

The Sound of Nationalism:  
Music in the Early American Republic

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In the summer of 1798, an aspiring singer, Gilbert Fox, asked his long-time friend Joseph Hopkinson to create lyrics to the popular national musical piece, *The President's March*, in order to increase the number of ticket sales for a performance Fox held that season. Hopkinson took the opportunity to create lyrics that would further his political aims: to bring unity to a nation increasingly divided over the political situation in Europe. As Hopkinson later recounted, he created the lyrics to “get up an American Spirit” that would rise above the political divide and unite the people in a common sentiment.<sup>1</sup> Upon the opening night of the performance, the people, drawn in by the promise of a new national song, crowded the theater. According to Hopkinson, the people reacted to the song in a way that even he had not expected. The theater was full every night and the audience often joined in the chorus of *Hail Columbia*, and continued to sing the song in the streets after they left. As Hopkinson noted, “the patriotic feelings of every American heart responded to” the song, and it was performed “in every part of the United States.”<sup>2</sup> This exemplified not only the intent that many lyricists and composers had to create truly American patriotic pieces, but also their desire to create musical works that would unite all American people in similar patriotic sentiments, particularly in times of political crisis or division. It also exemplified the great enthusiasm the American public had for patriotic songs, as well as their emotional connection to and pleasure and enjoyment in singing them.

Before the American Revolution, the colonists had a very small repertoire of musical works, which consisted primarily of English tunes, mostly drinking songs and hymns. The people in the colonies had little motivation, before the Revolution, to create their own culture, as they had taken England's cultural traditions with them, and saw little need for anything

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Hopkinson, “History of the Song of Hail Columbia in the hand writing of the Author Judge Joseph Hopkinson,” as written for the *Wyoming Band*, August 1840, Hopkinson Family Papers 1735-1863, vol. 15, 39, Historical Society of Pennsylvania [hereafter cited as HSP].

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

different.<sup>3</sup> Over time, as the political tension between the colonies and Great Britain increased, the people responded with musical creativity, through political parodies and other songs in favor of the patriotic cause; and so, a new musical tradition began. Once Americans won their independence, they gained a new nation and a new identity. No longer British colonists, the people struggled with the notion of what it meant to be American, and some sought the answer to that question through music. The production of patriotic music played an essential role in the formation of an American identity and the strengthening of nationalism among the people; ultimately, this growth in nationalism contributed significantly to the desire for and development of a distinctly American musical culture.

For the purpose of this paper, I have looked at several works on American music history, primarily Richard Crawford's *America's Musical Life*, John Tasker Howard's *Our American Music*, and Kenneth Silverman's work, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theater, 1763-1789*. The first two provide brief glimpses into American "patriotic" music, as both works cover a rather large amount of time, and focus primarily on biographies of the American composers and musical analysis. Kenneth Silverman's work covers all of the cultural aspects of the Revolution and does discuss music, but again, very briefly, and only that which was created from 1763-1789. In my study of nationalism, I have relied primarily on David Waldstreicher's book, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820*. While all of these works make some reference to music and nationalism, they are brief, and neither the historians of American music nor those of nationalism, have truly tied the two subjects together. This paper will contribute to the literature in both fields, as I will argue the importance that patriotic music had in the formation of an

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American identity and the development of original musical works, inspired by nationalism, that followed.

This paper begins with a discussion of composers and the influential power they had through their music to unite the people in particular sentiments or causes during times of political crisis. In the interest of retaining clarity, I have broken this section down by song, beginning with the earliest composition. In my analysis of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, I will argue that it was the first truly national song composed in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Following this analysis, I will discuss the strong emotional response the American people had to those same pieces. I will then turn to a discussion of the leaders of the nation and their concern over the stability of the country. I will argue that they felt the need to cultivate good character and patriotic virtue among the people to ensure that the nation would survive. I will then discuss patriotic festivals and other celebratory gatherings and the role that patriotic music played in them, as well as the association of patriotic songs with national symbols. In this section, I will argue that organizers of such events, by associating patriotic music with toasts and other visual symbols of the nation, established and increased the sentimental and symbolic value of the songs themselves. Also, I will argue that, by associating music with visual and auditory symbols of the nation, organizers ensured that the people, upon future hearing of the songs, would recall the symbols they

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<sup>3</sup> Neil Harris, *The Artist in American Society: The Formative Years 1790-1860*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 2-3.

<sup>4</sup>In this paper, I will define “national” songs in two ways. The first definition is geographical and refers to the widespread proliferation of songs among the people, throughout all parts of the country. This geographic spread and acceptance of songs by the American people could be true not just of patriotic songs, but of music from many genres. I will use the second definition of “national” songs in my discussion of *The Star-Spangled Banner*, in which I will argue that it was the first national song by its *content*, both lyrical and thematic. In this sense, “national” refers to the lyrical and thematic content as something that encompasses the nation as a whole: its people, their culture, and the land in which they live. I will also use this definition of “national” songs in the section on the first orchestral composers, Anton Heinrich, George Bristow, and William Henry Fry, who composed pieces with national themes, or pieces inspired by the land, its people, and their culture. Geographical context aside, all “national” songs, in regard to content and theme, were patriotic, but not all patriotic songs were national, in that they did not use the same language or themes that “national” songs and compositions did. This is relevant, as there may be references to

corresponded with. I will then continue to a section on the performance of patriotic songs in public venues, such as concert halls, theaters, and music festivals where I will address the public's growing enthusiasm and increasing demand for patriotic music. This thesis will then discuss the desire Americans had, from almost the beginning of independence from Britain, to develop American music and separate culturally from Europe. I will argue that the nationalist fervor that swept through the nation influenced American composers to create original works, and will discuss the American composers Anton Heinrich, George Bristow, and William Fry and their desire to create works that reflected the nation, its people, and their culture.

