2015

Christmas music in American public schools: a genealogical inquiry

BOSTON UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS

Dissertation

CHRISTMAS MUSIC IN AMERICAN PUBLIC SCHOOLS:

A GENEALOGICAL INQUIRY

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

2015

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am sincerely grateful for the support of several individuals directly related to this dissertation. My supervisor, Phil Hash, was a tremendous influence on my writing, thinking, and organization. Although we are in many ways an "odd couple" with quite different belief systems, I richly enjoyed our collaboration throughout the process, as well as the common interest we share for middle school band education. My committee members, Ron Kos and Richard Bunbury, provided critical insight and questions that enabled me to grow as a thinker and writer. Ever present in the foundation of this dissertation is Roger Mantie. From his persistent questions, I initially learned to jump out on my own, and I am thankful for the time we spent together. Finally, I could not have written this dissertation without the support of my longtime friend, Laura Moates Stanley. Her camaraderie and nurturing spirit have been with me every step of the way.

Throughout my time as a Boston University graduate student, I taught full-time as a band director. I am thankful for every student who has come through the doors of the Riverwatch band room during this time, as well as for the following colleagues who consistently supported and tolerated me: Dean Patterson, Abbigayle Williams Dean, and Miriam Reynolds.

Many close friends have helped me through this process, both directly and indirectly. My sincerest thanks to Jon Cotton, William Owens, Matt Everhart, Matt Haynor, John Culvahouse, Bill & Pat Martin, Tonya Millsap, Helen Saile, Wes Taylor, and John Israel.

I have been fortunate to have many mentors and role models who have inspired and supported me in numerous ways. Thank you to Philip Jameson, Skip Taylor, Mary Leglar, Dwight Satterwhite, Steven Tyndall, Rudy Gilbert, Kathy Carpenter, John Mongiovi, Richard Crosby, Mary Land, Frank Folds, Susan Conkling, and Troy Henson.

I dedicate this dissertation to my parents, John & Roxanne, and brother Christoffer, both with gratitude for their unyielding support and appreciation for the stimulation of healthy debate throughout my life.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine how the regular practice of Christmas music in the American public schools came to be. If we understand the historical evolution of this practice, we can better understand our conditions of possibility for the future. Christmas in America is both a religious and cultural holiday. The sacred/secular binary, often used as a lens for analysis, is problematic due to the multitude of religious and cultural meanings that constitute the American Christmas. I utilize genealogical methods to trace the relationships between elements that have conditioned and constrained the practice of Christmas music in the public schools.

These elements include the lack of established Christmas traditions and music at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the development of a regular canon of Christmas music in the churches, Sabbath school Christmas exhibitions, and public examinations as a technology of eighteenth century education. I contextualize these elements amongst the cultural history of the American Christmas, which includes a focus on the family, children, gift giving, goodwill, and community. This cultural history is set against a backdrop of nostalgia and ritual that frames Christmas practices. From this perspective, I trace varied examples of Christmas music in the public schools, starting with the

nineteenth century end-of-term exercises. Into the twentieth century, I describe different practices, including Christmas music as worship service, variations on the sacred/secular binary, and public school music in the community.

Based on this inquiry, I suggest reflexive questions for music teachers when considering Christmas music in the public schools. I also recommend suggestions in place of the current NAfME position statement. I propose that Christmas music be considered a postsecular genre in America. Applying a postsecular lens allows for acknowledgement of the persistence of the sacred/secular divide, in relation to the wide array of other elements that results in a blurriness of the dichotomy. Through application of this lens, the practice of Christmas music in the American public schools becomes both more difficult and more thoughtful.

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Introduction

Ninety-two percent of Americans celebrate Christmas, although these celebrations span a wide variety of practices.[1] For many, Christmas is primarily a religious holiday celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, the central figure of Christianity. In the Christian Bible, the Gospels of Matthew, Luke, and John tell the story of Christ's birth. Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God, conceived through the Holy Spirit in the womb of his mother Mary while she was still a virgin. The life of Jesus culminated in his crucifixion and, according to the Christian faith, his resurrection three days after his death.[2] Since the fourth century, Christians have celebrated Christ's birth annually on December 25.[3]

For many Americans, Christmas is mainly a cultural holiday.[4] The vast majority of businesses and schools are closed, and family and friends spend the day together.[5] Americans participate in shared secular rituals, such as shopping, gift giving, feasting, and parties. During the weeks leading to Christmas Day, there are television specials, extended shopping hours in department stores, and decorations throughout communities and homes. For some Americans, participation in Christmas practices occurs because businesses and schools are not open. "For both celebrant and non-celebrant alike,"

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[1] Pew Research Center, Celebrating Christmas and the Holidays, Then and Now

[2] John Bowker, "Christianity," In *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

[3] Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 4.

[4] According to the Pew Research Center, "about half see Christmas mostly as a religious holiday while one-third view it as more of a cultural holiday." (p. 1)

[5] Bruce David Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History* (Los Angeles: University of California, 2007), 61.

according to Plaut, "there is no hiding from Christmas."[6]

Many cultural traditions blur the line between religious and non-religious. For example, decorations on a Christmas tree might include sacred ornaments featuring angels and the Nativity, alongside the secular figures of Santa Claus and reindeer. A family might exchange gifts on Christmas morning before attending services at their local church. This combination of the religious and cultural is not new. For example, on Christmas Day, 1841, an editorial in the Baltimore *Sun* proclaimed "This day, the anniversary of the nativity of Jesus Christ, will be observed throughout all Christendom as a day of festivity—a religious and social holiday."[7]

Whether one sees Christmas mostly as a religious holiday or a cultural holiday, there is overlap amongst the wide variety of practices that constitute the holiday season spanning the weeks between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day. Lankford described this overlap as "an intricate and at times disjointed cultural landscape crowded with the meanings of a modern American Christmas."[8] Throughout this crowded cultural landscape, Christmas music is nearly everywhere. Whether on the radio, in shopping malls, or on television, Christmas music is the soundtrack to the season marked by a plethora of varied practices. As such, styles and varieties of Christmas music are as diverse as all other Christmas practices.[9]

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[6] Joshua Plaut, *A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to Be Jewish* (Piscataway: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 3.

[7] "Christmas Day," *The Sun*, December 25, 1841, p. 2.

[8] Ronald D. Lankford, Jr., *Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells, and Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2013), 5.

[9] See for example, Joseph A. Kotarba, et al., *Understanding Society through Popular Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 167. In the same paragraph, the authors referenced

For example, imagine an American shopping center in the month of December. Christmas music is playing throughout every store and restaurant. We might hear "Silent Night," a religious song retelling the story of the birth of Jesus Christ. Immediately following, we might hear "Santa Claus is Coming to Town," a secular song recounting the legend of Santa Claus, a mythological figure that brings gifts to well-behaved children during the night before Christmas. Next, we might hear "Sleigh Ride," a secular song that references winter, snow, family, and friends in an old-fashioned setting. We might hear "Happy Xmas (War is Over)" by John Lennon and Yoko Ono, originally a protest song about the Vietnam War that is now a standard Christmas song celebrating themes of peace and goodwill. We could also hear "Joy to the World," a triumphant, religious fanfare proclaiming "The Lord has come!" Next, we might hear "Grandma Got Run Over by a Reindeer," a satirical, secular song poking fun at the over-indulgent nature of the Christmas holiday.

Christmas music varies widely, and it overflows almost everywhere during the holiday season, including the public schools. Students regularly perform Christmas music in band, choir, and orchestra concerts, as well as elementary student programs.[10] Preparation for these performances often occurs during class time, sometimes months in

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a wide range of Christmas music, from *A Feast of Songs: Holiday Music from the Middle Ages* to "Christmas Time in Hell."

[10] Discourse in music education promotes the idea that the "repertoire is the curriculum" (e.g., H. Robert Reynolds, "Repertoire is the Curriculum," *Music Educators Journal* 87, no. 1 (2000): 31–33; Keith Powers, "Planning a December to Remember," *Teaching Music* 20, no. 2 (2012): 28–32.) Clinics, trade journal articles, textbooks, and teacher preparation classes are devoted to forming a cultural definition of "legitimate" repertoire. Curiously, in these same types of sources, the music education world largely ignores Christmas music, and the common practice of Christmas performances is often invisible.

advance.[11] Teachers have a wide variety of repertoire from which to choose. For example, on September 8, 2014, the home page of J. W. Pepper advertised "Music for Christmas and Holiday Concerts" and "Bring on the Holidays with Classroom Musicals!" The company's Christmas catalog includes 1,207 choral selections, 524 band, 302 orchestra, 137 jazz, and 69 classroom musical plays and revues.[12]

There is no shortage of school Christmas repertoire, nor is there a shortage of examples of school Christmas music performances. A systemized set of queries on the file sharing service YouTube returned an overwhelming number of videos, many of which include Christmas performances in the public schools.

Table 1-1
Search results for Christmas music on YouTube[13]

Search terms	Complete number of search results.
Christmas chorus concert	1,270,000
Holiday chorus concert	184,000
Winter chorus concert	255,000
Christmas choir concert	441,000
Holiday choir concert	287,000
Winter choir concert	450,000
Christmas band concert	675,000
Holiday band concert	240,000
Winter band concert	458,000
Christmas orchestra concert	358,000
Holiday orchestra concert	136,000
Winter orchestra concert	458,000
Elementary Christmas concert	302,000
Elementary Christmas musical	257,000

[11] Keith Powers, "Planning a December to Remember," *Teaching Music* 20, no. 2 (2012): 32.

[12] As advertised on jwpepper.com, the corporation J. W. Pepper claims to be the largest sheet music retailer in the world.

[13] Retrieved from YouTube.com, July 13, 2014. Each search returned a vast number of examples, including some that are not specifically public school concerts, as well as videos that are of little relevance to the search terms.

Christmas music can be found in many December performances posted on YouTube, regardless of being titled a "Christmas Concert," "Holiday Concert," or "Winter Concert." The variety of names for December concerts is a small detail that may be emblematic of an enduring aspect of the American Christmas: controversy. Christmas consists of a multitude of religious and non-religious meanings that intensify in government-sponsored settings, including the public schools.

American public schools are required to be religiously neutral, but also have an educational responsibility to teach and discuss religion and culture. Christmas music can be potentially problematic in that domain, considering the holiday is religious for many, cultural for some, and somewhere in between for others. Powers referred to this predicament as a "minefield."[14] Strauss titled a *Washington Post* opinion article "The Battle over Christmas music in School Begins (again)."[15] The broader discourse of the modern American Christmas includes war metaphors, such as "minefield" and "battle," along with conceptual figures of Scrooge and the Grinch. Scrooge is the main character of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, and the Grinch is the title character in *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* by Theodor "Dr. Seuss" Geisel. Although both become true Christmas believers by the end of their respective stories, they are frequently used in popular discourse to demonize people who focus on the secular aspects of the Christmas holiday or avoid Christmas altogether. For example, Staver cautioned, "Don't let the Grinch steal this Christmas" in an article defending religious symbols and themes in

[14] Powers, 32.

[15] Retrieved on June 21, 2014 from www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2013/11/15/the-battle-over-christmas-music-in-school-begins-again/

public spaces and schools.[16] Feder demonized public school bureaucrats that wage "war on Christmas," warning, "public schools and the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union] play Scrooge this Christmas."[17] Rycenga summarized the yearly tradition of controversy, as "holidays become major sites of ideological posturing, quite distant from the pious practices ideally imagined."[18]

Position statements attempt to guide music teachers through this "minefield," such as the current guidelines of two of the largest music education organizations: the National Association of Music Education (NAfME) and the Texas Music Educators Association (TMEA). Both organizations conflate sacred music with Christmas music, gloss over the practice of Christmas concerts, and largely ignore instrumental music. Both documents cite court cases from 1996 and earlier, omitting several contrasting cases from the twenty-first century.[19] For example, both lean heavily on the 1980 court decision in *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District*, in which the appellate court ruled that schools have a right to schedule and prepare student performances of Christmas music as part of the curriculum. This court decision rests upon the *Lemon* test, in which the court applied the following examination: "First, the statute must have a secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor

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[16] Retrieved on July 3, 2014 from www.lc.org/misc/grinch/htm

[17] Retrieved on May 20, 2014 from www.psaf.org/archive/2004/November/FederpublicschoolsACLUscrooge112904.htm

[18] Jennifer Rycenga, "Religious Controversies over Christmas," in *Christmas, Ideology, and Popular Culture*, ed. Sheila Whiteley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University, 2008), 71.

[19] "Sacred Music in Schools," National Association for Music Education, Retrieved from http://musiced.nafme.org/about/position-statements/sacred-music-in-schools/ on January 12, 2015. "Appropriate Use of Sacred Music in the Curriculum," Texas Music Educators Association, Retrieved from www.tmea.org/assets/pdf/educator_toolkit/8_4_Sacred_Music.pdf on January 12, 2015.

inhibits religion; finally, the statute must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion."[20] The appellate court found that the Sioux Falls School District policy on Christmas music did not violate the *Lemon* test. [21]As a result, both the NAfME and TMEA position statements include reworded versions of the *Lemon* test to guide music educators. For example, the NAfME statement asks:

1. What is the purpose of the activity? Is the purpose secular in nature, that is, studying music of a particular composer's style or historical period?
2. What is the primary *effect* of the activity? Is it the celebration of religion? Does the activity either enhance or inhibit religion? Does it invite confusion of thought or family objections?
3. Does the activity involve excessive *entanglement* with a religion or religious group, or between the schools and religious organizations?[22]

Two court cases from the twenty-first century are absent from the NAfME and TMEA position statements. *Nurre v. Whitehead* established a precedent that includes instrumental music as "speech." School officials prevented a high school band from performing a religious selection at the graduation ceremony. In its place, the band performed a non-religious piece. The court found that the school officials acted in accordance with the *Lemon* test and did not inhibit religion. Furthermore, the court upheld the right of school officials to limit sacred music in performance in a limited public forum.[23] In *Stratechuk v. Board of Education*, a parent challenged the decision of school officials to prohibit sacred Christmas music from school performances. In this case, the court upheld the right of the school officials to determine policy restricting Christmas music selection. The court found that the school district was acting to avoid

[20] *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).
[21] *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, 619 F.2d 1311 (1980).
[22] NAfME Position Statement, emphasis in original.
[23] *Nurre v. Whitehead*, 580 F.3d 1087 (9th cir. 2009).

the endorsement of any particular religion, as opposed to endorsing an anti-religious curriculum.[24] In both of these cases, the appellate courts acted to give school systems broad discretion in determining the appropriate regulation of sacred music for their respective communities and activities.

Both of these recent decisions, as well as earlier cases, serve as examples of the importance of context. It is problematic to extrapolate a policy from court decisions that are contextual and localized. Similarly, no appellate court decision regarding the three cases previously mentioned has been unanimous. Just as there are different meanings to the modern American Christmas, there are different interpretations of celebrations in music classrooms in the public schools. The disagreement of judges in rendering a decision hints at the various perceptions surrounding Christmas in modern America.

The court cases listed above also exemplify the tricky nature of oversimplifying music. These decisions assume that music is divisible into mutually exclusive piles: sacred and secular. Even as judges insist on this division, there is also disagreement in the sorting. Due to the plurality of meanings, Christmas music can be difficult to divide into two neat piles of sacred and secular. For example, is a composition sacred if it includes the words "Merry Christmas?" If so, then "Carol of the Bells" and "Feliz Navidad" might be considered sacred. What if the text of the song uses allusion, such as "The Twelve Days of Christmas," in which religious themes are never stated, although the song is layered with religious symbolism? What about instrumental versions of sacred music? Leroy Anderson's popular arrangement *A Christmas Festival* includes instrumental

[24] *Stratechuk v. Board of Education South Orange-Maplewood School District*, 587 F.3d 597 (3rd Cir. 2009).

versions of "Joy to the World," "God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen," "Silent Night," and "O Come All Ye Faithful." All of these compositions include explicit Christian references in the lyrics, but there are no lyrics when performed by a band or orchestra.

The policies and court cases mentioned above represent the tip of an iceberg. Like an actual iceberg, the submerged, depth problem consists of "the same stuff, the same ice."[25] The problems inherent in these court cases are problems that persist in our present. These court decisions do not offer simple solutions, but draw attention to complexities that perhaps need more attention and thoughtfulness.

Purpose

Amid the complexities of the holiday, the practice of including Christmas music in the public schools is common.[26] This practice, however, did not always exist. The purpose of this study is to examine how the regular practice of Christmas music in the American public schools came to be. As we act and interact in the world, we have a spectrum of choices. These choices are determined by the conditions of possibility that have been formed by the actions and interactions that have come before. I seek to understand the conditions of possibility that have enabled the performance of Christmas music as a regular practice in the American public schools.

I borrow the phrase "conditions of possibility" from a particular philosophical tradition: genealogy. In particular, the work of the French philosopher-historian Michel

[25] I borrow this metaphor from Paul Veyne, used in his 1978 essay "Foucault Revolutionizes History."

[26] See for example, Powers, 2012.

Foucault informed the genealogical approach of this study. A genealogical approach lends itself to conducting a "history of the present."[27] A genealogical approach seeks to explicate relationships across contexts and temporalities. By understanding how the regular practice of Christmas music in the public schools has come to be, we can better understand the conditions that have enabled our possibilities for the future.

Need for Study

The desire to understand possibilities for the future forms the need for this study. No practice in music education or public education should be exempt from interrogation and examination. "Our purpose is to critique all ideas and ideologies," wrote Estelle Jorgensen. "None is sacrosanct or immune from philosophical scrutiny and interrogation, including our own."[28]

If we understand how Christmas music in the public schools came to be a regular practice, we can better understand the possibilities for the future.[29] The historico-philosophical examination of Christmas music in the public schools has the potential to deepen the understanding of both practitioners and theorists. As the cultural and religious makeup of America becomes more diverse, there is a need for practical guidance for teachers and administrators. Through an understanding how the practice has come to be,

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[27] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995), 31.

[28] Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Values and Philosophizing about Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 14.

[29] The future appears to include a decreasing percentage of Christians in the United States. According to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), 86% of Americans identified as Christian in 1990; 76% identified as Christian in 2008. According to the Pew Forum on Religious Life, 78.4% of Americans identified as Christian in 2007; 70.6% identified as Christian in 2014.

practitioners will have a better understanding of the various choices in the future and how these choices affect students, parents, and the community. I am hopeful that this dissertation will result in an approach that promotes thoughtful choices, actions, and dialogue.

Research Questions

The following questions about Christmas music in the American public schools guided this research:

1. How did the practice of performing Christmas music in the American public schools come to be?
2. How do these contexts and conditions shape and/or constrain the practice in our present?
3. What are potential conditions of possibility for the future of this practice?

Biases and Interests

I approach this study with my own background and biases. I am an atheist, and I celebrate Christmas with family and friends. I enjoy Christmas music, caroling, and other traditions of the season. I continue to select Christmas music for my students to perform at December concerts, as I have every year of my eleven years of teaching in the Georgia public schools.

I enjoy the ritual and celebration of familiar holiday music, while simultaneously questioning its effect. Is it appropriate to perform Christmas music in the public schools?

How much time should we spend in class rehearsing and perfecting Christmas music for public performance? How might the Christmas music we perform normatively condition the subjectivities of the students?

This study does not attempt to answer those questions. A universal approach—or, a "correct" method for approaching Christmas performances—is incompatible with the nominalist framework of this project. Rather, this study is an attempt to trace how it came to be possible that I am asking myself these questions, while simultaneously enjoying, protecting, and regenerating the practice of public school Christmas music performances.

Definition of Terms

The descriptions of the following terms reflect traditional views of American society.

Church Music: Music for performance in a religious rite of worship. The term is most commonly associated with the Christian tradition.[30]

Sacred Music: Musical settings of sacred texts. In the immensely diverse context of American religious cultures, this simple notion of music as a vehicle or medium for expressing holy words proves inadequate.[31]

Christmas Music: Generally synonymous with "Holiday Music" in American culture. American Christmas songs range from explicitly religious hymns and carols intended for performance in a sacred context to secular songs revolving around Santa Claus, gift

[30] "Church Music," (Alternative title: "Liturgical Music"), *Encyclopedia Britannica.* Accessed August 30, 2015. www.search.eb.com/topic/liturgical-music.

[31] Stephen A. Marini, "Sacred Music," *Grove Music Online.* Oxford University Press. Accessed August 31, 2015. www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2225462.

giving, and general goodwill.[32]

[32] Joanna R. Smolko, "Christmas Music," *Grove Music Online*. Oxford University Press. Accessed August 31, 2015. www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2227990

CHAPTER TWO:
Review of Related Literature

The performance of Christmas music is a regular practice in American public schools. How did this come to be? As noted in the previous chapter, it is both common and problematic to categorize Christmas music as sacred or secular. According to Hubbard, "the intertwining historical, religious, and commercial strains [of Christmas] are not easily separated."[33] Still, Christmas music in public schools inextricably links to the larger topic of religion and these institutions. I begin this chapter with an overview of religion and the American public schools, followed by a review of literature dealing with this intersection. I limit this review to related dissertations in order to focus the remainder of this chapter on issues of sacred music and public education. I look specifically at case law and related literature involving sacred music and K-12 public education. Finally, I examine the archive of the *Music Educators Journal* as it pertains to the issue of sacred music in public schools.

Religion and the United States Public Schools

Overview

The history of formal education in the United States predates the Revolutionary War. In 1642, it became mandatory in Massachusetts that all children in the colony

[33] David A. Hubbard, "Religion in the Public Schools: Crossing the Line and the Effects on Children" (EdD diss., The Fielding Institute, 1999), 37.

receive some education.[34] This compulsory instruction provided by the parents included reading, writing, and principles of religion. Five years later, a Massachusetts law required every town of fifty households to hire a teacher and every town of one hundred households to establish a grammar school. This law—labeled the "Old Deluder Satan Act"—established the principle of publicly supported community schools.[35] Because these schools formed in and around communities and churches, religion was a natural part of a young person's education. For many colonists, religious freedom was a reason they immigrated to North America from Europe.[36]

Massachusetts continued to be at the forefront of the development of public education. Laws enacted between 1827 and 1834 required compulsory taxation to support public schooling, making schools free for students.[37] The development of the common school during this time referred "to a type of schooling that would educate all in common, using the same curriculum."[38] The school day in these common schools "typically began with the Lord's Prayer and readings from the King James Version of the Bible, usually read without comment."[39]

Education became compulsory throughout America on a state-by-state basis,

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[34] Parents were required to ensure that children learned to read and write, understand the principles of religion and the major laws of the colony, and trained for profitable labor. House Committee on Education and Labor, *Important Dates in the History of American Education*, 88th Cong., 1st sess., 1963, 2.

