

MUSICAL ACTIVITIES AND MUSICIANS  
IN PHILADELPHIA FROM 1750 TO 1800

by

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## Preface

The year 1750 might be a good one to examine the American colonies, when they were on the eve of the Revolutionary War. In less than a century and a half, the group of colonies, made up of nearly every nationality, had grown rapidly and had matured with amazing swiftness.

Philadelphia was one of the colonial cities to experience rapid growth. Founded in 1682, Philadelphia grew to a population of 4,000 by 1690; 40,000 by the year 1774; and 70,000 by 1800.

In the years before the Revolution, the cultural leadership of the colonies was centered in Philadelphia. At this time, it was the largest city in the country and the second largest in the British Empire, second only to London. By 1750, with the continued recession of the frontier and with increased religious freedom, life seemed full of hope and promise. There was much travel between Europe and the colonies, and America's slowly expanding cultural life was greatly aided by the many newspapers, libraries, and books from Europe.

This paper will examine the different types of musical activities that were available to Philadelphians during the years 1750-1800, as well as examining several individuals who made great contributions in establishing Philadelphia as the cultural center of the American colonies.

### Music In Colonial Philadelphia

The musical life of Philadelphia before 1790 was largely the creation of a small group of dedicated amateurs. Realizing that the cultivation of the arts in America would depend on private philanthropy rather than on public revenue, these "gentleman amateurs" devoted themselves to such professions as business, politics, various crafts, or the law. They considered music an edifying diversion and a means of benefiting a number of favorite charities.<sup>1</sup>

Music in the private homes of the well-to-do became the vogue in Philadelphia, a musical activity which no other city was enjoying to the same extent. Evenings of chamber music were frequent, with the Lieutenant Governor John Penn as one of the leaders. Penn was also an accomplished violinist. Stringed instruments were combined with winds which included flutes, a French horn or two, and so on. The music was the best European music of the day. The composers included Handel, Pergolesi, Scarlatti, Corelli, Vivaldi, Arne, and Purcell.

Professional musicians continued to arrive from England. One such as this was John Beals, "musick master from London," who taught in Philadelphia from 1749 to 1758. Another who was destined to play a major role in the city's musical life was the Scottish musician, James Bremner, who arrived in 1763.

Bremner immediately opened a music school, where he taught "young ladies" the harpsichord and guitar, and "young gentlemen" the violin,

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<sup>1</sup>Robert Secor, Ed., Pennsylvania 1776, (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1975), p. 258.

flute, harpsichord, or guitar.<sup>2</sup> He was the organist at two Philadelphia churches and an active composer whose manuscripts still exist. Among his pupils was a young man who played several leading roles in the development of the American colonies. This pupil was Francis Hopkinson, a great patriot, a signer of the Declaration of Independence, and considered by some to be America's first native composer.

Bremner was also one of the early concert organizers to reach America. On February 21, 1764, Bremner organized a public musicale for the benefit of the St. Peter's organ fund. This concert was held in the Assembly Room in Lodge Alley.

Several years later, Bremner was employed as the organist at Christ Church as well as St. Peter's. These two organ positions and public concerts by groups that were trained by him seem to have constituted the occupation of Philadelphia's first professional musician of distinction until his death in 1780.<sup>3</sup>

Musical instruction in Philadelphia began even before James Bremner arrived in 1763. Around the year 1750, three men became active in music teaching in Philadelphia. John Beals, a music master from London, advertised that he would teach "Violin, Hautboy, German Flute, Common Flute, and Dulcimer by note" at his house in Fourth Street. Robert Coe also advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette in January of 1753, that he "conceiving himself capable of teaching the German Flute, thought proper to inform the Publick that he would attend to that purpose four nights in the week at his house."<sup>4</sup> In December of 1753, Josiah Davenport also advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette that

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<sup>2</sup>John Tasker Howard and John Kent Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, (Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1957), pp. 39-40.

<sup>3</sup>Robert A. Gerson, Music In Philadelphia, (Greenwood Press, 1940), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup>Gerson, Music In Philadelphia, p. 10.

he would give lessons in psalmody.

The Pennsylvania Gazette became crowded with names after about 1760. Teachers of music and dancing and of musical concerts and ballad operas became more numerous.

