discuss music. In her biography of her brother, Eliza Buckminster Lee discussed at length his involvement in Biblical criticism, the *Monthly Anthology*, and other intellectual endeavors; his role in compiling the *Brattle Street Collection* occupies only a single paragraph.

The limited evidence of the role of music in the lives of the New England literati points toward the lower status music commanded among that elite. Octavius Pickering's four-volume biography of Timothy Pickering includes several examples of this state of affairs. In 1784 Dr. Joseph Orne, Timothy's nephew, wrote to his uncle that his bouncing "from music through law and arms, and then to trade, make me suspect that you are not fixed yet." Orne added, "I am persuaded that either music or law will bring you up, and that you will be for life either a singing-school master or a judge; but, as singing masters and eunuchs are equal objects of my loathing, I cannot abide this as any part of the alternative." He requested that Pickering take up law.<sup>44</sup>

Twenty-six years later, Timothy Pickering himself penned a letter to his son Henry, John's younger brother, instructing him not to allow his teenage sisters to study piano:

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*A delicate ear, with an exquisite relish for music, should be indulged, where the parent is rich in wealth and the daughter in time. You offer to be the substitute of the former; but your sisters have no time. What time they have for mental improvement is invaluable. Knowledge combined with good sense gives respectability in society. It is the becoming garb of certain ranks; music is but the lace or fringe on a garment sufficiently rich and decent without it. I would rather your money were thrown into the sea; for that would be a loss only of so much money; but time to your sisters is above all price; its loss, in sitting to a musical instrument, would be irretrievable.*<sup>45</sup>

Music clearly had a place in the lives of the Pickerings and their contemporaries, but it was below that of other scholarly and intellectual enterprises—an attitude typical among New Englanders of his class. For

<sup>44</sup> Octavius Pickering, *The Life of Timothy Pickering*, vol. 1 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1867), 498–99. Timothy Pickering's musical proclivities, however, may have manifested in another form. As Raoul Camus has documented, Pickering authored *An Easy Plan of Discipline for a Militia*, a 1775 instructional volume that included intensive descriptions of military drum and fife music and was used as a blueprint for the colonial army. See Raoul F. Camus, "The Inspector of Music Meets the French," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 8, no. 4 (2014): 479–500.

<sup>45</sup> Charles W. Upham, *The Life of Timothy Pickering*, vol. 4 (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1873), 200.

Timothy Pickering, it did not qualify as a mental improvement that granted respectability, and thus time spent on music should not come at the expense of acquiring other forms of knowledge.

If hymnody was an important side-project for John Pickering, then the policing of American letters was a principal occupation. Pickering's role as a reviewer for the *Monthly Anthology* demonstrates how "Ancient Music" reform was part of a broader discourse in which New England Federalists navigated issues of national identity and intellectual prestige. Over several issues of the *Monthly Anthology* in 1806–1807, Pickering waged an anonymous print war against a Philadelphia-published subscription edition of Abraham Rees's famous *Cyclopaedia*, first issued in London in 1802.<sup>46</sup> Solicited by the Anthology Club to critique the American edition, Pickering—who likely acquired the original European version of the encyclopedia abroad—led a vociferous protest against the additions and emendations that the Philadelphia editors had made to Rees's work. In the first of several reviews of the encyclopedia's early volumes, Pickering initially expressed his hope that an American edition of the prestigious encyclopedia signaled "the flourishing state of the arts of *printing* and *engraving* in our country"; upon realizing the numerous errors it contained, though, he proclaimed it a "literary fraud."<sup>47</sup> Following up in May 1807, Pickering wrote that:

The honour of our country was deeply interested in the protest, we made against the practices of the American editors of this work in publishing the first part of the first volume. In the republication of foreign books, of inferior importance, by printers without character, we have learned, by melancholy experience, to expect shameful mutilations of fact, and perversions of sentiment.<sup>48</sup>

He requested that the editors reprint the volume "as it should be, to satisfy the honour of the country, which they have stained."<sup>49</sup> The sentiment is similar to contemporary concerns about the quality of the refined products that Americans imported from Britain; Yokota writes that "beyond their use and trade value, these goods fulfilled the promise of civility and the development of high culture in the distant colonies."<sup>50</sup>

<sup>46</sup> Though contributions to the *Monthly Anthology* were unsigned in print, the *Journal of the Proceedings of the Anthology Society* provides detailed minutes for meetings of the Anthology Society, including discussions of who submitted each article. See *Journal of the Proceedings of the Anthology Society Which Conducts the Monthly Anthology & Boston Review* (Boston: The Boston Athenaeum, 1910).

<sup>47</sup> "Article 38. Volume I. Part I. of the New Cyclopaedia," *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 3 (August 1806): 423, 424.

<sup>48</sup> "Art. 23. The New Cyclopaedia, &c. by Abraham Rees and others," *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 4 (May 1807): 265.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 266.

<sup>50</sup> Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 75.

Amid this vehement remonstrance, another contributor to the *Monthly Anthology* cited the Rees controversy, but in a wholly different context. In April 1807, Peter O. Thacher opened a generally praiseful review of *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick* by invoking the Salem-based protest against the republication of Rees's encyclopedia: "In this resistance we united our exertions, not, however, from malice, or because we were glad of the occasion; but because it is the duty of good men to be watchful over each other for the general edification."<sup>51</sup> Hymnody, Thacher made clear, was also a part of the mission of general edification and the New England Federalists' supervision of American arts, letters, and religious practices in the post-Revolutionary era. Thacher—certainly aware of Pickering's involvement in the compilation of the *Salem Collection*—described the hymnal's preface as "written by no common hand."<sup>52</sup> He went on to quote extensively from the preface and acclaim the hymnal's musical contents, though he had some qualms about its harmonic settings.

