

## 6 | Cultivating a European Concert Culture in Colonial Sydney and Hobart, 1826–1840

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### Introduction

A very respectable and select *Coterie* assembled on Wednesday Evening at the Freemason's Tavern, to participate in the luxury of the long-talked of musical *Melange* . . . There were 120 persons of both sexes present.

We feel much gratified at the success of this zealous attempt to promote public sociability through the medium of so innocent a recreation as a Concert of well-selected music . . . *The Concert* is the only public recreation which we have, from personal observation, found strictly consistent with religious and moral feeling. Theatres *might* be made so – Races *might* be made so – but they never *have* been, and we are afraid never *will* be.<sup>1</sup>

In the mid 1820s the 'preindustrial town' of Sydney (Warrane) was, according to historian Grace Karskens, 'remodelled as a more aesthetic, rectilinear, polite and self-conscious city' after the false starts of European invasion and settlement in the 1780s and 1790s.<sup>2</sup> Capturing this shift, the above excerpt from 1826, published in the newly founded Sydney paper *The Monitor*, hints at the role of organised concerts in the self-conscious promotion of public sociability. This chapter considers evidence from early concerts in both Sydney and Hobart – the first two colonial towns to be established by Europeans – that supports Karskens' contention that activities of Sydney in the mid 1820s mark a new phase in the transition from penal colony to an organised and aesthetic city.

We begin with an assessment of the changing demographics in 1820s Sydney that resulted from a dramatic increase in European migration and free settlement. This development gave rise to a shift in formal music-making. Public performance is one of the five categories of 'cultural transmission' that Richard Waterhouse asserts 'helped the new arrivals to adapt to a new and strange climate . . . rendering it habitable and civilised'.<sup>3</sup> European habits and activities were, to quote Helen English, expressions of a 'transplanted community whose origins were a class-structured society that linked taste in music to social standing'.<sup>4</sup> Contextual evidence around

two 1826 concert series in Sydney and Hobart allows us to see the ways that European music-making marked the 'interplay of transformation and continuity' for British and other European colonisers, settlers and visitors, while also reminding us of the ongoing presence of Aboriginal people throughout this period of transformative, and frequently violent, settlement.<sup>5</sup>

The two 1826 concert series mark a significant shift in the formal music-making of colonial Australia. Prior to these concerts, formal European music-making had primarily accompanied worship in newly constructed churches or had featured the military bands who arrived in various ship-ment waves from England, adding a sense of grandeur to English ceremonial celebrations and marking ongoing ties to home.<sup>6</sup> Outside of formal settings, music-making was a regular form of evening entertainment in both the home and the pub, even if comparatively limited evidence details the music played in these casual settings.<sup>7</sup> Formal concerts played a different role, establishing a context for genteel activities that referenced the metropolis of Europe. In suggesting this, we extend Penny Russell's categories for the kinds of activities that built 'social relationships and structures in ways that promised . . . an elite status, one founded in almost equal measure on optimistic fantasy and nostalgic (mis)remembering'.<sup>8</sup>

The 1826 Sydney and Hobart concert programmes, reconstructed through Graeme Skinner's research, show an eclectic programme of Continental European and British orchestral overtures (German and French overtures of Weber, Mozart and Kreutzer being particular favourites), operatic arias (of Rossini, Handel and others), duets and trios (by Pleyel, Corelli and others) arranged to feature the instruments available, and glees (vocal part-songs by a range of British composers such as Callcott, King, Webbe and others), with many players performing on multiple instruments and singing.<sup>9</sup> As well as occurring in the same year, the 1826 concert series in Sydney and Hobart shared several other common elements. As the above lists suggest, the programmes from these concerts evidence a circulation of key repertoire that confirms shared practices and marks them out as more than just idiosyncratic musical assemblages. Key musicians often arrived in Van Diemen's Land (now Tasmania/Lutruwita), and established performances there before relocating to Sydney, creating direct musical links between the two sites. Looking at the two series alongside one another allows us to identify several key musicians and a wider range of music-making that shaped the early phase of these towns' establishment and their residents' aspirations for cultural life. The activities of these musicians take us to the rise of the theatre in the early 1840s and its heralding of another new phase in colonial music-making, where this chapter concludes.