### Concert Life

Philadelphia's first public concert, January 20, 1757, had been given under the direction of Mr. John Palma, and a second concert on March 25 had been distinguished by the presence of George Washington, who had bought fifty-two shillings, sixpence worth of tickets eight days in advance.<sup>5</sup> Washington's military career had just begun with his promotion to the rank of lieutenant colonel. This had been a reward for the valuable information he had brought back to the British as to the strength of the French fortifications along the Ohio.

Concerts were undoubtedly given before 1757, but records of such events are scarce. Most of the residents and newspapers in Philadelphia seem to have ignored the performances of ballad operas, instrumental music, and secular vocal music which had already become the most common ingredient of the concert programs in the other colonial cities. Most of the public concerts were casually organized. Programs were usually selected at the last minute, and some concerts, advertised weeks in advance, were never given.

One ambitious organizer was a wine merchant, John Gualdo, who came to Philadelphia from London in 1767. He started selling music and instruments and also gave lessons on the guitar, violin, and flute. In 1769, Gualdo organized a concert series. He also seems to have been the first organizer to conclude a concert with a ball, during which members of the audience could perform quadrilles, hornpipes, minuets, cotillions, and other popular dances of the period. Philadelphia's concert life might have been greatly enhanced by Gualdo's talents, but

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<sup>5</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 40.

he became ill and died in 1771.<sup>6</sup>

In 1754, the Old America Company of Comedians, led by William and Henry Hallam of London, engaged William Plumstead's warehouse for a season that proved to be a dismal failure. The opposition to ballad opera, farce, and pantomime in 1754 did not lessen in succeeding years.<sup>7</sup>

Like European concerts of this time, 1750-1776, Philadelphia programs contained songs (patriotic, parodistic, lyrical), overtures, readings, solos, and pieces for various small ensembles. Philadelphia's concerts and balls depended on amateur as well as professional musicians. "Opera nights" probably featured the popular English imports, ballad operas like Gay and Pepusch's Beggar's Opera. Although such theatricals were usually subjected to harassment by public officials or by certain local residents, there are records of performances in 1749, 1751, and 1754.<sup>8</sup>

One of Philadelphia's most important musical figures was Francis Hopkinson. Together with Lieutenant Governor John Penn, James Bremner, and a handful of other friends, Hopkinson helped to organize benefit concerts such as the one advertised in the Pennsylvania Gazette on April 4, 1765, for the College of Philadelphia.<sup>9</sup>

More important than the subscription or benefit concerts were the informal evenings of chamber music and social dancing. Governor Penn, as previously mentioned, regularly presided over such sessions at his home, and Benjamin Franklin mentions such events in his correspondence. Franklin's glass harmonica, which first charmed Philadelphia audiences

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<sup>6</sup>Edith Boroff, Music in Europe and the United States: A History, (Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1971), p. 480.

<sup>7</sup>Boroff, Music in Europe and the United States, p. 480.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 480.

<sup>9</sup>Secor, Pennsylvania 1776, p. 258.



in 1764, was probably the featured novelty at many of Philadelphia's chamber music sessions. The tradition of domestic music-making was one of the most important elements in the early musical history of Philadelphia.<sup>10</sup>

After 1789, the musical theater flourished under the direction of professional musicians from England and Germany. Public concerts were given in warehouses, taverns, lofts, meeting rooms, theaters, or at the college auditorium. Although the number of performers was never very large, the variety of instruments featured in some of these programs shows that Philadelphians were familiar with instruments from every orchestral family.

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<sup>10</sup>Secor, Pennsylvania 1776, p. 258.

### Singing Schools

It is difficult to imagine the American tune books of the 1760's without singing schools.<sup>11</sup> The increase in the printed material indicates that reading music was no longer a rare skill, a tribute to the effectiveness of the singing school. Though slowed down by the Revolution, the repertory of American psalmody continued to grow throughout the rest of the century.

The music that was written for singing schools, recreational use, and worship answered specific needs and represented a community practice for the colonists. The singing school served to brighten the daily routine of lives that were often dreary.<sup>12</sup>

The period from 1760 to 1800 saw the greatest activity of the singing school. It usually functioned as a private venture and was advertised in advance in a community for subscriptions. There was a close relationship between the singing schools and local churches, but the singing schools were not usually sponsored directly by the church.

Most pupils were mostly young persons. The singing school also served as a social gathering for the young ones as well as people of all ages.