Thacher was likewise no common hand in the world of hymnody. He had reviewed *The First Church Collection of Sacred Musick*, another Boston reform hymnal, in the January 1807 edition of the *Monthly Anthology*.<sup>53</sup> A lawyer and Harvard graduate, Thacher was also the son of Peter Thacher, the minister of the Brattle Street Church who immediately preceded Joseph Stevens Buckminster. Three years after penning his review of the *Salem Collection*, Peter O. Thacher participated in the compilation of the *Brattle Street Collection* alongside Buckminster.

### *Buckminster, Travel, and the Brattle Street Church*

The Brattle Street Church, one of Boston's most illustrious Congregational meeting houses, had a long tradition of music since its establishment in 1698; its founder, Thomas Brattle, had bequeathed it New England's first organ in 1713, though its congregants actually refused it, a typical move for dissenting churches of the time.<sup>54</sup> In the 1720s, Brattle Street became one of Boston's first churches to host a singing school, and when it finally accepted an organ in 1790, purchased from England, it was Boston's first Congregational church to acquire one. Its organist, Hans Gram, was an important figure in transatlantic reform.

<sup>51</sup> "Art 21. *The Salem Collection of Classical Sacred Musick*," *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 4 (April 1807): 213.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>53</sup> "Art. 4. *The First Church Collection of Sacred Musick. Second edition*," *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 4 (January 1807): 50–51.

<sup>54</sup> Barbara Owen, *The Organs and Music of King's Chapel Boston: 1713–1993* (Boston: King's Chapel, 1993).

A Dutch émigré, Gram compiled America's first major music treatise with Samuel Holyoke and Oliver Holden: the 1795 *Massachusetts Compiler of Theoretical and Practical Elements of Sacred Vocal Music*.

Gram died in 1804, a year before the twenty-year-old Joseph Stevens Buckminster became pastor of the Brattle Street Church. The son of a New Hampshire minister, Buckminster studied theology and literature at Harvard, organized literary periodicals as a member of the Anthology Club, and helped introduce German Biblical textual criticism to the United States. At age nineteen, before he took the Brattle Street position, Buckminster broke with his father's strict Calvinism and became a Unitarian. Skeptical of the Calvinist elevation of tradition into dogma, the younger Buckminster believed that religious truth lay in a scholarly examination of the Bible. In 1809, he persuaded Harvard to publish Johann Jakob Griesbach's New Testament, the first critical edition of the Greek New Testament in the United States. Although textual criticism was well known in Europe, it had not yet reached America, and Buckminster became the subject of controversy when journals such as *The Panoplist* attacked his approach to religious studies. In an 1809 review of Charles Thomson's translation of the Septuagint, Buckminster asserted that textual criticism was important to all Christians as a method for discovering the true foundations of faith.<sup>55</sup>

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Buckminster suffered from epilepsy, and in May 1806—a little over a year after his appointment to the Brattle Street Church—he embarked on an extended sabbatical abroad to recover from his illness. Buckminster traveled through Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, London, and Paris and acquired a library of almost three thousand volumes. This library would become an important part of New England cultural life, sought out by cognoscenti across the East Coast. Buckminster's voyage brought new insights into European cultural life and his study of textual criticism; he met with numerous well-known European writers and clergy and absorbed ideas that would influence his later work in Boston, including his perspective on hymnody.

Buckminster was invested in music from an early age. His father had held his own congregation's choir rehearsals at his home, and Joseph Stevens learned flute, violin, cello, and organ. The Congregational church was the principal site of American hymnody reform dating back

<sup>55</sup> Michael J. Lee, "American Revelations: Biblical Interpretation and Criticism in America, Circa 1700–1860" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009), 275. In a subsequent review, Buckminster wrote "Nothing can more satisfactorily illustrate the extreme folly of a bigotted adherence to the received text and version of the scriptures, and of that horror of alteration which has been of late so industriously propagated among us, than the study of the Septuagint." Joseph Stevens Buckminster, "Thomson's Septuagint," *Monthly Anthology and Boston Review* 7 (March 1810): 193.

to the “Regular Singing” movement, and Buckminster was thus in a prime position to address the singing style of the Brattle Street Church. Among the contents of the immense library that Buckminster acquired abroad were several musical treatises, including Johann Joseph Fux’s *Gradus ad Parnassum*.<sup>56</sup>

One of the clergymen whom Buckminster met in London was Dr. Rees himself, who would have been in a position to provide the young Boston preacher with extensive knowledge of European music. Rees, a dissenting Welsh minister, had commissioned Charles Burney to write the entries on music for his encyclopedia, which had begun publication in 1802.<sup>57</sup> In 1795, Rees published *A Collection of Hymns and Psalms*, a compilation of hymn texts designed to replace the standard Watts collection. Although its preface does not explicitly mention music, it points toward the same ideals of congregational singing that “Ancient Music” reformers like Buckminster adapted in America:

In this sacred employment [of psalmody], particular care should be taken that nothing be introduced which shall clash with the sentiments, or hurt the feelings, of any sincere Christian. This is evident from the very nature of social prayer and praise, in which it is requisite that every member of a religious assembly should be able to join.<sup>58</sup>

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Buckminster visited Rees’s parish at Old Jewry, a small dissenting church, in which he heard this social prayer in action—the only musical description that Buckminster provides in the letters he wrote home from Europe:

I attended meeting yesterday at the old Jewry, formerly a very celebrated place of worship among the Dissenters, now very thinly attended. The forms of service reminded me more of New England than any thing I have yet seen in England. A chorister, who sat below the pulpit, always set the tune; and, so natural is it for an Englishman to be a singer, that, really, I do not think there were twenty in the congregation who did not join. The preacher was Dr. Rees, a good, substantial old gentleman, with a discourse an hour long.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>56</sup> The contents of Buckminster’s library are partially listed in an auction catalog compiled after the minister’s death; see *Catalogue of the Library of the Late Rev. J.S. Buckminster* (Boston: John Eliot, 1812).

<sup>57</sup> See Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney*, vol. 2 (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 184–202. The auction catalog for Buckminster’s library lists volumes eight through eleven of Rees’s *Cyclopaedia*, which were probably not acquired during his European trip, as only the first eight volumes had been issued by fall 1807, when Buckminster returned to the United States. See *Catalogue of the Library*, 40.

<sup>58</sup> Abraham Rees, *A Collection of Hymns and Psalms for Public and Private Worship* (London: C. Stower, 1807), v.

<sup>59</sup> Letter from Joseph Stevens Buckminster to his father, 23 June 1806. Reprinted in Lee, *Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Stevens Buckminster*, 266.

It is significant here that Buckminster feels at home in this environment. What he describes is not the “Ancient Music” model of congregational singing from homophonic, notated music, or even the earlier, rollicking style of the singing school and its fusing tunes. It is, instead, the “Old Way” of lining out—which, though the Brattle Street Church had instituted “Regular Singing” several decades before Buckminster was born, the preacher apparently still associated with New England.<sup>60</sup> If Buckminster sought out a particular model from the singing he heard at Old Jewry, it would have been the near-universal participation of the congregation in psalmody. Uninterested in re-adopting older practices of lining out, Buckminster sought out more current means to achieve the same ends in Boston: the creation of a new church choir and a new hymnal with the ultimate goal of fostering skilled congregational singing.

Upon his return in fall 1807, Buckminster launched several projects, including a new edition of hymn texts that expanded the classic Tate & Brady psalm collection. By September 1808, he had founded the “Brattle-Street Social Singing Society” (fig. 1).<sup>61</sup>

Buckminster had a chamber organ at his house, and the Brattle Street choir practiced and performed concerts there.<sup>62</sup> In January 1810 he met with several congregants and local musicians to plan the publication of a hymnal with texts and music, and later that year the Boston firm Manning & Loring published the *Brattle Street Collection*.

### *Pleyel's Second Before the Brattle Street Collection*

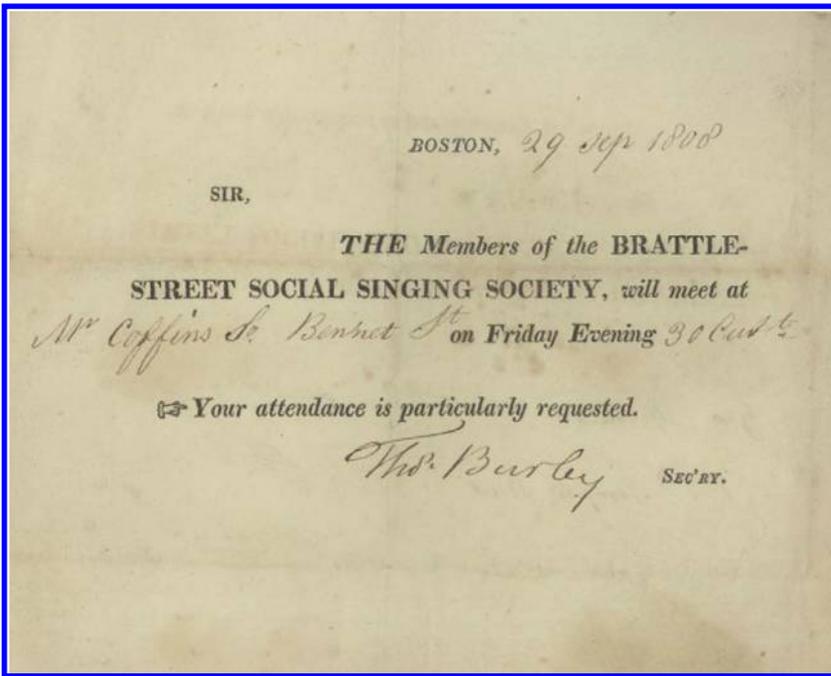
The origins and influence of the *Brattle Street Collection* can be traced by tracking the dissemination of a single hymn. The hymn known today as Pleyel's Hymn (Second)—I will refer to it, for simplicity's sake, as Pleyel's Second—is a particularly intriguing participant in the “Ancient Music” movement, since it was not exactly ancient: Ignace Pleyel's tune, contracted by British composer Thomas Costello into a hymn in 1801, dates

<sup>60</sup> Although Temperley suggests that Congregationalists and Baptists in Britain had begun to abandon the “Old Way” by the end of the eighteenth century, Broyles's investigation of Lowell Mason's European travels shows that the practice was still present in English churches by 1837. See Temperley, “The Old Way of Singing,” 538; and Broyles, “Lowell Mason,” 328.