This kind of broad analysis has been enabled by Trove, a resource of the National Library of Australia.<sup>10</sup> Scholars have drawn attention to the risks of relying on historic newspapers – Helen English notes the limitations of only reporting ‘significant events’, and Paul Watt observes that ‘the nineteenth-century press can be an unreliable source of information in an age of anonymity’.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, many reports provide valuable insight into attitudes and events that were important to citizens throughout the colonies.

### **The Rise of Free Settlement and the Establishment of a Concert Life in Colonial Towns**

From their arrival in January 1788 on a fleet of eleven British ships, officers, governors and convicts attempted to establish a penal colony at a number of sites, first at Kamay (Botany Bay) and later at Warrane (Sydney Cove).<sup>12</sup> By 1800 the estimated non-Indigenous population was 1,024.<sup>13</sup> This number rapidly increased as fares lowered, conditions improved and the total travel time for the journey to the colonies decreased. The number of free immigrants arriving grew exponentially as new arrivals took advantage of the land and employment being offered. Between 1815 and 1821, the colony’s newly migrated population had more than doubled – from 12,911 in 1815 to 29,783 in 1821.<sup>14</sup> By 1846, the population of New South Wales would expand to 154,205.<sup>15</sup>

Prior to 1820, the class divide between convicts and those who ruled over them was particularly rigid. However, as the purpose of the local settlement became increasingly geared towards self-sufficiency, the proportion of the colonial population who were free settlers rose and the proportion of convicts shrank, and colonial society grew in complexity.<sup>16</sup> This change in demographics saw a more ‘status-conscious elite’ begin to emerge throughout the 1820s.<sup>17</sup>

Linda Young explains that when convicts who were ‘immoral by definition’ were first sent to the colonies, ‘there was even less assurance of acceptable society’.<sup>18</sup> In his comparative history of settler societies, Canadian historian Gérard Bouchard argues that colonial ‘cultural elites’ were ‘tormented by the idea of belonging to a make-shift society, of being culturally impoverished beside Europe, rootless and without tradition’.<sup>19</sup> Writing about amateur theatre in Australia, Bill Dunstone notes that it ‘articulated and intensified often unconscious anxieties about colonial isolation from metropolitan centres of imperial culture’, a phenomenon we observe also in colonial music-making.<sup>20</sup> Penny Russell suggests that across

a number of British colonies ‘insecurity was manifest in constant, anxious reference to the standards of the metropolis’.<sup>21</sup> The colonies were seen as ‘mediocre, philistine, contemptible, forever doomed by location and distance by ... fraught penal and colonial origins’<sup>22</sup> so they attempted ‘to fill the void through literature, the arts and through the construction of a “collective imaginary” to affirm the nation’s existence’.<sup>23</sup> The pursuit of music for music’s sake represented ‘genteel skill’ and ‘personal refinement’.<sup>24</sup>

Firmly focused on the priorities of the British Empire, European occasions for music-making were aloof from the Aboriginal Country on which they took place, its seasons, sounds and people. They looked instead to the far-away shores of England, using woodwind instruments, violins and singing in harmony to mark imperial milestones.<sup>25</sup> Those citizens who both endorsed and performed in the 1826 music concerts played a formative role in the development of musical taste in nineteenth-century colonial Australia.<sup>26</sup>

### The 1826 Sydney and Hobart Concert Series

The programming of both the 1826 Sydney and Hobart concerts capitalised on the players available, in arrangements that were opportunistic rather than fixed, across a series of twelve concerts in Sydney and two in Hobart. The less-than-ideal instrumental arrangements were a point of contention for one Sydney audience member who reported, ‘we regretted the absence of some instruments to fill out some of the harmonies’, though others suggested the concerts were ‘in various respects superior to many things of the kind in Europe’.<sup>27</sup>

The concert organisers and players were often drawn from military bands. For instance, key organisers of the Sydney concerts – George Sippe and Thomas Kavanagh – were also bandmasters of the 57th and 3rd Regiments respectively.<sup>28</sup> Another leader of the Sydney Amateur Concerts, John Edwards, was according to Skinner ‘the first of Sydney’s leading professional musicians not to be a military bandsman’.<sup>29</sup> During the 1830s, Edwards – a violinist, bass vocalist and choirmaster at St James’ church – would go on to lead the orchestra at a new theatre established by another of the Amateur Concert performers, Barnett Levey, whose career has been documented by historians of the theatre.<sup>30</sup>