[35] House Committee on Education and Labor, 2.

[36] Wayne J. Urban and Jennings L. Wagoner, *American Education: A History* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 34–35.

[37] Of course, developments in education were taking place during this time throughout the colonies. For example, Pennsylvania adopted free elementary education in 1834. House Committee on Education and Labor, 2.

[38] Urban and Wagoner, *American Education*, 83.

[39] Ibid., 93.

beginning with Massachusetts in 1852. In 1893, the National Education Association issued a report by the Committee of Ten that attempted to establish a unified progression of eight years of grammar (elementary) school and four years of high school. This action marked a shift away from common schools towards the modern educational system in the United States that persists today.[40]

Because public schools in the United States developed from local common schools, parochial schools, and community schools, prayer often remained a regular component. This practice faced a legal challenge in the late nineteenth century in *Weiss v. District Board*, also known as the Edgerton Bible Case. During that time, teachers read aloud to their students from the King James Bible on a daily basis. Catholic parents complained, not about the Bible readings per se, but about the King James Version that was incompatible with Catholic beliefs.

The circuit court sided with the school district in 1888, but the Wisconsin Supreme Court overturned the decision in 1890.[41] The court noted that the Bible readings improperly united functions of church and state. The Wisconsin Supreme Court decision cited the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion."[42] The Establishment Clause is often synonymous with the expression "separation between church and state." This phrase is not included in the Constitution, but was used by Thomas Jefferson in an 1802 letter to the Danbury Baptists in which he wrote the words

[40] At the time of the Committee of Ten's report, the United States was "an extremely untidy world of secondary education." Urban and Wagoner, 184.

[41] *Weiss v. District Board*, 76 Wis. 177 (1890).

[42] U.S. Constitution, amend. 1.

"a wall of separation between church and state."[43]

School prayer became a national issue in the mid-twentieth century in the United States with two cases decided by the United States Supreme Court: *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington School District v. Schempp*. The case of *Engel v. Vitale* began in the 1950s when the New York Board of Regents developed this prayer and recommended it to local school boards: *Almighty God, we acknowledge our dependence upon Thee, our parents, our teachers and our Country.*[44]

The Board of Education of Union Free School District No. 9 adopted the prayer, and required that each class recite it in the presence of a teacher at the beginning of the school day. The parents of ten students sued the school district because the prayer was not in accordance with their religious beliefs. According to Hubbard, the families had two main legal challenges: "First, the parents challenged the constitutionality of the state law authorizing the school district to direct the use of prayer in public schools. Second, the parents challenged the school district's regulation ordering the recitation of this particular prayer."[45] *Engel v. Vitale* was first decided by the New York state and appellate courts in favor of the school district and Board of Regents. The United States Supreme Court, however, overturned the decision in 1962, citing a violation of the Establishment Clause with improper separation of church and state.

Abington School District v. Schempp began in 1956 when sixteen-year-old high school student Ellery Schempp refused to participate in the daily recitation of the Lord's

[43] Julie A. Oseid, "The Power of Metaphor: Thomas Jefferson's 'Wall of Separation between Church & State'," *Journal of the Association of Legal Writing Directors* 7 (2010): 123–153.

[44] Hubbard, "Religion in the Public Schools," 49–50.

[45] Ibid.

Prayer.[46] The Abington School District began each with the recitation of the Lord's Prayer, as well as the reading of ten verses from the King James Bible. With support from his parents and the American Civil Liberties Union, Schempp filed suit against the school district. In 1963, the United States Supreme Court upheld the lower court's decision that the school prayer violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. The Supreme Court noted that it is constitutional to teach the Bible as literature, but it is unconstitutional to use the Bible as part of religious exercises in a public school setting.

Religion in the United States public schools remains a controversial, contentious issue since the rulings in *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington School District v. Schempp* ended school-sponsored prayer.[47] According to Eck, America has shifted from a Christian country to the most diverse nation in the world.[48] The intersection of religion and the public schools is a controversial, broad topic as evidenced by the following review of related dissertations.

Religion and Public Schools: Related Dissertations

Religion is a profoundly personal issue, and we all have our own perspectives and beliefs. In this section, I review dissertations related to religion and K-12 public

[46] Stephen D. Solomon, "The Kid Who Didn't Stand," *Tufts Magazine*, Fall 2007, retrieved from http://www.tufts.edu/alumni/magazine/fall2007/features/the_kid.html (accessed September 3, 2014).

[47] James J. Jurinski, *Religion in the Schools: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: Contemporary World Issues, 1998), xi.

[48] After founding the Pluralism Project at Harvard University in 1991, Eck traveled the United States studying religious diversity. Eck described several accounts of violence in public schools against students who identified with non-Christian religions, including Muslim, Hindu, and Jewish students. Diana L. Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Diverse Nation* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2002).

education in the United States. Although topics vary widely, all of these studies relate in some manner to perceptions and beliefs regarding religion and public schools. This section is organized according to how each study relates to perceptions and beliefs.

First, I look at dissertations that examine the perceptions and beliefs of specific individuals or groups. Then, I review studies in which the perceptions and beliefs of the scholar relate to the analysis of the intersection between religion and public education that lies in curriculum. Finally, I review literature related to legal decisions about religion and the public schools and discuss how the perceptions and beliefs of justices in the American judicial system have influenced these decisions.

Perceptions and Beliefs: Individuals & Groups

A number of dissertations feature the perceptions of educational leaders, including those by Beery, Helberg, Jones, and Berry. Beery traced the opinions of nine figures in early public education, including Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, and John Dewey. The study examined if these figures thought that religious beliefs belonged in the public school curricula.[49] Using the First Amendment as a framework for historical analysis, Beery positioned the research as an attempt to provide guidance for administrators and teachers. Findings revealed that the nine educators largely supported the separation of church and state, although personal definitions varied greatly. For example, some considered the teaching of general Christianity appropriate, but teaching from a sectarian point of view (e.g., Catholicism, Protestantism) inappropriate. Others

[49] Cleo C. Beery, "Public Schools and Religion: The Opinions of Nine Eminent Educators" (EdD diss., University of Southern California, 1961), 407.

considered the separation principle simply to mean that there was no direct church control over the schools.[50] The author questioned the abilities of teachers to divorce themselves objectively from personal religious beliefs in the classroom and recommended further study.

Helberg and Jones gathered data directly from school superintendents in their respective studies. Helberg compared the beliefs of faith leaders and school superintendents, described the religiously-neutral curriculum offered by American public schools, and noted the absence of religious history in the United States. The absence of religion possibly relates to the anti-public school movement of the Religious Right. Components of this movement include support for school vouchers, school prayer, and creationism in the classroom.[51] Helberg used a qualitative approach to gather feedback from both faith and school leaders. Findings suggested that separation between church and state is a challenging issue, and recommended more dialogue between church and school leaders. Although Helberg acknowledged the vast diversity of religious beliefs in the United States, the author's recommendations did not account for this phenomenon. There were more commonalities among perceptions of school superintendents than between religious leaders of varying faiths.[52] This finding highlights the complex nature of working with religious leaders, as there may be a wide variety of opinions regarding religion and the public schools. The author also found that some superintendents were not

[50] Beery, 423.

[51] Cindy A. Helberg, "Religion and Public Schools: Beliefs of Faith Leaders and Public School Leaders" (EdD diss., Oklahoma State University, 2007), 5.

[52] Ibid., 265.

abiding by legal guidelines regarding religion in the public schools.[53]

Jones studied religion in the Indiana public schools from three perspectives: school superintendent feedback, school board policy analysis, and a review of 11th grade history textbooks. A majority of school superintendents in the state of Indiana provided feedback regarding religion in public school curricula. Most superintendents reported infrequent or no complaints from the community about religion and curriculum. Generally, superintendents believed that religion is included in the curriculum in an objective manner.[54] Jones found that the majority of public school systems in Indiana do not have written policies dealing with religion in the curriculum and noted that, despite stories shared by teachers and administrators, religion has not been a major source of conflict in the Indiana public schools.[55]

Differences in communities affect approaches to church and state issues. Berry conducted a case study with elementary school principals, teachers, and parents specifically regarding Christmas. Church and state issues included division within the school and community, varying definitions of the mission of the school, sudden personal exposure and questions from the media, and scrutiny of the school and administrators by other educational leaders.[56] In examining the perceptions of educators, the author noted that, "some seem unable to understand that non-Christian children might be confused or

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[53] Helberg, 269.

[54] Thomas G. Jones, "Religion in Indiana's Public High Schools: A Survey of School Superintendents, Analysis of School Board Policies, and a Review of 11th Grade U.S. History Textbooks" (EdD diss., Ball State University, 1997), 1.

[55] Ibid., 170, 175.

[56] David R. Berry, "The Christmas Dilemma for Public Elementary School Leaders" (EdD diss., University of Tennessee, 2002), 7.

feel excluded by either subtle or overt Christian Christmas traditions."[57] School leaders should be proactive in understanding the shifting religious and non-religious trends in their communities. The author concluded that there is not a clear, systemized definition of separation of church and state as it applies to matters of educational policy.[58]

Two other dissertations examined the perceptions of teachers and students, respectively. Luke studied the relationship between First Amendment knowledge and opinions about religion in public schools within a population of high school teachers in Florida. Findings included a significant correlation between teachers' knowledge of the First Amendment and personal belief that religious freedom belongs in public schools. However, overall teacher knowledge about the First Amendment and religion in schools was lacking among participants.[59] Based on the results of this quantitative study, Luke recommended a qualitative study to better gauge teacher beliefs and perceptions about religion in the public schools.[60]

Hubbard examined the effects of Christianity in the public school classroom on Jewish students. For the purposes of the study, presence of religion in the classroom included class activities, songs, books, videos, activities, parties, and other forms of celebration.[61] Effects on Jewish students related to sense of belonging, sense of

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[57] Berry, 152.
[58] Ibid., 153.
[59] Amber M. Luke, "Religious Freedom in Public Education: The Relationship Between High School Educators' First Amendment Knowledge and Their Opinions about Religion in Public Schools" (EdD diss., University of Central Florida, 2004), 82.
[60] Ibid., 85.
[61] David A. Hubbard, "Religion in the Public Schools: Crossing the Line and the Effects on Children" (EdD diss., The Fielding Institute, 1999), 3.

loneliness, fear, anxiety, stress, and motivation.[62] Hubbard acknowledged the predicament of Jewish students who choose to be absent from school on Jewish holidays such as Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashanah and noted the tendency to promote Hanukkah as a major Jewish holiday to counterbalance teaching about Christmas. The author cautioned school administrators to evaluate their approach. The inclusion of Hanukkah is justified so that Jewish students do not feel excluded. What about the students who are neither Christian nor Jewish? Parents should be proactive and involved in their school community, and teachers should be well versed in their school policies, dialogue with parents, and attend religious diversity workshops. School and district administrators should proactively discuss topics of religion in education, rather than wait for community backlash. Teacher preparation programs should dialogue with other departments, such as Comparative Religion, to create new ways of teaching religious diversity to undergraduates.[63]

The media plays a role in the development of our perceptions and beliefs. Johnson performed a discourse analysis of the media's portrayal of religion in the public schools and identified four conceptual figures represented:

> The *clarifiers*, who seek to communicate that teaching about religions is legal and desirable; the *returners*, who seek to return prayer and Bible reading to public schools; the *fideists*, who claim that Scripture is sacred and should only be taught by believers for the purposes of spreading faith; and the *secularists*, who believe that a focus on religion will inevitably lead to sectarianism.[64]

Based upon the discourse analysis, Johnson determined that normative and descriptive

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[62] Hubbard, ii.

[63] Ibid., 201–205.

[64] Erica K. Johnson, "Teaching about Religion in Public Schools: A Study of Media Discourse" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2013), 36.

narrative rationality influenced individual perception of religion in the schools.[65] Writers utilized three common types of narratives: "*Experience stories* detailed events that occurred either to them personally or to someone they know. *Imagined situations* laid out the writers' ideas about what they believe could, or should, happen in various circumstances. Narratives of *the way things are* provided snapshots of how the writers think about society."[66] This study provides insightful commentary on the media's portrayal of religion and the public schools, but it also underscores the backgrounds and biases that form our individual perspectives.

Perceptions and Beliefs: Personal Examinations of Curriculum

The following studies focused on curriculum as it relates to religion and public education. In these studies, the perspective of each author is particularly relevant. Two of these studies focus on the intersection of moral education as it relates to religion and the public PK-12 institutions. Writing from a conservative Christian perspective, Clayton performed a historical comparative analysis of sacred and secular moral education in American public schools. The author found that the "interrelationship between Christianity, morality, and a shared moral culture" is the most effective approach to combat "moral decline."[67] Among the causes of moral decline, the author cited the Supreme Court's removal of prayer from the public schools in the early 1960s. This action led to a shift in moral education, as educators developed secular moral education

[65] Johnson, 85.
[66] Ibid., 160.
[67] Ladona Kay Clayton, "An Analysis of the Effects of Sacred and Secular Moral Education on Moral Behavior in American Public Education" (EdD diss., Oral Roberts University, 2009), 570.

programs that did not adequately meet the needs of Christian students that formed a majority of the student population. The author concluded that a return to sacred moral education based on Christian values is essential to confronting moral decline in America. This conclusion is justified by the historical examination, albeit one-sided, of the Christian foundations of the American government. The author does not offer any alternative conclusions or viewpoints.[68]

In a more balanced look at moral education, Roberts reviewed a variety of approaches in the public schools, as related to philosophical positions of religion in the institutions. The author posited that, "different philosophical understandings of religion exercise a determinative influence over at least three factors important to the debate over public education."[69] These factors are (1) interpretations of the situation in American education; (2) normative understandings of education; and (3) the range of acceptable educational policy options.[70] Individual philosophies of religion are important to understanding humanity and cultures, according to the author, as well as approaching the practical problem of religion in the public schools.

Two scholars offered alternative curricula. In an epistemological examination of the relationship between religion and public schools, Rosenblith noted that the inclusion or omission of study about religion in the public schools is often a matter of respect.[71] The author rejected the notion that the study of religion should avoid matters of truth and

[68] Clayton, 570–71, 580.

[69] Raymond R. Roberts, "Religion, Morality, and America's Public Schools" (PhD diss., Union Theological Seminary, 1999), 5.

[70] Ibid.

[71] Suzanne N. Rosenblith, "Taking Religion and Education Seriously: An Epistemological Examination of the Relationship between Religion and Public Schools" (PhD diss., University of Wisconsin - Madison, 2001), 26.

instead argued for rigorous epistemological study about religion and truth in the public schools. “Since an epistemological perspective is primarily concerned with assessing the status of religious beliefs and claims through public principles, it can serve to bring about desirable educational outcomes.”[72] Practical and theoretical suggestions included the implementation of an epistemological approach to the study of religion as part of the curriculum.

Robinson analyzed policy and legal issues regarding the teaching about religion in the public schools as a part of a multicultural curriculum.[73] The author developed a new theoretical framework for analysis, combining existing legal, religious, and social theories. This framework—Critical Religious Legal Theory—is normative rather than explanatory. Critical Religious Legal Theory is a tool for “critically interpreting and addressing deficiencies and illegalities in educational policies and laws that relate to religion in U.S. public schools, while broadening the generally accepted understanding of multicultural education to include religion.”[74] Robinson also critically analyzed “generally accepted Christian norms in public education and America’s reliance upon ceremonial deism, as it relates to public schools.”[75] Critical Religious Legal Theory not only overflows multicultural education into religious education, but also focuses on the legal perspective, as do the following three studies.

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[72] Rosenblith, 112.

[73] Malila N. Robinson, “Reconsidering Religion: Towards a Broader Understanding of Multicultural Education in U.S. Public Schools” (PhD diss., Rutgers University, 2013), ii.

[74] Ibid., 21 (footnote).

[75] Ibid., 215.

Perceptions and Beliefs: Legal Decisions

The following dissertations include reviews of court cases relating to the general topic of religion and public education. Alexander studied religion as an academic subject in United States public high schools and examined this topic in relation to the intersection of "religious traditions and secular ideologies."[76] Using a historical lens, the author reviewed relevant Supreme Court decisions between 1948 and 1963 as well as contextualizing the historical development of religious studies. The review of court decisions was only a portion of the study, conducted in an effort to understand how these actions shaped the study of religion in the schools. Additionally, the author promoted several approaches to the study of religion from an absolute or universal framework, rejecting those grounded in relativism. Recommendations included making space for the study of doctrine, argument, and critical thinking as part of the academic study of religion in the public schools.[77]

Hobbs analyzed legal decisions from 1990 to 1999 that related to religion and the public schools. Findings suggested a list of activities deemed constitutional, including (1) teaching about religion; (2) religious student organizations; and (3) teaching about religious holidays. Issues of separation between church and state were historically positioned beginning in 1629 with the Mayflower Charter, and the intersection of religion and public education was briefly traced to the twentieth century.[78] Religion was starting to disappear from the public schools by the end of the nineteenth century, fifty years

[76] Kathryn Ogier Alexander, "Religion and the Public Schools: A Search for Consensus" (PhD diss., University of California - Santa Barbara, 1988), viii.

[77] Alexander, "Religion and the Public Schools," 344.

[78] Leslie Stuart Hobbs, Jr., "The Legal Aspects of Religion in American Public Schools from 1990–1999" (EdD diss., University of North Carolina - Greensboro, 2000), 327.

before the Supreme Court considered the issue of prayer in public schools.[79]

Collins examined perceptions of geography and space as related to religion and public schools in the case law of the United States and Canada. The author noted the controversial nature of religion in the public schools of both countries and evaluated case law from three perspectives: the public/private dichotomy, the individual/collective dichotomy, and the concept of place. Court rulings "often focus on mapping out social spaces, and the boundaries that distinguish them."[80] According to the findings, case law regarding religion in the public schools is "a fundamentally geographical project" due to its reliance on "spatial concepts and distinctions to make sense of the issues at stake."[81]

Sacred Music and the United States Public Schools

Legal Background

There are approximately fifteen thousand public school systems in the United States, each with their own school board and superintendent. For practical reasons, the United States Department of Education cannot monitor and enforce school compliance with Supreme Court precedents, the Equal Access Act, and the DOE's guidelines governing religious expression in the public schools. The realities of school policy and practice are "influenced by a wide range of actors from appointed professionals (including teachers, principals, school attorneys, and district superintendents) to elected

[79] Hobbs, 5.

[80] Damian C. A. Collins, "The Place of Religion in Public Schools: A Geographical Analysis of U.S. and Canadian Case Law" (PhD diss., Simon Fraser University, 2004), iii.

[81] Ibid.

school boards of citizen legislators" as well as parents and students.[82] Naturally, there are disagreements between these varied groups; at times, these conflicts settle in the courts. According to Hobbs:

> An analysis of judicial court decisions does not always reveal consistent and definitive solutions for resolving litigious issues. Varying circumstances, such as time, place, and unique conditions involved, account for the sometimes-diverse rulings of the courts. As American society changes, so do the rulings of the courts.[83]

Yet, decisions, policies, and guidelines draw upon a handful of court cases involving sacred music in the public schools. Therefore, an in-depth review of these cases is integral to this chapter.

Court cases involving religion in the public schools have some commonalities and most look to the Establishment Clause for guidance. As part of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, the Establishment Clause reads, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."[84] The *Lemon* test is a three-pronged analysis as defined by the Supreme Court of the United States to determine violation of the Establishment Clause. In the 1971 case *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, the Supreme Court ruled against Pennsylvania's 1968 Nonpublic Elementary and Secondary Education Act, in which the state was reimbursing private school teacher salaries.[85] The *Lemon* test, as articulated by Chief Justice Warren Burger, has influenced many court decisions since that time. "First, the statute must have a

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[82] Stephen P. Brown and Cynthia J. Bowling, "Public Schools and Religious Expression: The Diversity of School Districts' Policies Regarding Religious Expression," *Journal of Church and State* 45, no. 2 (March 2003).

[83] Hobbs, 338.

[84] U.S. Constitution, amend. 1.

[85] *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 403 U.S. 602 (1971).

secular legislative purpose; second, its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion; finally, the statute must not foster an excessive government entanglement with religion."[86] Lower courts have applied the *Lemon* test in cases regarding Christmas music in the public schools, including *Florey v. Sioux Falls* in 1980 and *Stratechuk v. Board of Education* in 2009 (details below). Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor interpreted the second prong of the *Lemon* test as a matter of endorsement. O'Connor wrote "Endorsement [of a particular religion] sends a message to nonadherents that they are outsiders, not full members of the political community, and an accompanying message to adherents that they are insiders, favored members of the political community. The proper inquiry … is whether the government intends to convey a message of endorsement or disapproval of religion."[87] Theoretically, lack of both endorsement and disapproval constitutes *religious neutrality*, an unbiased and objective association with religion.

The Supreme Court has never ruled on a case involving religious music in the public schools. However, the Supreme Court has ruled on issues of religion and government on several occasions. For example, in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 that a crèche could stand on government property.[88] The four dissenting justices were "convinced that this case appears hard not because the principles of decision [*Lemon* test] are obscure, but because the Christmas holiday seems so familiar

[86] *Lemon v. Kurtzman*, 612–614.
[87] *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 465 U.S. 668, 688 (1984).
[88] A crèche is also known as a nativity scene featuring the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger, surrounded by parents Mary and Joseph, three Wise Men, and animals.

and agreeable."[89]

The *Lemon* test and O'Connor's establishment test interpret religious neutrality from an either-or logic. A statute cannot advance nor inhibit religion. Government cannot endorse nor disapprove of religion. Regardless of the inability of these measures to account for the messiness and realities of schooling, these tests have been the basis for case law dealing with religion in the public schools.[90]

Florey v. Sioux Falls (1980)

In 1977, the Sioux Falls public school system in South Dakota received several complaints that school Christmas concerts and programs resembled Christian religious services.[91] The Sioux Falls school system gathered a committee consisting of local religious leaders representing Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant clergy, an attorney, a member of the American Civil Liberties Union, the director of music for Sioux Falls public schools, and various parents and students. The committee constructed a policy that permitted some use of religious materials in the curriculum as related to "the several

[89] *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 696–697. Opinion by Justice William J. Brennan. Justice Brennan went on to write that the inclusion of the crèche on government property was "a step toward establishing the sectarian preferences of the majority at the expense of the minority, accomplished by placing public facilities and funds in support of the religious symbolism and theological tidings that the crèche conveys." (725–726)

[90] Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia disagreed with the *Lemon* test: "Like some ghoul in a late-night horror movie that repeatedly sits up in its grave and shuffles abroad, after being repeatedly killed and buried, *Lemon* stalks our Establishment Clause jurisprudence once again, frightening the little children and school attorneys." *Lamb's Chapel v. Center Moriches Union Free School District*, 508 U.S. 384, 398 (1993).

