Chapter 8

Some of the Music Heard during the Fledgling Colony’s First Two Years

Despite the fact that characteristically rapid changes in temperature and humidity levels at Sydney Cove may have played havoc with the wooden components of any musical instruments that had travelled with the First Fleet, the colony, from its inception, had music.

The Official Reading of Governor Phillip’s Commission, 7 February 1788

As early as Thursday, 7 February 1788—13 days after the fleet’s arrival at Sydney Cove—there was music at the official reading of Governor Phillip’s commission. On that occasion, fifes and drums were probably used (three marine fife and drummers had travelled on board the *Sirius*)¹ when ‘all the officers of guard took post in the marine battalion, which was drawn up, and marched off the parade with music playing, and colours flying, to an adjoining ground, which had been cleared for the occasion’.² It is not known specifically what tune was piped as the marine battalion was marched off the parade ground.

In his journal, George Worgan describes the music that was heard within the context of the ceremony: ‘The battalion fired 3 volleys of small-arms, the band playing the first part of God Save the King, between each volley.’³

Exactly what Worgan means by the term ‘band’ is unclear. In England, military regiments were commonly associated with particular kinds of musical activity. A typical British regiment comprised

- eight infantry companies and a company of grenadiers. Each company was allowed two drummers who beat calls, kept cadence during marches, and signaled formations and commands via drumbeat patterns during battles … In addition to its drummers, the grenadier company had two fifers, usually boys, who played popular airs over the drummers’ cadence during marches. These juvenile fifers had no role in battle.

² Tench, A Narrative of the Expedition to Botany Bay, p. 65.
³ Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon, ‘Sat 9th’ (February 1788).
Officially, no other regimental music was authorized; however, most regiments also had bands of wind instruments, privately paid for ... by regimental officers. Such bands usually contained two oboes, two bassoons, two clarinets, and two horns.4

The French Revolution boosted the position of the wind band, now employed for public singing and other republican entertainment. Napoleon later drew upon the excellent French wind players in his military bands and directed the creation of new cavalry bands which relied mostly on brass instruments. English, Austrian and German bands were influenced profoundly by the French musicians who, like them, often played in the front lines to inspire the soldiers to fight.5

In England, military tradition dictated that each regiment had its own fifes and drums (within the British military musical context, fifes and drums were ubiquitous; daily, regimental drums ‘beat the reveille at 6.00am and tapto at 8.00 or 9.00pm’).6 For their troubles, drummers were paid an additional three-quarters of a penny per day.7

The First Fleet travelled with four Royal Marine regiments; three of these regiments had nicknames: ‘The Jollies’, ‘Boot Necks’ and ‘Blue Bottles’.8 If military norms had been upheld, these regiments would have had 18 drummers and two fifers each—which means that when simultaneously on parade, the four regiments may have been inspired by the extraordinary sound created by 72 drummers and eight fifers. There is no evidence supporting the existence either of such numbers or of such sonic opulence in relation to the ‘band’ at Sydney Cove. It is known, however, that three marine fife and drummers travelled to Sydney Cove on board the **Sirius**.9

At the official reading of Governor Phillip’s commission on 7 February 1788, and as the ‘band’ played the first part of ‘God Save the King’ between each of the three volleys of small arms,10 the (eight?) fifes of the regimental band(s) were used for the interspersions of ‘God Save the King’.

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5 Hanson, *Musical Life in Biedermeier Vienna*, p. 144.
10 Worgan, *Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon*, ‘Sat 9th’ (February 1788).
This context would not have been the first within which European musical sounds had been released into the Antipodean environment. In 1773, Captain Cook ‘set out to impress natives onshore at Dusky Sound [New Zealand] by asking “the bagpipes and fife to be played and the drum to be beat”’.11

This flatulently rattling flourish does not represent the only connection between music and Captain Cook. James Burney (1750–1821), the musicologist and eldest son of the music historian Charles Burney, ‘sailed on Cook’s second and third naval voyages, learning Polynesian and recording Polynesian music in his journal to help solve the problem [of] whether harmony and counterpoint was understood in the South Seas’.12 Prior to the commencement of Cook’s 1772–74 journey around the world, Cook visited Charles Burney at his home at Queen’s Square, Bloomsbury. Burney made a note of the visit:

I had the honour of receiving the illustrious Captain Cooke to dine with me in Queens-Square, previously to his second voyage round the world.

Observing upon a table Bougainville’s Voyage Autour du Monde, he turned it over, and made some curious remarks on the illiberal conduct of that circumnavigator towards himself, when they met and crossed each other; which made me desirous to know, in examining the chart of M. de Bougainville, the several tracks of the two navigators; and exactly when they had crossed or approached each other.

Captain Cooke instantly took out a pencil from his pocket-book, and said he would trace the route, which he did in so clear and scientific a manner, that I would not take fifty pounds for the book. The pencil marks having been fixed by skim milk, will always be visible.13

It is not known if music was made as a part of this convivial gathering. We do know, however, that 16 years later, during the very earliest days of the colony at Sydney Cove, military music filled the air.

‘The Rogue’s March’, 9 February 1788

Two days after the ceremonial reading of Governor Phillip’s commission, fifes and drums would have been used as accompaniment to the punishment and public disgrace of a serviceman and his accomplices. In fact, apart from ‘God Save the King’.