Composers and lyricists considered music a useful and effective medium for the proliferation of ideas among the masses. While the melody had great importance, words were often beneficial, and at times, integral in the artists' endeavor to create influential pieces, particularly in the creation of national songs.<sup>5</sup> Songwriters used a combination of lyrics and musical accompaniment to communicate the meaning and purpose of their work. Emerson wrote, "human passion...aims to...marry music to thought, believing...that for every thought its proper melody or rhyme exists."<sup>6</sup> The right combination of words and the repetition of key phrases, along with a strong melody and rhythm made songs memorable and enjoyable to hear and perform. For a song to take root and become a "national" piece, it had to first be impressive enough to be "taken up by others, further diffused, and thus traditionally preserved."<sup>7</sup> In order for that to occur, songs had to be emotionally and intellectually appealing to the majority of the

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other patriotic works throughout the paper as national songs, airs, or anthems, in which case, the first definition would apply.

<sup>5</sup> Numerous intellectuals believed, for some time, that music had a profound influence on the emotional and intellectual state of the people, while it also had a significant affect on their development of character. It could be very important in the development of patriotism, as well. In the longer version of this thesis, I include a section on this phenomenon in which I discuss the many tools composers had in the creation of instrumental music and melodies to influence the emotional state of the listener. Music, without words, was powerful in and of itself.

<sup>6</sup> Emerson, 42.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Engel, *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (London: Savill and Edwards, 1866), 12-3.

people. Once people throughout the country embraced certain musical pieces, those works became “national” songs, in the sense that a great number of people in a wide geographic area accepted, sang, and sought performances of them. As songs traveled throughout the country, they connected the people through melody and lyrics as well as the expression of similar sentiments and ideals contained within the pieces, such as love of country, patriotic loyalty, and regard for liberty. The popularity of national songs rendered the use of instruments and vocal harmonization unnecessary, which facilitated spontaneous rendition of the songs, as the people could sing whatever, wherever, whenever they wished, unimpeded by any lack of instruments, musical education, or talent.<sup>8</sup> The incredible and universal appeal of patriotic songs resulted from the emotionally and intellectually evocative nature of the compositions. The people felt a connection to the patriotic pieces and the sentiments they embodied. Pleasing melodies and exciting rhythms made the songs pleasing to listen to and sing. Pieces received with enthusiasm in one area often received similar responses in other locations. In this manner, songs and their messages spread throughout the country, uniting the people not only through patriotic lyrics, but through the act of singing the songs as one people in celebration of their shared history, country, and identity.

During times of political crisis, composers and lyricists took advantage of the influential power of music to rally the people to unite in a particular cause, or to a particular sentiment. In the years leading up to the American Revolution, many men, often statesmen, created political pieces to garner support for the revolutionary cause. Many of these pieces were adaptations of pre-existing English tunes, such as Francis Hopkinson’s *Battle of the Kegs*, *A Tory Medley*, and *American Independent, or The Temple of Minerva* and John Dickinson’s *Liberty Song*. Once the Revolution ended, the political tone found in American music faded into more patriotic strains.

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gel, 135.

Joseph Hopkinson's *Hail Columbia*; Benjamin Carr's *Federal Overture*; and Francis Scott Key's *Star-Spangled Banner* reflected this shift from the political to the patriotic, as well as the shift in the definition of patriotism itself. Inspired by the political climate, men such as William Billings and Francis Hopkinson wrote political pieces and lyrics with the intention of uniting the people in the patriot cause: the quest for independence from Great Britain. In 1768, John Dickinson published the *Liberty Song*, a song that resonated with revolutionary spirit.<sup>9</sup> The lyrics, set to the well-known English tune "Hearts of Oak," encouraged the colonists to fight for freedom and independence from the British tyrants, and called for unity among the people.<sup>10</sup> The refrain was a powerful segment of the song in which Dickinson expressed those ideals: "Come, join Hand in Hand, brave Americans all, And rouse your bold Hearts to fair Liberty's Call...in freedom we're born, and in freedom we'll live...By uniting We stand, by dividing We fall..."<sup>11</sup> In order for the people to gain their political freedom, they had to rally together in support of the patriot cause. Dickinson attempted, through his song, to spread this message to the people.

In 1798, Joseph Hopkinson received a request from the performer Gilbert Fox to create lyrics for the popular song *The President's March*, a work composed by Philip Phile in honor of George Washington.<sup>12</sup> Hopkinson, rather than simply complying with Fox's request, took the opportunity to promote ideals he considered most important. He intended to "get up an *American Spirit*, which should be independent of and above the interests, passions, and policy" of the political parties, as the people, at that time, were divided over the political situation in France.<sup>13</sup> He knew that he needed to compose lyrics that would unite the people, lyrics that went beyond the partisan divide. Hopkinson wrote that the song was "...exclusively patriotic in

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<sup>9</sup>Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc., 1975), 27.