[91] For example, the 1977 kindergarten program included the following call-and-response. Teacher: *Of whom did heav'nly angels sing, and news about His birthday bring?* Class: *Jesus*. Cited in R. Murray Thomas, *God in the Classroom: Religion and Public Schools* (Westport: Praeger, 2007), 1.

holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis."[92]

Roger Florey, the parent of a student in the Sioux Falls public schools, challenged this policy in court. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals, citing application of the Lemon test, upheld the school policy in 1980. "Presented with a situation in which the state is involving itself with a concededly religious activity or institution," noted the court, "the real danger is the potential for state repression of such institutions."[93] One justice on the Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals disagreed with the majority. The dissenting justice wrote "I do not understand how the observance of particular religious holidays (i.e., Christian and Jewish holidays), but not others (i.e., Ramadan, North American Indian holidays, Hindu holidays) encourages student knowledge and appreciation of religious and cultural diversity."[94]

It is interesting to note the contradiction between policy and practice. *Florey v. Sioux Falls* dealt specifically with the text of the 1977 policy. The court did not evaluate nor rule on the interpretation or implementation of the policy. Through the course of discussion, the court did note that Christmas concerts and programs prior to 1977 did

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[92] Deming Smith and Robert E. Hayes, "A Christmas Carol Revisited: Humbug in the Sioux Falls Schools," *St. Louis University Law Journal* 24 (1980): 359–376. Here is the policy: "The several holidays throughout the year which have a religious and secular basis may be observed in the public schools. Music, art, literature, and drama having religious themes or basis [sic] are permitted as part of the curriculum for school-sponsored activities and programs if presented in a prudent and objective manner and as a traditional part of the cultural and religious heritage of the particular holiday. The use of religious symbols, such as a cross, menorah, crescent, Star of David, crèche, symbols of Native American religions, or other symbols that are a part of a religious holiday is permitted as a teaching aid or resource, provided such symbols are displayed as an example of the cultural and religious heritage of the holiday and are temporary in nature. Among these holidays are included Christmas, Easter, Passover, Hanukkah, St. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, Thanksgiving, and Halloween." (p. 362)

[93] *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, 619 F.2d 1311 (1980).

[94] Ibid.

violate constitutional separation of church and state. The Supreme Court declined hearing the appeal of *Florey v. Sioux Falls*. This case remains "the controlling case on this controversial issue" according to Haynes and Thomas.[95]

Doe v. Aldine Independent School District (1982)

In the Aldine Independent School District in Texas in the early 1980s, school officials posted a prayer on the gymnasium wall. At the direction of the principal or other teachers, students would recite or sing the prayer at various school activities.[96] In *Doe v. Aldine Independent School District*, a federal district court found that the words met the definition of "prayer" as established by the Supreme Court decision in *Engel v. Vitale*.[97] In applying the Lemon test, the court found "that the stated purpose—to instill school spirit and pride which increases morale and lessens disciplinary problems—could be achieved through nonreligious means."[98] Therefore, the recitation and singing of the school prayer did not have a secular purpose and represented an excessive entanglement with religion by the state.

Doe v. Duncanville Independent School District (1995)

An unidentified seventh grade student entered the Duncanville Independent

[95] Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas, *Finding Common Ground: A First Amendment Guide to Religion and Public Schools* (Nashville: First Amendment Center, 2007), 118.

[96] Faith D. Kasparian, "The Constitutionality of Teaching and Performing Sacred Choral Music in Public Schools," *Duke Law Journal* 46, no. 5 (March, 1997), 1139.

[97] The text of the prayer was: "Dear God, please bless our school and all it stands for. Help keep us free from sin, honest and true, courage and faith to make our school the victor. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen." Ibid., 1139.

[98] Kasparian, 1139.

School District (DISD) in 1988. She joined the school basketball team, but refrained from the team recitation of the Lord's Prayer at each practice, before games in the locker room, and after games in the center of the court. Students and parents asked Doe "aren't you a Christian?" Her history teacher referred to her in class as a "little atheist."[99]

Doe also joined the school choir. Both the middle and high school choirs had a theme song that students sang at the end of class every Friday, at performances and choral competitions, and on the bus coming home from choir trips. The theme song was a tradition and remained the same from year to year. The middle school theme song was "Go Ye Now in Peace" and the high school theme song was "The Lord Bless You and Keep You."[100] Students traditionally joined hands during the singing of the theme song, based upon a video recording of the Duncanville High School choir performing "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" at the conclusion of their fall concert in 2007.[101]

Doe and her family filed suit against the DISD for violation of church and state in both the basketball prayers and the choir theme song. The initial ruling was in favor of Doe; however, the school district appealed the decision. The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower court's ruling as it related to the basketball game prayers. According to the court, a school employee should not participate in the voluntary prayers of students. The court summarized that "participation in these prayers improperly

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[99] *Doe v. Duncanville Independent School District*, 994 F.2d 160 (1995).

[100] The Duncanville High School Choir Theme Song was written by Peter C. Lutkin (lyrics and music). The lyrics are: "The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord lift His countenance upon you, And give you peace, and give you peace, The Lord make His face to shine upon you, And be gracious unto you, be gracious, The Lord be gracious, gracious unto you. Amen"

[101] "The Lord Bless You and Keep You," retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KHBecnqDQE8 (accessed October 6, 2014).

entangles it in religion and signals an unconstitutional endorsement of religion."[102] The appellate court, however, overturned the lower court's ruling regarding the use of religious songs as theme songs. The lower court found that this practice was a violation of the First Amendment. The appellate court, however, reasoned that legitimate secular reasons existed for maintaining "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" as the theme song. The court drew upon the testimony of Duncanville choir director David McCullar, noting that "this song is particularly useful to teach students to sight read and to sing *a cappella* … it is a good piece of music by a reputable composer."[103] Additionally, the court cited McCullar's testimony that "60-75 percent of serious choral music is based on sacred themes or text." The court stated that "as a matter of statistical probability, the song best suited to be the theme [song] is more likely to be religious than not."[104] The court noted that the frequency of performance—in this case, singing the theme song at least once a week on Fridays—should not factor into the decision.[105] The dissenting justice in the Fifth Circuit Court, however, stated an opinion that "DISD is free to teach religious songs and obtain their secular benefits as part of the music curriculum without giving them the special treatment it has accorded theme songs."[106]

Bauchman v. West High School (1997)

In 1995, sophomore student Rachel Bauchman expressed concerns to her chorus

[102] *Doe v. DISD* (1995).
[103] Ibid.
[104] Ibid.
[105] The court wrote, "Limiting the number of times a religious piece of music can be sung is tantamount to censorship." *Doe v. DISD* (1995).
[106] Ibid.

teacher Richard Torgerson at West High School in Salt Lake City, Utah. These concerns were related to the repertoire for the upcoming Christmas chorus concert. Bauchman stated,

> I noticed that it consisted of ten songs all praising Jesus as the Lord, Savior, and King. We're also talking contemporary Christian songs here—not Handel's Messiah or Vivaldi's Gloria or anything by Brahms, Mozart, or Bach. I didn't feel that as a Jew I could honestly and in good conscience sing these particular pieces. They made me extremely uncomfortable.[107]

As Bauchman and her family began to seek legal assistance, Torgerson added two songs associated with Judaism to the Christmas concert. According to Bauchman, "throwing in two Jewish songs hoping to shut me up was not only embarrassing but insulting … I'm uncomfortable having to act as an agent promoting any religion, including my own, in a public school environment."[108] Torgerson then told Bauchman that she did not have to attend the concert and would still receive an "A" for the semester; she could sit in the school library while the chorus was preparing for the performance.

As the year progressed following the Christmas concert controversy, the school canceled the annual spring choir tour that traditionally occurred in Mormon churches, including participation in Mormon services and readings from the Book of Mormon. Torgerson reportedly ostracized, criticized, and blamed Bauchman in public. Students and parents reportedly harassed and threatened Bauchman in person and over the phone, including telling her to "go back to Israel" and calling her a "Jew Bitch."[109]

Near the end of the school year, Bauchman again expressed concern when the

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[107] Rachel Bauchman, "Rachel Bauchman versus Utah," A speech delivered at the 19th annual convention of the Freedom from Religion Foundation on October 12, 1996. http://ffrf.org/legacy/fttoday/1996/oct96/bauchman.html. (accessed September 15, 2013).

[108] Bauchman, "Rachel Bauchman versus Utah," 1996.

[109] Ibid.

chorus was required to sing two religious songs at the high school graduation ceremony: "The Lord Bless You and Keep You" and "Friends." The school did not give Bauchman the option to miss the graduation performance. On the day prior to the graduation ceremony, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals issued an injunction halting the performance pending review of the case. The chorus and audience defied the injunction and sang "Friends," which includes the lyrics "Friends are friends forever when the Lord's the Lord of them."[110]

In *Bauchman v. West High School*, the Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals found that there was no violation of Bauchman's constitutional rights. The court noted that there are a number of secular reasons that a choir might program a concert entirely of sacred music. The court heavily cited the Supreme Court's decision in *Lynch v. Donnelly*, in which Justice O'Connor developed the establishment test. "The meaning of a statement to its audience" wrote O'Connor, "depends both on the intention of the speaker and the objective meaning of the statement in the community."[111] In *Bauchman v. West High School*, the court found that a "reasonable observer" would perceive that the West High School performed "a diverse array of songs … in a number of public (religious and nonreligious) settings, all of which reflect the community's culture and heritage."[112] Although it was not relevant to the outcome of the case, the court noted "a lack of sensitivity, crudeness, and poor judgment unbefitting of high school students, their parents, and especially, public school teachers and administrators."[113]

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[110] Bauchman, "Rachel Bauchman versus Utah," 1996.
[111] *Lynch v. Donnelly*, 690.
[112] *Bauchman v. West High School*, 95-CV-506 (10th Cir. 1997).
[113] Ibid. In particular, Torgerson continued to teach at West High School until his

Nurre v. Whitehead (2009)

Henry M. Jackson High School (JHS) is one of three high schools in the Everett School District No. 2, located in western Washington State. At the 2005 JHS graduation ceremony, the student choir performed "Up above My Head," a religious song with references to "God," "heaven," and "angels." Following the graduation ceremony, the Everett School District No. 2 received complaints from graduation attendees about the performance of religious music. *The Everett Herald* printed "indignant letters to the editor complaining about religious statements included in the ceremony's music."[114]

In 2006, the JHS band director continued a three-year tradition in which graduating seniors in the band voted on the piece of music they would perform at graduation. The students chose *Ave Maria* composed by Franz Biebl, originally for chorus but transcribed for band. In light of complaints about the religious music at graduation the previous year, the principal and school district staff asked the students to choose another piece without a religious title or connotations. The school district then enacted a policy sent to all principals explaining that music for graduation ceremonies should be entirely secular. Performance-based classes could program religious music throughout the year as part of a balanced curriculum. However, the school district recognized graduation as a unique event in which achieving that balance would not be

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teaching license was revoked in 2000 for directing the choir students to protest at a local craft store during school hours. Torgerson was also charged with criminal trespass and disorderly conduct as a result of the protest, reportedly stemming from a dispute over a canceled check. J. Toomer-Cook, "LDS teacher who used students to harass loses license," *Deseret News*, March 16, 2000.

[114] *Nurre v. Whitehead*, 580 F.3d 1087 (9th cir. 2009).

possible.[115]

A graduating senior in the JHS band, Nurre filed suit against Whitehead, the school superintendent, alleging violation of First Amendment, specifically free speech and the Establishment Clause. Nurre argued that the superintendent violated her free speech through the prohibition of the performance of *Ave Maria*. In regards to the Establishment Clause, Nurre argued that Whitehead acted "with hostility towards religion."[116] In the decision, the court did note that instrumental music is speech protected under the First Amendment and cited several preceding decisions (e.g., *Ward v. Rock against Racism*, 1989, as determined by the Supreme Court). The court, however, did not side in favor of Nurre, and instead found that Whitehead and the school district acted to prevent controversy. The court stated, "District administrators recognized the evident religious nature of *Ave Maria* and took into consideration the compulsory nature of a graduation ceremony."[117] The court utilized the three-prong Lemon Test and determined that the school district and Superintendent Whitehead did not act with hostility towards religion and did not violate the Establishment Clause.

One justice disagreed with the majority, stating that "the practical effect [of this decision] will be for public school administrators to chill—or even kill—music and artistic presentations by their students … where those presentations contain any trace of religious inspiration, for fear of criticism by a member of the public."[118] The Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal of *Nurre v. Whitehead*, although Justice Samuel Alito

[115] *Nurre v. Whitehead* (2009).
[116] Ibid.
[117] Ibid.
[118] Ibid.

did express concern over the decision. Alito wrote, "School administrators in some communities may choose to avoid controversy by banishing all musical pieces with religious connotations."[119]

In a 2013 article in *Philosophy of Music Education Review,* Perrine considered philosophical issues regarding free speech and religion raised in *Nurre v. Whitehead*. Perrine disagreed with the court's decision to allow the Everett School District to limit repertoire at graduation. The analysis focuses on two questions in relation to United States public education: "What is religious music?" and "Do students have a right to musical expression protected by the First Amendment?"[120] Perrine noted that the Supreme Court has never ruled on the constitutionality of performing sacred music in the public schools, but that the handful of lower court rulings on this topic are relevant to music educators regardless of jurisdiction.[121] The notion of defining religious and secular music is a major theme of the article. The author noted the blurriness of lines and complexity of history and justified the performance of sacred music from the lens of Western (Christian) art music. Because of the blurriness between the religious and the secular, musical works "should be evaluated within the cultural context in which they were created."[122]

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[119] *Nurre v. Whitehead*, 1130 U.S. 1937 (2010).

[120] William M. Perrine, "Religious Music and Free Speech: Philosophical Issues in *Nurre v. Whitehead*," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 21, no. 2 (Fall 2013), 178–196.

[121] Perrine, 179–180.

[122] Ibid., 188.

Stratechuk v. Board of Education (2009)

The South Orange-Maplewood School District, located in New Jersey, instituted a policy in 2001 to follow a religiously neutral curriculum. This policy included the condition that "music programs prepared or presented by student groups as an outcome of the curriculum shall not have a religious orientation or focus on religious holidays."[123] In 2003, a parent complained about a December band concert in the South Orange-Maplewood School District. The concert in question included *Sounds of Hanukkah* (a medley of three Hanukkah songs) and *A Christmas Sing-a-long* (featuring "Joy to the World," "Silent Night," "Oh, Come All Ye Faithful," and "Hark the Herald Angels Sing").

Because of the parent complaint, the school district required the system fine arts director to review and approve all December concert programs for compliance with district policy. Additionally, the fine arts director issued a series of clarifications, such as one regarding printed program design: "Your printed programs for any Holiday concert must avoid graphics which refer to the holidays, such as Christmas Trees and dreidels."[124] The fine arts director did allow songs with religious lyrics such as "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night" for classroom use, but not for public concerts of vocal or instrumental music. In December 2004, the fine arts director approved selections for public concert performance that included "Jingle Bell Rock," "Winter Wonderland," "Hava Nagila," and "Frosty the Snowman."[125]

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[123] *Stratechuk v. Board of Education South Orange-Maplewood School District*, 587 F.3d 597 (3rd Cir. 2009).

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

In response to the policy and practice of the South Orange-Maplewood School District, Michael Stratechuk—a parent—alleged that the school district violated his rights and the rights of his children under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Stratechuk claimed that the district was engaged in the "impermissible, government-sponsored message of disapproval of and hostility towards religion, including Christianity."[126] The Third Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the lower court's decision that sided with the school district. In 2010, the United States Supreme Court refused to hear the appeal of that decision.

Citing application of the *Lemon* test, the Third Circuit Court of Appeals found that the school district was acting to avoid the endorsement of any particular religion, as well as opposed to endorsing an anti-religious curriculum. Stratechuk had cited several court cases that upheld the right to perform religious music in public school concerts, including *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, *Doe v. Duncanville ISD*, and *Bauchman v. West High School*. The court noted that these cases upheld the policy of the respective school districts. These cases, noted the court, do not substantiate the claim that "the First Amendment compels a school district to permit religious holiday music or risk running afoul of the First Amendment."[127] The court sided with the school district, noting that

> Certainly, those of us who were educated in the public schools remember holiday celebrations replete with Christmas carols, and possibly even Chanukah songs, to which no objection has been raised. Since then, the governing principles have been examined and defined with more particularity. Many decisions about how to best create an inclusive environment in public schools, such as those at issue here, are left to the sound discretion of the school authorities.[128]

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[126] *Stratechuck v. Board of Education* (2009)
[127] Ibid.
[128] Ibid.

Sacred Music Case Law: Additional Literature

Cranmore and Fossey acknowledged the evolving views on sacred music in the public schools, coupled with evolving legal interpretations. They claimed that the myriad federal court decisions have provided music educators with "useful guidance on the use of religious music in the public school curriculum."[129] "One of the best protections for school districts," is the creation of "a neutral policy on religiously themed music."[130] The authors cited *Florey v. Sioux Falls, Doe v. Aldine Independent School District, Doe v. Duncanville Independent School District, Bauchman v. West High School, S.D. v. St. Johns County School District, Stratechuk v. Board of Education,* and *Nurre v. Whitehead* as landmark cases regarding sacred music in public K-12 institutions. The authors concluded, "The performance or rehearsal of religious music in a public school setting is not in itself a violation of the Establishment Clause, as long as that music is used for secular purposes."[131]

Cranmore and Fossey did not reconcile the contradiction between secular purposes and the seasonal performance of sacred holiday music. The authors did acknowledge the importance of context and emphasize the importance of educational content and connection to the curriculum.[132] The authors glossed over the temporal, seasonal nature of holiday music without any suggestions, other than for teachers to be familiar with local and state policies, as well as the National Association for Music

[129] Jeff Cranmore and Richard Fossey, "Religious Music, the Public Schools, and the Establishment Clause: A Review of Federal Case Law," *Update: Applications of Research in Music Education*, (July 11, 2014): 1–4.

[130] Cranmore & Fossey, 1.

[131] Ibid., 4.

[132] See Cranmore & Fossey's second research question regarding circumstances of performance (p. 2).

Education position statement (details below).

Kasparian reviewed the constitutionality of performing sacred choral music in the public schools. "Is a song with a sacred text only a vehicle for religious worship and divine praise, or an independent secular aesthetic entity as well?"[133] The author argued that the performance of sacred music diffuses the religious nature of the lyrics.[134] In other words, the recitation of religious text might be inappropriate in the very same public school setting in which it might be appropriate to sing those same lyrics set to music.

Evaluating the issue from the perspective of legal precedent, Kasparian noted the absence of any Supreme Court decision on the issue of sacred music in the public schools. Due to the lack of Supreme Court decision and general confusion about policies or lack thereof, many teachers might omit or regulate sacred music from their curriculum, referred to as the "chilling effect."[135] Since Kasparian's article was published, court decisions in *Nurre v. Whitehead* and *Stratechuk v. Board of Education* have reinforced local school board decisions to determine policy.

Articles and Dissertations

A variety of articles and dissertations address the topic of sacred music in the public schools, either primarily or tangentially. Haynes and Thomas's report titled "Religious Holidays in the Public Schools" is the most frequently cited. Seventeen educational and religious organizations sponsored this report, including the American

[133] Faith D. Kasparian, "The Constitutionality of Teaching and Performing Sacred Choral Music in Public Schools," *Duke Law Journal* 46, no. 5 (March, 1997), 1115.
[134] Kasparian, 1158–1159.
[135] Ibid., 1117.

Jewish Congress, Catholic League for American and Civil Rights, Central Conference for American Rabbis, Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Christian Legal Society, Islamic Society of North America, National Education Association, and the National School Boards Association.[136] In this report, the authors noted that public school concerts and performances may include religious music for a secular, educational purpose, but "concerts dominated by religious music, especially when they coincide with a particular religious holiday, should be avoided."[137] Some music teachers rationalize the performance of Christmas music in December with the inclusion of Hanukkah songs. According to the authors, "This approach is wrong … Hanukkah is not a major Jewish holiday and should not be equated with Christmas, one of the two most important holidays in the Christian year."[138]

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) noted that a preponderance of "serious choral music" is religious; therefore, there are "legitimate secular reasons" for public school performance.[139] The crucial difference is the distinction between teaching about religion and celebrating religious holidays. The ADL describes the "December Dilemma" as "the difficult task of acknowledging the various religious and secular holiday traditions celebrated during that time of year."[140] Public school concerts and performances "should

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[136] Charles C. Haynes and Oliver Thomas, *Finding Common Ground: A Guide to Religious Liberty in Public Schools* (Nashville: First Amendment Center, 2001), 10.

[137] Haynes and Thomas, 115.

[138] Ibid., 119.

[139] Anti-Defamation League, "December Dilemma: December Holiday Guidelines for Public Schools," http://archive.adl.org/issue_education/december_dilemma_2004/decdilemma_rev.pdf (accessed September 12, 2014).

[140] Ibid., 2.

not focus on a particular holiday or denomination."[141]

Plummer wrote a critical, historical dissertation regarding the policy and practice of religious music in the public schools and offered several general recommendations, including

1. Students should have the right (and *know* they have the right) to participate or decline to participate when they or their parents feel that a particular activity violates their freedoms of religion or religious beliefs.
2. The music selected for use in public school classrooms must support musical learning objectives. To the greatest extent possible, music should be chosen objectively, for its educational merit, not for its religious significance.[142]

Plummer cautioned teachers against assuming that it is appropriate to perform religious music one year simply because nobody complained about it the previous year. The author described this assumption as the "silent system" and advocated for the creation of environments "where every child belongs."[143] Several recommendations specifically for teachers included: (1) track literature selection over time; (2) think about the message(s) literature selection sends to students; (3) make the literature selection process apparent; and (4) understand that students whose traditions are never represented in the classroom are likely to feel devalued.[144] Administrators can create a dialogue with all stakeholders regarding the possible use of religious music, remain aware of the needs and backgrounds of multiple stakeholders, and maintain productive dialogue between all stakeholders.[145]

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[141] ADL, "December Dilemma," 6.

[142] Amanda K. Plummer, "Sacred Music in Public Schools: A Historical Consideration of Policy and Practice" (EdD diss., University of Illinois, 2003), iii–iv.

[143] Ibid., 179–180.

[144] Ibid., 181–182.

[145] Ibid., 182–183.

The examination of repertoire selection intersects with sacred music in the schools. Three studies about repertoire selection include insight into this process. In a study of high school choral teachers, Forbes listed factors that participants reported were important to repertoire selection, noting that many teachers practiced "an unstructured approach" and that repertoire selection is "more of an art than a science."[146] The author compared and contrasted the value of different styles of music (e.g., classical and pop) but never broached the topic of sacred music in the public school chorus class.