Singing schools were heard of in Philadelphia in the late 1750's. As the singing schools began to increase in number and the singing teachers began to publish songbooks for their classes, there was an increase in the number of secular tunes along with a share of hymns and anthems, while the share of old psalms decreased in number.

The singing schools were very important in raising the level of

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<sup>11</sup>Stanley Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, (MacMillan Publishers Limited, 1980), "Psalmody."

<sup>12</sup>Daniel Kingman, American Music: A Panorama, (Schirmer Books, 1979), p. 128.

musical literacy, in expanding the repertory of available music, and in encouraging the development of native composers.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Kingman, American Music: A Panorama, p. 129.

### Music During the Revolution

As tension mounted in the colonies in the years before the final break with England, musical activity was greatly restricted. Many of the musical amateurs were too busy writing pamphlets and broadsides to indulge in music, and even the theater began to suffer. The season of 1773-74 was the last before the War, for in October, 1774, the newly formed Continental Congress, realizing that a struggle with England was not only impending but inevitable, found it advisable to pass a resolution which everyone respectfully observed. All types of extravagant and reckless expenditure of money were discouraged, and soon plays and entertainments of all kinds came almost to a complete stop. It seemed that the only type of music people had time for was the singing of war songs.

The Philadelphia Regiment in 1756 had maintained a band "with Hautboys and Fifes in Ranks. . . (and) Drums between the third and fourth Ranks."<sup>14</sup> The war band consisted of the fife and drum corps and dispensed with the oboes, probably because no fighting man could have kept an oboe reed in condition. The fife major and drum major positions were highly respected in the Continental army. Undoubtedly, new march tunes were being written, but the fighting men were content with the tunes they already knew.

Song served the purposes of patriotism and religion, both of which sustained the colonists during the Revolutionary War. After the war, music rapidly recaptured its place in the life of the Americans. The most popular was "Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes," but the patriotic

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<sup>14</sup>Boroff, Music in Europe and the United States, pp. 425-426.

songs, especially those honoring Washington, were very popular.

The song that became the rallying cry of the Revolution was "Yankee Doodle." It gave shape to a figure that had been slowly emerging in the years before the war, the "Yankee" symbol of the new America. Shrewd, dry of speech, lovable, he was at the same time fiercely independent, bowing his head to no one.<sup>15</sup> The British had first used "Yankee" as a term of derision. The "Doodle" might have been a combination of "do little," meaning a simpleton. But whatever its beginning, its use by the enemy was unmistakable. British troops, full of contempt for the unmilitary appearance of the untrained colonists, sang "Yankee Doodle" on every occasion, even standing before churches and shouting at the top of their voices.

The Yankees soon turned the tables. When the British troops marched out of Boston on an April night in 1775, headed for Lexington to capture John Hancock and Samuel Adams, they kept step to the strains of "Yankee Doodle." At Concord, the British were met with "Yankee Doodle," as well as Yankee gunfire, and from then on it was to be an American song.

Hardly had the guns of the Revolution grown silent when foreign travelers began to swarm to America and to see the new nation in its first blaze of glory. Here was the hope of the world, a people who had at last thrown off the bonds of the tyrant.<sup>16</sup> To their surprise, the visitors heard music on all sides, as the marching fife and drum corps were celebrating their great victory. America resumed her singing and dancing as she had never done before.

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<sup>15</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 59.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 61.

The fife fitted the mood of the day as it kept feet moving and people singing to its gay and joyful tunes. Its sound could be heard as Washington entered the cities, where cheering crowds were celebrating their first taste of freedom. The fife became the instrument of the common man, to be heard for many generations as he played his tunes in the taverns or at fairs. It was music of the people that reflected in those happy days the affection and warmth of a grateful and adoring nation.<sup>17</sup>

With the close of the Revolution, life took on new meaning and the theaters began to flourish again, as though the people would like to forget the horrors of war. Most often the productions were in the form of pageantry, and they became so popular that new theaters had to be built. In 1793, Philadelphia had a new Chestnut Street Theatre, built for Thomas Wignell, and modeled after the Royal Theatre at Bath. Wignell began seasons of opera, too, and took the productions to Baltimore and Washington.

Musically, the years after the War were notable for two things: 1) the immigration in the 1790's of certain gifted English musicians, and 2) the establishment of publishing firms in Philadelphia, which, in publishing only musical works, was a great service in the development of America's music.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 61.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 62.