<sup>10</sup> John Dickinson, *A New Song*, 1768, Library Company of Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA [hereafter cited LCP].

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

its sentiment and spirit...truly *American*, and nothing else, and the patriotic feelings of every American heart responded to it.”<sup>14</sup> Hopkinson expressed what he thought it meant to be American through his lyrics. For Hopkinson, veneration of those who fought for the nation, regard for liberty and freedom, and a united effort to preserve peace encompassed patriotic virtue. The song praised the national heroes “who fought and bled in Freedom’s cause” and called for the people to unite as a “band of brothers” in defense of their liberty.<sup>15</sup> From a study of Hopkinson’s lyrics and explanation of the song’s origins, it can be assumed that, for Hopkinson, patriotism, or the “American Spirit,” was rooted in veneration of national heroes, the desire for unity among the people, as well as a regard for liberty and those who fought in the name of freedom. He also intended to promote George Washington’s virtue and character as an example for the American people to follow, as will later be discussed.

In 1794, Benjamin Carr composed a patriotic piece at the request of certain theater managers who, having witnessed the potential for violence among audience members when certain musical pieces were performed, wished to avoid conflict among audience members.<sup>16</sup> The theater managers hoped that, by enlisting Carr to create a musical work that would appeal to the majority of people, they would lessen the chance of a catastrophe.<sup>17</sup> With this in mind, Carr chose to include a variety of songs in his *Federal Overture* that would “evoke admiration which crossed party lines, to appeal to Federalist and anti-Federalist alike.”<sup>18</sup> Not only would the selection appeal to the entire audience, but also, by combining different songs into one musical piece, the *Overture* itself symbolized the unity Carr hoped to bring to the people. His skillfully

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Hopkinson, *Hail, Columbia*, Hopkinson Family Papers, 1735-1863, volume 15, 3, HSP.

<sup>16</sup> Irving Lowens, *Benjamin Carr’s Federal Overture*, (Philadelphia: Magill Printing Co., 1957), 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Lowens, 10.

arranged potpourri of carefully selected popular pieces included *The President's March*, the *Marseillaise*, *Ca Ira*, and *Yankee Doodle*, among others.<sup>19</sup> All of the songs had bright melodies and invigorating rhythms, which Carr designated should be played “with spirit” to induce feelings of excitement within the members of the audience.<sup>20</sup> Following a performance of the *Overture*, a critic reported that it had been “eminently calculated to attract an *universal* admiration.”<sup>21</sup> Some audience members, then, recognized the intention behind and significance of the *Federal Overture*, a recognition that meant Carr had done his job well. He deliberately created a musical work that contained various themes and familiar pieces that he knew would appeal to the majority of the people, as he sought to fulfill the managers’ desire, as well as his own, to bring the people together despite their political differences.

Though not the first patriotic song, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, based on its origin and lyrical content, was one of—if not the first—truly national songs produced in the United States. According to the musicologist and theorist Carl Engel, the people of a country created truly “national” songs, or songs that reflected the character of a country and its people, “in...moment(s) of extraordinary emotion” not “unfrequently connected with remarkable national events, by which they were called forth.”<sup>22</sup> While many composers and lyricists wrote patriotic songs before the War of 1812, their works were often contrived, calculated pieces created with specific intentions, as discussed earlier. *The Star-Spangled Banner* had no such origin. In 1814, Francis Scott Key went aboard a British ship to rescue a friend and was detained there, as the British feared Key would reveal their plan to attack.<sup>23</sup> While aboard the ship, Key could only watch in anxious anticipation of the battle’s conclusion. When the smoke cleared, he

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<sup>19</sup> Lowens, 5.

<sup>20</sup> Benjamin Carr, *Federal Overture* score, in Lowens, 19-25.

<sup>21</sup> *New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository* (1794), V, 716, as quoted in Lowens, 12.

<sup>22</sup> Engel, 12.

saw that the American flag still flew, which meant the American forces had defeated the British, and had proved themselves superior. Immediately seized by an overwhelming sense of national pride, in a moment of true inspiration, Key wrote the words that became the lyrics to *The Star-Spangled Banner*, a song infused with “the warm spirit of patriotism.”<sup>24</sup> Key wrote the lyrics out of a spontaneous and deeply felt sense of national pride, the product of a great national event—the defeat of the British at the Battle of Fort McHenry. Key experienced such immediacy and such deeply felt emotion in those moments that he had no time for deep contemplation as he wrote. Consequently, as his brother in law, R. B. Taney wrote, Key’s lyrics “came warm from his heart.”<sup>25</sup> In addition to the inspired creation of the piece, the lyrical content also distinguished *The Star-Spangled Banner* from other patriotic songs in that Key referred to the people of the United States as a “nation.” In the fourth stanza, Key wrote: “Praise the power that hath made and preserv’d us a nation” and in the refrain, he referred to the land as the “home” of the “free and the brave.”<sup>26</sup> *The Star-Spangled Banner* referred to the people as members of a nation, one people united in common ideals. Key also used the flag as a symbol of American bravery and freedom, a freedom the people would always defend if “their cause was just.”<sup>27</sup> There was also an air of assurance in the lyrics that the people would conquer any foe and that the flag would “in triumph” wave.<sup>28</sup> The other patriotic songs differed greatly from *The Star-Spangled Banner* in both origin and language. The *Star-Spangled Banner*’s inspired beginning, the strongly patriotic and emotional nature of the lyrics, and the shift in patriotic language

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<sup>23</sup> “Defence of Fort McHenry,” *The Washingtonian*, November 14, 1814, vol. V, iss. 226, 4.