In a qualitative dissertation about choral teacher repertoire selection, Hunsaker included a participant who teaches in New Jersey, "lives in a very diverse community" and "cannot have a Christmas concert, nor is she allowed to have her students sing sacred Christmas music."[147] The author described the repertoire selection process of this teacher as "an inclusive philosophy." The teacher annually programs at least one Hebrew piece and one African piece for each of her choirs.[148]

In a dissertation focused on the repertoire selection of Florida band directors, Carney examined several factors, including suitability and quality of repertoire. Factors related to suitability were most important to directors. The highest-rated factors were those related to "instrumentation of ensemble, experience of ensemble, and amount of available rehearsal time."[149] The author did discuss holiday music: "Literature composed

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[146] Guy W. Forbes, "The Repertoire Selection Practices of High School Choral Directors," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 49, no. 2 (2001): 102–121, p. 118.

[147] Tracy C. Hunsaker, "Process and Criteria of Nationally Recognized High School Choral Directors in the Selection of Performance Literature" (PhD diss., University of Florida, 2007), 171.

[148] Ibid., 171–172.

[149] Patrick K. Carney, "Rankings and Ratings of Literature Selection Criteria among Florida Public School Wind Band Conductors" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 69.

for a specific purpose such as a celebration, holiday, ceremony, or any multitude of reasons can be appropriate if it is selected for those particular intentions."[150] This rationale is opposite the view presented by Haynes and Thomas, and by the Anti-Defamation League. Incidentally, participants in this study used the descriptor "holiday" five times more often than the descriptor "Christmas" when referring to types of programming.[151]

Two dissertations specifically examine the perceptions and beliefs of students and teachers, respectively. Mirabel conducted a phenomenological investigation to determine the perspectives of elementary students about singing sacred music. [152] Positioning the inquiry between opposing policies from the National Association for Music Education and the South Orange-Maplewood School District, discussion included Christmas, Hanukkah, and Kwanzaa music in the classroom. Although Mirabel does not claim to solve any problem, the main thrust of this dissertation is the addition of the voices of elementary students to the dialogue on sacred music in the public schools. The author described the voices of elementary students as "responsible and sensitive … highly sophisticated" and found that these elementary students generally supported a curriculum including sacred music.[153]

Gianuzzi wrote a qualitative, policy-based dissertation regarding teacher

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[150] Carney, 21.

[151] I base this finding upon my own word counting of Carney's open-ended question data. (pp. 99–134).

[152] This school district was the subject of the court case *Stratechuk v. Board of Education*, in which the school board enacted a policy that included elimination of sacred music from the elementary curriculum.

[153] Lori B. Mirabel, "Singing Sacred Songs in Public Schools: Perspectives of Primary School Students" (EdD diss., Columbia University, 2008), 158–159.

perception and attitudes about policies on sacred music in the public schools. The author sent surveys to every instrumental and choral high school music teacher in New Jersey and conducted interviews with a purposeful sample of respondents. Both the survey responses and interview participants represented a balance of instrumental and vocal music teachers. Based on the findings, participants believed sacred music to be important to music education, regardless of policy. Participants programmed sacred music for educational rather than religious purposes. Holiday music "was the most cited genre of sacred music" in the survey results.[154] The author used the sacred/secular binary throughout the dissertation. In the survey, respondents listed the sacred music that they most often programmed with students. The resulting list of "most common" responses contained exclusively Christian selections.[155]

Gianuzzi found that "written or implied policies regarding sacred music had more to do with regulating when teachers can program sacred music and making sure teachers balance programs with a variety of other types of music, than with restricting the participants' decisions to include or exclude sacred music."[156] The concept of an "exemption policy" emerged from the participant responses. In particular, the types of exemptions music teachers use might actually exclude students from the learning environment. These exemptions from sacred music performance included "walking off stage or sitting during a particular performance, sitting quietly and reading during rehearsal, excusing a student from a concert, and excusing students from rehearsals and

[154] Deborah P. Gianuzzi, "Policies, Perceptions of Policies, and Teacher Attitudes: Their Influence on the Use of Sacred Music in Public High Schools" (DMA diss., Boston University, 2014), 74.

[155] Ibid., 83.

[156] Ibid., 143–144.

performances for religious holidays and community events."[157]

The Music Educators Journal: Examining an Archive

I conclude this chapter with a review of the contributions from the National Association of Music Education to the discussion on sacred music in the public schools. These articles both reflect the changing times and lead towards the development of a position statement about sacred music in the public schools. The National Association for Music Education (NAfME) is the largest music education organization in America.[158] According to the organization's history, "NAfME's activities and resources have been largely responsible for the establishment of music education as a profession, for the promotion and guidance of music study as an integral part of education as a profession, [and] for the promotion and guidance of music study as an integral part of the school curriculum."[159] NAfME's primary trade journal, the *Music Educators Journal* (*MEJ*), has published articles on sacred music and holiday music throughout its history, as summarized in the following paragraphs.

In 1915, Peter Dykema presented detailed instructions for school music supervisors to combine student performance of Christmas music with larger community celebrations, including a municipal Christmas tree, caroling, and decorations.[160] In 1917,

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[157] Gianuzzi, 152.

[158] Formerly known as the Music Supervisors' National Conference (MSNC, 1907–1934) and Music Educators National Conference (MENC, 1934–2011), I will use MENC and NAfME interchangeably throughout this dissertation based on the appropriateness of the time period.

[159] National Association for Music Education, "About Us," www.nafme.org/About/ (accessed October 3, 2014).

[160] Peter Dykema, "A Community Christmas: Suggestions for Town Christmas Celebrations," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 2, no. 2 (1915): 9–16.

Edgar B. Gordon suggested a number of pageants, plays, and songs for school music supervisors, including "The Holy Child," "The Christ-Child in Art, Story, and Song," and "The Birth of Christ."[161] In 1946, Robert W. Milton wrote suggestions for public schools to produce and perform a "traditional Christmas vesper service," involving the music, commercial, and woodworking departments.[162]

In a similar article in 1953, Alice Brainerd suggested that teachers transform their usual Christmas concert into a candlelight service. Instructions included Christmas cards handed to each parent upon entrance, as well as a candle-lighting ceremony prior to the start of the concert. Calling for "seven girls, dressed as pages," the candle leader would begin by reciting, "I am the Spirit of Christmas. I came into existence on that first Christmas, centuries ago, when the angels proclaimed the birth of the Christ Child."[163] Brainerd noted that candles and the accompanying texts would enhance the typical Christmas concert.

In the early 1960s, the United States Supreme Court ruled in *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington School District v. Schempp* that school-sponsored prayer is unconstitutional. Although these decisions did not include any comment on sacred music, the conversation in the *MEJ* about sacred music in the public schools shifted permanently.[164] In 1967, James Scamman wrote, "The impact of these decisions is still being realized and will be

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[161] Edgar B. Gordon, "The School and Community Christmas," *Music Supervisors' Journal* 4, no. 2 (1917): 11–14.

[162] Robert W. Milton, "A Christmas Service," *Music Educators Journal* 33, no. 2 (1946): 52.

[163] Alice Brainerd, "Make Your Christmas Programs a Candlelight Service," *Music Educators Journal* 40, no. 1 (1953): 71–73.

[164] See *Engel v. Vitale*, 1962; *Abington School District v. Schempp*, 1963

of concern to educators for years to come."[165] Scamman described in detail the First Amendment and the Establishment Clause, as well as the language involved in the Supreme Court decisions of the early 1960s as it might relate to religious music in the public schools. In regards to Christmas music, Scamman wrote, "The existence of Christmas as far as the public schools are concerned *can* be treated largely as an historical event."[166]

Scamman acknowledged that not all Americans celebrate Christmas, and attempted to provide a counterpoint to the traditional Christian perspective with statements by the American Jewish Congress. The American Jewish Congress opposed school celebrations or events with Christian connotations, in which "Jewish children have the choice of either abstaining or conforming to the pressure of the majority."[167] The author also questioned the practice of merging Christian and Jewish celebrations, citing the American Jewish Congress once more:

> It is plain that the results of the Christian-Chanukah experiment for the Jewish community have been uniformly dismal. Even when well-intentioned, the introduction of Chanukah into the public school results in a lame competition between a menorah on one hand, and the elaborate panopoly of Christmas on the other. As presented in the public schools, generally by a faculty that has no grasp of the meaning of the holiday or of its place in Jewish religious life, Chanukah becomes a kind of appendage to Christmas.[168]

Scamman did not suggest that public schools abandon the inclusion of sacred music in the curriculum; rather, teachers were encouraged to follow guidelines. These included (1) being aware of minorities within the local community when programming

[165] James Scamman, "Religious Music in the Public Schools," *Music Educators Journal* 53, no. 9 (1946): 46–49.
[166] Ibid., 48. (emphasis in original)
[167] Scamman, 48.
[168] Ibid.

repertoire; (2) remembering that the violation of the rights of any individual—atheist, agnostic, or religious minority—is a violation of the United States Constitution; and (3) discouraging any prayers or benedictions at concerts or assemblies.[169] "Prudence and sound judgment exercised in the selection and use of sacred music," wrote Scamman, "can greatly enhance experiences of students without violating the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment."[170]

In a 1968 letter to the *MEJ* editor titled, "Christmas without Carols," LaVigne expressed concern over the removal of Christmas carols from the Duluth, Minnesota, schools. The editor responded that the professional music educator "has a duty to use sacred music, including Christmas carols, but he must use it educationally in a way that does not assume the character of a religious observance."[171] The editorial response noted that no organizational policy existed "in defense of Christmas carols in the public schools, [but] serious consideration is being given to the need for some kind of action in this regard."[172]

In this historical review of related literature in the *MEJ*, it is relevant to mention Abraham Schwadron's article "On Religion, Music, and Education" published in 1970 in the *Journal of Research in Music Education* (*JRME*, a peer-reviewed research journal of NAfME). This article builds upon the foundation set by Scamman, in which religious music in the public schools is simply a dichotomy between Christian majority and Jewish

[169] Scamman, 49.
[170] Ibid.
[171] Judith La Vigne, "Christmas Without Carols?" *Music Educators Journal* 55, no. 1 (1968): 11–12.
[172] Ibid.

minority, without discussion of other faiths or non-adherents.[173] Schwadron's article remains relevant, as NAfME quotes it at length to form the summarizing paragraphs of the position statement of sacred music in the public schools.[174]

In 1976, John Aquino's article in the *MEJ* titled "Can We Still Sing Christmas Carols in Public Schools?" essentially restated the positions stated by Scamman in 1967 and Schwadron in 1970. While Scamman and Schwadron attempted to represent the Jewish minority in a balanced manner, Aquino labeled and blamed specific groups for speaking against Christmas programs and concerts. In particular, Aquino targeted Jewish groups and the American Civil Liberties Union. A full-page artist's rendition of a choir performance was covered with a red stamp marked "CANCELED."[175]

The *MEJ* published several letters to the editor in response to Aquino's article; these letters rejected the claims that Christmas music has an integral place in the public schools. Gwirtz asserted that Aquino's lack of flexibility in the seasonal programming of Christmas music "constitutes a practice of religion in the public schools."[176] Gwirtz took issue with Aquino's use of the words "historical" and "cultural."

> The statement that [Christmas] is part of the American culture is an important one to understand. The word 'part' is the important one here. It is incorrect to assume that this is true for the total population. Those of us who do not celebrate the holiday do not wish to find it thrust on us and our children by the public institutions that we support with our tax dollars during an emotionally charged period of Christian religious worship.[177]

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[173] Abraham Schwadron, "On Religion, Music, and Education," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 18, no. 2 (1970): 157–166.

[174] As of October 5, 2014.

[175] John Aquino, "Can We Still Sing Christmas Carols in the Public Schools?" *Music Educators Journal* 63, no. 3 (1977): 70–73.

[176] Lois Weiss Gwirtz, "Christmas Music," *Music Educators Journal* 63, no. 6 (1977): 7–8.

[177] Ibid., 8.

Jeffrey Stiffman responded to Aquino's article, writing, "No child should be made to feel like an outsider in the public schools, and … religious music does that."[178] Aquino had written that Christmas "is a religious holiday for some and a public holiday for all."[179] Richard Silverman disagreed, stating that "I consider Christmas to be a totally religious holiday … I do resent the idea that my child is forced to sing songs expressing Christian beliefs that she doesn't accept."[180]

In 1979, Rebecca Grier utilized the results of a survey sent to state music supervisors as a basis for discussion. Although the article is titled "Sacred Music in the Schools: An Update," it is largely focused on holiday music in December. In a similar manner to Scamman, Grier restated the Supreme Court focus on school prayer and religion from the early 1960s. Topics raised from the survey results include merging of Christian and Jewish holiday music onto the same performance, individual parent and student concerns, and ramifications of proselytizing.[181]

Grier discussed appropriateness from the standpoint of the text; the discussion did not include instrumental music. Grier also noted, "Student interest in [Christmas] music is highest when it relates to holiday activities outside the school."[182] It may be questionable for students to rehearse Christmas music for months in advance, or for these concerts to take place off school property in churches. The author also interrogated the practice of renaming the "Christmas Concert" to "Holiday Concert" or "Winter Concert,"

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[178] Jeffrey B. Stiffman, "Christmas Music," *Music Educators Journal* 63, no. 9 (1977): 18.

[179] Aquino, 71.

[180] Richard Silverman, "Christmas Music," *Music Educators Journal* 63, no. 6 (1977): 8.

[181] Rebecca Grier, "Sacred Music in the Schools: An Update," *Music Educators Journal* 66, no. 3 (1979): 48–51.

[182] Ibid., 48.

and noted that the name alone does not determine the perception of the program in entirety.

Grier concluded with suggestions for music teachers in districts or states without a defined policy.[183] These suggestions were culled from existing policies based upon the survey, and included the following questions: (1) Does performing this music at a concert accomplish goals that could not be met with in-class instruction? (2) In the context of this program, have I avoided reflecting one religious viewpoint? (3) Will no student be isolated or offended by participating or not participating in this activity?[184]

In 1984, Music Educators National Conference (MENC, organization now known as NAfME) adopted a position statement on religious music in the public schools and published it in the November edition of the *MEJ*.[185] The position statement and corresponding article consisted of two pages of rationale based upon the First Amendment, the *Lemon* test, and relevant case law. The position statement is:

> It is the position of the Music Educators National Conference that the study of religious music is a vital and appropriate part of the total music experience in both performance and listening. To omit sacred music from the repertoire or study of music would present an incorrect and incomplete concept of the comprehensive nature of the art.[186]

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[183] For example, Grier noted that supervisors in the "Bible Belt" (Mississippi, Arkansas, Kansas, Georgia, Texas, Florida, Louisiana, South Carolina, and North Carolina) reported no concerns or complaints about religious music in the schools. Consequently, supervisors in these states had not enacted any policies or guidelines.

[184] Grier, 48–51.

[185] The November 1984 edition of the *MEJ* also featured an article by Charles Reynolds titled "How to Avoid Cooking Your Holiday Goose." Reynolds discussed the need for teachers to work proactively with their school boards to develop guidelines for the use of sacred music in the schools.

[186] Music Educators National Conference, "Religious Music in the Schools," *Music Educators Journal* 71, no. 3 (1984): 28–30. The committee that authored this position statement consisted of Alex B. Campbell, Leon Adams Jr., Stuart Ling, Jonanna Rainey, Lorainne P. Wilson, and Abraham Schwadron.

Throughout the article, MENC generally restated much of the legal language from previous articles by Scamman and Schwadron. The position statement remains largely focused on vocal performance, or music with text. This focus on choral music included a full-page photograph of high school choral musicians performing in robes, with a background of red and green Christmas colors. Even though the policy is about all sacred music, much of the background content reflects Christmas music. For example, the sheet music to "Silent Night" is a background graphic.[187] Nothing in the position statement proper, however, contains references to Christmas music. The article does extensively quote Schwadron's 1970 article, including the following rationale:

> If it is possible to study Communism without indoctrination or to examine the ills of contemporary society without promoting the seeds of revolution, then it must also be possible to study sacred music (with performance-related activities) without parochialistic attitudes and sectarian points of view.[188]

Schwadron was a member of the six-person Committee on Religious Music in the Schools that constructed the 1984 position statement. This comparison to the study of Communism remains quoted on the NAfME website as part of the position statement regarding sacred music in the public schools.[189]

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[187] Ironically, without text.

[188] "Religious Music in the Schools," 30. Originally from Abraham Schwadron, "On Religion, Music, and Education," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 18, no. 2 (1970): 157–166.

[189] The Communism comparison begs the question: Is this the best defense of sacred music in the public schools? Even at the height of the Cold War, the majority of social studies teachers in the United States were likely not Communists. Nor were social studies teachers explaining communism through staged, public performances in which the students performed the part of Communist citizens. Many music teachers, however, are practicing Christians. Many of their students are practicing Christians. Christianity is an accepted religious identity throughout the United States. The performance of sacred music—or any music—requires different, active participation than the studying of concepts and facts about Communism. The continued use of the Communism example is outdated and inappropriate.

In 1996, the *MEJ* reprinted the1984 position statement article with different pictures and some reorganization of text. The 1996 position statement remains the current position statement as listed on NAfME's website. The official position statement contains only minor semantic changes from the 1984 position statement:

> It is the position of Music Educators National Conference that the study and performance of religious music within an educational context is a vital and appropriate part of a comprehensive music education. The omission of sacred music from the school curriculum would result in an incomplete educational experience.[190]

Conclusion

The related literature surrounding the topic of this dissertation is broad, varied, and fluid. There is not one definitive source, policy, or court case. In this chapter, I included an overview of religion and the American public schools, as well as a review of related dissertations. I examined case law and related literature involving sacred music and K-12 public education, and traced the archive of the *Music Educators Journal* as it pertains to the issue of sacred music in public schools. The literature in this chapter positions public school Christmas music as both established and problematic, but does not attend to how this practice came to be.

[190] Music Educators National Conference, "Religious Music in the Public Schools," *Music Educators Journal* 83, no. 3 (1996): 1–4.

CHAPTER THREE:
Framework and Method

This study is a genealogical inquiry of Christmas music performances in American public schools. What is the contemporary significance of this practice? How did this come to be? What are the conditions of possibility for the future? These questions imply an approach drawn from the philosophical tradition of genealogy—the history of the present. Genealogy is a "philosophico-historical inquiry" into conditions of possibility for the present.[191] I look towards the work of the French historian-philosopher Michel Foucault (1926-1984) for the framework for this study.

Foucault's *oeuvre* is broad and diverse. His interests ranged from the development of sexuality, imprisonment, human subjectivity, and governmentality. His genealogies are empirically grounded, temporal, and historical. Foucault "expressed frustration that so much effort was devoted to writing about what he might mean rather than doing the sort of practical analytical work that he advocated so vigorously."[192] In other words, Foucault's work resulted in the articulation of concepts, such as discipline and biopolitics, that scholars continue to revisit in the years since his death in 1984.[193] His work, however, *also* resulted in a methodological toolbox that can be used to analyze other contexts and temporalities without necessarily transplanting the same concepts or results.

In order to isolate the specific methodological tools that I shall use, yet still

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[191] Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 6–7.

[192] Stephen J. Ball, *Foucault, Power, and Education* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 18.

[193] Colin Koopman & Thomas Matza, "Putting Foucault to Work: Analytic and Concept in Foucaultian Inquiry," *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 4 (2013): 823.

recognizing Foucault's overall contributions, I reference a taxonomy developed by Koopman and Matza. This taxonomy classifies Foucault's work as follows. *Methods* are higher-order analytics that facilitate inquiry; exemplars include archaeology and genealogy. *Categories* are conceptual lenses functioning as analytical grids of intelligibility. Foucault's categories include power, knowledge, self, and practices. *Doctrines* are philosophical foundations, including Foucault's nominalism (the theory that there are no universal essences in reality) and historicism (the idea that an object or concept has developed through history, as opposed to existing naturally or universally). *Topics* are elective subject matter, such as psychiatry, medicine, punishment, and sexuality. *Concepts* are complex formulations emerging out of or produced by inquiry, such as discipline, biopower, and governmentality.[194]

This taxonomy clarifies that genealogy, as a method, does not require transplantation of Foucault's concepts. It is not necessary, required, or even appropriate to assume one will find Foucault's results—such as biopower or discipline—in different temporal and historical contexts. When Foucault traced the history and development of the prison, he analyzed the relationships between a variety of practices in schools, monasteries, hospitals, and industry, some of which included architectural designs, daily schedules, ritualized confession, methods for controlling plague, and statistics. From his analysis of the relationships between these practices and many others, Foucault articulated the developing concept of discipline to explicate these relationships.[195] It

[194] Koopman & Matza, 824.

[195] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1995).

would be inappropriate to transplant Foucault's concept of discipline to different problems and contexts.[196] These concepts developed out of temporally specific historicities. The genealogical methods Foucault used, however, are transplantable to a variety of situations and contexts.

Genealogy as a Method

This study is not a genealogy; a genealogy proper is a broad, depth problem much larger than the interrogation of one practice.[197] Rather, I utilize genealogical methods to trace the multiple relationships constituting the present practice of Christmas music in the public schools. By utilizing genealogical methods, I am also drawing upon its philosophical tradition. Genealogy, according to Foucault, "disturbs what was considered immobile; it fragments what was thought unified; it shows the heterogeneity of what was imagined consistent with itself."[198] Koopman noted, "The idea of bringing our submerged problems into view … is the thread that runs through all genealogies."[199]

The philosophical tradition of genealogy encompasses debates regarding the combination of philosophy and history.[200] Differences include genealogies that are subversive and vindicatory.[201] I look towards Foucault's genealogical methodology in

[196] It is, of course, possible that a Foucaultian concept (e.g., discipline, biopower) could be appropriately used to articulate other problems in different contexts. However, these concepts should not be transplanted without careful and rigorous analysis of the problem at hand.

[197] Koopman, 1–5.

[198] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Donald F. Brouchard & Sherry Simon (New York: New Press, 1998), 375.

[199] Koopman, 1–2.

[200] Ibid., 59.

[201] Koopman (chapter two) offered contrasting examples of the debate encompassing the

particular, which focuses on *problematization.* Recent genealogical scholarship drawing on Foucault's tradition of problematization includes work by Ian Hacking and Paul Rabinow.[202]

Archaeology towards Genealogy

Prior to developing his genealogies, Foucault's methodological focus until 1970 was archaeology. According to Prado, "archaeology is the mapping of the enabling conditions for the production of truth and knowledge."[203] Archaeology is the study of the rules and regulations governing discourse. Foucault explored archaeology as a method in *Madness and Civilization* (1961), *The Birth of the Clinic* (1963), *The Order of Things* (1966), and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969).[204] His archaeological methods focused on discourse, studied separately from social practices. Foucault utilized archaeological methodology in his early works to trace the "rules and norms" of specific archives.[205] These archaeological archives represented isolated segments of time, lacking continuity across temporalities. Koopman described archaeological methodology as unable to "muster the kind of critical inquiry facilitated by genealogy."[206]

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philosophical tradition of genealogy (specifically Nietzsche as subversive and Williams as vindicatory).