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the earliest piece of music known by name to have been performed in Australia is *The Rogue’s March*, played by a marine fifer and drummer ‘at the drumming out’ on Saturday, 9 February 1788 of a sailor, carpenter and a cabinboy belonging to the *Prince of Wales*, ‘who had been caught in the female convicts’ tents’.14

In a rough colony devoid of any entertainment whatsoever, ‘fornication was one of the few joys more or less readily available’.15 The violating sailor, carpenter and cabinboy ‘were drummed through the camp with their hands tied behind them, the boy dressed in petticoats’.16

‘The Rogue’s March’, a lively melody in 6/8 meter (Plate 65), was traditionally played to accompany the ritual dishonouring of military or civil offenders. Throughout the ritual, the march would be played by the largest number of fifers and drummers that could be assembled. The offender, with his hands bound behind him and wearing his coat inside-out as a mark of shame, would be stripped of rank, insignia and buttons, and marched to the entrance of the encampment. The final disgrace would come in the form of a farewell kick in the behind from the youngest drummer.

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Source: Transcribed by the author.

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14 Rogers, ‘Australia’s First Piano, Clavierübung’.
The King’s Birthday Celebration, 4 June 1788

Four months after the musical drumming out of the hapless sailor, carpenter and cabinboy, Governor Phillip hosted a king’s birthday celebration dinner at Government House, on Wednesday, 4 June 1788. George Worgan mentions that there was background music at this function. Governor Phillip had previously given a general invitation to the officers to dine with him; and about 2 o’clock we sat down to a very good entertainment … In the course of the afternoon the Governor had occasion to step into an adjacent room, when; it was intimated by some one to pay him a flattering compliment, and every gentleman standing up & filling his glass, we all with one voice gave, as the toast, the Governor and the settlement, we then gave three huzza’s, as we had done indeed after every loyal toast, the band playing the whole time. 17

That Worgan was included in Governor Phillip’s invitation to ‘the officers to dine with him’ has implications for Worgan’s seemingly unusual status in the colony. Normally, Worgan, as a warrant officer, would not have been classified as an officer, and would therefore have been ineligible to attend the Governor’s dinner. It appears that uncommon attitudes existed in New South Wales. 18

In order to celebrate the King’s birthday, the convention of the day dictated that in the afternoon, and stretching into the evening, members of the ruling elite gathered, by invitation, at Government House for a formal dinner, with toasts and music. In 1788, and apparently until the numbers became too great, the invitation extended ‘to all the officers not on duty, both of the garrison and His Majesty’s ships’. 19

Repertoire Played at Social Functions

We do not know specifically what repertoire was played during such social occasions. Perhaps the music comprised strathspeys, cotillions (the forerunner of the quadrille), country dances, minuets, ‘sentimentally homesick airs and martial songs of a conventionally patriotic kind’. 20 It is unlikely that a waltz would have been played as part of the King’s birthday celebration dinner hosted

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17 Worgan, Journal of a First Fleet Surgeon, ‘Wed. 4th’ (June 1788).
18 I am indebted to Robert Clarke for this information, which comes from his preparatory research for Working the Forge.
20 Covell, Australia’s Music. Quoted in Rogers, ‘Australia’s First Piano, Clavierubung’.
by Governor Phillip on 4 June 1788. Seven years later, in England, the waltz (considered indecent) and its effect received a mention in The Times of Sunday, 25 January 1795: ‘The balls at Southampton are exceedingly lively, and well-attended. The young ladies are particularly favourable to a German dance, called the Volse: for squeezing, hugging, &c., it is excellent in its kind, and more than one lady has actually fainted in the middle of it.’ In London, attitudes to the waltz were not as liberal as those in Southampton: ‘the waltz was not accepted in London until 1812 because it was regarded as indecinate.’ On 4 June 1788, at Sydney Cove, any waltz heard as part of the background music provided for the King’s birthday celebration dinner may well have offended the sensibilities of those present.

The Quadrille in Sydney

Quadrilles—‘a dance for four couples in square formation that allowed for many [intricate] variations’—were not heard, danced or seen in Sydney (or in Europe) until the early nineteenth century.

Sydney enjoyed the onset of the new vogue of the quadrille almost in tandem with London, where the dance had been introduced to Almack’s famous dance club around 1815 by the leader of the orchestra James Paine … both Almacks and the quadrille were still being mentioned as bywords of fashion over a decade later.

The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 28 October 1820 contains the first mention in the Sydney press of a quadrille:

French language and dancing.—M. Girard, of Paris, presenting compliments to the families of Sydney, most respectfully informs them that he gives instruction in his native language, and also in quadrilles.

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24 Murray (An Elegant Madness, p. 48) describes Almack’s as ‘The Seventh Heaven of the Fashionable World’.
25 The quadrille ‘was introduced in France around 1760, and later in England around 1808 by a woman known as Miss Berry. It was introduced to the Duke of Devonshire and made fashionable in 1813.’ ‘Quadrille’, in Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia (n.d.).
waltzes, &c. all kind of elegant dances, at Mr. Nott’s Academy, 44, Castlereagh-street; and those families, who desire it, may be waited on at their own houses.\textsuperscript{27}

Three years later, the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} of Thursday, 4 September 1823 reported that quadrilles had been danced within the context of a grand social occasion:

On Thursday last, the 26th Ultimo, a splendid ball was given by William Cox, Esq. of Clarendon, near Windsor, which was attended by a large party of ladies and gentlemen from Sydney, and other parts of the country. The town of Windsor exhibited the day previous, and on the day the ball was given, a most pleasing sight of carriages, of all descriptions, passing through it.—The ball-room was tastefully fitted up; the newest quadrilles danced, and country dances gone through, with an unusual degree of spirit and liveliness, occasioned by the excellent music provided.\textsuperscript{28}

The next year, on Thursday, 1 July 1824, the \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser} published an account of a sumptuous ball hosted by the physician, banker and landowner Sir John Jamison (1776–1844). At this gathering, quadrilles were danced with enthusiasm:

The ball and supper, given by Sir John Jamison on the evening of Thursday last, was of the most fascinating and splendid description. The ball-room was fancifully fitted up for the occasion. The company flocked in from 8 to 9: the carriages were rolling rapidly down our streets between those hours. Captain Piper, with his usual zeal in these cases, had his own band in attendance upon the noble host. Dancing, consisting of country dances, quadrilles, and Spanish waltzes, presently commenced, and was maintained with the utmost animation till midnight, when the guests were ushered in to the supper-room, which was entitled to the palm for superior taste in the disposition of the various arrangements that were most happily executed. All the rare and choice delicacies that Australia possesses, whether natural or imported, decorated the festive board, which groaned beneath the weight of excessive luxuriance: upwards of 170 sat down to supper.\textsuperscript{29}

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 4 September 1823, Vol. 18 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 3.
\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser}, 1 July 1824, Vol. 22 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 2.
'M. Girard, of Paris' continued to instruct those fashionable members of Sydney society who desired to master the technical intricacies associated with dancing the quadrille (the difficulty of the dance’s steps ensured that ‘there was a long preparatory training with great lots of temper, and loss of fiddle-strings on the part of the teacher’). On Thursday, 28 April 1825, ‘Monsieur Girard’ advertised in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*: French language and dancing. Quadrilles, country dances, waltzes, &c. taught at No. 4, Macquarie-Street.

Monsieur Girard, in presenting his sincere Thanks to the Public for the very liberal encouragement which he has uniformly experienced, begs to suggest the advantage which ladies and gentlemen would derive, by being furnished, a few days previous to any ball, with select quadrilles, &c. in exercising which mistakes would be effectually prevented. As M. G. has a thorough knowledge of the manner in which French and English balls are conducted, he respectfully offers his services for this purpose, and will undertake to conduct them in the finest style.

N. B.—As many ladies and gentlemen, who are somewhat advanced in life, may have, from a variety of reasons, neglected to acquire a proper knowledge of dancing, M. G. would undertake to teach such, in three months, so that they might appear in a ball-room with perfect grace.

In the same newspaper (and on the same page), an advertisement appears in which the first quadrilles composed for Australia are mentioned:

Mr. Reichenberg [b. 1789], Music Master of the 40th Regiment, respectfully inform[s] the ladies and gentlemen of the colony, that he has composed a first set of quadrilles for Australia, with proper figures adapted to it, for the pianoforte, flute, or violin; also, for a full band. The same may be had in manuscript, from Mr. Reichenberg, at the Military Barracks; or at Mr. Campbell’s, No. 93, George-street, by giving one day’s notice.—Price 6s.

The ‘one day’s notice’ mentioned towards the end of the advertisement allowed for copying from the original.

Girard’s strength of purpose catalysed a pronounced change in Sydney’s cultural life. By the late 1820s, the quadrille had become a popular ballroom dance. Newspaper reports reveal the dance’s journey towards popularity. On

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30 *The Empire*, 24 October 1863, No. 3754 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 3.
32 Ibid. Robert Campbell was Sydney’s first dedicated music retailer.
Wednesday, 1 March 1826, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* was able to report: ‘Yesterday evening His Excellency and Mrs. Darling\(^{33}\) gave a splendid ball and supper to a large party of civil and military officers, and other gentlemen, and their ladies. The music consisted principally of French quadrilles, which were tastefully executed by the Pandean Band.’\(^{34}\)

Approximately two months later, on Wednesday, 26 April 1826, Governor Darling and his wife hosted a ball at Government House in celebration of the King’s birthday. The ball ‘commenced with quadrilles [which] … were the favourites of the ladies, and the Band of the 3d (Buffs) exquisitely performed them. The ladies skipt “on the light fantastic toe” with all imaginable grace and spirit. It was supposed that 200 individuals occupied the saloon at one time.’\(^{35}\)

By 1829, nine years after Girard brought the quadrille to Sydney, the dance had become an accepted part of Sydney society’s balletic activities. For example, *The Sydney Monitor* of Saturday, 25 April 1829 describes a ball held in celebration of the King’s birthday: ‘Jockey and Racing Club Ball.—Sixty or seventy ladies, and … the same number of gentlemen, all testified their love for sociabilit[y] by assembling at the Royal Hotel, George-street, to dance quadrilles, and enjoy the pleasures of conversation.’\(^{36}\)

Who was the extraordinary Girard, the man who appears to have introduced the quadrille to Sydney society?

**Mr Girard**

‘Mr Girard, of Paris’,\(^{37}\) was the French-born convict ‘Francis Girard, alias de Lisle’\(^{38}\) (1793–1859), who, eight months before he first advertised his services as a quadrille instructor,\(^{39}\) had received a sentence of transportation for seven years\(^{40}\) ‘for stealing two gold watches from a London jeweller’.\(^{41}\) Girard arrived

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\(^{33}\) That is, Governor Sir Ralph Darling (1772–1858) and his wife, Eliza.

\(^{34}\) *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 1 March 1826, Vol. 23 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 2.


\(^{37}\) *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 4 September 1823, p. 3.