<sup>24</sup> R. B. Taney, introductory letter to *Poems of the Late Francis S. Key, Esq.* (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857), 13.

<sup>25</sup> Taney, 14.

<sup>26</sup> “Defence of Fort McHenry,” *The Washingtonian*. November 14, 1814. Vol. V, Iss. 226, 4.

<sup>27</sup> Richard Crawford, *America’s Musical Life: A History*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Co.), 241.

<sup>28</sup> “Defence of Fort McHenry,” 4.

contributed to the unique quality of Key's work and distinguished it as a "national" song, or a song about the nation, both the land and its people.

Regardless of the motivations, or lack thereof, of songwriters and composers, the general public often reacted with overwhelming enthusiasm for and displayed a strong emotional connection with patriotic musical pieces, which attested both to the powerful content and appeal of such works as well as the need and desire the people had for them. Chauncey Holcomb, an American intellectual and proponent of music education, wrote that, during the Revolution, many "national ballads were in the mouth of every one, and might be heard in every town, barroom, cabin, and military encampment in the country...."<sup>29</sup> The enthusiasm people felt for those songs was evident in their widespread appeal and continued performance. At that time, the people had a need for such songs, as it united "the patriots of those days to a resistance of tyranny."<sup>30</sup> From the time of the Revolution on, songs such as John Dickinson's *Liberty Song*, Joseph Hopkinson's *Hail Columbia*, Benjamin Carr's *Federal Overture*, Francis Scott Key's *Star-Spangled Banner*, and Samuel Francis Smith's *America*, often strongly affected the American people. The first of these songs, John Dickinson's *Liberty Song*, published in 1768, resonated with revolutionary spirit.<sup>31</sup> It was an inspirational song that corresponded with and even fostered the revolutionary spirit among the patriots while it unified them in a common cause. The motivational lyrics, combined with the use of an already popular melody, made the *Liberty Song* successful from the very start. The people sang it "everywhere: at political demonstrations, protest meetings, patriotic celebrations, dedication ceremonies for liberty trees, for pure enjoyment, and for nuisance value to enrage the British and their American

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<sup>29</sup> Holcomb, 12.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents: Harmonies and Discords of the First Hundred Years* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co, Inc., 1975), 27.

sympathizers.”<sup>32</sup> The people needed such a song at that time, to rally them in the patriot cause, and the song’s revolutionary spirit made the song useful in their pursuits. It would also seem that they found great pleasure in using the song to taunt the British, especially since Dickinson set the lyrics to the beloved English melody, *Hearts of Oak*.

The enthusiasm for Joseph Hopkinson’s *Hail Columbia* began even before the first performance. When theater managers announced the addition of the song to the program in 1798, ticket sales immediately increased and the “theater was crowded to excess.”<sup>33</sup> Once the people heard that lyrics had been added to one of the more popular musical pieces, *The President’s March*, they filled the theater, anxiously awaiting the patriotic piece. None of the other songs on the program appealed to them in the way that Hopkinson’s piece did. After the initial performance, the people continued to crowd the theater “night after night, for the rest of the season, the song being encored and repeated many times each night, the audience joining in the chorus.”<sup>34</sup> No other song received such a favorable response. The song had such a powerful impact on the people that the entire audience, not just one social or political group, demanded multiple performances of the work. The excitement did not end with the performance, as the people, not content with hearing the song only in the theaters, continued to sing it on their own. Hopkinson noted that *Hail Columbia* was “sung at night in the streets by large assemblies of citizens, including members of Congress...and was heard...in every part of the United States.”<sup>35</sup> His statement painted a powerful image of the people united in song and celebration of their country’s past and ideals. The powerful lyrical content, as well as the music, appealed to all members of society across the nation, regardless of their party affiliations and personal politics.

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<sup>32</sup> Lawrence, *Music for Patriots*, 27.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

Members of Congress and ordinary citizens, those who supported France and those who did not, all joined in sharing the sentiments expressed in *Hail Columbia*. Their love of country and veneration of those who fought for their freedom, George Washington in particular, meant more to them in those moments than their political differences.