[202] Ian Hacking, for example, expressed preference for the term "Historical Ontology," rather than genealogy. Ian Hacking, *Historical Ontology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), 1–26.

[203] C. G. Prado, *Starting with Foucault: An Introduction to Genealogy*. 2nd ed. (Boulder: Westview Press, 2000), 28.

[204] Roger Mantie, "Styling Lives: Selected Discourses in Instrumental Music Education" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2009), 104.

[205] Todd May, *The Philosophy of Foucault* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 94.

[206] Koopman, 36.

As Foucault shifted from archaeological to genealogical methods, he became more concerned with the tracing of historical transformations across temporalities, and how "particular discourses of knowledge arise within concrete social practices."[207] This development of knowledge from within practices led towards Foucault's interest in the relationship between knowledge and power—the major category of his genealogies. "By focusing on practices rather than on bodies of knowledge," wrote May, "what we think we know and what we do are in constant interaction."[208] According to Davidson, "genealogy does not so much displace archaeology as widen the kind of analysis to be pursued."[209] Foucault's single focus on knowledge in archaeology expanded to the analysis of multiple vectors in genealogy.[210] If archaeology is the study of existence, genealogy is the study of emergence. "Archaeology lays bare a field of practices," noted Koopman, "while genealogy tracks the flow of these fields into the present practices that are their target."[211]

Problematization

A genealogical approach explores submersed depth problems, for which easy answers are not readily apparent, if at all. At the core of Foucaultian genealogy is problematization: "A problematization is both an object of inquiry (that is, an underlying depth problem that inquiry illuminates) and an act of inquiry (that is, that which renders

[207] May, 91–92.
[208] Ibid.
[209] Arnold Davidson, "Archaeology, Genealogy, Ethics" in *Foucault: A Critical Reader*, ed. David Hoy (Malden: Blackwell, 1986), 227.
[210] These vectors, in particular, include the relationships between power and knowledge, as discussed in the *Categories* section.
[211] Koopman, 47.

the seemingly natural more problematic)."[212] The "seemingly natural" is a reference to Foucault's nominalism. Foucault was committed to the historical contingency of practices, in opposition to any universal truths or principles. "It's a matter of shaking this false self-evidence," Foucault wrote, "of demonstrating its … complex interconnection with a multiplicity of historical processes."[213] By rendering the seemingly natural more problematic, Foucault aimed to illustrate the difficulty, contingency, and complexity of many of our problems. Straightforward, easy solutions have no place in a Foucaultian genealogy. Rather, Foucault's work "intensifies the extraordinarily thorny problems of the relations between structure and agency, discipline and liberation, and power and freedom."[214]

Labeling a practice as problematic does not automatically imply normative judgment. Foucault did not write genealogies for the purpose of vindicating or subverting, but to "describe the conditions of possibility … of our capacities for various forms of judgment."[215] I do not judge whether Christmas music in the public schools is appropriate or inappropriate. In this study, rather, I am describing the conditions in which it is possible for people and groups to make those judgments.

In the tradition of genealogy, conditions of possibility are contingent and complex. In Foucault's genealogies, "the target of analysis wasn't 'institutions', 'theories', or 'ideology', but practices—with the aim of grasping the conditions that make

[212] Koopman & Matza, 827.
[213] Michel Foucault, "Questions of Method," in *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: New Press, 1978/1994), 225–226.
[214] Koopman, 22–23.
[215] Ibid., 17–18.

these acceptable at a given moment."[216] A genealogical approach allows for the tracing of the contingent construction of the practice through a variety of relationships and temporalities. By showing how a practice is contingently constructed, possibilities for the future clarify. According to Koopman, "Foucault problematized in order to conceptualize and make intelligible that which contingently conditions our present."[217] For it is the present that is both the starting point of departure and the ending point in genealogy. Once again, according to Koopman:

> Genealogies are, in every prominent instance, addressed to today despite ostensibly being histories about the past. The present, or the difference that today makes with respect to who we are, is a key organizing idea for genealogy in the work of all genealogists. As such, genealogies function as critical histories of the present. Genealogies start with the present in order to trace the conditions of the emergence of the present in which we are present.[218]

Foucault's genealogical approach encourages analysis of relationships between "forms of knowledge (*savoirs*), studied in terms of their *specific modes of veridiction*" and **"**relations of power, not studied as an emanation of a substantial and invasive power, but in the procedures by which people's conduct is governed."[219] Koopman & Matza's taxonomy classifies power and knowledge as categories, or lenses for analysis. Analysis of these categories is contingent upon the relationships uncovered through inquiry. Uncovering relations of power and knowledge is not an end unto itself. In other words, "While power [and knowledge] is an undeniably critical aspect of genealogy, its long shadow must not prevent attending to Foucault's larger genealogical purpose: challenging

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[216] Foucault, "Questions of Method," 225–226.
[217] Koopman, 24.
[218] Ibid.
[219] Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: The Government of Self and Others II*, ed. Frederic Gros, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 1984/2008), 9. Emphasis in original.

traditional methods, assumptions, and established conceptions of truth and knowledge."[220] The categories of power and knowledge are lenses to make sense of the contingent, complex relations forming and enabling the conditions of the history of our present.

Power

Foucault's conception of power is possibly the contribution for which he is most well known. He put a great deal of effort defining what power is *not*. Power is not a theory. Power is not a commodity or possession. Power is not top-down or hierarchical. Power is not exterior to other relations.[221] Rather, power is productive; it is part of what we do in our everyday practices. With our participation in these practices, we are active participants in power relations. In a Foucaultian sense, because power is everywhere, one might exclaim that there really is nothing to identify. It is not a matter of identifying power, but understanding its operation: "If one is to understand the operation of power within [practices], it requires a patient historical analysis of the way power arises within and across practices, not a sweeping generalization about everything being simply a matter of power."[222]

Our practices define who we are in our present. The power relations embedded within our practices contributes to our conditioning of who we are, even as we participate in or resist these practices. Power relations both enable and constrain everyday practices,

[220] Mantie, 118.
[221] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume I* (New York: Vintage Books: 1976/1990), 93–95.
[222] May, 83–84.

such as shopping at a grocery store, selecting performance repertoire for a school chorus, or watching television. The choices we make at a grocery store, music retailer, or on television are limited and have formed from a multitude of actions and practices. However, the choices we make influence future actions. A television show that receives poor viewing ratings will be canceled; similar shows might not be filmed, and space for new possibilities will be opened up. Operations of power, historically embedded in practices, can be unraveled through genealogical inquiry.

Power, in a Foucaultian sense, does not operate as the arm of some unseen hierarchy or organization, nor does it operate as a transcendental, guiding category. Its "intentionality" comes from its orientation, the momentum it gains from being formed from "actions upon actions."[223] Although there is an intentionality to power, it does not operate consciously. For example, one might argue that the power relations embedded in practices of the twenty-first century Christmas controversy are oriented towards neoliberalism, or "gloves-off" capitalism, in which right-wing Christians enforce the religious aspects of Christmas using tactics similar to those used in the same-sex marriage debate.

Foucault stated, "Where there is power, there is resistance."[224] May interpreted that statement to mean simply that resistance often is found coupled with power relations.[225] Resistance may be in the form of social enforcement of religious (or perceived religious) Christmas traditions, or in the refusal by a school system to allow

[223] May, 83.
[224] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 95.
[225] May, 85.

certain types of music in December. Although we are free to make our own choices, the actions we take and the choices we make occur on a web of possibilities that has been constructed and constrained by previous actions. Much like driving on a large, crowded multi-lane interstate highway, the actions of a car driving several miles ahead condition and constrain the choices made for cars miles behind. Instead of viewing power as a major accident caused when a car swerves into the median, consider that it is the constant changes of speed, velocity, and trajectory as cars enter, merge, and exit.

Foucault refused to offer a theory of power, offering instead "an analytics of power."[226] Power relations are contingently constructed throughout history. These relationships exist empirically. According to May,

> We often know what we do and why we are doing it; what we do not know is what our doing it does. What *our doing it does* is reinforce power relations that elude our cognitive grasp, not because we are distant from them but for the opposite reason that they are so much a part of who we are. It is the project of a genealogy to display those relations before us in their proximity, their complexity, and their historical contingency.[227]

Power/Knowledge

In a Foucaultian sense, knowledge resides in our practices. We cannot know something separately or from outside the practices from which we are constituted. As practices change, knowledge changes. Because knowledge is embedded within our practices, what occurs in those practices affects how we go about the project of knowing. According to May, "our knowing is not only inseparable from our practices generally; it

[226] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 82. Also, Koopman summarized Foucault's lack of theory as "Foucault in fact made the point that power is not the kind of thing valuably theorized, if by that we mean creating conceptions of power without empirically inquiring into the actual functionings of power in carefully delineated contexts." (p. 9)

[227] May, 85.

is inseparable from the norms and doings and sayings those practices consist in."[228] By extension, "if knowledge occurs within our practices, and power arises within those same practices, then there must be an intimate connection between knowledge and power."[229]

Foucault referred to this relationship as power/knowledge. Foucault rejected the assumption that knowledge exists in a "pure" state, in a form that can be studied separately from the practices in which it resides and the power relations that interact with its formation. By focusing on relationships between knowledge and power, I seek to explain the conditions of possibility from outside the rules and regulations that govern the practice itself. For example, consider a hypothetical study that examines programming practices in Christmas concerts. This study might assume that Christmas concerts are an essential part of the school music curriculum and calendar. This study might operate from the assumption that Christmas concerts should present a balance of sacred and secular music. However, if we do not assume anything, and instead look at how these assumptions have formed, we are examining the relationship between power and knowledge. Foucault described power/knowledge as the relationship between "forms of knowledge, studied in terms of their specific modes of veridiction" and "relations of power, not studied as an emanation of a substantial and invasive power, but in the procedures by which people's conduct is governed."[230]

If we sought only to explicate knowledge from the context of the practice in which it is contained, we would be constrained by that very practice and knowledge. That

[228] May, 20.
[229] Ibid.
[230] Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, 8–9.

is not to say that it is possible to remove oneself from the knowledge that constitutes us; but, by examining relationships and problematizing, we can explicate the conditions of possibility that made such a practice and knowledge possible in the first place. May described the power/knowledge relationship in terms of genealogy. "Foucault's genealogies are tied to the politics of truth. It is not simply practices that Foucault is interested in: it is the politics and epistemology of those practices, and especially the bond between their politics and their epistemology."[231]

Consider, for example, religious freedom in the United States as it relates to the assumption of a sacred/secular divide. Power intertwines with freedom of religion, as well as with freedom from religion. Freedom does not exist in a vacuum; the powers used to negotiate perceived religious freedom condition what we *know* religious freedom to be. In other words, the powers that we at times use to defend religious freedom condition and delineate what we know as religion and freedom. Religion becomes a "thing" we can sort into two piles, sacred and secular. Freedom becomes a condition in which we can have both "freedom of religion" and "freedom from religion."

In Foucault's study of the prison, he used the concept of discipline to articulate the various relationships that constituted the development of modern penology. Through the course of his analysis, he identified *normalization* as an exemplar of the power/knowledge relationship. Powers of normalization are contained in our practices, which then create what we know to be normal, or, how far we are from the norm. Then, this knowledge further conditions the powers of normalization that are contained in future

[231] May, 63.

practices. Normalization—where each of us measures according to "what is normal"—is a reference to both the knowledge produced as well as the powers of normalization influenced by this knowledge.

I mention normalization as an example of the effects of power and knowledge. I do not mention normalization because that is what I expect to find in this study of Christmas music in the public schools. Each problem exists empirically in its own context. In general, any time a music teacher selects repertoire for performance, there is an effect on the students. Choices have effects, and choices do not happen in a vacuum. Determining the effect of those choices would be an interesting project. This project, however, studies the conditions of possibility that enabled the field of choices and actions here in our present.

Relations of actions upon actions, in a circular relationship with knowledge, form the power/knowledge relationship. Legitimacy is another exemplar of the power/knowledge relationship. For example, in a Christmas concert, it is generally legitimate for a student who is a Jehovah's Witness to exempt the preparation and performance of the music. This legitimacy forms through knowledge about religious freedom that condition—and have previously been conditioned—by actions upon actions. Mantie identified regimes of truth as an effect of the power/knowledge relationship: *"Legitimacy* can thus be understood as a perceived, but historically determined, hierarchical relation of power-knowledge. Considered in this way, forms of legitimacy, although material, are always contingent and at risk, the degree of which is determined by

the entrenchment of normative *regimes of truth*.[232]"

Foucault was not concerned with any type of universal or transcendental truth. In a Foucaultian sense, truth is a product of the power/knowledge relationship, found within practices. Like practices, truth is contextual and temporal. Foucault wrote, "My problem is to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth."[233] Within a regime of truth of the intersection of Christmas music and music education, it would be odd to perform *A Christmas Festival* at a spring concert in May.[234] However, it is considered natural—and in some cases, expected—to perform that selection in December. "The particular type of truth that Foucault is concerned with," wrote Marshall, is the relationships of "power/knowledge which permit such statements to emerge and be legitimated as truth."[235]

I emphasize that power/knowledge does not represent an all-encompassing force, devoid of freedom. However, we are perhaps not as free as we think we are either. Foucault referred to this dichotomy as the "agonism between power relations and the intransitivity of freedom."[236] This duality raises questions vital to genealogy. When we make choices in our present, what are the conditions of possibility that constrain our choices? Ultimately, can we not make any choice, even an absurd or dangerous one?

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[232] Roger Mantie, "Bands and/as Music Education: Antinomies and the Struggle for Legitimacy," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 20, no. 1 (2012), 65. (Emphasis in original)

[233] Foucault, "Questions of Method," 230.

[234] A Christmas Festival, written by Leroy Anderson, can be performed by band or orchestra, with chorus. It features a medley of Christmas songs, including Hark, the Herald Angels Sing, O Come all Ye Faithful, and Silent Night.

[235] James Marshall, *Michel Foucault: Personal Autonomy and Education* (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1996), 93.

[236] Michel Foucault, "The Subject and Power," In *Power*, ed. James D. Faubion, (New York: New Press, 1983/1994), 343.

What are the costs of such choices? How do the conditions of possibility determine what those costs are? These questions are not research questions proper, but they serve as a reminder of our subjectivity.

The Subject

In his study of the prisons and his first genealogy on sexuality, Foucault was accused of neglecting the role of the subject in the relationship between power and knowledge. In his late lectures at the College de France, as well as in his second and third volumes of the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault focused on the effects of power/knowledge on the subject. The interaction of these categories, according to Foucault, is the interaction of "fields of knowledge, types of normativity, and forms of subjectivity."[237] Subjectivity is an orientation that remains prominently in the intersection of analysis of power/knowledge relations. How might power/knowledge condition subjectivity? How are we formed by our actions in relation to the actions of others, which is in circular conditioning with the knowledge of the practices in which we participate? May summarized the position of the subject as part of genealogy: "One does not create new practices on one's own. One does not alter the practices one participates in without it having effects on others. One does not understand one's own complex history without recourse to the work of those who have also attempted to understand theirs. If who we are is a collective project, then so is the project of being otherwise than who we are."[238]

The subject, in a Foucaultian sense, is not referring to persons or groups of

[237] Michel Foucault, *The Use of Pleasure: Volume 2 of the History of Sexuality* (New York: Vintage Books 1984/1990), 4.

[238] May, 21–22.

people, such as students. It is an acknowledgement, an additional lens of analysis that recognizes the role subjectivity plays in the relationship of power and knowledge in our practices. In this project, I trace how the present context of Christmas music in the public schools came to be. Although I do not use interviews, questionnaires, or focus groups, I remain aware of the role subjectivity plays in the formation and continuation of this practice.

Genealogical Methods in this Project

Practices often perpetuate themselves. According to Hinckley, "[music] education retains the strategies of the past and morphs them into the practices of today simply because some things remain constant even in times of change."[239]Although I disagree with the universalist premise of this argument, historical studies in music education often inform present practice.[240] By drawing upon genealogical methods, however, I am examining Christmas music in the public schools in relation to broader contexts. I am not looking at the practice only from within itself. The relationship between practices is the focus of this study.

Christmas music in the public schools is problematic. I do not judge, however, whether the practice is good or bad; my aim is not to subvert or vindicate. Either approach would be incompatible with my nominalist framework. Rather, I am describing

[239] June Hinckley, "Foreward" in Michael L. Mark and Charles E. Gary, *A History of American Music Education*, 3rd ed. (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), xii.

[240] See for example, Phillip M. Hash, "Music Education at the New York Institution for the Blind, 1832–1863," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 62, no. 4 (Jan., 2015), 362–388. "Findings from this study suggest several principles and strategies for teaching music to students with visual impairments today." (p. 378)

the conditions in which it is possible for those judgments to be made by different people and groups. A genealogical approach allows for the examination of a wide variety of artifacts and archives across multiple temporalities and historicities. For example, genealogy allows for the examination of relationships between a Christmas concert video from the 21st century, alongside a concert program from 1955, alongside a newspaper article detailing the use of music in a community Christmas tree celebration from 1914, alongside population data from the three time periods. What seems like random, unordered research is instead a genealogical approach to connecting relationships. A genealogical approach also allows for examination without any assumptions that a practice is natural or absolute. It allows for the application of the lack of assumptions across multiple vectors. For example, a genealogical approach allows for the problematizing of the sacred/secular divide in relation to Christmas music in the public schools, religion in the public schools, and the modern American Christmas.

One might argue that I am primarily utilizing archaeological methods to examine only one practice, one archive. An example of archaeological methods would be a study that examined the discourse of Christmas music as established by the *Music Educators Journal*: one archive found within the music education community. An archaeological study examines the rules and regularities defined by the discourse. I am using genealogical methods to examine a practice in music education *in relation* to other related elements outside of music education. A genealogical approach allows for this comparison of relations and practices. A genealogical orientation is a philosophico-historical approach that keeps an eye to the present. It is this orientation to the present

that directly relates to the guiding questions of Foucaultian genealogy in this study. (1) How did the practice of performing Christmas music in the American public schools come to be? (2) How do these contexts and conditions shape and/or constrain the practice in our present? (3) What are possible conditions of possibility for the future of this practice?

Historical Methods within Genealogy

This dissertation is a philosophico-historical inquiry. Before tracing relationships and describing conditions of possibility, however, I must examine and present empirical evidence. Volk described six main methods for historical research in music education. [241] These included immersion or saturation, content analysis, oral history, collective biography, genealogical sources, and government sources.[242] Within the framework of this study, the immersion or saturation method most closely aligns with the goals of Foucaultian genealogy. According to Volk

> Immersion or saturation refers to the act of simply gathering and reading everything possible on the topic, preferably from solid primary sources. This includes, but is not limited to, books, letters, playbills, newspapers, advertisements, and Internet pages. The historian reads and gathers as much information as possible until he/she is immersed in the topic, and has a complete picture in mind of the historical context, the person investigated, or the event explored.[243]

Foucaultian genealogy is "a history of the present." [244] Christmas music in

[241] For more explanation on historical method, see Roger P. Phelps et al, *A Guide to Research in Music Education,* 5th ed. (Lanham MD: Scarecrow Press, 2005), chapt. 7.

[242] Terese M. Volk, "Looking Back in Time: On Being a Music Education Historian," *Journal of Historical Research in Music Education* 25, no. 1 (Oct., 2003), 55.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Foucault, *Discipline & Punish,* 31.

American public schools is a broad topic and requires extensive reading to trace relationships across temporalities and historicities. In an attempt to uncover these relationships, I examined the following variety of primary sources: newspapers, advertisements, magazines, musical scores, Internet pages, and legal documents. I also examined several books as secondary sources to determine the context of the cultural history of the American Christmas.

Archives of newspapers formed the most numerous primary sources for this dissertation. My study of these archives was initially prompted by reading *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday*, in which Nissenbaum researched almanacs from the eighteenth century.[245] For this dissertation, I examined archives of 148 American newspapers published from 1750-2000, using public and private databases with searchable text. Databases included the Library of Congress, Old Fulton Newspaper Collection, and www.newspapers.com, as well as numerous individual archives accessed via the publisher's website, such as *The New York Times.* Appendix B contains the complete list of newspapers used in this dissertation. These archives proved to be fruitful resources for establishing context, discovering trends, listing repertoire, and identifying additional primary sources. Search terms varied based upon the year and context. For example, the word "Christmas" appears only seven times in the New York *Evening Post* throughout 1801, and each example set valuable context.[246] A century later, *The New York Times* contains the word "Christmas" sixty-

[245] Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 30-33.

[246] All occurrences are advertisements. *The Evening Post*, December 1-26, 1801.

nine times on December 25, 1901. In that instance, searching for "Christmas music" narrowed results relevant to this study.

As I immersed myself in the topic, I often changed search parameters to investigate potential relationships. For example, I was surprised to read a nineteenth century example in which Santa Claus featured prominently in a church Sunday school performance. Updated search parameters, "Sunday school Santa," yielded many more results. As another example, I noted most nineteenth century school performances came under the guise of exhibitions or exercises. As I altered search parameters and searched backwards, I traced the evolution of end-of-term examinations into exhibitions/exercises that included both Christmas music and remnants of testing.

Often, books and music mentioned in a newspaper article or advertisement appeared significant. For example, several papers advertised *Peter Parley's Christmas Tales* in the late 1830s.[247] When I located the book, this source yielded a unique perspective about nostalgia and Christmas music in the nineteenth century. As another example, an advertisement for "Star of the East" in 1831 prompted me to locate the score and play through the nativity song on the piano.[248] These two examples, like many others, are seemingly unrelated to the practice of Christmas music in the schools, but they are vital to understanding context.

The establishment of context is integral to genealogy. In this dissertation, I have established context at both ends of the practice: (1) early nineteenth century music at

[247] See for example, "New Books for Children," *The Evening Post*, December 3, 1838, p. 3.

[248] Bishop Heber and G. J. Webb, *Star of the East* (Boston, C. Bradley, 1831). Accessed via the Library of Congress on December 15, 2014. www.loc.gov/item/sm1831.360360/

Christmastime prior to the practice in our schools, and (2) Christmas music in the public schools in our present. For the former, I relied on newspapers and advertisements, as well as books and musical scores. For the latter, I turned to videos posted on YouTube. In the preceding chapter, I used a variety of legal documents to establish the contexts in the courts.