\(^{39}\) See *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 28 October 1820, p. 2.


in Sydney on Friday, 22 September 1820, on the transport ship *Agamemnon*.\(^{42}\) Four and a half years later, on Wednesday, 20 April 1825, Girard was granted a conditional pardon.\(^{43}\)

The influence of Girard’s French cultural roots looms large within the context of his life in Sydney. Shortly after his conditional pardon, Girard brought his endeavours as a dancing teacher to a close, and became a baker. He is mentioned in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Thursday, 10 November 1825, as having appeared in court for selling underweight bread: ‘F Girard, baker, in Hunter-street, who had exposed for sale certain loaves, deficient in weight in the aggregate 14 ounces and a half, was fined in the mitigated penalty of two shillings and sixpence per ounce, amounting to £1 2s. 6d.’\(^{44}\)

Despite this embarrassing lapse in integrity, Girard eventually gained not only the contract ‘to supply all the military and convict establishments in Sydney with bread’,\(^{45}\) but also ‘contracts to supply [bread for] the troops and convicts at Parramatta and Liverpool’.\(^{46}\) Girard’s bread-baking inclination proved to be so lucrative that he ‘erected a windmill on Woolloomooloo Hill (later Kings Cross) for the milling of grain’.\(^{47}\)

In September 1826, Girard opened ‘a coffee-room, *à la Francaise*’.\(^{48}\) On Wednesday, 13 September 1826, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* reports:

> We are glad to see that Mr. Girard, whose enterprising character is pretty generally known amongst us, is to open a coffee-room, in the French style, for the reception of the Sydney beaux and belles, where will be had not only coffee at any hour of the day, but comfits, jellies, sweet wines, and fruits in their seasons. There is little doubt but Mr. Girard will experience every encouragement, as something of the kind which he is about to undertake, is really wanted in our Australian capital.\(^{49}\)

Apart from coffee, Girard also offered ‘hot French rolls’\(^{50}\) for the delectation of his customers.

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\(^{42}\) See Brown, *‘Agamemnon 1820’*; ‘Convict Ships—A’, in *Free Settler or Felon?* (n.d.).

\(^{43}\) *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 21 April 1825, p. 1.

\(^{44}\) *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*, 10 November 1825, Vol. 23 (Trove, National Library of Australia), p. 4.

\(^{45}\) Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.


\(^{47}\) Ibid.

\(^{48}\) Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.


\(^{50}\) Nicholas and Shergold, ‘Non-British Convicts’, p. 25.
Two years later, the 1828 census records Girard as being ‘the proprietor of the Sydney Hotel’, 51 specialising in superior French wines’. 52 That there was a demand for ‘superior French wines’ indicates that Sydney had become a place where a certain degree of epicurean sophistication could be found. On Saturday, 3 March 1827, Christiana Brooks (née Passmore), writing from her home at ‘Denham Court, a property near Liverpool’, 53 described Sydney: ‘This place which 10 or 12 years ago was a quiet country looking, thoroughly English looking town, is now a crowded bustling business like city—the shops are well supplied generally speaking.’ 54

By 1837, Girard ‘was plying the North Coast of New South Wales with his three ships; the primary trade being the cutting, transporting, and milling of cedar’. 55 Subsequently, Girard was influential in opening up the Clarence River to settlers. After 1844 he became a pastoralist specialising in sheep and bought the Branga Park Station near Walcha. The willow trees planted by Girard along the banks of the Cobrabald River, flowing through Branga Park, are said to have come from seedlings imported from St Helena, where Napoleon died in exile. 56

It appears that the man who introduced the quadrille to Sydney’s social elite was a man of many talents; he was not only a convict, but also a French-language teacher, dancing master, baker, coffee-shop owner, publican, wine connoisseur, shipping entrepreneur and pastoralist. Girard also ‘influenced the naming of Napoleon Street, Darling Harbour’. 57

At the King’s birthday celebration dinner held at Government House on Wednesday, 4 June 1788, the quadrille, however, had not yet become a part of social gatherings.

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51 A hand-coloured lithograph entitled *The View from the Sydney Hotel*, by Augustus Earle (1793–1838), dated about 1825, is housed at the National Library of Australia, Canberra (Pictures Collection, nla.pic-an6065557). As the only professional artist in Sydney, Earle was the first ‘to clearly portray chained prisoners working in the open air supervised by armed guards’. In this, ‘he was an exception, as others strove to present an Arcadian view of Australia’. Menezes and Bandeira, *O Rio De Janeiro na Rota dos Mares do Sul*, p. 220.

52 Nicholas and Shergold, *Non-British Convicts*, p. 25.


55 Clarke, ‘Australian Colonial Dance: François Girard’.


'National’ Airs

The selection of repertoire usually heard as background music—that is, music that was not intended to accompany dancing—would have been influenced by the fashion for ‘national airs’, specifically Scottish and Welsh airs. A distinctly English national musical style had been recognisable since the early eighteenth century. The famous German composer Georg Philipp Telemann (1681–1767), for example, in his libretto for his lost cantata ‘Wie? Ruhet ihr, versteckte Saiten? [How? Rests Her Hidden Strings?]’, described the nature of several contemporaneous national musical styles:

The flattery of Italy’s pieces,
The unrestrained liveliness
That flows from French songs;
Britain’s leaping, obliging nature.59

The ‘leaping’ nature of British music arises from idiosyncratic melodic contour, and is an integral aspect of much of Britain’s folk music (this is especially so for Scottish folk music). Telemann’s reference to the ‘obliging nature’ of British music may refer to the following commonly encountered British musical characteristics:

1. dance-like regular phrasing without sequential extension
2. an endearing tunefulness achieved through the use of simple and affecting melody.60

‘Of the folk-songs heard in London the most popular seem to have been sentimental Scots strophic ballads of disappointed or lost love.’61 Already in 1755, the Geneva-born French enamellist Jean André Rouquet (1701–58), in his L’état des Arts, en Angleterre (The State of the Arts in England), had observed:

Les Anglois aiment préférablement les compositions tendres, pathétiques ou languissantes; ils aiment moins celles qui sont plus légeres, & qui expriment plus de gaieté.

[The English generally prefer compositions which are tender, pathetic and languid; they are not nearly so fond of those that are lighter, and more expressive of gaiety.]62

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58 (TVWW 20:13)
61 Ibid., p. 133.
Typically, Scottish ‘airs’ revealed

1. drone basses
2. the idiosyncratic ‘Scotch snap’  
3. ‘distinctive modal twists’  
4. fermatas on climactic notes.