As the Sydney concerts gained momentum, not only musicians but other artistic talents of colonial society were drawn in, with artist Augustus Earle directing concert three and improving the acoustics of the concert room in the courthouse building on Castlereagh Street, Sydney, by blocking the windows with a series of his paintings. The

portraits depicted classical figures of music and poetry – Apollo, Minerva and Melpomene – but interspersed these with images that acknowledged the place on which the concerts were staged, featuring a kangaroo and emu.<sup>31</sup> Apollo also featured in the programme of music, with Bishop’s ‘Hark Apollo’ sung before Thomas Kavanagh’s original composition, ‘The Trumpet Sounds Australia’s Fame’. The assemblage of Earle’s paintings would not mark a pathway to Australia’s fame, but another portrait Earle painted in this same year became one of the most circulated images in the colony. This work was the first lithograph portrait of its kind to be produced in New South Wales and depicted Kuringgai man Bungaree (Boongaree) (Figure 6.1).

Perhaps playing on Earle’s contributions to the concert, and a useful reminder of the presence of Aboriginal people in Sydney at the time, a letter to the editor published in *The Monitor* on 25 June 1826 made reference to



**Figure 6.1** Bungaree – King of the Aborigines of New South Wales. Hand-coloured lithograph by Augustus Earle (1826). Courtesy of Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

King Bungaree, drawing attention to the absence of Aboriginal people and songs from the Sydney concert programme but also their presence in the town (Figure 6.2).

Aboriginal intermediaries such as Bungaree often used singing as a mediation technique, as Tiffany Shellam has shown, and European musicians of Sydney also sought to grapple with communication across cultures by circulating arrangements of Aboriginal songs.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, several of the 1826 subscription series performers would go on to make a piano arrangement of a song notated from the singing of Ngarigu people. Titled ‘Song of the Women of the Menero Tribe’, it would become the first printed musical work to be published in the colony in 1834. Sydney concert

**TO THE EDITOR OF THE MONITOR.**  
*Royal Palace Kira-Billie, June 25th 1826.*  
 SIR,  
 IT is with feelings of extreme sorrow that I mention to you a circumstance which took place the last evening of the Concert.—  
 OUR gracious Sovereign had signified his intention of visiting the room last Wednesday—consequently his suite attended him there at eight o'clock. His Majesty was accompanied by the Ladies from the Palace, Her Majesty, Princess Coudda, &c. &c. When we attempted admittance—we were repulsed. The body-guard wished to interfere—but His Majesty with his usual mercy, ordered *Peace*. The Queen was terrified beyond any thing—and the interesting Princess, extremely agitated, burst into tears.  
 THINK, Sir of our sensations, when we saw a huge fellow thrust our King from the door-way—I knew not how to express myself—The Queen, her Majestic appearance—His Majesty's dignified behaviour—and last, the elegant all-accomplished Coudda—youngest Princess of the reigning family—thrown as they were on our protection—so generally beloved as they supposed themselves to be. I know not what may be the result of my communication; good or bad, I have only done my duty. But it will appear strange, if a monarch such as His Beneficent Majesty, *Bungaree the First*, is not considered entitled to a seat, or indeed, a *throne*, in the Concert-room.  
 I have the honor to subscribe myself,  
 Sir,  
 Your humble Servant,  
 HEK.  
*Captain in the Body Guards.*  
 P. S. I have since read in the Australian, that “*God Save the King*,” was loudly called for; perchance it was intended for a kind of apology; be it even so—His Majesty's household cannot accept of any apology—unless it be “a public one.”

Figure 6.2 ‘To the Editor of The Monitor’, *The Monitor* (7 July 1826), p. 5, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31757611>.

performers George Sippe and Joseph Josephson composed the piano part, and James Pearson arranged the melody.<sup>33</sup>