## Benjamin Franklin

Benjamin Franklin was the Baroque model of the eighteenth century. He had a mind of large intellectual capacity and of universal curiosity.<sup>19</sup> He was very interested in the science and philosophy of music and musical instruments. His views were considered young and modern, and he continued to be viewed this way for the rest of his life.

In the spring of 1761, Benjamin Franklin, while on a visit to England, heard Edmund Delaval, a fellow of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, play on the glasses. Franklin was so impressed with the instrument that he decided to improve it.<sup>20</sup> It was originally named "armonica" in honor of the Italian musical language that Franklin admired. The name somehow became altered to "harmonica."

Franklin's invention achieved a certain popularity in America, but was far more influential in Europe, where it seems to have been introduced by Marianne Davies, a virtuoso who is thought to have received her own glass harmonica from Franklin. She began to tour Europe in 1768, moving in the highest society. In 1773, she became known to the Mozart family, and caused Leopold Mozart to express an interest in owning a glass harmonica himself. Some of the finest glass harmonica players were women. Marianne Kirchgessner, a remarkable blind performer, became famous throughout Europe between 1790 and her death in 1808. W.A. Mozart composed his Quintet k617 for glass harmonica, flute, oboe, viola and cello for her in 1791.

Although the glass harmonica was considered important enough for

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<sup>19</sup>Boroff, Music in Europe and the United States, p. 423.

<sup>20</sup>Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, "Musical glasses."

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

several men to make minor improvements on the original, the instrument never attained the goal Franklin set for it, which was to supplant the harpsichord and the piano. Instead, it disappeared from the musical scene around 1800 and has since become obsolete.

In a letter written in 1785 to Francis Hopkinson, Thomas Jefferson mentioned a "pretty little instrument" that Franklin carried around with him in Paris. This instrument was the sticcado-pastorale, a kind of crystallophone resembling in construction a miniature xylophone with small-knobbed mallets. The instrument was very small and was carried in a wooden case about the size of a briefcase. The sticcado-pastorale had a three-octave range with soft and delicate tones.

Franklin may have been America's first music critic. He had a preference for Scotch songs and often wrote about their merits. He derived great pleasure from a plain old Scotch tune with consonant harmonies on the accented beats, and he believed a majority of concertgoers felt the same way, although the performers preferred music which gave the greatest opportunity for technical display.

As a performer, Benjamin Franklin never attained the stature of a major concert artist, yet he was a virtuoso on his own glass harmonica. He was not well known as a music critic, but he enjoyed expressing his musical views. His musical invention has become almost obsolete. Nevertheless, the fact that a great statesman such as Benjamin Franklin became involved in many aspects of music is very significant.



### Francis Hopkinson

We might search a long time and never find another figure who so perfectly suited and embodied all of the elements of Philadelphia's era of culture as did Francis Hopkinson, a man who was one of the greatest figures of his time, and who practiced the arts in the finest sense of the word.<sup>22</sup> He is given credit for being America's first native composer, but politically he had a stronger influence. His uncompromising, satirical writings on the part of the Revolutionary forces were of great help in molding public opinion. During the war, he assumed many governmental responsibilities. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and a close friend of Franklin, Washington, and Jefferson.

Hopkinson was a member of the Philadelphia dilettante circle of amateurs, musicians, poets, and theatrical people who enjoyed music-making. They were highly intelligent men, some of whom were well educated, and who also possessed a keen interest in all that was going on in Philadelphia. Music gave Francis Hopkinson the greatest possible pleasure. It was a luxury which he could enjoy in private, but his interest in the other arts was just as important. He enjoyed painting, was something of an inventor, and enjoyed writing. A member of a well-to-do family, Hopkinson had been sent to college, and he was one of the first class to graduate from the College of Philadelphia, later known as the University of Pennsylvania, which the Episcopal Church had created in 1755.

John Adams thought Hopkinson an oddity, ". . . one of your pretty, little, curious, ingenious men. His head is not bigger than a large

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<sup>22</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 43.

apple. . . . I have not met with anything in natural history more amusing and entertaining than his personal appearance; yet he is genteel and well-bred, and is very social."<sup>23</sup> None of the early statesmen could realize that soon there would emerge in America a professional class whose main occupation would be the practice of the arts. Hopkinson would have been perfectly at home in one of the musical and artistic salons in Paris or Vienna, whereas in the colonies, although he was treated with great respect, he was not always understood.