Throughout the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, Scottish and Welsh airs remained popular in England. Such airs were also popular with the colonists in Sydney. That Scottish airs remained popular in Sydney is suggested by the fact that in 1821, the Sydney auctioneers McQueen and Atkinson offered Captain Simon Fraser’s [1773–1852] collection of [232] *Airs and Melodies Peculiar to the Highlands of Scotland, and the Isles*, recently published [in 1816] in Edinburgh. The same work was also on sale at the *Hobart Town Gazette* office. ‘Hobart … was often at the forefront of colonial culture from the 1820s’, a balanced colonial microcosm of late Georgian British culture supported sophisticated architecture, furniture makers, silversmiths, frame makers, saddle makers … portrait painters and a surprising number of musicians. This was largely due to the fact that until the settling of the Swan River colony [Western Australia] in 1829, all merchant ships from Asia and Europe came to Sydney via Hobart first.

Sometimes a flute was used to accompany the singing of national airs. For example, in

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63 A two-note rhythmic figure in which the first note is of a shorter value than the second. The first note is dynamically emphasised. For example, within the context of a crotchet (quarter note) rhythmic value, the Scotch snap comprises a semiquaver (a sixteenth note) followed by a dotted quaver (a dotted eighth note). The semiquaver (sixteenth note) is dynamically emphasised. A well-known song whose melodic line includes many Scotch snaps is ‘Comin’ through the Rye’.

64 McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn*, p. 134. In Scottish ‘airs’, the inclusion of intervals derived from modes (a ‘mode’ is particular type of scale) produces a characteristically exotic and emotive ‘flavour’. As typical examples, four well-known songs with modal melodic lines are: ‘Are You Going to Scarborough Fair?’, ‘Black is the Colour of My True Love’s Hair’, ‘Whay, Hay, and Up She Rises’ and ‘When Johnny Comes Marching Home’. See ‘Mode’, in Appendix Q, Volume 2 of this publication.

65 The notational symbol representing a fermata—commonly called a ‘pause sign’—comprises a dot with an arch-like semicircle around it. The fermata symbol is usually placed above (rather than below) a note, a chord, a rest or a bar line. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the performative meaning of a fermata was determined by its musical context. Within the context of the performance of Scottish airs, a fermata indicates that an elongation of the rhythmic value of a note should occur; the extent of elongation is left to the performer's discretion.


the last years of the eighteenth century the wife of an officer at Parramatta wrote of dining at the home of Sir John Jamison, near Nepean … After dinner the guests sat in the garden of the house and listened to ‘sweet airs sung by a young lady to the accompaniment of a pipe’.70

More commonly, however, pianos or harps were used to accompany the voice or other instruments in Scottish and Welsh airs—airs such as the evergreen and trendy ‘Bonnie Wee Thing, ‘I Hae Laid a Herring in Salt’ and ‘Fy Gar Rub Her o’er with Straw’. ‘Who can now guess the appeal of … “The Tight Little Fellow that wears the Blue Jacket” or the wisely anonymous glee “Palala, sum, nootka gunza”[?] … “Dear Boy Throw that Icicle Down” must surely have moved the coolest listener.’71

The popularity of Scottish and Welsh airs is probably bound up with social identity. For late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century bourgeois listeners, the performance of a national air helped to create ‘a temporary, socially distinct alternative self’, the effectiveness of whose identity depended ‘on its clear distance from the “real” self, the security of which [was] … reinforced by contrast with the briefly imagined one’, which was suggested by a music whose roots lay in folk culture. A national air could reassure bourgeois listeners ‘of what they were not’.72

On the other hand, a national air may have helped to create both nostalgia and a yearning sense of Britain, the nurturing mother country whose rich variety of music traditions included Scottish and Welsh airs.

Between 1788 and the end of the 1790s, in Sydney—and within the context of any given social occasion—the performance of Scottish and Welsh airs may have been interspersed with arrangements of works by popular composers such as the violinist Pietro Castrucci (1679–1752), Gluck, Händel, Haydn, Schobert and Vanhal.

In London, between 1695 and the 1770s, ‘a number of collections of band music, consisting of popular marches and airs, were published … with titles like XXIV Favourite Marches in Five Parts, as They are Perform’d by His Majesty’s Foot and Horse Guards (London, 1770)’.73 Perhaps, at Governor Phillip’s King’s birthday celebration dinner held on 4 June 1788, the band played selections from such a collection.

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the boundaries between “classical” and vernacular musics were less strictly policed than later in the [nineteenth] century … a good deal of what might now be claimed as

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70 McKinlay, *Sweet & Simple Pleasures*, p. 6.
“popular” music (dance and band tunes, national, sentimental, and patriotic and national songs) was subsumed under the category of ‘music’, and comprised the broad range of repertoire that was available for use within the contexts of formal and informal social situations. Although late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century colonists in Sydney Cove did not have easy access to the musical developments that were taking place in Vienna through the work of composers such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven and Franz Schubert (1797–1828), they did not exist in a musical–cultural wilderness. The colonists had, instead, access to contemporaneous English music culture, which comprised the rich trove of music composed and/or heard in London. No-one, on hearing this distinctive music, can fail to notice its accessibility … its sociability of tone … [and its] amiability … Our still largely Romantic sense of the role and function of music has tended to make the … amiable and social suspect in their own right, unless they are ‘deepened’ in some demonstrable way. We readily assume that profundity is to be equated with the overtly serious in tone or the melancholy; it is harder for us to accept that what may be modest or inviting or sociable is just as valid a tone of artistic voice as that which presents itself more earnestly.