The organiser of Van Diemen's Land's first public concerts in 1826, John Philip Deane, had migrated to Hobart with his wife and two children in 1822. Deane was an accomplished violinist and soon became organist of St David's Church, where the first organ imported from London had been installed in 1824, paid for through public subscriptions.<sup>34</sup> Staged in the same year as the Sydney Amateur Concerts, the shorter Hobart concert series had repertoire in common, notably the glees (part-songs) 'Glorious Apollo' by Samuel Webbe and 'The Witches' by Matthew Peter King, as well as a 'favourite' song 'The Wolf' from a comic opera by William Shield and a Mozart overture.<sup>35</sup> Deane conducted and performed as singer, pianist and violinist for audiences of several hundred, including Governor Arthur.<sup>36</sup> As in Sydney, the concerts utilised the court house, and instrumentalists and singers were drawn from the current resident military band – the 40th Regiment, led by their bandmaster (and clarinet-tist) Joseph Reichenberg.<sup>37</sup> One commentator noted that in every way the musicians of Hobart were keeping up with developments in Sydney: 'Concerts have for some months past been established in Sydney, and several gentlemen here of the first respectability conceiving that many inhabitants of Hobart Town possessed equal, if not superior musical talents, set on foot a plan for introducing the same source of enjoyment amongst us also; and in this, the first attempt, they have succeeded beyond expectation.'<sup>38</sup>

Though evidence like that of Bungaree's presence in Sydney was not part of descriptions of the Hobart concerts, we cannot look past the presence of Palawa Aboriginal people in the Hobart area at the time. One snippet of 'Van Diemen's Land News' gives a strong sense of the concert taking place alongside ongoing conflict between Aboriginal people and settlers in what we as contemporary readers might now think of as the frontier wars.<sup>39</sup> In *The Australian*, either side of the concert description were reports of the killing of stock-keepers by local Aboriginal people and the subsequent execution of two Aboriginal men as punishment for a recent spearing (Figure 6.3).<sup>40</sup> The presence of military bands and use of the courthouse as concert venue are therefore reminders of the ongoing conflict between Europeans, who were establishing settlements and seeking also to transplant musical traditions onto the Australian colonies, and Aboriginal people whose presence and singing continued on the Country they had occupied for thousands of years.

**PIANO-FORTES.**  
**M. R. EDWARDS HAVING RECEIVED PER**  
 Medora, an investment of **PIANO-FORTES**,  
 from the celebrated house of Broadwood and Sons, begs to ac-  
 quaint the ladies and gentlemen of the Colony, that the same  
 are ready for inspection at his apartments, 10, George-street.  
 A selection of fashionable music for the piano-forte, &c. by  
 the same conveyance.

**WANTED TO PURCHASE A TEAM OF**  
**WORKING BULLOCKS.** Apply to Mr.  
**S. LOND,** Macquarie Place.

**VAN DIEMEN'S LAND NEWS.**

(From the Colonial Times of September 29.)  
 We last week had occasion to notice the death of two unfor-  
 tunate stock-keepers by the natives. We now lament in having  
 to state, that four other Europeans were previously killed by  
 some other of the Aboriginal tribes.

**HOBART TOWN CONCERTS.**  
 Yesterday evening, the first public concert which this Island  
 has as yet known, took place at the Court-house. The plan of  
 the concert has been organized by a committee of gentlemen,  
 and supported by the patronage of his Excellency the Lieut.  
 Governor and Mr. Arthur. The number of persons could not  
 have been less than 250 or 300, and the effect of the coup-  
 d'oeil of the whole was most brilliant. The band of the 40th re-  
 giment were in their elegant and chaste new uniforms. An  
 excellent grand piano forte was in front, a little on one side—at  
 which Mr. J. P. Dean, the conductor, presided. The gentlemen  
 who were kind enough to lend their vocal powers in aid of the

bulls.

(From the Colonial Times of Sept. 8.)  
 Sailed on Tuesday the ship *Cape Packet*, Captain Kallie,  
 for England direct, with a full cargo of Colonial produce.  
 We understand from good authority, that the Coal Mine at  
 the South Cape, is about to be opened and worked immediately.

(From the Colonial Times of Sept. 1.)  
 Wheat is considered a mere drug at Launceston, owing to  
 the reduced price of that article at Sydney.

Mr. Kelly, the harbour master, in conjunction with Mr. Be-  
 thune, has procured and brought up to port 70 tons of oil; and  
 is reported to have caught six more whales; one of which was  
 taken off Sandy Bay, and towed near the harbour.

During the last week very heavy rains have been experienced,  
 but especially at the other side of the Island. There much da-  
 mage has been, we are sorry to say, experienced, in sheep and  
 cattle being drowned, and cultivated land and its seed washed  
 away. We are however happy to find, that no injury has been  
 sustained.