Hopkinson at the harpsichord soon became a major figure in the musical life of Philadelphia, and his own compositions, which he began to write while still a student in school, were to be found on concert programs through the years. He wrote songs for his college, and even after graduation, he accompanied on the harpsichord the choruses and instrumental music for different events.

He received most of his musical training from James Bremner, whose death in 1780 Hopkinson commemorated by composing a memorial "Ode." But it is his group of four secular songs, the manuscripts of which are in the Library of Congress, that make Hopkinson one of the outstanding musicians of early America. These songs were composed as a private venture, but they are practically all that is available of pre-Revolution secular song. The first is dated 1759, which is why he has been said to be America's first native composer. The titles suggest Hopkinson's sensitive nature: "My Days Have Been So Wondrous Free;" "The Garland;" "Oh, Come to Mason Borough's Grave;" and, "With Pleasures Have I Past My Days." Hopkinson wrote them in eighteenth-century style in two parts, treble and bass. The person accompanying on the harpsichord

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<sup>23</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 44.

would improvise the indicated harmonies.

Many of Hopkinson's musical works have never been found, and are only known through the words, also by Hopkinson, which were printed in current magazines. If the music of one of these works were in existence today, it would be the score of the first American opera. The libretto was published, a few weeks after the first performance, in the New York Royal Gazette, of 1781, and was not called an opera, but an "oratorical entertainment."<sup>24</sup> Hopkinson composed the work to celebrate America's alliance with France during the Revolutionary War. Titled The Temple of Minerva, it included an overture, arias, ensembles, and choruses. A contemporary news account dates its performance as December 11, 1781, "by a company of gentlemen and ladies in the hotel of the minister of France in the presence of his Excellency General Washington and his Lady."<sup>25</sup>

Hopkinson's Seven Songs for the Harpsichord or Forte Piano, published in 1788, are the first known published collection of secular American songs. Their style and content were influenced by the best contemporary English song writers. There were really eight songs in the volume and a note explained that the eighth was added after the title page announcing seven had been engraved. They were interesting, historically, because of their dedication to George Washington, who was soon to be President of the United States.

Hopkinson also sent a copy to Thomas Jefferson who was then in Paris. Hopkinson remarked in his letter that the last song, "The trav'ler benighted and lost, O'er the mountains pursues his long way, --- if played very slow, and sung with Expression," was "forcibly

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<sup>24</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 45.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 45.

pathetic --- at least in my Fancy."<sup>26</sup> Its pathos was corroborated by Jefferson in acknowledging receipt of the songs.

I will not tell you how much they have pleased us, nor how well the last of them merits praise for its pathos, but relate a fact only, which is that while my elder daughter was playing it on the harpsichord, I happened to look toward the fire and saw the younger one all in tears. I asked her if she was sick? She said "no," but the tune was so mournful.<sup>27</sup>

While in Europe, Jefferson had attempted to interest foreign manufacturers in Hopkinson's improvements in the method of quilling the harpsichord.

Hopkinson's music should be examined historically rather than critically. His works possess a fresh and clever point of view that makes them very charming. They were like many other pieces of the eighteenth century, and did not have enough originality to set them off from the other works written at this time.

Hopkinson's claim of being America's first native born composer demonstrates that he considered secular music as something distinctly separate from sacred music, and that in his mind, psalm and hymn tunes did not qualify as "musical compositions."<sup>28</sup> His attitude reflects the gap between sacred and secular musical traditions which existed in 18th-century America.

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<sup>26</sup>Quoted in Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>28</sup>Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, "Francis Hopkinson."

## James Lyon

James Lyon was a contemporary of Francis Hopkinson. He was a Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia and almost the direct opposite of Hopkinson. He was mild-mannered and sometimes absent-minded.

He moved to Philadelphia in 1760 and began teaching in a singing school. An anthem he had written was featured at a graduation concert given by the College of Philadelphia and appeared on the same program with an "Ode" by Francis Hopkinson.

While living in Philadelphia and working toward his degree, Lyon gathered material for a collection of music which began the music publishing business in Philadelphia in 1761 with: Urania, or a Choice Collection of Psalm-Tunes, Anthems and Hymns from the most approved Authors, with some Entirely New; in Two, Three, and Four Parts; the whole Peculiarly adapted to the Use of Churches and Private Families; to which are Prefixed the Plainest and most Necessary Rules of Psalmody.<sup>29</sup>

This is Lyon's greatest achievement and is also a landmark in American psalmody. Larger than any earlier American tune book, it was the first to contain English fugging-tunes and anthems and the first to identify native compositions.<sup>30</sup> It was taken primarily from British sources but also included the first printed compositions of Lyon and Francis Hopkinson. Reprinted at least five times, Urania served as a source for a generation of American compilers.