It is a curious quirk of the psychology of our fallen nature that when we hear [a musical] … work [that] enshrines that fallen nature, we feel better …

The major philosophical systems since the French Revolution have been tragic systems. They have metaphorized the theological premises of the fall of man … To philosophize after Rousseau and Kant, to find a normative, conceptual phrasing for the psychic, social, and historical condition of man, is to think ‘tragically’.

75 For example, the colonial press took an interest in Beethoven: on Thursday, 9 June 1825, the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 23, Trove, National Library of Australia, p. 4) published a biography of Beethoven; on Thursday, 29 March 1827, the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 25, Trove, National Library of Australia, ‘British Extracts’, p. 3) published information concerning a Berlin performance of one of Beethoven’s late string quartets. Since the notice states ‘[t]his sublime piece is dedicated to Prince Galitzen’, the unidentified quartet is either Beethoven’s Opus 127 in E-flat major, Opus 130 in B-flat major or Opus 132 in A minor. On Friday, 19 October 1827, the Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser (Vol. 25, Trove, National Library of Australia, ‘Beethoven’, p. 3) published news concerning Beethoven’s final illness. And on Saturday, 11 August 1827, The Hobart Town Gazette (Vol. 12, Trove, National Library of Australia, p. 4) announced Beethoven’s death.
Late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century contexts within which music was heard (including the theatre and concert venues) were places of ‘pleasure and display, devoted to social interaction and public self-representation. Most audiences … were doubtless inattentive at times, by modern concert standards; the music’s functions comprised not only stylistic innovation and expressive depth but also, precisely, entertainment.’78

A Dinner Party, 1 January 1789

Governor Phillip appears to have arranged for music to be played during the infrequent occasions when he dined with his officers at luncheon or dinner. Watkin Tench informs us that during a dinner party given by Governor Phillip on New Year’s Day 1789, ‘a band of music played in an adjoining apartment and, after the cloth was removed, one of the company sang in a very soft and superior style’.79 (The table would have been laid with two tablecloths, one of which was removed before the dessert.) On this occasion, the removal of ‘the cloth’ may have signalled that the singing could commence. It is tempting to assume that the band accompanied the singer, but in the absence of documentary evidence, this is not certain.

Although Phillip was ‘not extraordinarily interested’80 in music, his straightforward generosity in providing background music for the delight of his dinner companions is very much in keeping with both his personality and his status.

The Portuguese Viceroy in Rio de Janeiro, Marquis de Lavradio … gives one of the most extended discourses on [Phillip’s] … character that we have … ‘he is an officer of education and principle, he gives way to reason, and does not, before doing so, fall into those exaggerated and unbearable excesses of temper which the majority of his fellow countrymen do … [he is] an officer of great truth and very brave; and is no flatterer, saying what he thinks, but without temper or want of respect.’81

In his retirement,

Phillip, it appears, enjoyed wine and carriages—as a connoisseur of the former and devotee of the latter … he laid down some 30 dozen ‘singularly choice’ Madeira, sherry and port which were ‘fifteen to thirty five years in bottle’. And he acquired a particularly smart and colourful carriage for getting around town.

78 Webster, ‘Haydn’s Symphonies between Sturm und Drang and “Classical style”’, p. 227.
79 Tench, ‘Transactions of the Colony until the Close of the Year 1789’, p. 98.
80 Parker, Arthur Phillip, p. 224.
81 Keneally, A Commonwealth of Thieves, p. 43.
Like most Georgian gentlemen, Phillip possessed fine china, crystal and glassware and a ‘large and valuable quantity of silver’. He also had an extensive collection of books.

The Kinds of Music Predominantly Played at Social Occasions in the Colony

The kinds of music played in the colony were similar to those played in other transplanted British colonies around the world. In Sydney, as in New York, for example:

[T]he local musical tastes ran chiefly to the traditional and popular musics inherited from the former mother country: English, Irish, and Scottish ballads, glees, folk tunes, show tunes, sentimental tunes, comic tunes, dance tunes, marching tunes, and whatever other kinds of tunes constituted the current crop of vernacular music.

The ‘Subscribers’ Ball’, 20 October 1810

Descriptions specifying the repertoire played at social functions held during the first decades of colonial life in Sydney are rare. One of the few accounts is found in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 20 October 1810, where a description is given of a ‘Subscribers’ Ball’ held in celebration of Sydney’s ‘first liberal amusement’—that is, in celebration of Sydney’s first race meeting: ‘the full band of the 73d played off “God save the King” in exquisite style, and between the country dances filled the room with other melodious and appropriate airs.’

‘The 73rd Regiment served in New South Wales from 1810 to 1814 under Lieutenant-Colonel Maurice O’Connell, Lieutenant-Governor of the colony.’ The 73rd replaced the mutinous NSW Corps. ‘O’Connell’s wife, Mary Putland, was the widowed daughter of the deposed Governor William Bligh.’

The Ball Held at ‘Bellmont’

Another account specifying the repertoire played at a social function was published on Friday, 5 April 1822 in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*. It comprises a description of a ball given in ‘Bellmont’ for

a large party of ladies and gentlemen; the Windsor band attended; and the dance was led off to the tune of ‘Rivers, I am beyond your reach.’ On Wednesday following, William Cox, Esq., of Clarendon [near Windsor], invited a large party of his friends to celebrate the christening of his son, and closed the evening with a lively dance, to the tune of ‘The Golden Fleece,’ or ‘The Merino Breed is pure.’ On the Friday following … [at] Clifton Cottage, the residence of Captain Brabyn … in the evening a sprightly dance commenced, led off by Miss Brabyn, to the tune of ‘Speed the Plough,’ which was played by the Windsor band with animated glee.