**EXECUTIONS.**

**Wednesday Morning.**—We have to record the final exit of  
 seven of the unhappy men—Jack and Dick, the two Aborigines,  
 for spearing and killing Thomas Colley, a stock-keeper, at  
 Oyster Bay; William Smith, Thomas Darrings, and Edward  
 Everett, for the horrid murder of the unfortunate Mr. Simpson,  
 settler, at Pitt-water; and John Taylor and George Waters, for  
 robbing a soldier at the penal settlement at Macquarie Har-  
 bour.

**Friday Morning.**—Scarce is our paper dry from giving an ac-  
 count of the above melancholy executions, when eight more un-  
 happy criminals doomed to suffer, have this morning fulfilled  
 the penalty due to the Law, by meeting a similar fate as those  
 above recorded.

George Bruce, a bushranger, for the robbery at Mr. Gate-

Figure 6.3 Excerpt from page 2 of *The Australian* including the sections 'Hobart Town Concerts' and 'Executions' (18 October 1826), <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article37071471>.

## Sydney Concert Culture, 1836–1840

Further documentary evidence confirms that the Sydney and Hobart concert series were not isolated efforts at shaping the cultural life of colonial towns. The year 1836 saw a series of instrumentalists and singers land in Sydney whose arrival signified a rise in the concert culture of New South Wales as they endeavoured to mimic Europe in the colonies.<sup>41</sup> These newly arrived musicians would extend the existing concert culture established around 1826 by Sippe and others in Sydney, and Deane in Hobart. In particular, the Irish siblings violinist William Vincent Wallace and soprano Eliza Wallace (later Bushelle), and the married French musicians violinist Joseph Gautrot and soprano Madame Gautrot provide a window into the breadth of musical contexts for European music-making during this period.<sup>42</sup>

The Deane and Wallace families both moved to Sydney in 1836, with the Gautrots following around three years later. Despite only remaining in the Australian colonies for about three years, William Vincent Wallace had a pronounced impact on colonial musical life.<sup>43</sup> Early reviews noted the potential for Wallace's performances to usher in a new era of music in Sydney: 'Mr. Wallace, we hear, is about becoming a resident among us, for his splendid and novel performance on Friday evening, has been hailed as the commencement of a new era in the chronology of music in this



Colony.<sup>44</sup> This shift was framed as offering a more ‘intellectual’ musical culture than the theatre, as an advertisement announcing Wallace’s first concert suggests: ‘His Excellency has signified his intention of being present, and we would recommend all the *Haut ton* to follow an example so laudable, which has for its object the creating in the people a taste for intellectual amusements, unalloyed by the vices and immoralities which are the inevitable attendants of a play-house.’<sup>45</sup>

A key aspect of Wallace’s contribution to the music of the colonies was in bringing virtuosic concert culture from Europe; he was often referred to as the ‘Australian Paganini’, even if this showiness was also the basis of criticisms levelled against him.<sup>46</sup> After a year of Wallace’s presence in Sydney, the shape of musical life had changed, according to one commentator:

A twelvemonth ago, it would have been just as possible to walk from Sydney to old Drury, or to the English Opera House, as to get up such a Concert in Sydney, as that with which Mr. Wallace delighted the townfolk on Wednesday evening last. Indeed Mr. W. Wallace, our fine violinist, and his charming nightingale sister – with Mrs. Chester, Mr. Dean [*sic*] and family, are a vast acquisition to the intellectual advancement of Sydney.<sup>47</sup>

In 1838 a ‘grand musical festival’ took place at St Mary’s Cathedral, reportedly attended by upwards of 500 people. William Vincent Wallace, Eliza Wallace and John Philip Deane performed in the concert with several other notable musicians, including the full band of the 50th Regiment. The concert began with a sacred oratorio, followed by an overture and a series of shorter recitatives and arias.<sup>48</sup> Several detailed reviews of the concert appeared in the papers, celebrating its ‘intellectual’ contribution to the colony. Though the string section had to fill the gaps in tenor and alto lines left by the lack of male singers, ‘Domestic Intelligence’ suggested the music was not only appreciated by the critical press but was also popular with the audience:

From the short notice of the entertainment, we did not think it possible that such an intellectual treat could have been produced. Such was the effect of the performance that the audience could not be restrained from exhibiting their approbation and applause at the termination of every piece. We must conclude by saying that it was altogether highly creditable to the musical profession of Australia.<sup>49</sup>

Three months later, J. P. Deane held a concert in the saloon of the Royal Hotel under the patronage of Lady Gipps.<sup>50</sup> In attendance was ‘a galaxy of beauty and fashion’ including, among others, His Excellency Sir George