I deviate in part with Volk's description of immersion quoted above. According to Volk, immersion concludes once the historian "has a *complete* picture in mind of the historical context."[249] Genealogy connects relationships, which are a constellation of practices related to other practices. Based upon my philosophical framework, it is not possible to possess a "complete" picture. However, I did read and gather as much as possible, until I felt confident that I could answer my research questions based on empirical evidence within the philosophical foundations of this dissertation. This decision to stop researching and begin writing is a personal one. Estelle Jorgensen described the process of reading Tolkien as she prepared to write her article on the *Lord of the Rings* and its implications for music education. "I might spend an entire working lifetime studying," wrote Jorgensen. "There came a moment when I realized that if I was ever to break free of it, I must stop now. I had done enough reading to make my own point."[250]

Organization of Inquiry

A genealogical approach allows for the examination of seemingly unrelated

[249] Volk, 55. (emphasis added)

[250] Estelle R. Jorgensen, "Values and Philosophizing about Music Education," *Philosophy of Music Education Review* 22, no. 1 (Spring 2014), 10.

elements, in an effort to explicate the formation of our present from various parts of the past. Genealogist Todd May recalled Michel Foucault's depiction of genealogy: "grey, meticulous, and patiently documentary."[251] The presentation of empirical evidence may appear disjointed and random. I have organized this genealogical inquiry as follows, using a combination of topical and chronological approaches.[252]Chapter four describes selected elements of the cultural history of the American Christmas. These elements include the sacred/secular divide, the origins of the holiday, and the development of the modern American Christmas including a focus on family, children, gift giving, community, and nostalgia. In chapter five, I introduce the music surrounding Christmastime at the beginning of the nineteenth century, from a variety of cultural practices. As the holiday developed, so did its music. In chapter six, I describe the development of Christmas music in the nineteenth century churches and Sabbath schools. I also include the intersection of Santa Claus with music for children. In chapter seven, I present evidence of a variety of ways that Christmas music in the American public schools developed as a practice. First, I briefly detail the tradition of end-of-term public examinations in schools at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then, I trace early instances of Christmas music found in the nineteenth century public schools. In chapter eight, I explore the many different variations on this practice as found in the twentieth century. In chapter nine, I draw conclusions and make recommendations based upon the contexts and conditions discussed.

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[251] Todd May, *The Philosophy of Foucault* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2006), 93.

[252] Kenneth H. Phillips, *Exploring Research in Music Education & Music Therapy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 54.

CHAPTER FOUR:
Selected Elements of the Cultural History of Christmas in America

Christmas music in the United States public schools is arguably a small part of the massive holiday season. Like so many different aspects, themes, and rituals of the season, Christmas music encompasses a multitude of personal meanings and significances. The expectations, traditions, and policies regarding the performance of this music differ widely throughout the present. How did this come to be? What are the conditions of possibility that enabled so many differences? What possibilities exist for the future?

Due to the wide variety of meanings, contexts, and imports of the holiday, I label the performance of Christmas music in the public schools as problematic, or, more complicated than it may seem at first glance. I propose that Christmas music in the public schools has been contingently constructed—that is, formed through intersecting elements. Selected elements of the cultural history behind the complex collection of American Christmas practices will form the background for the analysis of these intersecting relationships. Before tracing the development of Christmas music in the public schools, I shall first highlight aspects of the development of Christmas in the United States, with a particular focus on meanings, contexts, and interpretations identified by cultural historians and sociologists.

The sacred/secular dichotomy is a common lens for viewing and explaining Christmas practices.[253] This lens, however, risks oversimplification. Christmas in America carries a multiplicity of cultural meanings, contexts, and interpretations that lose

[253] For discussion of this common practice, see Jennifer Rycenga, "Religious Controversies over Christmas," in Whiteley, 71–87; Lankford, 20–21.

nuance and complexity when labeled as sacred or secular. Several cultural historians have explored additional aspects of the Christmas holiday. Lankford identified elements of nostalgia, commerce, charity, carnival, romance, and travesty embedded within the modern American Christmas.[254] Nissenbaum charted the invention of rituals within varying aspects of Christmas, including carnival, domesticity, capitalism, and authenticity.[255] Storey discussed themes of commerce, charity, and utopian nostalgia in relation to the invention of the modern Christmas.[256] Jarman-Ivens categorized themes of religion, nostalgia, children, romance, party, and goodwill to all.[257] Agajanian listed a variety of rituals and themes:

> Today Christmas conjures up images of Christmas trees, decorations and lights, presents, snow and snowmen, Santa Claus and reindeer, food, the nativity, church, carol-singing, cards, pantomimes and parades, and, depending on age and religious beliefs, the items on this list vary in importance. Christmas has also come to signify family gatherings, cosy [sic] homes, a focus on the children, humanitarianism toward the under-privileged and vulnerable, and a feeling of nostalgia for good times past. However, the more negative associations with Christmas include resentment toward the increasing commercialism surrounding the festival, and the escalating expenditure on food, drink and particularly presents.[258]

These themes form the fabric of the modern American Christmas. The establishment of this context shapes the backdrop for the inclusion and evolution of

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[254] Ronald D. Lankford, Jr., *Sleigh Rides, Jingle Bells & Silent Nights: A Cultural History of American Christmas Songs* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013).

[255] Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America's Most Cherished Holiday* (New York: Vintage, 1996).

[256] John Storey, "The Invention of the English Christmas," in *Christmas, Ideology and Popular Culture*, ed. Sheila Whiteley (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), 17–31.

[257] Freya Jarman-Ivens, "The Musical Underbelly of Christmas," in Whiteley, 113–136.

[258] Rowana Agajanian, "Peace on Earth, Goodwill to All Men: The Depiction of Christmas in Modern Hollywood Films," in *Christmas at the Movies: Images of Christmas in American, British, and European Cinema*, ed. Mark Connelly (New York: I. B. Tauris & Co., 2001), 145.

holiday music in the schools. Before examining this varied set of themes, I review the relationship of the sacred/secular lens with Christmas practices in America.

The Sacred/Secular Dichotomy

Christmas in America is a broad, complex collection of practices, with individual practices often labeled as sacred or secular.[259] Within the context of the modern American Christmas, the term sacred generally refers to Christianity, specifically regarding the birth of Jesus as symbolized by the nativity. The term secular generally refers to any element of the Christmas season not specifically related to Christianity. Frequently, the term secular is used as a derisive synonym for a variety of specific meanings, including commercialism, materialism, and atheism.

The sacred/secular dichotomy often represents a conflict between the spiritual and the material.[260] According to Rycenga, "this antinomy between matter and spirit is as old as Christianity and the Christianised Christmas itself."[261] Writing in 1912, Miles described an inner conflict between "the ascetic principle of self-mortification, world-renunciation, [and] absorption in a transcendent ideal" versus "the natural human striving towards earthly joy and well-being."[262] Miles also described secular Christmas practices as "relics of heathenism, these devilish rites" supported by "mankind's instinctive

[259] Rycenga, 71–87; Lankford, 20–21.

[260] In this setting, "material" is not a reference to commercialism, but rather to the body. The Platonic assertion that the "body is the prison of the soul" forms the basis for this division.

[261] Rycenga, 72.

[262] Clement Miles, *Christmas in Ritual and Tradition: Christian and Pagan* (London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1912), 27–28.

paganism."[263] In an early cultural history of the American Christmas, Barnett divided practices into sacred and secular groupings. "There is no doubt that the religious character of Christmas in the United States is maintained with some difficulty and that it will continue to be threatened by secular emphases."[264]

Conflict between sacred and secular elements of the American Christmas often appears to be a recent problem of modernity, but examples exist throughout the past four centuries. For example, Puritans in seventeenth century New England generally believed Christmas celebrations to be at odds with their strict interpretation of the Bible. According to Nissenbaum, the "entire cultural world … Puritans felt to be corrupt, 'pagan', evil."[265] The Puritans suppressed Christmas to the point that it was illegal to observe the holiday in Massachusetts from 1659-1681.

Restad described the "central conflict Americans experience in Christmas" as a "perceived war between material and spiritual satisfaction."[266] Several recent books in popular, conservative culture are based on this idea of conflict, such as *The War on Christmas: How the Liberal Plot to Ban the Sacred Christian Holiday is Worse than You Thought*,[267] *War on Christmas: Battles in Faith, Tradition, and Religious Expression*,[268]

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[263] Miles, 28.

[264] James H. Barnett, *The American Christmas: A Study in National Culture* (New York: MacMillan, 1954), 57.

[265] Nissenbaum, 11.

[266] Penne L. Restad, *Christmas in America: A History* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 1996), 155.

[267] John Gibson, *The War on Christmas: How the Liberal Plot to Ban the Sacred Christian Holiday is Worse Than You Thought* (New York: Penguin Group, 2005).

[268] Bodie Hodge, *War on Christmas: Battle in Faith, Tradition, and Religious Expression* (Green Forest: New Leaf Publishing Group, 2013).

and *Good Tidings and Great Joy: Protecting the Heart of Christmas*.[269] Associations with war and battle further cement the dichotomy between sacred and secular elements, without any examination for overlap or additional possibilities. This application of an either/or dichotomy can create false dilemmas.

For example, consider the 2005 conflict between Wal-Mart and the Catholic League for Religious and Civil Rights. This public controversy started with Wal-Mart's policy for employees to greet customers with the phrase "Happy Holidays" instead of "Merry Christmas," despite strong protests from the Catholic League.[270] The polarization of both phrases via sacred/secular dichotomy created and conditioned mutual exclusivity, and the phrase "Merry Christmas" shifted entirely into the realm of the sacred. Wishing a customer "Happy Holidays," however, could now be construed as anti-sacred (or, anti-Christian), by virtue of being labeled secular.

Lankford referred to the sacred/secular dichotomy as a "familiar and perhaps comforting dualism" and suggested the removal of that lens for a deeper analysis of the American Christmas. "We have viewed holiday values through sacred-secular lenses for so long," wrote Lankford, "that everything appears fuzzy when we first remove them."[271] Although removal of this lens can no doubt provide a different interpretation of the American Christmas, it is simplistic to remove it altogether. By attempting to analyze each of the elements in relation to the others, the complexity of the modern American Christmas can be preserved and unraveled simultaneously. The American Christmas has

[269] Sarah Palin, *Good Tidings and Great Joy: Protecting the Heart of Christmas* (New York: Harper Collins, 2013).
[270] Rycenga, 71–87.
[271] Lankford, 20–21.

developed in relation to the "familiar dualism" and "perceived war" of the sacred/secular divide.

It is particularly problematic to render the sacred/secular dichotomy invisible, due to the relationship between the American government, legal system, and the sites of many Christmas practices, such as government buildings, public schools, and town parks. The adoption of the First Amendment in 1791 and Thomas Jefferson's use of the phrase "a wall of separation between church and state" in 1802 have formed the basis of local and national court decisions involving religion in America.[272] The legal system has operated under the presumption that sacred and secular elements sort into separate categories. This presumption has influenced the perception of government-sponsored Christmas celebrations. For example, Bella described the prototypical sacred/secular dichotomy found in the public schools.

> The non-denominational public school system of the United States was, and is still supposed to be, free from religious doctrine. Religious education was left to the family, the church, and of course, the Sunday school. Therefore, the celebration of Christmas in public schools has emphasized secular rituals, such as Santa Claus, Christmas trees, gifts, decorations, secular songs, and stories. The story of the Nativity is played down.[273]

How is it possible to move beyond the sacred/secular dichotomy as Lankford argued, yet still acknowledge the persistent permanence of that lens in American government? McCrary described the problem as *postsecular*.

> A clean secular/religious binary imagined by some scholars and commentators has in recent years broken down. This is true in scholarship but also, I think, in

[272] Julie A. Oseid, "The Power of Metaphor: Thomas Jefferson's 'Wall of Separation between Church & State'," *Journal of the Association of Legal Writing Directors* 7 (2010): 123–153.

[273] Leslie Bella, *The Christmas Imperative: Leisure, Family, and Women's Work* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1992), 195.

> institutions like law and government, and in American culture more broadly. However, questions like 'Is that practice really religious?' or 'Is that idea of religious or secular origin?'—questions that many scholars now find unhelpful—have relevance due to religion's special place in law. So, these questions, odd as they are, must be answered.[274]

Postsecularism provides a useful set of provocations for re-imagining the sacred/secular dichotomy. Ratti recounted postsecularism narratives first established by Habermas, and noted that the shrinking of the globe in modernity has not corresponded to a disappearance of religion, but rather in the persistence of religion. "How does the presence of those who are religiously, linguistically, ethnically, and racially different influence people's image of themselves and their nation?" asked Ratti.[275] Crockett described postsecularism as a context in which "there is no way to ascertain a secure secularist and nonreligious viewpoint or to rigorously exclude religion from it."[276] Scholes and Sassower summarized this departure from an either/or dichotomy. "Instead of the religious and the secular locked in a war, a postsecular context allows for the kind of relationship that effectively blurs the line between the two."[277]

I move forward under the assumption that the line between sacred and secular is blurry for many, if not most Americans, particularly in regards to Christmas. Plaut observed, "During the twentieth century, the religious and secular character of the

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[274] Charles McCrary, "Religion Snapshots: Defining Postsecularism, Part 1," Religion Bulletin Blog, entry posted April 11, 2014, http://www.equinoxpub.com/blog/201404/religion-snapshots-defining-the-post-secular-ism-part-1/ (accessed July 7, 2014).

[275] Manav Ratti, *Postsecular Imagination: Postcolonialism, Religion, and Literature* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2013), 6.

[276] Clayton Crockett, *Radical Political Theology: Religion and Politics after Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 160–161.

[277] Jeffrey Scholes and Raphael Sassower, *Religion and Sport in American Culture* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 8.

holiday merged."[278] The elements I describe in the remainder of this chapter are not easily isolable as purely sacred or secular. The ritualistic nature of Christmas practices further complicates the blurriness of the sacred/secular divide.

For many Americans, Christmas practices are rituals, occupying space that is both individual and collective. According to Alexander

> Rituals are episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication in which the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication's symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of one another's intentions.[279]

The performance of a successful ritual can *feel* sacred in the sense that it is special and revered, even if it is not rooted in organized religion. A family gathering around the dinner table, sharing the same food as their parents and grandparents did years ago. The communal viewing of *It's a Wonderful Life* around the television set. The lighting of Christmas trees in the center of major cities. An office Christmas party, the only time throughout the year all employees socialize with each other outside of work, regardless of rank. These rituals span the continuum of "socially conditioned, historically acquired, and biologically constituted rhythms and metaphors of human existence."[280] They do not happen in a vacuum. Rituals exist in relation to "open-ended conflicts between parties who do not necessarily share beliefs, frequently do not accept the validity of one another's intention, and often disagree even about the descriptions that people offer for

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[278] Joshua Plaut, *A Kosher Christmas: 'Tis the Season to be Jewish* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2012), 14.

[279] Jeffrey Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (December 2004): 527.

[280] Peter McLaren, "Classroom Symbols and the Ritual Dimensions of Schooling," *Anthropologica* 27 (1985): 163–164.

acts."[281] For the modern American Christmas, the sacred/secular binary is a manifestation of those conflicts and disagreements.

Christmas in America has evolved with a variety of meanings, contexts, backgrounds, and beliefs. An examination of the contemporary significance of Christmas concerts in the American public schools benefits from an accounting of this complexity along multiple axes. The sacred/secular dichotomy cannot be rendered invisible, nor should it be considered the only means of analysis. In following sections, I review the history of the American Christmas in relation to elements of family, goodwill, charity, commercialism, community, and nostalgia. I do not attempt to label any of these themes as sacred or secular; rather, I attempt to draw attention to the conditions of possibility that have enabled their development.

A Brief Overview of Christmas Origins

Holidays and celebrations exist throughout the world. According to Emile Durkheim, "[holidays] punctuate the rhythm of the calendrical year, helping to describe and characterize units of time and to give them significance."[282] In most cultures throughout the world—with the exception of those found closest to the Equator—celebrations and rituals marking seasonal transitions are ancient practice.[283] In particular, the winter solstice marked the anticipated return of light and sun, and coincided with the end of harvests and work cycles, providing a time for rest and revelry, festival and

[281] Alexander, 527–528.
[282] Restad, 18, citing Emile Durkheim.
[283] Restad, 18.

feasting. Winter solstice celebrations such as the pagan Saturnalia, the Mithraic Day of Birth of the Unconquered Sun, and the Norse celebration Yule all predate the best estimations of the birth of Jesus, generally thought by biblical scholars to be between 6 and 4 BCE.[284]

The winter solstice coincides with the celebration of Christmas. Christians have not always celebrated the birth of Jesus on December 25. The earliest observances of this date trace back to the 4th century. In 325 CE, Constantine the Great—Roman Emperor from 312 to 337 CE—established Christianity as the state religion of the Roman Empire. Leaders of the early Christian church recognized an opportunity to absorb traditional pagan celebrations to ease the transition of the general population to Christianity. The Christian adoption of winter pagan traditions repeats throughout the Christmas literature.[285] The celebration of the feast of the Saturnalia occurred at the winter solstice each year, ending around December 25. Generally, the Saturnalia celebration included feasting, dancing, singing, lawlessness, as well as the sacrifice of one member of the community. Christian church leaders allowed for the continuation of the Saturnalia celebration, but also began recognizing December 25 as the celebration of the birth of Jesus starting as early as 336 CE. The winter solstice also coincided with the celebration of the birth of Mithras, the god of light and central figure to the religion Mithraism, a

[284] Accounts of these celebrations are in the following sources. Bruce David Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007); Joseph F. Kelly, *The Origins of Christmas* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 2004).

[285] There is a plethora of sources recounting the Christian adoption of pagan traditions. Recent examples include Forbes, 2007; Kelly, 2004; Restad, 1996; Storey, 2008. Older examples include John Ashton, *A Righte Merrie Christmasse: The Story of Christ-Tide* (London: Leadenhall Press, 1894); W. F. Dawson, *Christmas: Its Origin and Associations* (London: E. Stock, 1902); Miles, 1912.

rival to Christianity at the time. The birth of Mithras was celebrated as the Day of the Birth of the Unconquered Sun (*Dies Solis Invicti Nati*) on December 25.[286] There is broad consensus that no scriptural evidence exists that the birth of Jesus occurred on December 25. Rather, Mithraism and Christianity both spread throughout the Roman Empire during the first three centuries CE and operated in competition with each other. By placing the observance of the birth of Jesus on December 25, Christian leaders were able to solidify its footing and convert a broader populace. According to Storey, "it seems quite clear that the intention of the Christian Church was to overlay [non-Christian] rituals and ceremonies with Christian significance."[287] In a similar fashion, the Christian Church adopted many customs from the Norse holiday Yule and absorbed them into the Christmas holiday between 600-800 CE.[288]

The adoption of non-Christian traditions and celebrations by the Christian church was a political maneuver to negotiate the transition of the general population to Christianity.[289] The Christian church superimposed the observance of the birth of Jesus onto these existing traditions, while allowing the celebrations and festivals to remain unchanged. This merger created a hybrid celebration that divides into two parts: Christian and non-Christian. This initial political maneuver formed the basis for the ongoing

[286] The merger of these non–Christian festivals with the observance of the birth of Jesus included the adoption of traditions that persist to this day. Although such comparisons are not the purpose of this study, they are fascinating (e.g., The Pagan tradition of eating human shaped biscuits during the Saturnalia, paralleled with the Christian tradition of gingerbread "man" cookies).

[287] Storey, 18.

[288] Forbes, 10-13.

[289] The pagan influences embedded within the Christmas holiday and the strategic, political maneuvering of early Christian Church leaders is a story retold throughout the last two centuries in the United States. It is not secret information; however, it continues to be presented as generally unknown knowledge.

sacred/secular dichotomy that persists in our present.

A thorough development of the Christmas holiday from the 4th century to the 19th century is outside the scope of this dissertation. However, several brief examples highlight the contingent, varied practices of Christmas prior its modern development. In particular, these examples emphasize the movement away from rowdy, raucous celebrations towards a moderate, family-centered holiday.

In England during the sixteenth century, the Puritans struck Christmas from the calendar citing customs based on pagan traditions. The British Parliament outlawed seasonal plays in 1642. Shops were required to stay open, and pastors could not lead worship services, but "resistance was not uncommon."[290] On December 25, 1646, the public abused merchants who obeyed the law and opened for business, and those same merchants petitioned Parliament for protection. In London, protesters "decorated churches and shops with swags of bay, rosemary, box, holly, privit, and ivy, only to watch the Lord Mayor and City Marshall ride about setting fire to their handiwork."[291]

In colonial America, many early Christmas traditions—or lack thereof—mirrored the state of affairs in England.[292] The majority of people did not celebrate Christmas until the nineteenth century. For example, Governor William Bradford of Plymouth Colony

[290] Restad, 8.

[291] Ibid.