‘The Band’

During the late eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, regimental musicians in ‘the band’ would most likely have developed their instrumental skills through the experience of their daily work. For members of the military, there was no systematic musical training available until ‘the foundation of Kneller Hall, a school for military musicians’, in 1857.

In 1794, typically for a military musician, Edward Frost, for example,

joined a recruiting party as a fifer ‘having previously learnt to play a few tunes.’ He then also learned the clarinet, and after four years was selected for a regimental band.

He now began to feel the effects of harmony (not having heard a military band before) and directly set about composing marches and other military pieces, in which he succeeded tolerably well as to the melodies, but the arrangements in parts were certainly curious: for, having heard musicians talk of *discords* without explaining their relations to harmony, he imagined that no two intervals, disagreeing in themselves, could be tolerated together; his chief care, therefore, was to avoid all discords, consequently his productions were monotonous enough.

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87 An undated watercolour portrait of William Cox by an unknown artist, on ivory, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. MIN 382; Album ID: 823396; Digital order no. a1087003).
90 Ibid., p. 73.
He found that, to be able to arrange music effectively for a band, it required a knowledge of the various instruments to be introduced, and this he was not able to obtain till he was appointed master, which situation he enjoyed about twelve years; when, by experience, he found that even the worst performer in a band may be set off to the best advantage.  

In Sydney during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, regimental bands ‘provided music for official functions and private celebrations among the members of the garrison, and occasionally they also played in the streets on warm summer evenings’.  

‘Band members also provided music for church services and were the colony’s first music teachers.’  

The Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser of Saturday, 22 May 1819 announced:

> The death of Serjeant Harry Parsons who arrived here in the marines a mere youth thirty years ago, took place three weeks since at Sydney. He … was Master of the Band; and remained in each succeeding regiment on account of his very great utility to the colony as Instructor of Sacred Music to the little female orphans, and their constant leader at divine worship.

Fifteen months earlier, on Tuesday, 17 February 1818, Robert McIntosh, a member of the regimental band, advertised that he gave music lessons at his house in York Street. He charged 2s 6d for piano lessons and 2s for lessons on the violin, clarinet, hautboy and other wind instruments. He was also able to tune instruments and could supply music for balls and private entertainments ‘at a short notice and with a moderate rate of charge’.

It is not known if the regimental band that played background music at Government House on New Year’s Day 1789 was under the directorship of a band ‘master’ who was skilled in musical arrangement and/or composition. If so, it is possible that the works heard at Government House during social occasions were written in more than one part, especially if the band was an ensemble of wind instruments deserving of the title ‘harmonie’. Traditionally,
a *harmonie* comprised two oboes, two horns, two clarinets and two bassoons. ‘A typical core instrumentation for British military bands at the time was pairs of oboes, horns, clarinets, and bassoons, with flute, trumpet, and serpent.’

There is no evidence that any member of the band that played background music at Government House had studied with an experienced musician. If the band comprised only fifes and drums, it is probable that the musical textures and harmony heard within the context of background music at Government House were rudimentary, perhaps comprising (when deemed appropriate) thirds or sixths running parallel with the melodic line. If, however, the band comprised several different wind instruments, the musical textures and harmony may have been more sophisticated and aesthetically pleasing (especially for the connoisseur). A sense of orchestrational opulence would have been guaranteed if there were also violins (often, the musicians in military bands were ‘capable of playing several instruments, both wind and string’).

**Lieutenant-Governor Erskine’s Concert, September 1818**

In early September 1818,

a concert was given by His Honor Lieutenant Governor [James] Erskine to a numerous party of ladies and gentlemen, which was succeeded by a splendid ball. His Excellency the Governor, and Mrs. Macquarie, participated in the elegancies of the festival, as did likewise all the principal officers, ladies, and gentlemen in Sydney and its vicinities; the company being in number 80 persons … The full Band of the 48th attended upon the amusements of the evening: and several singers, who were introduced in masquerade, added not a little to its harmonies.

‘As with Erskine’s concert, so with most of the private balls and dinners given during the Macquarie period. Music was supplied by the bands of whichever regiment was currently garrisoning in Sydney.’ The specific repertoire performed at Erskine’s concert is not known.

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97 Ibid., p. 81.
The Queen’s Birthday Ball, 23 January 1819

The *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 23 January 1819 contains a description of the music making associated with a ball hosted by Governor Lachlan Macquarie (1762–1824), the colony’s first non-naval governor, at Government House in celebration of ‘the birth of our revered and gracious Queen’. At Governor Macquarie’s ball, violins were used in conjunction with wind instruments. We read that, following supper, ‘about 170 ladies and gentlemen’ were

[re-summoned to the sprightly dance by the novel and attractive sound of the Pandean pipes, whose shrill tones were mellowed by the softer cadences of flutes, clarinets, and violins; the company returned to the ballroom, where the dancing continued with uncommon vivacity and spirit until four o’clock in the morning, when the party retired highly gratified with the superior and truly fascinating amusements of the evening.

Typically, the music would have been played by the regimental band.

This account contains clues related to the ‘presence’ of the background music within the context of the occasion’s overall soundscape. Pandean pipes are mentioned as being used to martial the revellers (after supper) back to the ballroom for dancing. Presumably, Pandean pipes were also used within the context of the ensuing dance music.

The Pandean pipe is a wind instrument comprising usually five or more parallel pipes bound together. Each pipe is stopped at one end and produces a note that sounds one octave lower than that produced by an open pipe of the same length. The sound is produced by blowing across the open end of each pipe.

The sound of Pandean pipes is not as piercing as that of the wind instrument most commonly used in regimental bands, the fife. This may explain the use of Pandean pipes indoors—even though the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* of Saturday, 23 January 1819 describes their sound as being ‘shrill’.