<sup>61</sup> An invitation reads: “Boston, 29 Sep 1808. Sir, The members of the Brattle-Street Social Singing Society, will meet at Mr. Coffins So. Bennet St on Friday Evening [ . . . ] Your attendance is particularly requested. Tho. Burley Sec'ry.” See Tho. Burley, Letter to unknown, *American Broad-sides and Ephemera*, Series 1. According to church records, Thomas Burley was a member of the Brattle Street congregation; Coffins is not listed. See *The Manifesto Church: Records of the Church in Brattle Square Boston* (Boston: The Benevolent Fraternity of Churches, 1902).

<sup>62</sup> Lee, *Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Buckminster*, 205.

FIGURE 1. Thomas Burley, Invitation to the Brattle-Street Social Singing Society



back less than twenty-five years before the publication of the *Brattle Street Collection*. Pleyel's *Symphonie Concertante* in E-flat b. 111, a five-movement work for violin, viola, cello, and oboe concertant, premiered in 1786 in Paris.<sup>63</sup> First published in 1788, by 1790 the piece was available in London in keyboard arrangement and known as the composer's "celebrated Concertante." The Andante of the work, a set of variations, was particularly popular and was published throughout Europe in various arrangements. In 1794 the Philadelphia firm G. Willig issued "The Village Holy Day," a texted song arrangement of the Andante theme and its first documented American appearance.

Costellow, a London organist and composer, transformed the theme of Pleyel's Andante into a hymn tune in his 1801 collection *Sunday's Amusement* (reprinted in 1805 with revisions and additions). Subtitled

<sup>63</sup> The b. number refers to Rita Benton's bibliographic catalog of Pleyel's music. For the publication record of b. 111, see Rita Benton, *Ignace Pleyel: A Thematic Catalogue of His Compositions* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1977), 11–17.

“A Selection of Sacred Music as Sung at Bedford Chapel, Selected from Handel, Haydn, Pleyel and Dr. Boyce,” *Sunday’s Amusement* printed hymn settings of relatively new music alongside tunes by Costellow himself, in arrangements for voice and pianoforte designed for home use. Costellow set Pleyel’s music to a text by British poet Helen Maria Williams, “While Thee I Seek, Protecting Power” (fig. 2).

Pleyel’s Second appeared next in 1808 in the Boston reform hymnal *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist*, compiled by Oliver Shaw, Amos Albee, and Elias Mann. It remained essentially an American tune: of the seventy-seven subsequent reprints between 1809 and 1820 that are listed in Temperley’s *Hymn Tune Index*, only seven appear outside the United States.<sup>64</sup> *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist* compilers acquired the tune via Costellow’s compilation—no other British hymnal printed it until after 1808—and the musical setting is almost identical to Costellow’s but with the important distinction of dividing the keyboard arrangement into three voices (fig. 3).

How did the compilers of *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist* obtain Costellow’s hymnal? It is certainly possible that Boston music shops imported popular British collections such as *Sunday’s Amusement*. It is also likely that the acquisition of the hymnal was the result of transatlantic travel. Elias Mann went on to help compile the *Brattle Street Collection*; in 1807, Buckminster met with Helen Maria Williams while traveling abroad and likely obtained Costellow’s hymnal from her. Before working with Mann on the *Brattle Street Collection*, Buckminster may have shared *Sunday’s Amusement* with Mann, who could have incorporated its tunes into the 1808 *Columbian Sacred Harmonist*.

The appearance of Pleyel’s Second in *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist*, however, is a dead end: the American tradition of the hymn draws almost exclusively on a later source. None of the American reprints I examined derive from the 1808 hymnal.<sup>65</sup> In their dotted-note bassline and harmony, all of these other iterations of Pleyel’s Second trace back

<sup>64</sup> For a full listing of printings of Pleyel’s Second, see Nicholas Temperley, *The Hymn Tune Index: A Census of English-Language Hymn Tunes in Printed Sources from 1535 to 1820* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), vol. 4, 281. Temperley’s *Hymn Tune Index* is also available as a searchable online resource; see <http://hymntune.library.uiuc.edu>. All foreign reprints were published in England: William Russell, *Psalms Hymns and Anthems for the Foundling Chapel* (London: Luke Hansard & Sons, 1809); T. Curtis, *Divine Amusement* (London: J. Balls, 1810 and 1812); J. Wardle, *A Collection of Psalm and Hymn Tunes, as Sung at Newcastle Church* (London: C. Chester, 1810); Ralph Guest, *Hymns & Psalms* (London: Goulding, D’Almaine, Potter & Co., 1816); and two editions of *The Beauties of Mozart, Handel, Pleyel, Haydn, Beethoven, and other celebrated composers* (London: Samuel Leigh, 1820).

<sup>65</sup> I examined thirteen American reprints: ten derive from the *Brattle Street Collection*; one derives from Costellow; and two are new arrangements, not clearly based on either source.