Such reverence for the past also contributed to the success of Benjamin Carr's *Federal Overture*. As Carr's composition included many of the most popular and historical songs, audience members experienced the old favorites anew.<sup>36</sup> Though theater managers feared, based on previous experience, that the political tension among the people would bring certain disaster during their productions, the skillful arrangement of the carefully selected songs brought positive feelings to the audience as they shared in the experience of hearing such memorable and enjoyable songs.<sup>37</sup> The *Federal Overture* pleased members of both parties so much that Carr's orchestra gave several subsequent performances, and even traveled to showcase the work.<sup>38</sup> On December 15, 1794, Carr traveled to New York with the American Company orchestra for the debut of the *Federal Overture* in the city, where it also achieved great success. A writer for the *New York Magazine* reported that the piece "excited in us as delightful sensations as ever we remember to have experienced on a similar occasion."<sup>39</sup> The familiarity of the songs used in the composition and the excitement that the new arrangement brought contributed to the audience's enjoyment of the piece. The people accepted and enjoyed the song, regardless of political affiliation. Though some of the pieces he included in the overture had political overtones, Carr had worked toward achieving what Joseph Hopkinson had with *Hail Columbia*. Critics reported on the "universal admiration" that the overture inspired among the people, which attested to

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<sup>36</sup> Lawrence, *Music for Patriots, Politicians, and Presidents*, 135.

<sup>37</sup> Lowens, 12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> *New York Magazine; or, Literary Repository* (1794), V, 716, as quoted in Lowens, 12.

Carr's compositional skill, his sensitivity to the emotional and sentimental content of the pieces, as well as his intuition regarding the desires and needs of the American people. He chose pieces that he knew would work to his advantage, and arranged them in a manner that would arouse excitement and patriotic fervor among audience members.<sup>40</sup> The audience reacted as Carr and the theater managers had hoped: with pleasure rather than anger, as one people rather than two divided groups intent on destroying each other.

*The Star-Spangled Banner*, a song unique in its origins and content, also captivated the minds and hearts of the American public. The language Key used differed from that in previous patriotic songs in two ways: in its description and in its reference to Americans as one united people of a nation. While the song described a single battle, it also referred to the nation as a whole, as well as freedom and the bravery, even superiority, of the American people. Key wrote the song not out of spite, but out of a deeply felt sense of national pride. Key's brother-in-law, R. B. Taney, wrote that Key's lyrics "came warm from his heart, and for that reason, even more than from its poetical merit, it never fails to find a response in the hearts of those who listen to it."<sup>41</sup> The emotions Key experienced while on the British ship were deeply embedded in the lyrics of the *Star-Spangled Banner*, and the transfer of those emotions from composer to listener made the song powerful. Though the song's musical structure left something to be desired, the lyrics and the patriotic feeling within the song mattered to the American people. *The Star-Spangled Banner's* reference to the people of the United States, their character, devotion to liberty, and their bravery and superiority in battle reflected the patriotic sentiment of the people following the War of 1812. The refrain was the most popular and most patriotic segment of the lyrics, as it referred to the American ideal of freedom and the character of the nation as a whole.

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<sup>40</sup> Lowens, 12.

<sup>41</sup> Taney, 14.

According to Colonel John L. Warner, “the choral lines of (the) song have brought it into general favor,” as the sentiments contained in the line “o’er the land of the free and the home of the brave” resonated most within the hearts of the people.<sup>42</sup> By using such words, Key referred to people as a unit, one American people, who should join together in praise of their great land and their strength as a nation. The people might have favored the refrain more than the verses, not only because of the grand chord progression that accompanied it, but also because it contained national language, a language that the people identified and agreed with. Key’s lyrics also reflected the pride he felt upon seeing the flag, “the star-spangled banner” that “in triumph doth wave” at the end of battle, a symbol of the courage and superiority of the American people.<sup>43</sup> Key also put the lyrics in the first person, often using the words “we” and “us,” which also created a more personal connection to the song while it also promoted a sense of unity, as the people would “experience” the events Key witnessed together as they sang the song.<sup>44</sup> The melody chosen for the lyrics was not ideal, as *Anacreon in Heaven* was an English drinking song that had awkward phrasing and a melodic line that went beyond the average person’s vocal range.<sup>45</sup> As Colonel John Warner noted after he first heard the *Star-Spangled Banner*, the words themselves did not fit comfortably with the song’s rhythm, which was “too complicated and often harsh,” which made it awkward to sing and hear.<sup>46</sup> Despite difficulty in performing the song, the people still embraced it. The morning after Key wrote the lyrics, he took the song to a printer, and “in less than an hour...it was all over town, and hailed with enthusiasm, and took its place at once, as a national song.”<sup>47</sup> It might be assumed, from the immediate response to the work, that the people needed a song such as *The Star-Spangled Banner* during that time of

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<sup>42</sup> Frederick Powers, Francis Scott Key, Volume II, Notes on War Songs, June, 1931, HSP.

<sup>43</sup> Defence of Fort McHenry,” *The Washingtonian*, November 14, 1814, vol. V, iss. 226, 4.

<sup>44</sup> “Defence of Fort McHenry,” 4.