Gipps, his wife, and Fijian Chief Prince Tubontutai, who ‘appeared highly delighted with the musical portion of the concert’.<sup>51</sup> The concert began with the band of the 50th Regiment playing Weber’s overture to *Der Freischütz*, followed by several glees and arias.<sup>52</sup>

Deane’s three children also appeared, with Miss Deane performing ‘masterfully’ on the piano and singing a vocal duet with her brother Master E. Deane. Master J. Deane performed his first public violin solo, after which the two brothers performed a violin and cello duet.<sup>53</sup> Despite some critical reviews of the sound properties of the venue, the repertoire and performers, the concert was praised for its successful display of transplanted European cultural practices: ‘We should think it must have been [a] matter of surprise to Sir George Gipps to have witnessed the arts of civilized and settled society, introduced and patronized in this Colony, within 50 years of its being dressed in nature’s wildest garb.’<sup>54</sup>

The reception of another of Deane’s musical soirées illustrates a tension in the audience’s desire for melodious English language tunes rather than the complex German chamber and orchestral compositions promoted in Deane’s programming. At this soirée, repertoire included a Haydn ‘Quartett’ and ‘Quintetto’; six vocal songs; two glees; a vocal duet; a fantasie for piano; an air with variations for the violin; a duet for violin and piano; and a piano, violin and viola trio by Moscheles.<sup>55</sup>

Fresh from the country, and hoping to enjoy an intellectual treat, I last night visited Mr. Deane’s musical ‘soiree,’ where I confess that (apparently) a great deal of skill and expertness was displayed by Miss Deane, and others, in the performance of various seemingly difficult, and doubtless scientific musical compositions, but which did not possess a single charm for the unskilled, and I will venture to say very few for the initiated part of the audience . . . Now I would ask, sir, why are all the melodious airs of England, Ireland, and Scotland, banished from our musical entertainments? Their beauties are unquestioned; and requiring no previous preparation of the mind to render them pleasing, their effects are equally felt by the savage and the civilised; the whole of the faculties are involuntarily surrendered to their delightful influence, and such exquisitely pleasurable emotions are aroused as cannot be described.<sup>56</sup>

Word of Deane’s musical achievements in the colonies had reached the Scottish and English press, with one reviewer suggesting that ‘Messrs. Wallace and Deane . . . will raise young musicians to make a creditable colonial orchestra’.<sup>57</sup> In 1849, the year of his death, Deane would be celebrated as the ‘oldest musician in the southern hemisphere, and a colonist of twenty-eight years standing’.<sup>58</sup>

The year 1839 saw French violinist Joseph Gautrot and soprano Madame Gautrot arrive in Sydney after travelling with the French Operatic Company.<sup>59</sup> When the company moved on after only a few weeks in Sydney, the Gautrots were the only members to remain, and their subsequent careers evidence the blurred lines between high art and theatrical vaudeville, virtuosity and music of broad appeal. Reports of the company's run in Sydney indicate they had brought something novel to town:

A new era in our colonial dramatic annals has taken place within the last week in the introduction of a French operatic company amongst us. To say that we view this event as a matter of congratulation, and as deserving our best encouragement, would be only to express a sentiment in which we have been anticipated by the proceedings of Friday evening last. Considerable excitement had been occasioned by the announcement, that the French company newly arrived, would give their first entertainment on the evening above-mentioned, and we are happy to say, that the result has more than realized the highest expectations.<sup>60</sup>

A concert review from 1839 compared Madame Gautrot's singing with Eliza Wallace's and Joseph Gautrot's playing with William Wallace's, perhaps also readable as a critique of virtuosity over a more emotional approach to music performance:

Madame's voice is too loud for a room. At the Opera house she might excel Miss W[allace] ... Mons. Gautrot's violin is of the finest. This gentleman may not excel Mr. Wallace (the absent Mr. W. we mean,) in execution, but he excels him in a much superior thing to mere execution, and that is soul. In his 'Air varié,' Mons. Gautrot, being himself inspired, inspired his hearers. Mr. Wallace was never inspired in his life, and cannot be. He therefore never inspired his hearers. He was an imitator of Paganini, but he could imitate that necromancer only in his manipular skill. He could not imitate him in his inspiration and frenzy, because he has no capacity for exquisite feelings.<sup>61</sup>