FIGURE 2. Ignace Pleyel, “Hymn 4,” mm. 1–5, in Thomas Costello, *Sunday’s Amusement*. Fine Arts Library, University of Kentucky



FIGURE 3. Pleyel, “Devotion,” mm. 1–7, in Oliver Shaw, Amos Albee, and Elias Mann, *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist*

Hy. 284. DEVOTION. C. M. PLEYEL. 41

Allegro

While thee I seek protecting power! Be my vain wishes stilled; And may this consecrated hour With better hopes be filled, Thy

to the work’s appearance as “Hymn 2” in the *Brattle Street Collection*. Their titles attest to a common origin: twenty-one share the “Hymn 2” title, thirteen transform it into “Pleyel’s Ps. 2,” and eleven assume the name of the hymn’s source, “Brattle Street.”<sup>66</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Other titles before 1820 include Vienna (2), Bengal (2), Springfield (4), Evening Hymn (1), Retirement (8), Sabbath (4), Whitsunday Hymn (1), and Bremen (1). Only two

*The Brattle Street Collection's Origins and its Culminating Hymns*

The *Brattle Street Collection* was one of the many projects Buckminster launched in the years following his return to the United States in fall 1807, and his travels directly influenced its creation. While in Paris, Buckminster met Williams, an encounter he documented in a letter dated January 1807:

I have had the pleasure of passing an evening with Helen Maria Williams. She has a literary coterie every Sunday evening. She is now rather advanced in years, and certainly homely, but a very interesting woman.<sup>67</sup>

Earlier scholars have asserted that Buckminster acquired a manuscript copy of Pleyel's Second from Williams; I would suggest instead that Williams provided him with Costellow's hymnal.<sup>68</sup> The expansion of Tate & Brady's psalm collection that Buckminster worked on immediately following his return to the states—*Hymns for Public Worship Part II*—included Williams's "While Thee I Seek, Protecting Pow'r."<sup>69</sup> Additionally, several of the hymns of the *Brattle Street Collection* adapted tunes printed exclusively in Costellow's *Sunday's Amusement*, and the correspondence between the two hymnals suggests that the *Brattle* compilers drew on Costellow as a key source.<sup>70</sup>

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One of the Library of Congress's two copies of the *Brattle Street Collection* contains a handwritten note from its authors.<sup>71</sup> This print includes revealing marginalia and corrections throughout and appears to have been owned by none other than Peter O. Thacher, who served as the church's clerk. The note reads:

At a meeting of the Standing Committee of the Church in Brattle Square, January 14, 1810.

other hymnals share the "Devotion" title, which probably comes from Jeremy Belknap's *Sacred Poetry: Consisting of Psalm Hymns Adapted to Christian Devotion*, the first American hymnal publication of Williams's text.

<sup>67</sup> Lee, *Memoirs of Rev. Joseph Buckminster*, 288.

<sup>68</sup> An 1885 article in the *Unitarian Review* mentions that General H. K. Oliver proposed that Buckminster brought the hymn to America, but that the article's author found the text in the Belknap collection as early as 1795. The author here may be mistaken; no editions of Belknap that I have examined contain Williams's text before the 1804 printing of the collection. See "A Story of Some French Liberal Protestants," *The Unitarian Review* 23 (1885): 217–29. In a *Massachusetts Historical Society* essay of 1914, Dr. De Normandie writes that Buckminster brought a manuscript copy of the hymn to the states after visiting Williams, and that this was its first appearance in America. See *Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings* 47 (February 1914): 230–31.

<sup>69</sup> *Hymns for Public Worship Part II: For the Use of the Church in Brattle Street* (Boston: Andrews and Cummings, 1808), 27–28.

<sup>70</sup> The compilers must have drawn on Costellow's 1805 revision of the collection, since the *Brattle Street Collection* prints hymns that do not appear in the earlier 1801 edition.

<sup>71</sup> The second copy, intriguingly, is held in the collection of Judge Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Voted that Mr. Bryant P. Tilden, Mr. Bartholomew Brown and Mr. Ebenezer Withington be a Committee with the advice and assistance of the Rev. Mr. Buckminster to make a small selection of Sacred musick, to be used in the publick worship of the Society, and to cause the same to be published and distributed in the several pews.

At a meeting of the church in Brattle Square January [. . .], 1810

Voted that this Society approves of the above vote, and that Elias Mann be added to the said Committee.

Attest, Peter Thacher, clerk.<sup>72</sup>

Two of these figures, Brown and Mann, were active hymnal compilers. Brown, a lawyer, worked with Nahum Mitchell on editions of *The Bridgewater Collection*—an important reform hymnal launched in 1802—for twenty years, and Mann was a composer and printer as well as a member of the Massachusetts Musical Society, a forerunner though not direct predecessor to the Handel and Haydn Society. Tilden, a tea merchant, was involved in music throughout the Boston area; he served as treasurer of the Boston chapter of the St. Cecilia Society in 1805, an early national musical organization, and became vice president of the Philharmonic Society in 1820. Withington started his career as a Unitarian clergyman but left the church because of ill health and became a businessman; he was also an original trustee of the Handel and Haydn Society in 1815.

Another professional musician (and congressman), Nahum Mitchell, was almost certainly involved in the creation of the hymnal. Though the collection's note does not mention him, an 1853 obituary of Mitchell includes this information:

About the year 1810, Mr. Mitchell, in conjunction with the Rev. Mr. Buckminster, compiled a small volume of church music, bearing the title of the *Brattle Street Collection*. The tune "Brattle Street" was here first introduced for sacred purposes, the melody being adapted by Mr. Buckminster, and harmonized by Mr. Mitchell.<sup>73</sup>

Not only did he participate in the collection's compilation, but Mitchell may also have been responsible for resetting Pleyel's Second (of course, the obituary writer was clearly unaware of the Costello and Shaw precedents for the tune). It is significant that in the 1850s Pleyel's Second had enough presence to earn a mention, without its original composer's name attached, in the obituary of a prominent figure.