<sup>45</sup> Powers, notes on Francis Scott Key.

political crisis as the lyrics, particularly the refrain, contained sentiments that could boost morale and induce a sense of accomplishment and pride in the American people. Even more so, the people might have reacted so strongly and enthusiastically to the piece because the American people had defeated the British in battle, and so asserted themselves as worthy opponents, perhaps even superior to the British forces. Through *The Star-Spangled Banner*, they could express their pride and celebrate the American victory.<sup>48</sup>

In the years immediately following the Revolution, leaders of the nation, aware of the questionable stability of the newly formed government, sought to strengthen the nation through the development of virtuous character among the American people. The character of a nation depended on the character of its people; thus, it was necessary for the people to be virtuous, patriotic citizens.<sup>49</sup> One of the ways in which the people sought to cultivate national virtue was through the use of patriotic songs. Intellectuals had identified the socially beneficial and influential properties of music, and believed that music could “call into exercise the higher virtues, and among them that of *patriotism*.”<sup>50</sup> If music could control the passions and instill love of country, then music was the key to the creation of a strong, prosperous nation. Organizers often made music a part of festivals, federal processions, and other celebrations with patriotic themes meant to develop national character and unity.<sup>51</sup> As Americans across the country joined in such events, an “imagined community” formed.<sup>52</sup> This “imagined community” was an intangible emotional and intellectual bond that connected all Americans together as one

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Taney, 28.

<sup>48</sup> The people also experienced an emotional connection with the patriotic song, *America*, composed in 1831. The extended version of this thesis explores the popularity and significance that the song had among the people.

<sup>49</sup> Harris, 29.

<sup>50</sup> Holcomb, 11-2.

<sup>51</sup> David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 10-1.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

community with common principles and a shared history. Processions, festivals, and other national events provided an opportunity for the masses to participate in celebrations of the nation. The people were “not merely the spectators but also the actors, observing themselves in the process of defining themselves.”<sup>53</sup> Not merely a means to cultivate national virtue, festivals provided opportunities for the people to honor their past and to express the ideals and principles they considered important, thereby defining what it meant to be American. The people participated in the veneration of historic figures and events that had contributed to the formation of the nation; the celebration of and reverence for what they considered most important—their history, freedom, independence, and virtue—provided an opportunity for the people to invent and reinforce an American identity. Through such celebrations, the American people also set a precedent for future generations to follow. If American youths were not directly involved in celebrations, they actively participated as spectators, and so learned patriotism and national virtue by example.<sup>54</sup>

Patriotic festivals and gatherings, which the people often attended in large numbers, served two functions concerning music and nationalism: they provided an opportunity for the people to unite as a community in celebration of the nation through song, while they also increased the significance of patriotic songs through the association of national symbols with music. Organizers often used music in patriotic celebrations such as the Grand Federal Procession of 1788. Following that particular festival—a celebration of the Fourth of July as well as the establishment of the Constitution—James Wilson wrote a letter of observances on the procession, later included in Francis Hopkinson’s extensive account, in which he commented on the artistic aspects of the festival, including the music. He wrote: “the senses partook of the

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<sup>53</sup> Kenneth Silverman, *A Cultural History of the American Revolution* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1976), 580.

entertainment, for the variety of colours displayed in the various ornaments of the machines and flags, and in the dresses...together with an excellent band of music, at once charmed the eyes and ears of the spectators...The effects of the precession, upon the minds and bodies of our citizens, deserve to be noticed.—It forced open every heart...”<sup>55</sup> For the spectators, the festival was a sensorial experience, full of sights and sounds. The images and music drew the audience in emotionally and intellectually, and created in them a sense of excitement regarding the country. As music accompanied many of the visual symbols, the people could associate the symbolic meaning of what they saw with the music they heard. Upon future hearings of the songs performed at the festival, the people who attended might recall the visual symbols, the feelings of excitement, as well as the deeper patriotic feelings associated with those symbols, with greater ease. During the 1813 celebration of the anniversary of American Independence, a large group of people met to honor the occasion. After a reading of the Declaration of Independence, the guests sat down to dinner, “and in the course of the entertainment, a band of music performed a number of appropriate tunes,” including *Yankee Doodle*, *Hail Columbia*, and *Washington’s March*.<sup>56</sup> Each song had a corresponding toast, thirteen all together, all of a national nature: the anniversary of American Independence, the country, the president of the United States, the army, and the navy, among others.<sup>57</sup> The reporter who gave the account of the celebration considered the songs the band performed “appropriate” for the occasion because of their nature as patriotic songs. The people who created the toasts also considered the content of such works relevant and complimentary to their references to the nation and its history. Similarly, in 1818, “a numerous

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<sup>54</sup> Waldstreicher, 73.

<sup>55</sup> James Wilson, *Observations on the Federal Procession on the fourth of July, 1788, in the city of Philadelphia*, in Francis Hopkinson, *Account of the Grand Federal Procession, Philadelphia, July 4, 1788* (Philadelphia: M. Carey, 1788).