The Gautrots moved between Sydney, Hobart and Melbourne, initially performing in concerts alongside the Wallaces, Deanes, Sippe and the military bands and later staging comic operas at Signor Luigi Dalle Case's short-lived Australian Olympic Theatre – described by Mark St Leon as the colony's 'first real circus in the accepted sense'.<sup>62</sup> In 1842, the Gautrots formed the 'Foreign Operatic Company' and gave a short winter season.<sup>63</sup> The Gautrots were thus part of a movement towards musical theatre in the early 1840s, when, as Richard Waterhouse shows, a divide developed between the class backgrounds of the audiences for opera and music halls, and also in the stated moral or recreational purposes of their entertainment.<sup>64</sup>

## Conclusion

Most of the performers detailed in this brief account of European music-making arrived from European centres or from tours of British and other colonies in the Pacific, bringing their concert practices to the towns of Sydney and Hobart between 1826 and the early 1840s. As contemporary readers, we get occasional glimpses of the musicians' awareness that their efforts to import a European musical culture took place on Aboriginal land, but largely the musical practices of European settlers and Aboriginal people remained separate. We can trace this separation into the present day in institutions such as opera companies and orchestras, which have been the slowest of the creative arts industries to open their stages to Aboriginal musicians and composers.<sup>65</sup>

The 1826 Sydney and Hobart concert series were the earliest subscription concerts of European music of which we still have evidence, and they were part of broader efforts to reimagine colonial towns in this transitional phase of Australian history. The notable musicians and cultural entrepreneurs that led these concerts, including Sippe, Kavanagh, Edwards, Deane, the Wallaces and the Gautrots, shaped these musical worlds, bringing European instruments, forms of opera and vocal music, chamber, orchestral and solo violin music that would continue to develop over the next two centuries in Australia's urban centres. We see, in this early aspirational culture, the seeds of Australian music-making, which continued to look to the cultural practices of the British Isles and Continental Europe well into the twentieth century and which has only recently come to regard itself as part of its geographical and cultural region.

## Notes

1. 'Amateur Concert', *The Monitor* (9 June 1826), p. 4, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31757526>.
2. G. Karskens, *The Colony: A History of Early Sydney* (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2009), pp. 2, 61.
3. The others were fairs, sporting activities, blood sports and activities centred on alehouses. R. Waterhouse, 'Cultural Transmissions' in H-M. Teo and R. White (eds.), *Cultural History in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003), pp. 118–19.

4. H. English, 'Music-Making in the Colonial City: Benefit Concerts in Newcastle, NSW in the 1870s', *Musicology Australia*, 36(1) (2014), 53, <https://doi.org/10.1080/08145857.2014.896071>.
5. Karskens, *The Colony*, p. 1.
6. See details at G. Skinner, 'A Chronological Register of British Military Bands and Bandsmen in Australia, 1788–1870', *Australharmony (an online resource toward the early history of music in colonial Australia)*, <https://bit.ly/3w0PuRE>, accessed 27 July 2023; R. Jordan, 'Music and Civil Society in New South Wales, 1788–1809', *Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society*, 98(2) (2012), 193–210; R. Bannister and J. Whiteoak, 'Military Music' in A. Scott-Maxwell and J. Whiteoak (eds.), *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia* (Sydney: Currency House, 2003), pp. 412–15; R. Bannister, 'How Are We to Write Our Music History? Perspectives on the Historiography of Military Music', *Musicology Australia*, 25(1) (2002), 1–21.
7. For instance, one of the main forms of remaining evidence detailing fiddlers is in the form of arrest reports, which very rarely detail the musical endeavours of those players. See 'The Police', *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (1 March 1826), p. 3, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article2185320>; 'News of the Day', *The Sydney Monitor* (26 March 1838), p. 2, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article32159514>; 'Police Report', *The Tasmanian* (22 November 1833), p. 7, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article233614169>; P. MacFie, S. Gadd and M. Gadd, *On the Fiddle from Scotland to Tasmania, 1815–1863: The Life and Music of Alexander Laing (1792-1868), Convict, Constable, Fiddler and Composer* (Dulcot, Tasmania: Peter MacFie, 2010), <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/4865244>.
8. P. Russell, 'Cultures of Distinction' in H.-M. Teo and R. White (eds.), *Cultural History in Australia* (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2003), p. 166.
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