James Lyon played a prominent role in the sacred music of Philadelphia in the early 1760's. He was dedicated to God and the

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<sup>29</sup>Howard and Bellows, A Short History of Music In America, pp. 48-49.

<sup>30</sup>Sadie, The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, "James Lyon."

Church, and his music took a subordinate role to his spiritual work. He soon left Philadelphia for Nova Scotia, where he worked among the isolated people in a frontier church.

### Alexander Reinagle

Alexander Reinagle was English-born and educated in Scotland of Austrian parents. He knew both J.C. Bach in London, and C.P.E. Bach briefly in Hamburg. Reinagle came to the United States in 1786, after a large tour of Europe, and settled in Philadelphia, where he was respected and very busy. He directed plays and light operas, supervised the construction of the new Chestnut Street Theatre (1793-94), and composed and conducted concerts. His works include several operas, keyboard-violin sonatas, piano sonatas, and occasional music.

Reinagle, whose music is greater in quantity and perhaps in quality than Hopkinson, did more for American music than Hopkinson, but he is not as well known as a result of a fire that destroyed much of his work.

Reinagle's impressive performances at the harpsichord attracted immediate attention. His concerts were described as being in "exquisite taste," without the excessive mannerisms common to European and American artists of the day.<sup>28</sup>

Reinagle was also a friend of General Washington, and was employed by Washington to give music lessons to his adopted daughter Nellie.

Reinagle and Francis Hopkinson worked together to produce the "Grand Procession in Philadelphia" on July 4, 1788, in honor of the state that ratified the Constitution and thus made it the law of the land.<sup>29</sup> The parade was made up of eighty-eight groups, was over a mile and a half long, and took three hours to pass in review. Reinagle

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<sup>28</sup>Boroff, Music in Europe and the United States, p. 485.

<sup>29</sup>Katherine Hines Mahan, "Hopkinson and Reinagle: Patriot-Musicians of Washington's Time," Music Educator's Journal, (April 1976), pp. 40-50.

composed the music which included the "Federal March."

Philadelphia provided Reinagle the surroundings similar to the life he had known in London. At thirty years of age, Reinagle was a handsome man with a compelling personality, one who had all the attributes of a gentleman, even though the professional musician of that day had not attained that stature. Philadelphia had not heard a pianist as high a caliber as that of Reinagle. From the beginning, he exerted an influence that raised Philadelphia's musical standards.



### Conclusion

The years 1750-1800 were an important and also critical time in the early development of music in America. Philadelphia was the center of this cultural activity, but cities such as Boston, New York, and Charleston were establishing their musical culture as well.

The Revolution halted the musical growth for a short period of time, but after 1785, music continued to grow and develop at a rapid pace. Immigrants from Europe came to America to help in the musical development.

Francis Hopkinson, Benjamin Franklin, James Lyon, and Alexander Reinagle contributed in so many ways to this new culture. They also cared very deeply for this country which they were helping to build.

The American Revolution was a monumental event for colonial America, as well as becoming a turning point for the musical direction of this country. Secular music was more widespread following the Revolution. Not only were the colonists beginning a new life, but their music reflected a new beginning and took on a different meaning. The music also reflected their hopes, dreams, and allegiance to their new country. Our founding fathers helped provide and inspire the development of music in this new America.

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by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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MASTER OF MUSIC

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MUSICAL ACTIVITIES AND MUSICIANS  
IN PHILADELPHIA FROM 1750 TO 1800

An Abstract

The report examines the musical activities in Philadelphia from 1750 to 1800. A general picture is provided of music in colonial Philadelphia and some mention is made of music teachers and concert organizers. Other areas discussed are concert life, singing schools, and music during the American Revolution.

Benjamin Franklin, Francis Hopkinson, James Lyon, and Alexander Reinagle were influential men in Philadelphia's musical life, while Franklin and Hopkinson were also important political figures at this time.

This report provides some insight into the musical lives of the colonists during the fifty years from 1750 to 1800.