[292] This statement is reflective of the common practice of viewing American Christmas traditions from a British colonialist perspective. There were many other musical and cultural influences during this time. For example, Leaver described the richness of Spanish, French, Dutch, and Swedish musical traditions in the eighteenth century in Robin A. Leaver, "More Than Simple Psalm-Singing in English: Sacred Music in Early Colonial America," *Yale Journal of Music & Religion* 1, no. 1 (2015): 63–80. Although the exploration of the multitude of colonialist influences is outside the scope of this dissertation, many modern practices relate to a variety of traditions. For example, many Americans in the Southwestern United States celebrate *Las Posadas*, a nine-day celebration with Spanish origins ending on Christmas Eve.

ordered "street revelers" back to work on December 25, 1621.[293] Puritans suppressed the Christmas holiday in Massachusetts, where it was illegal to celebrate Christmas from 1659-1681.[294] A typical Christmas celebration during that time consisted of a variety of quasi-carnival traditions infused with alcohol and feasting. These traditions rested upon the idea that Christmas was a season of "misrule" in which social roles and conventions could be freely violated. The season of misrule originated in the pagan celebrations of the 4th century.[295] Mumming and carol singing were two particular practices that structured general misrule. Mumming involved the swapping of clothes between men and women, going from house to house in disguise to "make merry." The singing of carols also accompanied this practice, usually accompanied by "rioting and chambering."[296] Restad described this season of misrule as

> "Frolicking," the name many gave to this sort of boisterous Christmas and New Year's fun, could be found throughout the colonies. In the New England countryside, revelous intruders entered houses with a speech and swords at Christmas time. Far into the eighteenth century, masked merrymakers roved Pennsylvania's Delaware Valley "making sport for everyone." Southerners shot guns, a custom similar to one practiced in northern England.[297]

The Christmas season of misrule did not happen in isolation, nor was it the only practice of celebrating Christmas. Nissenbaum traced the gradual inclusion of Christmas through two 18th century archives: almanacs and hymnals. Prior to 1730, it was rare for an almanac to include a reference to Christmas. Around 1730, almanacs gradually began

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[293] Forbes, 58.
[294] Nissenbaum, 3.
[295] Restad, 9.
[296] Chambering was a common euphuism for fornication. According to demographic data, sexual activity peaked during the Christmas season, as evidenced by a higher number of births in September-October. See Nissenbaum, 7.
[297] Restad, 9.

including references to the holiday as celebrations expanded beyond misrule and revelry. For example the popular almanac-makers Benjamin Franklin and Nathaniel Ames both called for a Christmas "that combined mirth and moderation."[298] After 1760, virtually all almanacs referenced Christmas. Similar evidence exists in early New England hymnals. Prior to 1760, no hymnal published in New England contained textual references to Christmas or the Nativity. Nissenbaum noted, however, "Nine different Christmas [hymns] were published in New England" during the 1760s.[299]

Following the Revolutionary War, there were no national holidays in America. All official British holidays vanished from the calendar with no replacement. As such, "the American calendar at the beginning of nationhood actually looked more barren than it had early in the seventeenth century."[300] At this point during the eighteenth century:

> Then as now, there was no single "Christmas." For some it was probably little more than the name for a day in the year. For others it was a time of pious devotion, devotion that could range all the way from mirthful joy in the Savior's birth to angst over personal failings, and from stately prayers to ecstatic hymns. For others still it was a time of feasting—accompanied or not by a supply of alcohol. Finally, Christmas might mean misrule and carnival, in which alcohol could lead to sexual liberties, social inversion, or even violence.[301]

None of these practices specifically included elements integral to the modern American Christmas that would soon develop in the nineteenth century: the family, gift giving to children, domestic events, and the mythology of Santa Claus.

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[298] Nissenbaum, 27.
[299] Ibid., 34.
[300] Restad, 21.
[301] Nissenbaum, 37–38.

The Nineteenth Century: Family, Children, and Goodwill

During the nineteenth century, American Christmas traditions were invented that focused on the family. With increased attention towards children, traditions shifted from public celebrations to private, domestic rituals. Cultural historians have focused on three Americans central to the solidification of the myths and moralities of our modern Christmas: Washington Irving, John Pintard, and Clement Moore.[302]

Pintard, Irving, and Moore were wealthy residents of New York City in the nineteenth century, as well as members of the New-York Historical Society.[303] Many factors motivated these individuals in the development of Christmas traditions, including crime, poverty, homelessness, concern with Christmas misrule and alcohol, property values, and a focus on "old" traditions through the New-York Historical Society.[304] Irving created some of these "old" traditions in his Christmas stories set at the fictional Bracebridge Hall in his *Sketch Book* published in 1819.[305] Bracebridge Hall, set in the rural English countryside, is the location of a fictional open house during the Christmas season, featuring feasts, games, and mingling of all social classes. Although Irving had never actually witnessed anything like the fictional Bracebridge Hall, his stories "played

[302] The contributions of Irving, Pintard, and Moore exist in many sources, including the following. William B. Waits, *The Modern Christmas in America: A Cultural History of Gift Giving* (New York: New York University Press, 1993); John M. Golby and A. W. Purdue, *The Making of the Modern Christmas* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986); Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*; Restad, *Christmas in America*; Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History*.

[303] The New-York Historical Society is the oldest museum in New York City. Its mission in 2015 is "to explore the richly layered political, cultural and social history of New York City and State and the nation, and to serve as a national forum for the discussion of issues surrounding the making and meaning of history." Retrieved from http://www.nyhistory.org/about (June 14, 2015).

[304] Nissenbaum, 49–89.

[305] The same *Sketch Book* contained the stories "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow."

an important part in restoring the interest of 'respectable' Americans (and Britishers) in celebrating Christmas."[306]

Pintard was actively engaged in attempts to uncover and create ceremonies and rituals in both New York City and the entire country. Pintard's contributions include the founding of the New-York Historical Society in 1804, a significant role in the establishment of national holidays for Washington's Birthday, the Fourth of July, and Columbus Day, and personal efforts to make St. Nicholas the patron saint of New York City.[307] Pintard experimented with many different practices in an effort to establish family-oriented Christmas traditions, particularly traditions for the upper class. His introduction of St. Nicholas to America in 1810 led the way for Clement Moore's publication of his poem, "A Visit from St. Nicholas," also known as, "The Night before Christmas," in 1823.[308]

Moore's poem is credited for popularizing many aspects of St. Nicholas, including (1) traveling in a sleigh pulled by eight named reindeer, (2) visiting on Christmas Eve instead of the eve of St. Nicholas's Day on December fifth, and (3) losing the role and attire as an authority figure of discipline.[309] Ironically, Moore wrote his poem only to entertain his own family. Although the exact details of its anonymous 1823 publication are debatable, Moore did not write it with the intent of a broad audience.[310] Regardless, the poem remains at the forefront of the American Christmas in our present.

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[306] Nissenbaum, 60. The mention of "respectable" Americans is a colloquial reference to the upper class.

[307] See Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*; Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History*.

[308] Nissenbaum, 71.

[309] Forbes, 85–86.

[310] Restad, 50.

With the establishment of a popularized Saint Nicholas, the tradition of giving gifts to children replaced older Christmas traditions. Rituals of social inversion and charity to the less fortunate had long been a part of the holiday season, even traceable back to pagan celebrations of the winter solstice.[311] Largely due to the fictional setting of Irving's *Bracebridge Hall*, the concept of "open-handed hospitality" related to common perceptions about "old-fashioned" Christmases in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England.[312] With the establishment of Moore's Saint Nicholas—a working class, mythic figure—upper class parents could give gifts to their children without guilt. The ritual of social inversion was preserved, but instead of sharing food, drink, and money with a lower class of adults for the purpose of goodwill, the "charity" became gifts given to children for the same purposes of goodwill.[313] The growing tide of gift giving at Christmas resulted not just in a domestic, child-focused holiday, but an eventual merging with American capitalism in which the Christmas season is economically vital.

In describing the cultural history of gift giving in the American Christmas, Waits questioned whether the tradition "was foisted on the public by avaricious businessmen" or if it rose "on a groundswell of public favor."[314] The efforts of Pintard and Moore to bring St. Nicholas into popular American culture seems motivated by the desire to have a holiday celebration focused on children and the family, particularly for the upper- and

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[311] For a cultural history of the emergence of gift giving to children, see Gary Cross, "Just for Kids: How Holidays Became Child Centered," in *We Are What We Celebrate: Understanding Holidays and Rituals*, ed. Amitai Etzioni and Jared Bloom (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 61–73.

[312] Mark Connelly, *Christmas: A Social History* (New York: I. B. Tauris, 1999), 23.

[313] Charitable giving still has a strong presence during the modern Christmas season, whether tipping for services received throughout the year (e.g. postal workers) or end-of-year contributions to tax-deductible charities.

[314] Waits, 2.

middle-class. Quickly, businesses seized on the opportunity to increase sales prior to Christmas. Advertisements reinforced symbols and themes and strengthened holiday practices. In our present, the Christmas season is big business for the travel industry, movie studios, recording artists, department stores, grocers, and more. All contribute to the shaping and propagating of the American Christmas, reinforcing concepts of family, goodwill, charity, nostalgia, and community. Jarman-Ivens cited the influence of capitalism on (rein)forcing the annual, commercial message of a "traditional" and "family" Christmas in the twenty-first century.[315] Featuring heterosexual, attractive, biological parents with fine gifts, smiling children, and an open fire, these images promote a certain conception of Christmas that requires spending money for special gifts, foods, and decorations on the "ideal" family.

Charles Dickens reinforced the importance of family and charity in his popular 1842 ghost story, *A Christmas Carol*. Although having little to do with music, it corresponded with interest for all things Christmas in the style of old Merrie England. The first mention of *A Christmas Carol* in an American newspaper appears to be the *New York Tribune*, January 27, 1844, advertised as "a ghost story of Christmas" and costing six cents.[316]

The main character, Ebenezer Scrooge, remains symbolic in the twenty-first century as a conceptual figure that rejects Christmas. *A Christmas Carol* ends, however, with Scrooge fully embracing Christmas values and traditions such as family and charity. This specific morality eventually accepted by Scrooge defined Dickens's *carol*

[315] Jarman-Ivens, 113–114.
[316] *New York Tribune*, January 27, 1844, p. 3.

philosophy. This philosophy narrowly emphasized giving to those less fortunate during Christmas, but it "did not call forth the power of government or any agency to effect changes in an economy that created extremes of poverty and wealth."[317] The carol philosophy emphasized family as the source of happiness, as evidenced by Scrooge's great loneliness when he observes the Cratchit family Christmas celebration. Charity is equally important to the carol philosophy, with a narrow set of parameters. The carol philosophy does not promote goodwill towards all, just familiar people and groups. Regarding the transition to the twentieth century, Restad asserted, "In their comprehension of poverty and its solutions, most Americans moved little beyond Dickens."[318] In fact, the carol philosophy is rooted in the point of view of Scrooge, formerly a miserly man, who transforms into a happy, beloved character when he makes concessions and donations to the family of one of his employees. We never really experience the point of view of Bob Crachit or his family. Regardless, Dickens' influence on the development of the modern Christmas is significant but "it was the American Santa Claus who made the difference, emerging as the central icon of the season, around whom everyone could rally."[319]

A variety of factors influenced the transition from Moore's Saint Nicholas to the modern Santa Claus throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, including the contributions of Thomas Nast, Haddon Sundblom, and Francis Church.[320] Thomas Nast was the head cartoonist at *Harper's Weekly*, where he

[317] Restad, 138–139.
[318] Ibid., 140.
[319] Forbes, 96.
[320] See Forbes, 67–107. The name "Santa Claus" was already in use interchangeably in

developed the elephant and donkey as the modern day political party emblems for the Republican and Democratic parties, respectively. Nast drew Santa with a "jolly face, full beard, and wide belt around his rotund waist … bringing life to the character described in 'The Night before Christmas'."[321] The artist Haddon Sundblom painted at least one Santa Claus advertisement for the Coca-Cola Company each year from 1931-1964. These paintings remain so popular that "a common urban legend claims that Coca-Cola invented Santa Claus."[322] Francis Church, an editorial writer for the *New York Sun*, popularized the "childlike faith" shared by adults and children regarding Santa Claus mythology. Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter in 1897 asking if there really was a Santa Claus. Church responded with a famous editorial, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus."[323] Fifteen years later, Clement Miles wrote, "Most men are ready at Christmas to put themselves into an instinctive rather than a rational attitude … to become in fact children again."[324]

The mythology of the American Santa Claus reaches a wide variety of Christmas themes, not just those of family and charity. According to Forbes:

> Both the religious and nonreligious public could embrace Santa who brought joy to children and families, who represented a spirit of giving and nonjudgmental warmth of good feeling among all people. Even business interests could add their encouragement, because Santa as gift giver held so many commercial possibilities. And it all still served as a winter party, bringing lights and celebration in the midst of the cold and dark. With Santa's encouragement, now the entire culture stopped for the Christmas parade.[325]

New York City when Moore's poem was published in 1823. The Dutch residents referred to "Sinter Klaas," which became "Santa Claus."

[321] Forbes, 89.
[322] Ibid., 93.
[323] Ibid., 90–91.
[324] Miles, 359.
[325] Forbes, 96.

Christmas in Community

During the early nineteenth century, rowdy public celebrations of the Christmas season shifted to private, domestic rituals of the family.[326] With a heightened focus on children, these rituals of the family persist into our present. Concurrently, churches began to adapt alongside the growing popularity of the family Christmas. According to Restad:

> Americans had begun to create a symbol of non-denominational Protestantism that fit well into the pluralist culture in which they lived. The festive air of churches, draped with nature's greenery, shining with candles, and filled with music, invited wary strangers to enter. … Synthetic, short-lived, and to some degree superficial, this association of believers at Christmas helped satisfy a vague but growing need to identify and solidify a sense of community that went beyond the confines of church walls.[327]

Moving from the nineteenth to the twentieth century, Christmas celebrations overflowed from church services and private family rituals and into the public arena. The public Christmas celebrations developed during that time were "more formal and, ironically, less commercial" than nineteenth century celebrations.[328] These community celebrations were a combination of seasonal celebration, national pride, access to technological advances, and charity. As a representative example of these celebrations, I draw upon the phenomenon of community Christmas trees in the early twentieth century.

The first community Christmas tree celebration in America occurred in 1912 with great publicity in New York City. The following year, over one hundred towns and communities sponsored their own community Christmas tree.[329] These nighttime tree lightings celebrated American technology—specifically, the electric light bulb—within

[326] This transition is described by Restad, *Christmas in America*; Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas*; Forbes, *Christmas: A Candid History*.
[327] Restad, 22.
[328] Ibid., 156.
[329] Ibid., 156.

the context of ancient seasonal celebrations that celebrated the return of the sun with lights and greenery during the darkest days of the year. Community Christmas trees featured electric lights that were not yet accessible to the public to have in their own homes. According to Phillip Snyder, "the world's first electrically lighted Christmas tree was decorated in the New York City home of Edward Johnson [in 1882] … he lived in the first square mile of the first city in the world to have electricity."[330] In the early years of the twentieth century, only the wealthiest Americans could afford and access electrical Christmas tree lights. The community Christmas tree allowed all people to enjoy this new tradition.

The Greater New York edition of the *Daily Star* includes an intriguing example from December 24, 1914. The front page contained articles promoting two separate public community Christmas tree celebrations. At the tree lighting in Greenpoint, several features of past Christmas traditions merged with the current innovations. President Woodrow Wilson activated the tree lights via telegraph from the White House. The President sent "an electrical impulse … to magically transform the telegraphic tick into a blaze of light."[331] Just a few years earlier, "the average American of 1907 was still unaware of electric Christmas tree lights."[332] The "magical" lighting of the community tree in Greenpoint likely fueled the Christmas desire for adults to share in childlike wonderment that was found in the "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus" letter.

The *Daily Star* referenced several other elements of Christmas celebration in that

[330] Phillip V. Snyder, *The Christmas Tree Book: The History of the Christmas Tree and Antique Christmas Tree Ornaments* (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 113.
[331] "President Accepts," *Daily Star*, December 24, 1914, p. 1.
[332] Snyder, 118.

same article. Earlier traditions of misrule lingered, as evidenced by the promise that, "police reserves from several precincts will see to it that good order is maintained among any of the younger element who may be inclined to get too frisky." The inclusive nature of the American Christmas is both noted and promoted in the assertion that "Protestant, Catholic, Jew, Democrat, Republican, Socialist, representatives of nearly every one of the polyglot nationalities that make up [New York's] population; the homebody and the club member, all, have shown an interest in making the celebration an assured success." The message is clear: Christmas is for everyone in America. At the moment the President illuminated the tree, the band "burst forth into the stirring strains of *The Star Spangled Banner*." Through traditions such as the community Christmas trees of the early twentieth century, Christmas "came to be celebrated as a civic festival."[333]

The *Daily Star* noted the merging of private and public celebration the following day: "Fathers who seldom spent a Christmas Eve outside the home brought their entire families to witness the sights and listen to talks and music which their personal resources could never hope to stage."[334] The community Christmas tree provided new entertainment for the wealthiest families, but it also provided access for all people. Two years earlier, the *New York Times* summarized the experience of the first community Christmas tree lighting in 1912, including the following quote from an anonymous woman in the crowd:

> This is a real Christmas for me. Those rich people who give so much money away on Christmas always get the idea that the poor need something to eat. They forget

[333] Restad, 156.
[334] "Greenpoint's Celebration," *Daily Star*, December 25, 1914, p. 1.

that we also like to look at nice things and hear lovely music.[335]

Throughout the twentieth century and into our present, community celebrations have taken place in public spaces, often filled with decorations. The modern American Christmas has a primary focus on children; thus, many of these community celebrations have taken place in the public schools for and by the children.[336] These celebrations reinforced Christmas as the primary, national American holiday for all people, regardless of religious affiliation. A national holiday that is rooted in Christianity can be problematic for non-Christians.[337] For example, Plaut detailed many of the ways Jewish Americans cope, satirize, and rationalize Christmas, including developing Hanukkah as a complementary holiday that includes gift giving to children.[338] Plaut listed other Jewish traditions including eating Chinese food on Christmas, and the creation of fake holidays such as Festivus.[339]

The development of public celebrations combined notions of charity and goodwill, and encompassed developing traditions from home and church celebrations. According to Restad, these celebrations "relied on the same carols, nativity scenes, evergreens, and gifts for children."[340] As these public rituals developed, they did not replace private, domestic celebrations; rather, they supplemented and complemented them, reflecting the multitude of Christmas experiences in America. Whether during

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[335] "Huge Tree of Light Beckons Thousand," *New York Times*, December 25, 1912, p. 3.

[336] I discuss elements related to the development of public school Christmas celebrations throughout the remaining chapters, and most specifically in chapter seven.

[337] Chapter two includes discussion of related court cases.

[338] Plaut, 4–6; 137–161.

[339] The television comedy *Seinfeld* introduced Festivus in 1997. Features of this parody holiday include (1) airing of grievances, (2) feats of strength, and (3) a plain aluminum pole instead of a Christmas tree.

[340] Restad, 156.

world wars, economic success, or protest, the public celebration reflected the times. As the economic impetus of the Christmas season intensified and gained critical mass, additional experiences such as store window displays and holiday shopping supplanted earlier community celebrations. Communal celebrations have taken a variety of forms, such as the holiday office party, viewing Christmas movies in the theater, and the "bustle of shopping humanity."[341]

Nostalgia

When John Pintard invented new Christmas rituals in the early nineteenth century, he did so "in the name of restoring something that had been forgotten."[342] People have long sentimentalized the past during the Christmas season, even when referencing traditions that never existed. Hobsbawm and Ranger developed the term *invented tradition* to refer to "a ritual that implies continuity with the past, even though that continuity is largely fictitious."[343] Throughout the development of Christmas into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, nostalgic desire for an "old-fashioned" Christmas is a common theme.[344] Nostalgia is a result of the power/knowledge relationship. In other words, nostalgia is an effect of the interplay between invented traditions and knowledge of Christmas. Practices affect knowledge of Christmas in the past and present. This knowledge influences future Christmas practices, which further conditions what we *know*

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[341] Restad, 157.

[342] Nissenbaum, 56–57.

[343] Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 6.

[344] For example, see Karen Cure, *An Old-Fashioned Christmas* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984).

Christmas to be.

Howard described two conditions often cited with nostalgia: the *naiveté* requirement and the poverty of the present requirement. A necessary condition of the *naiveté* requirement is that nostalgic memories "be directed at times when one was unaware of the impermanence of one's surroundings."[345] For adults, examples include a remembrance of childlike belief in Santa Claus, joy and wonderment of the season, and lack of concern and worry. The poverty of the present requires the condition that the past was more favorable, more desirable. The past is privileged, and generally "one makes a negative assessment of the present, and then, aided by a selective memory, one flees to an idealized and imaginary past."[346] The following quote by Harriet Monroe in 1928 serves as an example of both of these elements of nostalgia:

> For our better Christmas songs we must go back to the carols of centuries ago when the meaning of Christmas was accepted with simple faith and people were not ashamed to be genuinely moved by their religion. Most of us sing these songs with a certain nostalgia, knowing that we do not believe them but wishing that we did.[347]

Monroe's description of the simple faith of people long ago, contrasted with the desire for that impossible simplicity in the present, is representative of *naiveté*. The idealization of ancient carol singing, without any mention of the related Mumming, revelry, and misrule, is an example of the poverty of the present.

Golby and Purdue credited Irving and Dickens for creating idealized versions of an old-fashioned Christmas, central to the development of the modern Christmas

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[345] Scott A. Howard, "Nostalgia," *Analysis* 72, no. 4 (2012): 642.
[346] Ibid., 643.
[347] Harriet Monroe, "Christmas," *Poetry* 33, no. 3 (1928): 148.

celebration. They noted, "It is impossible, however, to find any period when this ideal Christmas actually existed."[348] Connelly positioned the modern Christmas as a nostalgic response to the industrial revolution, citing a sense of "trauma" and "schism" due to the combination of industrialization and urbanization. According to Connelly, the idealized Christmas celebration links nostalgically to the Tudor and Stewart Christmas celebrations in English history.[349]

Lankford described an intensification of Christmas nostalgia in the 1940s. The idealized American Christmas continued to be "steeped in a nostalgic longing for a simpler time somewhere in the undefined American past."[350] The intensification came first from the modern media production of this ideal, via records, radio, movies, and greeting cards. Then, the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, led America into war for the following four Christmases. The element of the family in the modern American Christmas was both disrupted and heightened. Lankford linked the development of the new, nostalgic Christmas song to a national melancholy mood as millions of soldiers were away from home. At the same time, the greatest mass migration in American history also took place during these war years, disrupting settled communities and neighborhoods as "fifteen million civilians crossed county lines in pursuit of jobs or family."[351] Lankford noted the difficulty of defining contemporary nostalgia:

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[348] Golby and Purdue, 13.

[349] Connelly asked, "What was it about the Tudor and Stuart Christmas in particular that was thought to be so important?" and answered, "The obsession with the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Christmas revolved around the concept of its open-handed hospitality." (pp. 22–23, 29).

[350] Lankford, 25.

[351] Ibid., 28.

> Originally, nostalgia was defined by physicians as a longing for home, a feeling most commonly experienced by soldiers in distant lands. Contemporary nostalgia, however, might be described as the past fondly remembered, as personal memory, primarily disassociated from anything unpleasant … But nostalgia is complicated by its relationship to the present. A fond memory may also be tinged by wistfulness, as though to say the present, when measured against the past, is somehow lacking; that to express *people were different back then and they really cared about their neighbors* is also to say *people care less about their neighbors today.* In this way, nostalgia works as a running commentary on the present.[352]

The idealized American family Christmas developed not only in relation to nostalgia, but also with stress and sentimentality. Bella developed the phrase *the Christmas imperative* to describe the "compulsion to reproduce" the family Christmas.[353] Through the lens of the impoverished present and tinged with nostalgia for a perceived simpler time, the Christmas imperative is a losing battle. Bella noted the emotional intensification of the holiday and generalized that "all forms of unhappiness, whether resulting from bereavement or migration, cultural differences of divorce, alcoholism or illness, sexual orientation or poverty, were magnified in a family Christmas."[354] Bella argued that the Christmas imperative is rooted in an ideology of the family that "justifies and supports oppression of women."[355]

If Bella's assertion is accurate, there is a hegemonic undercurrent to nostalgic desire. The term *postsentimentalism* applies to the space that left open for those who might not fit into nostalgic longing for the past.[356] For example, postsentimentalist critics

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[352] Lankford, 25–26. (emphasis in original)
[353] Bella, 12.
[354] Ibid., 11.
[355] Ibid., 12.
[356] Elizabeth H. Pleck, *Celebrating the Family: Ethnicity, Consumer Culture, and Family Rituals* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Elizabeth H. Pleck, "Who Are We and Where Do We Come From? Rituals, Families, and Identities," in *We Are What We Celebrate:*

have charged that the Christmas holiday "was sexist and anti-gay, violated the separation of church and state, and could even cause mental illness."[357] Pleck noted, "The postsentimental approach to holiday celebration recognizes, if not celebrates, family diversity as well as ethnic and racial pluralism" and accounts for "transformations in how the family is celebrated" as a result of changes "in the family, in women's roles, in ethnic group consciousness, and in nationalism, consumer culture, and popular entertainment."[358] This discourse of postsentimentalism operates on the fringes of the traditional, nostalgic discourse of the family Christmas. In other words, to be anti-Christmas is to be anti-family.