<sup>56</sup> “Anniversary of American Independence,” *Weekly Aurora*, July 13, 1813, vol. IV, iss. 10, 86.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

and respectable assemblage” of Philadelphians met to celebrate the Fourth of July.<sup>58</sup> The hosts for the celebration gave toasts following a reading of the Declaration of Independence, all accompanied by music. The songs performed included *Yankee Doodle*, the *President’s March*, and *The Star-Spangled Banner*.<sup>59</sup> The toasts were patriotic as well, in honor of liberty, the president, those who died during the Revolution and the War of 1812, the military, the memory of George Washington, and American citizenship.<sup>60</sup> Patriotic songs, then, were associated, on more than one occasion, with national symbols: historically significant people, events, and objects. Such use of patriotic songs proved their sentimental and intellectual value; if the songs had no intrinsic patriotic meaning or significance, they would not have been used in such a capacity. Though large numbers of people often attended festivals and other such gatherings, the general public also received detailed accounts of the events through newspapers, which further assisted in the spread of patriotic messages, including the musical associations with national symbols, and patriotic feeling.<sup>61</sup> As the people experienced or read about such events, they might associate the already patriotic songs with other facets of American society and history. Through the repetitive use of songs in that capacity, the people established a precedent of using songs with patriotic themes during national celebrations. This did not limit the use of patriotic songs to festivals or anniversaries of independence, but did contribute to the value that those works had as tools for the promotion of nationalism.

The nationalist fervor that took hold of the country had a significant influence on several composers and the content, form, and style of music they created as they worked toward producing original compositions that would reflect the greatness of the nation and its people.

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<sup>58</sup> “Celebration of the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, 1818,” *Franklin Gazette*, July 8, 1818, vol. I, iss. 15, 2.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> Waldstreicher, 33.

Three men in particular, Anton Philip Heinrich, Bohemian violinist and composer; George Frederick Bristow, American composer and officer of the New York Philharmonic Society; and William Henry Fry, American composer and music critic, composed with the intent of creating pieces that would strengthen the American musical repertoire and reflect the country's landscape, culture, native peoples, and ideals. Though a native of Bohemia, Anton Heinrich moved to the United States in 1810, and from that time on considered himself to be an American musician and composer.<sup>62</sup> He originally settled in Philadelphia, and later moved westward to Kentucky, where he lived for a time among the Native Americans.<sup>63</sup> Heinrich found inspiration for his compositions while on his journey through the American landscape and his subsequent years in the Kentucky woodlands.<sup>64</sup> Though not formally trained in composition, Heinrich was so taken with the Native Americans and the beauty of the land that he taught himself to compose, and created for American music what the nationalist painters such as Thomas Cole created for the visual arts. "(T)he first to attempt American nationalism in the larger forms of musical composition," Heinrich was also the first to use Native Americans "as a theme for orchestral works on a large scale."<sup>65</sup> Thus, by inspiration and thematic content, Heinrich's works were national pieces. His works, though basically structured in accordance with most accepted musical conventions, contained elements of non-conformity, originality, experimentation, and emotional expression that embodied the essence of Ludwig van Beethoven's compositional style.<sup>66</sup> In regard to his compositional style and technique, his works, then, had the same significance in the eyes of his contemporaries to American music that Beethoven's did in Europe, an indication that, at last, America had a strong, capable, and talented composer

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<sup>62</sup> Crawford, 314.

<sup>63</sup> Howard, 227.

<sup>64</sup> Crawford, 317.

<sup>65</sup> Howard, 236.

contributing to the betterment of American musical life. Heinrich's works were innovative, descriptive pieces that resulted from his emotional response to and individual experience with America and its peoples.<sup>67</sup> As a composer, he brought a new level of maturity and originality to American musical culture. His motivation came, in part, from what he referred to as "the many and severe animadversions, so long and repeatedly cast on the talent for Music in this Country...."<sup>68</sup> Tired of such negative critique, Heinrich desired to create exceptional scores that would disprove the claim that American musicians had no talent.<sup>69</sup> Though Heinrich did not refer to a specific group of people, the criticism presumably came from European music critics. Heinrich wrote in the preface to one of his compositions published in 1820, *Dawning of Music in Kentucky*, that his desire was to create "one single *Star* in the *West*," or one bright and shining musical composition that would prove to those in the East (Heinrich's reference to the West might have been an implication that he meant to challenge Europeans, or those who resided in the East) that American artists could create exceptional musical works of the same, or perhaps even greater, caliber of European music. Heinrich was most capable of accomplishing such a task, if such a task existed, as his compositional style and ability rivaled that of the European masters, while at the same time, he retained the thematic and structural originality that distinguished his work from European pieces. In 1855, George Bristow also composed a piece "essentially national in its subject," as he chose to use Washington Irving's story *Rip Van Winkle* for his lyric drama, composed under the same title.<sup>70</sup> Bristow's work, like Heinrich's, was national by its content and theme, as it was based on a piece of literature about the Dutch-Americans in New York. Critics gave the performance mixed reviews, though many considered

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<sup>66</sup> Crawford, 315.

<sup>67</sup> Crawford, 317.

<sup>68</sup> Howard, 228.

<sup>69</sup> Howard, 228.

the work, in general, a success and a step forward in the establishment of “a national school of music” in America.<sup>71</sup> The generally favorable reception of and enthusiasm for their national works demonstrated the excitement and appreciation the people had for such compositions. Proponents of a national tradition in American music would most likely take great pleasure in the success that Bristow and Heinrich achieved as American composers. As both men chose national themes as the subjects for their compositions, they made a significant contribution to the American body of musical works.