<sup>72</sup> *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship* (Boston: Manning & Loring, 1810).

<sup>73</sup> L., "Hon. Nahum Mitchell," in C. M. Cady, ed., *The Musical Review and Choral Advocate* 4 (1853): 150.

FIGURE 4. Pleyel, “Hymn 2,” mm. 1–7, in the *Brattle Street Collection*. Music Division, the Library of Congress



Only one of the eighty tunes of the *Brattle Street Collection* originated in the United States. The hymns are mostly simple and homophonic, by composers including Handel, Arne, Arnold, Tansur, and Costellow himself. The setting of Pleyel’s Second resembles the one printed in *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist*, but with several important distinctions (fig. 4).

Though the tenor melody remains the same, *Brattle* raised the top part by an octave, altered many of its notes, and made it more rhythmically active. *Brattle* gave the bassline the same dotted rhythms as the other two voices, making the hymn homorhythmic (in Shaw, this may have been a printing error or an indication for the keyboard); the compilers also made slight modifications to the bassline.<sup>74</sup> All of these changes appear in the subsequent printings of the hymn that I examined, demonstrating that

<sup>74</sup> The *Brattle* compilers altered the bassline from a B $\flat$  to an A in the first two beats of measure 2, and the final two beats of measure 5. See figures 3 and 4.

the *Brattle Street Collection*, not *The Columbian Sacred Harmonist*, stood as the primary disseminator of Pleyel's Second.

Pleyel's Second appears at the end of the *Brattle Street Collection*, as "Hymn 2" in a sequence of four numbered hymns. The compilers explained this unusual conclusion in the opening paragraph of the *Brattle* preface:

The four Hymn Tunes at the close of the book, are given as a specimen of a more graceful style of psalmody than that to which we have been accustomed; and these, with a very few others, which the intelligent Chorister will easily discover, are suitable rather to extraordinary occasions, when the Choir have had previous time to prepare themselves, than to the habitual use of the whole congregation.<sup>75</sup>

All four hymns derive from Costellow's *Sunday's Amusement*: Hymn 1 is Costellow's own "When rising from the bed of death"; Hymn 2 is Pleyel's Second; Hymn 3 is Handel's "The spacious firmament on high"; and Hymn 4 is William Mason's "Lord of all pow'r and might."

The "more graceful style" alludes not only to the hymns' European origins and stateliness, but also to their relative difficulty in comparison with the other tunes in the collection. Though still mostly homophonic, all four are slightly more ornate than the earlier hymns and have more complicated rhythms. The preface suggests that Brattle's Singing Society, not its congregation, performed these four tunes: the trained choir would thus demonstrate the most refined form of the new "Ancient Music" idiom for the rest of the churchgoers. Dynamic markings as well as performance indications like "sotto voce" are printed only in these final four hymns, supporting the idea that they were meant for a rehearsed ensemble. Thacher's handwritten notes in the Library of Congress copy also included a marking for a "Duet" within Hymn 1, suggesting a performance setting.<sup>76</sup>

The compilers here attempted to strike a balance between the disparaged, secular virtuosity of the native fugging tune and the proficiency required for these particular European hymns, still beyond the skill level of the congregation. They suggested that such musical proficiency was a goal for worshippers to aspire to while still maintaining the scientific and religious ideals of their movement. Singing societies and choirs could exist in such contexts, but under the supervision of the clergy rather than that of the itinerant singing master (the Brattle choir met in Buckminster's home). Pleyel's Second and the "more graceful" hymns served a pedagogical purpose; the compilers wrote of their wishes that

<sup>75</sup> "Advertisement" in *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship*.

<sup>76</sup> *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship*, 47.

the principal melodies in it [the hymnal] may soon be familiar to the whole congregation; and that religious musick may receive encouragement “again to enter into the recreation of domestick leisure, and thus contribute to revive the sentiments of primitive religion.”<sup>77</sup>

*Transatlantic Rhetoric and Cis-Atlantic Reception*

The preface of the *Brattle Street Collection* participated wholly in the revival of the “sentiments of primitive religion,” indulging in the rhetoric of “Ancient Music” reform:

Singing masters, (here as well as in England) fondly attached to compositions in many parts, and those chiefly composed by unskillful men, abounding in ill-constructed *fugues* and false harmony, are apt to treat with contempt the simple, but elegant melodies used in parish churches.<sup>78</sup>

This anti-nativist invective actually came from a non-native: Dr. Edward Miller, an English organist and composer at Doncaster in York. Almost half of the *Brattle* preface was excerpted from the 1790 edition of Miller’s *Psalms of David* hymnal, printed first in London and widely disseminated. At the time, Miller directed his words against the English fusing tune, as part of an ongoing British conflict between town and country psalmody; issues of class were not necessarily present in American devotion, though the rhetoric itself was steeped in class.