Unfortunately, the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* does not tell us how many Pandean pipes were played; several sets of Pandean pipes

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100 An undated oil-on-canvas portrait of Lachlan Macquarie by an unknown artist is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. ML 37; Digital order no. a128471).
101 A watercolour drawing depicting Government House, Sydney, by Joseph Lycett (1774? – ca 1828), dated 1819, is housed at the State Library of New South Wales, Sydney (Call no. 1/Pub/Gov H/5; Digital order no. a928164).
103 Ibid., p. 3.
104 Ibid., p. 3.
sounding simultaneously may indeed have produced a shrill sound. Nor does the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* tell us what the pitch range of the Pandean pipes was; if the range was especially high, it is possible that one instrument alone may have sounded shrill (not to mention the combined effect of several instruments sounding simultaneously).

What the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser*’s account of Governor Macquarie’s ball strongly suggests is that the Pandean pipes could be heard over the sound that would have been generated by ‘about 170 ladies and gentlemen’\(^\text{105}\) conversing and dancing.

Flutes, clarinets and violins complete the sonic picture. We do not know how many of each was played. We are told that the intense effect of the ‘shrill’ sound of the Pandean pipes was mollified by these other instruments. This may be because

1. the Pandean pipe player(s) adjusted their dynamics in order to blend with the ensemble

2. the dynamic contrast between the ‘shrill tones’ of the Pandean pipes and the sounds made by other instruments in the ensemble was particularly evident to those present.

The description published in the *Sydney Gazette, and New South Wales Advertiser* leads one to assume that the Pandean pipes did not play all the time.

**‘The Band’ at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1825**

In about 1870, the builder, undertaker and amateur historian Columbus Fitzpatrick (1810–78) described the instruments making up the ensemble that accompanied the choir at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sydney, in 1825.\(^\text{106}\) His description not only links the ensemble with regimental bands, but also reveals that regimental bands included a wide variety of instruments.

In 1825 there were a great number of soldiers in this country and as it happened, the Bandmaster (Mr. [Thomas] Cavanagh [also Kavannagh, Kavannah, Kavenagh; ca 1800–?]) of the 3rd Buffs [that is, the 3rd—East Kent—Regiment] was a Catholic, as also the Bandmaster (Mr. [Joseph] Richenberg [Reichenberg; ca 1789/92–1851]) of the 40th Regiment, an Italian and a great musician. Both regiments were stationed in Sydney at

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the time,\textsuperscript{107} and as Mr. Richenberg was only a hired bandmaster to the
40th Regiment he used to devote all his leisure hours to the instruction
and formation of a real good choir, and I can say with truth that his
exertions were crowned with success, for he had taught us to sing with
his bandsmen, and it was a common thing to have five or six clarinets,
two bassoons, a serpent, two French horns, two flutes, a violoncello,
and first and tenor violin, and any amount of well-trained singers, all
bursting forth in perfect harmony the beautiful music of our Church.\textsuperscript{108}

The ensemble at St Mary’s Cathedral in 1825 provides an indication of the
instrumentation that was traditionally available within the context of regimental
bands. It is possible that a similar instrumentation (or something approaching it) had
been available, via the regimental bands, from the very earliest days of the colony.

‘The halls of poetic justice have many doors’,\textsuperscript{109} that the ensemble at St Mary’s
Cathedral in 1825 was so extraordinarily fine symbolises the entrance into the
colony of virtue rewarded: ‘two Catholic priests … who [voluntarily] sought
permission [from Lord Sydney]\textsuperscript{110} to accompany the convicts of the First Fleet
[at their own expense]\textsuperscript{111} to attend to the religious needs of the members of
their own faith were not … successful. Their application was rejected; or rather,
Government entirely ignored it’\textsuperscript{112}—and this despite the claims of Father Thomas
Walsh (one of the priests) that at least 300 convicts were Roman Catholic.\textsuperscript{113}

Laws originating in the Reformation and
directed against Catholicism, although no longer rigorously enforced, still
existed in Britain. To have allowed Catholic priests into New South Wales
would have aroused considerable opposition. Moreover, there was the fear
that priests might become the rallying point for the Irish convicts who
had every reason to resent the existence of British rule in Ireland.\textsuperscript{114}

Ironically, the British Government’s refusal to cater for the spiritual needs of the
First Fleet’s Catholic convicts was rewarded 38 years later with a flowering of
musical and liturgical richness at Sydney’s St Mary’s Cathedral.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{107}{The 40th Regiment was never stationed in Sydney. In 1825, a detachment from the 3rd Regiment was
stationed in Sydney: ‘The 3rd (East Kent) Regiment served from 1821 to 1828 in separate detachments in
Sydney and districts, Bathurst and in Van Diemen’s Land. The regiment was reunited in Calcutta.’ Rickard,
‘Lifelines from Calcutta’, p. 90.}
\footnote{108}{Quoted in Skinner, Toward a General History of Australian Musical Composition, p. 417, Appendix 1.}
\footnote{109}{‘Poetic Justice’, in Angelfire (n.d.).}
\footnote{110}{See Mackaness, Some Letters of Rev. Richard Johnson.}
\footnote{111}{See ibid.}
\footnote{112}{Wannan, Early Colonial Scandals, p. 30.}
\footnote{113}{See Swan, To Botany Bay, pp. 149–50.}
\footnote{114}{B. H. Fletcher, ‘Religion and Education’, in J. Broadbent and J. Hughes (eds), The Age of Macquarie
(Carlton, Vic.: Melbourne University Press in association with Historic Houses Trust of New South Wales,
1992), p. 77.}
\end{footnotes}
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