William Henry Fry also composed in the interest of establishing a more complete and substantial repertoire of original American compositions, as well as increasing appreciation for native rather than European composers. Fry’s ideals and body of work were vastly important in the development of American music. In 1845, he produced the first *opera seria*, or grand opera, performed in the United States.<sup>72</sup> As Francis Hopkinson had done years earlier, Fry made sure to document his contribution to American music in the introduction to *Leonora*, “the first American work of the kind,” and expressed his hope that, in America, “which has the accumulating wealth, taste, and knowledge conferred by freedom and peace...there may be a rapid, and at the same time, a vigorous growth of this branch of Art.”<sup>73</sup> Fry was also a strong proponent of a complete cultural separation from Europe. Indeed, in a lecture he delivered to the American public in 1853, he proclaimed that the time had come for “a Declaration of Independence in Art.”<sup>74</sup> He felt that American musicians should follow in the path of American painters and writers in the pursuit of cultural independence. Fry questioned American dependence on European culture and believed that a people capable of achieving political independence should also strive for cultural

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<sup>70</sup> Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 624.

<sup>71</sup> Lawrence, *Strong on Music*, 624-8.

<sup>72</sup> William Henry Fry, *Leonora: A Lyrical Drama in Three Acts* (New York: E. Ferrett & Co., 1846), LCP.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

separation and original achievement in the arts, particularly in music. In the same lecture, he continued: “until this Declaration of Independence in Art shall be made—until American composers shall discard their foreign liveries and found an American School—and until the American public shall learn to support American artists, Art will not become indigenous to this country, but will only exist as a feeble exotic, and we shall continue to be provincial in Art.”<sup>75</sup>

For Fry, cultural separation and the advancement and support of American composers and musical pieces would lead to the development of a strong and worthwhile musical culture.

According to Fry, America would not have its own musical culture until it stopped relying on European influences, and no composer would ever achieve greatness or contribute unique and significant pieces to further the development of American music. As long as American composers turned to Europe, their work could not be considered American. There were those who felt that Fry was sometimes too strong, and even contradictory in his statements.<sup>76</sup>

However, some did agree with him, and recognized the truth in his words, though, unlike Fry, they also recognized the achievements that had already been made in the establishment and development of original American music.<sup>77</sup> Those who reacted favorably to Fry’s strongly worded statements considered him to be a bold man rooted in “‘Americanism.’”<sup>78</sup> His ideas and beliefs regarding music were intensely patriotic in the sense that he believed America could and one day would achieve musical greatness, just as they had achieved success in the other arts. He advocated the development of American work, by American authors, for the American public, in the interest of developing an American musical culture. Fry used his music to convey his patriotic themes and ideals as well as implement his vision for the future of American music.

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<sup>74</sup> “Mr. Fry’s ‘American Ideas’ about Music” *Dwight’s Journal of Music*, March 1853, vol. 2, no. 23, 180-2.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

His opera, *Leonora*, though structured in the Italian style of the *opera seria*, did not follow all of the traditional conventions. Fry believed that an American opera should be performed in English, despite the widely held belief among European composers and musicians that opera should be written in Italian and other languages conducive to performance.<sup>79</sup> Fry defied convention, as he believed in the patriotic value of writing his opera in English, the native language of his country.<sup>80</sup>

From the time of the American Revolution on, patriotic songs had a significant impact on the American people and their love and enthusiasm for their country. Composers and lyricists took advantage of the influential power of music to promote their own desires and to unify the people. In a time when the people struggled to define themselves and what it meant to be American, composers and lyricists attempted to provide, through song, various examples of what they considered American behavior, and what they considered to be the ideals most important to the American people. The American people came to define themselves through the expression of the ideals and sentiments they considered most important, and as most patriotic songs contained such elements, they had a significant influence in the process. As the enthusiasm for patriotic songs grew through public renditions, festivals, national celebrations, and through print culture, the people experienced an increased desire for American works, a desire which was reflected in their demand for more music by American composers, or at least more music with patriotic themes and content. The nationalist fervor that swept the nation, partly due to the role patriotic music played, returned to music through composers who had adopted the ideals of nationalism. Throughout time, the patriotic language increased in its intensity. In the 1780s,

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Fry, *Leonora*, Introduction.

Francis Hopkinson simply wished that the American people would continue with the development of American music so that the country could advance culturally. By the 1850s, William Henry Fry used extreme language to express his ideals and hope that the American musical tradition would one day rival that of the other European nations. He felt that American music should be held in higher esteem than European works as American works were, of course, better than European ones simply because they were American. Nevertheless, he and his contemporaries, inspired by nationalism—in varying degrees of intensity—laid the foundation for a prosperous and worthwhile musical tradition in the United States. A musical repertoire that had once been used to taunt the British people during Revolutionary times turned into something much greater as the general enthusiasm for American musical works increased. Lyricists and composers, from Francis Hopkinson to William Henry Fry, contributed significantly to the history, culture, and maturity of the nation; indeed, they contributed to the strength of the nation itself by providing a means through which the American people could define themselves. In this way, Americans developed their own musical culture, one that proved to the world that the patriotic spirit of the American people lived on through music, and would continue to do so for some time.

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<sup>80</sup> Howard, 240. William Henry Fry also supported public performances of American music by established music societies such as the New York Philharmonic Society, which could be considered expressions of nationalism.

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