As Temperley has shown, clergy and intellectuals debated hymn reform in England decades before the issue crossed the Atlantic.<sup>79</sup> The dominance of singing school and parish choirs that would later spur American “Ancient Music” reform took place in England in the early eighteenth century. By the 1720s, some bishops began restricting the role of choirs in order to shift singing back to the congregation, albeit with limited success. Towns that had churches with organs fostered congregational singing, but rural country parishes kept to the choir and singing-school model through the 1760s. The emerging Evangelical movement took up the battle against country psalmody, and attacks against its rural harmony and fusing tunes increased through the 1760s and 1770s. In the final decades of the century, Evangelical clergy published reform collections with simpler, homophonic tunes designed to reignite congregational singing in the countryside; it is to this tradition that Miller’s *Psalms of David* belonged.

<sup>77</sup> “Advertisement” in *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship*.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid. The parenthetical here is an addition by the *Brattle* compilers to Dr. Edward Miller’s original quotation, emphasizing that the problems he outlines are found in America as well as abroad.

<sup>79</sup> Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*.

For the *Brattle* compilers, Miller represented European high standards and scientific musical thought, and his twenty-year-old argument adapted easily to their goals.<sup>80</sup> The *Brattle Street Collection* was not the first to use Miller's oratory; in 1805, the *Salem Collection* also quoted extensively from his preface (Peter O. Thacher reprinted this passage in his review of the *Salem Collection*). Both the *Brattle* and *Salem* prefaces drew attention to Miller's discussion of the role of the organ in worship, though *Brattle* placed stronger emphasis on its use. It quoted Miller's remarks that simpler, non-fugal melodies "when *properly performed* by a large congregation, and *judiciously accompanied* on the organ, their effect is perhaps as great in exciting sublime emotions, as we experience from more elaborate musick."<sup>81</sup> The preface concluded with a quotation from Dr. John Brown, a passage that also appeared in Miller's *Psalms of David*:

In great towns where a good organ is *skilfully* and *devoutly* employed by a sensible organist, the union of the instrument with the voices of a well-instructed congregation, forms one of the grandest scenes of unafflicted piety that human nature can afford.<sup>82</sup>

The *Salem Collection* included Miller's remark on proper performance but without the italics emphasizing the judicious organ accompaniment, and left out the Brown quotation.

As the leaders of a congregation that had recently acquired an organ in 1790, Buckminster and his fellow compilers emphasized Miller's call for the skillful employment of the instrument. The *Salem Collection* was originally intended for the First Church of Salem, which bought an organ in 1798. The *Collection's* purview, however, had extended beyond that single congregation, and thus its compilers probably did not want to overstate the importance of the organ for churches that had not yet acquired one.<sup>83</sup> Newly purchased organs meant emphasizing simply harmonized melodies, such as Pleyel's Second, over unaccompanied fugal tunes. This transatlantic migration of European reform to American

<sup>80</sup> Though Miller first published *Psalms of David* in 1775, this note appeared first in the 1790 edition of the hymnal. Edward Miller, *The Psalms of David for the Use of Parish Churches* (London: W. Miller, 1790).

<sup>81</sup> "Advertisement" in *LXXX Psalm and Hymn Tunes for Public Worship*.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> It is not likely that Salem's Tabernacle Church, for example, acquired an organ before the 1805 publication of the *Collection*. Barbara Lambert writes that the First Church Society of Salem acquired an organ in 1798, as the first Congregational church in the town to acquire one; Lambert's examination of organ-building in New England goes up to 1803 and does not mention the Tabernacle Church. Barbara Lambert, "Eighteenth-Century Organs and Organ Building in New England," in *Music in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630–1680*, ed. Barbara Lambert (Boston: Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980), 655–714.

soil remains one of the overlooked aspects of the “Ancient Music” movement.

The local response to this imported rhetoric is well documented in a newspaper spat that emerged soon after the *Brattle* publication.<sup>84</sup> A December 1810 letter to Boston’s *Columbian Centinel* cited the Brattle Church’s singing society as exhibiting “such specimens of taste and judgment in their selection of tunes and performance as are worthy of the undertaking,” and hoped that other churches would take on Brattle’s mission to improve psalmody.<sup>85</sup> In response, a writer to the *New England Palladium* admitted that he visited the Brattle Church recently and found the tunes “not the most appropriate to the psalms and hymns” and the singing “slow and dull.”<sup>86</sup> In early 1811, a writer using the pseudonym Ichabod Beetlehead weighed in, again in the *Columbian Centinel*. In a grand parody of the *Palladium* writer, he too defended the music of native hymnody, cited the *Brattle Street Collection* as a “little pestiferous Pamphlet,” and declared that a country cousin of his recently compiled a tunebook without any previous knowledge of music:

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‘Tis all a hum then, to talk about the mighty labours of European composers; and tell how many have spent their whole lifetimes in studying Musick scientifically, and then, having but just arrivd at the threshold of the science. Shame on such ninny-hammers as HANDEL, CROFT, PURCEL, ARNE, ARNOLD, &c. My cousin has outstript them all!!!<sup>87</sup>

Beetlehead’s parodic hyperbole responded to Miller’s “unskillful men” and “ill-constructed fugues and false harmony.” “Let us adopt the old tunes,” Beetlehead declared, “place suitable leaders over each Singing Society, and keep out every scientific intruder.—We may then hope to have the true, rational, and genuine Musick once more heard in our Churches.”<sup>88</sup> In co-opting the jargon of Miller and the *Brattle* compilers, Beetlehead poked holes in the language of scientific reform, while also mocking the provincialism of nativists. The movement of ideas and music from Europe to the United States had become entirely localized, a transatlantic exchange embedded enough within Boston public discourse that it earned its own satire.

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<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Richard Crawford, “The Beetlehead Testament,” in *Newsletter of the Institute for Studies in American Music* 13, no. 2 (May 1984): 10–12.

<sup>85</sup> *Columbian Centinel*, 19 December 1810.

<sup>86</sup> Quoted in Crawford, “The Beetlehead Testament,” 10.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*

Eleven years after Beetlehead's editorial, composer and educator Lowell Mason compiled *The Boston Handel and Haydn Society Church Collection*, a landmark hymnal in American psalmody. The 1822 collection featured predominantly European tunes, and many of the hymns, like Pleyel's Second, were contrafacta of secular music rewritten by Mason. (Pleyel's Second appears in the *Collection* under the title "Brattle-Street.") Three of the compilers of the *Brattle Street Collection* were members of the Handel and Haydn Society, and must have remembered Buckminster's legacy when they worked with Mason.<sup>89</sup> Buckminster died tragically young in 1812 of epilepsy, but had befriended and evidently influenced Mason in 1810, the same year he compiled the *Brattle Street Collection*; Mason later married Buckminster's cousin. In an unpublished 1957 biography of his grandfather, Henry Lowell Mason describes Lowell Mason's youthful encounters with Buckminster and the choir rehearsals that Mason attended at Buckminster's home:

As with an open copy of *The Brattle Square Collection* before him he listened to his host's reverential playing, there was vouchsafed a foreshadowing of the work he himself was destined to do in the cause of devotional playing and singing, and in that also of establishing a clear understanding and just appreciation of the kind of music essentially appropriate to religious worship.<sup>90</sup>

This web of connections sheds light on the influence that intellectuals and their transatlantic experience had not only on hymnody reform but also on the establishment of America's classical music institutions,

<sup>89</sup> Ebenezer Withington was an original member of the Society in April 1815, and Nahum Mitchell and Bartholomew Brown are listed as having joined in October 1815. See *History of the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston, Massachusetts* (Boston: Alfred Mudge & Sons, 1883), back matter 22, 23. The Brattle Street Choir was also one of several Boston-area singing societies that participated in the Handel and Haydn Society performances. For a description of Boston singing societies and other amateur music-making organizations, see Broyles, "Music of the Highest Class," 117–51.

<sup>90</sup> Henry Lowell Mason, *Lowell Mason: His Life and Work*, 1957, Box 12, The Lowell Mason Collection, Irving S. Gilmore Music Library, Yale University Library, 65. In the manuscript Henry Lowell Mason writes: "Through Hannah Adams it was, furthermore, that [Lowell] Mason was introduced, during the winter of 1810–11 which he passed in Boston, to her friend and benefactor, the brilliant young divine Joseph Stevens Buckminster. . . . To become acquainted even with this liberally-minded minister was an event of impressive influence in Mason's youthful years; while to be favored with so inspiring a friendship as ensured was cause for thanksgiving throughout his long life. Pleasant it is to recall that to a love of good music, and to the proper sort of singing as an act of worship, this sympathetic tie was, in part at least, due." *Ibid.*, 63, 64. Carol Pemberton suggests that Mason met his wife, Abigail Gregory, through the Buckminster connection: "They may have met through his friend, Joseph Stevens Buckminster, Abby's cousin, while Lowell was in Boston the winter of 1810–11. It is also possible that the Buckminsters and the Gregorys were Mason family friends of long standing." Pemberton, *Lowell Mason*, 23.

including the Handel and Haydn Society, which celebrates its two hundredth anniversary in 2015. This study proposes a missing link between the native musical style of Billings and the European imitations of Mason, and offers insights into how, with eyes and ears focused abroad, the socioeconomic elite of New England conceived of music as part of a broader project of cultural uplift. Yokota writes that “Americans’ continuing engagement with British goods, people, and ideas shaped the nation’s identity in its critical early years.”<sup>91</sup> Hymnody played its own role in the construction of this identity. As Buckminster reassessed the theology of the Brattle Street Church and reinvigorated American biblical studies, he also updated the repertoire of hymn tunes, offering musical contributions to the glorious scholarly age he promised in his 1809 speech. Finding a place in American musical history for Joseph Stevens Buckminster and John Pickering thus contributes to understanding the transatlantic roots of the Europeanization of American psalmody and the rhetoric that underlay musical institutions still in existence today.

ABSTRACT

In reforming psalmody in early nineteenth-century New England, participants in the so-called “Ancient Music” movement imported the solemnly refined hymn tunes and scientific rhetoric of Europe. This transatlantic exchange was in part the result of European travels by a generation of young members of the American socioeconomic and intellectual elite, such as Joseph Stevens Buckminster and John Pickering, whom scholars have not previously associated with hymnody reform. This study asserts that non-composers, particularly clergy and academics, played a crucial role in the “Ancient Music” movement, and offers a fuller picture of a little-examined but critical period in the history of American psalmody. Tracing the transatlantic voyages of figures like Buckminster and Pickering reveals that the actions and perspectives of active participants in the Atlantic world shaped “Ancient Music” reform and that hymnody reform was part of a broader project of cultural and intellectual uplift in New England.

Keywords: “Ancient Music,” Atlantic world, early American music, hymnody reform, psalmody

<sup>91</sup> Yokota, *Unbecoming British*, 235.