> Most people believe the contemporary family is in a state of moral decline. To them the past is the place where virtue resides. The transformation of some rituals and the disappearance of others furnishes evidence of the demise of the family and its moral lapse.[359]

Proponents of nostalgic discourse often blend idealistic images of family and faith, hearkening back to a time when beliefs and traditions were supposedly genuine and unquestioned, a time when everything was supposedly sacred. Yet, John Gillis noted the inherent issues with that lens, citing that "even as it was being invented in the 1840s and 1850s, the new family Christmas was constructed as an endangered tradition."[360] For example, Julia Peterkin decried the loss of tradition in 1929, stating that, "something has happened to Christmas … the children of enlightened parents no longer believe in Santa

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Understanding Holidays and Rituals, ed. Amitai Etzioni and Jared Bloom (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 43–60.

[357] Pleck, *Celebrating the Family*, 44.

[358] Ibid., 1–2

[359] Ibid., 5.

[360] John R. Gillis, "Gathering Together: Remembering Memory Through Ritual," in *We Are What We Celebrate: Understanding Holidays and Rituals*, ed. Amitai Etzioni and Jared Bloom (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 98.

Claus."[361]

Many practices that constitute the American Christmas are invented traditions. The nostalgic construction of these practices contributed to their development as rituals. The ritualized nature of these traditions continues to intensify connections to past and future, both in relation to and in spite of nostalgia. According to Myerhoff,

> Ritual inevitably carries a basic message of order, continuity, and predictability … By stating enduring and underlying patterns, ritual connects past, present, and future, abrogating history and time. Ritual always links participants to one another and often to wider collectivities that may be absent, even to the ancestors and those yet unborn.[362]

In this chapter, I provided an overview of selected elements of the cultural history of Christmas in America. The remainder of this dissertation rests upon this foundation. Throughout the following chapters, these elements provide context and exist in relation to the evolution of Christmas music in America and, eventually, in the public schools.

[361] Julia Peterkin, *A Plantation Christmas* (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1929), 3.

[362] Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites and Signs of Ripening: The Intertwining of Ritual, Time, and Growing Older," in *Age and Anthropological Theory*, ed. David Kertzer and Jennie Keith (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), 306.

CHAPTER FIVE:
Early American Christmas Music

Against the backdrop of the nineteenth century American Christmas described in the previous chapter, I include a sketch of its music—or, lack thereof. According to Emile Durkheim, "Holidays define and reflect the nature and needs of the societies in which they exist. Such days, and their pattern on the yearly calendar, are essential to the formation of a cultural identity."[363] At the end of the eighteenth century, Christmas in America bore little resemblance to the holiday in our present.[364] As new customs gained traction, the modern American Christmas developed into a form recognizable today. As the holiday evolved, eventually so did its music. Christmas music is a consistent presence throughout the holiday season, in shopping malls, radio, movies, television, and of course, the public schools. The *Grove Dictionary of American Music* describes Christmas music as follows:

> Developing out of the diverse strands of immigrant traditions, Christmas music gained prominence in 19th-century America and has retained its popularity into the 21st century, aided by the recording industry, radio, film, and television. From medieval Christmas celebrations onwards, the holiday has amalgamated Christian, pagan, and secular elements. American Christmas songs range from explicitly religious hymns and carols intended for performance in a sacred context to secular songs revolving around Santa Claus, gift-giving, and general goodwill.[365]

In the early nineteenth century, Christmas music hardly existed in America.[366] It was not included among the many vocal and instrumental concerts or found among the

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[363] Restad, 18, citing Durkheim.

[364] Nissenbaum, 37–38.

[365] Joanna R. Smolko, "Christmas music," *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed December 29, 2014, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2227990.

[366] This assertion is based upon my own research through thousands of newspaper articles from 1750–1900. Little that fits our current definition of "Christmas music" exists between 1750 to the early nineteenth century.

multitude of new music advertised in the many newspapers of the day. Although Christmas hymns were commonly included in church hymnals beginning in 1760, they did not appear to be any more special than hymns for other religious holidays.[367] Very little meeting the *Grove* definition of Christmas music existed in America.[368]

In the first section of this chapter, I briefly describe how music existed around Christmas during the early nineteenth century. Music and entertainment were popular and varied around the Christmas holiday during the early nineteenth century, although it was not anything that resembled our Christmas music of today. By contextualizing the lack of any type of Christmas music, we have a better hope of understanding how the eventual widespread persistence of Christmas music came to be common, and how it became a regular part of the American public schools.

In the remainder of this chapter, I discuss the slow, disjointed progression of early Christmas music in America. There is not an overarching theme tying together this movement. Although nostalgic discourse of the time called for a return to old carols, Christmas music published and performed during the early nineteenth century is a small, varied assortment, largely forgotten today.

Music around Christmastime in Early Nineteenth Century America

It is crucial to remember that Christmas was quite different from our present in

[367] For discussion of church hymnals around 1760, see Nissenbaum, 34–36. The lack of significance of Christmas hymns is my assertion, based upon the overall frequency of these hymns found in church hymnals, discussed later in this chapter.

[368] As seen in the Grove definition above, the sacred/secular dichotomy persists. I introduced the problematic nature of this lens in the previous chapter. The main thrust of this chapter is the historical tracing of Christmas music in American public schools. In chapter seven, I include discussion of the implications of the sacred/secular division, as perceived in our present.

the early nineteenth century and frequent mentions of Christmas in newsprint were rare. The most common occurrence would be for "Christmas and New Year's presents," or, commonly referred to as "boxes."[369] Due to the almost complete absence of any mention of Christmas, the few examples that reference both music and Christmas jump off the page. These examples of music at museums, balls, fairs, and concerts serve as context for the type of music found around the Christmas holiday before newer customs were developed.

Museums

The Evening Post contains one of the earliest references for music and Christmas in America. In 1822, the American Museum of New York City advertised that, "on Wednesday evening (Christmas) the Museum will be brilliantly illuminated, and a full band will play a great variety of new and fashionable airs."[370] The band did not play any music resembling the *Grove Dictionary* description of Christmas music. The American Museum offered a similar advertisement for Christmas Eve, 1824, in which the band performed "many new, admired, and sentimental pieces of music."[371] The following year, another New York City museum promoted special events during December. Museum owner Reubens Peale announced the illumination of his museum during the Christmas "holydays" and featured vocal and instrumental music.[372] Back at the American Museum,

[369] Advertisements for "Christmas and New Year's Presents" exist in many American newspapers throughout the early nineteenth century, such as the *Pittsburgh Gazette* and the New York *Evening Post.*

[370] "American Museum," *The Evening Post*, December 23, 1822, p. 2.

[371] "American Museum," *The Evening Post*, December 24, 1824, p. 3.

[372] "American Museum," *The Evening Post*, December 26, 1825, p. 3.

the band performed new music that had just arrived from Dublin, Ireland.[373] A concert at Peale's museum on Christmas Day, 1832, included a variety of popular music and dancing. One of the performers was "Master Nellis, a boy of 15 years of age, who was born without arms."[374] P. T. Barnum purchased the American Museum in 1841, and continued to advertise for special music and events on Christmas every year until it burned to the ground in 1865.

Balls

Organized parties around Christmastime grew in popularity throughout the early nineteenth century. *The Evening Post* advertised a Christmas ball in New York City in 1830.[375] The following year, advertisements included four additional balls.[376] One Christmas Eve ball in 1832 featured a "brilliant band," and another offered an "augmented" band for the occasion.[377] In 1839, another Christmas Eve ball in New York City included "a choice selection of music" including "the most modern gallopades, waltzes, quadrilles, etc."[378]

Outside of New York, organized parties grew in popularity. For example, a "fancy and civic ball" occurred on Christmas night in Philadelphia in 1837.[379] In that same city, several balls took place around Christmastime in 1839, including one that

[373] "American Museum," *The Evening Post*, December 24, 1825, p. 3.
[374] "Peale's Museum," *The Evening Post*, December 27, 1832, p. 3.
[375] "Christmas Ball," *The Evening Post*, December 22, 1830, p. 3.
[376] *The Evening Post*, December 24, 1831, p. 3.
[377] *The Evening Post*, December 21, 1832, p. 3.
[378] "Christmas Eve Ball," *The Evening Post*, December 23, 1839, p. 2.
[379] "Il Pirata Club," *Public Ledger*, December 22, 1837, p. 1.

featured the engagement of Hazzard's band.[380] On Christmas Eve, 1840, in New Orleans, Mrs. J. P. Auth hosted a Public Bar, complete with "the most choice liquors, a suraptuous supper, and a good band of music, which will play from 7 o'clock P.M. until day light."[381] In Baltimore, Charles L. Spies held Christmas Eve balls for a number of years. In 1842, his ball featured music by Rice's Military and Cotillion Bands, in which they performed "several new and fashionable quadrilles and waltzes."[382]

Fairs

Fairs were another popular type of entertainment around Christmastime. In Baltimore during the Christmas week of 1839, a fair held in the Music Saloon benefited orphan children in 1839.[383] That same year in Boston, an anti-slavery fair lasted for three days, starting on Christmas Eve. Piano music was included with admission, day and evening.[384] In Baltimore the following year, a Christmas fair was "held by the colored people." It began on Christmas Eve and continued for four days.[385] The Independent Grey's Band under the direction of Capt. Perrine, performed "some of their choicest pieces of Instrumental Music" at the Grand Fireman's Fair at Washington Hall in 1842.[386]

Concerts

Concerts were the most common form of musical entertainment around

[380] *Public Ledger*, December 14, 1839, p. 4.
[381] *The Times-Picayune*, December 23, 1840, p. 2.
[382] "Christmas Eve Ball," *The Sun*, December 17, 1842, p. 2.
[383] *The Sun*, December 13, 1839, p. 2.
[384] "Anti-Slavery Fair," *The Liberator*, December 20, 1839, p. 3.
[385] "Christmas Fair," *The Sun*, December 24, 1840, p. 2.
[386] "Grand Fireman's Fair," *The Sun*, December 17, 1842, p. 2.

Christmastime. For example, the Handel & Haydn Society performed its very first concert on Christmas Day in 1815 in King's Chapel, Boston, and performed selections from Handel's *Messiah* and Haydn's *Creation*.[387] The following two examples are representative performances given around Christmas in 1831. The first example (Table 5-1) contains selections from a Christmas Eve program in Boston's Boylston Hall. Advertised as "Mr. Burke's Concert," there is no Christmas music on the program.[388]

[387] The Handel & Haydn Society is the second-oldest, continuously performing musical organization in the United States, second to the President's Own Marine Band. Handelandhaydn.org/about/history. Accessed on December 14, 2014.

[388] "Master Burke's Concert," *Boston Post*, December 24, 1831, p. 3.

Table 5-1
Concert Program, Christmas Eve, 1831
***Boston Post*, December 24, 1831**

Part I	
Overture to Henry IV	Martini
Song—Mr. Johnson	"Honi Soit Qui Mal y'Pense"
Ballad—Master Burke	"Savourneen Deelish"
Song—Mr. Andrews	"Love is like a Concert of Music"
Overture to Guy Mannering—To be led by Master Burke	
Comic Song—Master Burke	"Capt. Bell" (parody on the favorite Song of Isabeil)
Mermaid Song—Mr. Johnson	In imitation of Miss Kelly
Concerto on the Violin—Master Burke	Kuffner
Variations for the Piano Forte—Mrs. Ostinelli	"Non pui Mesta" From Rossini's Opera of Centerentola
Part II	
Overture to the Swiss Family—Leader Master Burke	Weigl
Comic Song—Mr. Andrews	"Werry Pekoolar"
Song—Master Burke	"Here's to the year that's awa"
Overture to Prometheus—To be led by Master Burke	Beethoven
Song—Mr. Johnson	"The Arab Steed"
Song—Master Burke	"Let us haste to Kelvin Grove"
Grand Air—Master Burke (with variations for the Violin, accompanied by Mrs. Ostinelli)	De Berriot
Comic Song—Master Burke	"The Terrible Irishman"
To conclude with the Overture to the Miller and his Men	Bishop

Just a few days later, a concert occurred at St. Clement's Church in New York City (Table 5-2).[389] Although the program concluded with "Grand Chorus — 'Hallelujah' from *Messiah*," this selection had yet to be ingrained into American culture as a part of Christmas music tradition. Handel did not compose the oratorio for

[389] "A Grand Concert of Sacred Music," *The Evening Post*, December 29, 1831, p. 3.

Christmas, but the "Hallelujah Chorus" would eventually become a traditional fixture of Christmas music in America.[390]

Table 5-2.
St. Clement's Church, New York City
***Evening Post*, December 29, 1831**

Part First	
Voluntary on the Organ	
Chorus Anthem—"O sing unto the Lord"	Dr. Clarke
Anthem—"The Lord is King"	Chapple
Solo, Mrs. Toy—"Holy Lord God Almighty"	Handel
Chorus—"Thou are the King of Glory"	Handel
Duet—Mrs. Toy and a young lady—"Hear my Prayer"	Kent
Solo, Madame Brichta—"He was despised" from Messiah	Handel
Grand Chorus—"To the Cherubim"	Handel
Part Second	
Voluntary on the Organ	
Duet, Madame Brichta and Mr. J. Earle, "Graceful Consort"	Haydn
Solo, by a young lady—"On Mighty Wings"	Haydn
Grand Chorus—Lift up your Heads," Messiah	Handel
Solo, Mrs. Toye—"From Mighty Kings"	Handel
Chorus—Beyond the Glittering Starry Sky"	Hasband
Solo, Madame Brichta, with violin obligato by Mr. Hill—"Domine labia mea aperies"	Cianchettini
Grand Chorus—"Hallelujah" from Messiah	Handel

Performances on and around Christmas regularly took place in smaller towns and cities. For example, the Burlington Band of Vermont performed a concert between Christmas and New Year's Day in 1837. The program consisted of a "variety of Marches, Quick Steps, Waltzes, Comic and Sacred Music."[391] In Baltimore, Maryland, the choir of

[390] The "Hallelujah Chorus" was commonly available in New England beginning with its inclusion in Isaiah Thomas, *Worcester Collection of Sacred Harmony* (Worcester, 1786).

[391] "Concert," *Burlington Weekly Free Press*, December 22, 1837, p. 3.

the Light Street Methodist Episcopal Church presented a concert on December 26, 1837, as a fundraiser for the Male Free School of Baltimore in hopes that they could accept female students.[392] In New Orleans, 1843, a Christmas Eve concert of "Sacred Vocal Music" took place at the new German Protestant Church. The Sacred Vocal Music Society sang sixteen hymns and songs with pianoforte accompaniment.[393]

It was popular for temperance societies to sponsor concerts and entertainment around Christmastime. In Baltimore, the Second Grand Temperance Concert occurred on December 15, 1842. According to the advertisement, "Professor Deems' celebrated Band will be in attendance; also a Choir of Sacred Music, both Vocal and Instrumental, led by J. H. Magruder."[394] The Mechanical Rifle Corps, a temperance society in Pennsylvania, sponsored a "grand Military and Citizens' Concert" on Christmas Eve, 1842, at the Chinese Saloon of the Philadelphia Museum. The Cornopean Band performed along with amateur singers.[395] In Virginia, a Temperance Parade with a Band of Music took place on Christmas Day in 1857.[396] In North Carolina, an editorial noted, "Owing to the praiseworthy efforts and influence of the Temperance Society, and the energetic measures of the Auxiliary Guard and the Police Officers, we have had less of drunkenness, rowdyism, and mischief than has prevailed on Christmas eve and Christmas day for many years preceding the present festival."[397] The transplantation of traditions of misrule with other celebrations, including concerts, continued to mark the transition of

[392] "A Concert of Sacred Music," *The Sun*, December 23, 1837, p. 3.
[393] "Concert of Sacred Vocal Music," *The Times-Picayune*, December 23, 1843, p. 2.
[394] "Second Grand Temperance Concert," *The Sun*, December 12, 1842, p. 2.
[395] "Amusements," *Public Ledger*, December 24, 1842, p. 2.
[396] "Sons of Temperance Procession," *Richmond Dispatch*, December 24, 1857, p. 2.
[397] "The Christmas Holydays," *The North-Carolina Star*, January 18, 1843, p. 4.

Christmas as a family holiday.

Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" continued as a regular feature in sacred music performances, including the following two examples. The Polar Star Society performed the following program on December 20, 1841 in Philadelphia (Table 5-3). The program featured sacred music, but nothing that resembled a program of Christmas music.[398]

Table 5-3
Polar Star Society Concert, Philadelphia
***The Public Ledger*, December 20, 1841**

Part I	
Anthem—The Earth is the Lord's, and the fullness thereof	
Anthem—The Lord is King	Chapple
Solo—Mrs. Taylor	Wiesenthal
Solo and Chorus—Thou art the King of Glory	Handel
Solo—Dr. Chapman	Browne
Solo—Mr. Reed	Anon
Solo—Mrs. Chapman	Nelson
Chorus—Hallelujah to the Father	Beethoven
Part II	
Chorus—To Thee, Cherubim	Handel
Solo—Mrs. Taylor	Stevenson
Anthem—Hearken unto me	Chapple
Solo—Mr. Read	Handel
Anthem—I'll wash my hands in innocency	Chapple
Grand Hallelujah Chorus	Handel

A similar program took place in New York City at the Bowery Universalist Church on December 23, 1841 (Table 5-4). The organist opened the concert with variations on a National Anthem. The final number of the first half was the Hallelujah Chorus. The second half of the concert (not listed) closed with the Grand Chorus—

[398] *Public Ledger*, December 20, 1841, p. 3.

"Hallelujah to the Father" from the *Mount of Olives* by Beethoven. [399]

Table 5-4
Bowery Universalist Church, New York City
***New York Tribune*, December 23, 1841**

Part I	
Voluntary—Organ	W. Alpers
Song—"The Evening Prayer," Mrs. Strong	C. Smith
Trio—"O Jesu Pater Bonum," Mrs. Strong, Miss Pearson, and Mr. Pearson	Winter
Song—"When I think upon thy Goodness," Mr. Pearson	Haydn
Duett—"The Supplication," Mrs. Strong and Miss Pearson	M. P. King
Song—"Grattas Aginius," Mr. Strong and Miss Pearson	Guglielmi
Chorus—Grand Hallelujah, from the Oratorio of the Messiah	Handel

Moving through the 1840s, many concerts were named "Christmas Concerts," or similar descriptions. Although the type of repertoire performed was no different than the examples listed above, the names started to reflect the growing popularity of the Christmas holiday. For example, a vocal concert took place on Christmas night in Philadelphia at the Masonic Hall in 1841. Although the program did not include Christmas music, the concert was part of the advertised "Christmas Festival."[400] On Christmas Day in 1843, "Grand Christmas Concert of Sacred Music" occurred at the Methodist Episcopal Church on Bedford Street in New York City. An adult choir and a juvenile choir alternated a number of solos, duets, and choruses.[401] A particularly interesting example occurred in 1846. A "Kriss Kringle Concert" took place on

[399] "Concert of Sacred Music," *New York Tribune*, December 22, 1841, p. 3.
[400] *Public Ledger*, December 22, 1841, p. 3.
[401] "A Grand Christmas Concert," *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1843, p. 3.

December 23 in Philadelphia and included a raffle drawing for presents. The announcement in *The Public Ledger* included an assortment of entertainment, common in early variety shows that would eventually develop into vaudeville.

> KRISS KRINGLE'S CONCERT AND ENTERTAINMENT ON CHRISTMAS EVE, at the CHINESE SALOON, NINTH Street, below Chesnut.—The public is respectfully informed that the above novel and interesting Concert will take place as above. The following are the arrangements: For every eight persons who purchase tickets, a prize of one dollar's worth of presents, or 13 prizes to every 104 persons. The prizes will be drawn before the audience in a fair and impartial manner. Every person purchasing a ticket for the Concert will be presented with a number, which they must keep, in order to secure their prizes. The following unprecedented galaxy of talent is engaged for the Concert:
>
> Miss R. MYERS, the juvenile prodigy
> Mr. C. JENKINS, who will open his new budget of fun
> Madame LA FOY, the distinguished vocalist
> Mr. BROWN, the popular Irish melodist
> Signor BARNOTTI, in his Roman Statuary
> Mr. J. W. RYALL, the famous Grotesque Dancer
> Singor MARRIOTTI'S Grand Italian Fantoccini (automata)
> Mr. Jenkins, the unequalled Congoline melodist
>
> The whole forming by far the greatest attraction offered to the public this season.[402]

Performances on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day continued to be a popular method of entertainment through the mid-nineteenth century, despite the lack of what we would consider Christmas music. For example, on Christmas Eve in 1845, there were multiple circuses, balls, and museum performances advertised.[403] Many similar productions occurred on Christmas night, 1845, in New Orleans, Louisiana, including plays, opera, and a circus.[404] A Christmas Concert in Brooklyn, 1856, included opera arias, duets, and a German hunting song, but no Christmas music.[405] In Pennsylvania, a

[402] "Kriss Kringle's Concert," *Public Ledger*, December 23, 1846, p. 2.
[403] *The Evening Post*, December 24, 18, p. 3.
[404] *The Times-Picayune*, December 25, 1845, p. 3.
[405] "Christmas Concert in Brooklyn," *The New York Times*, December 26, 1856, p. 8.

concert on Christmas Eve, 1863, featured popular music listed in Table 5-5.[406]

Table 5-5
Ringgold Cornet Band Christmas Eve Concert (Pennsylvania)
***Reading Times*, December 24, 1863**

RINGGOLD CORNET BAND'S
GRAND ANNUAL
PROMENADE CONCERT AND BALL
At Keystone Hall,
CHRISTMAS EVE, THURSDAY, DEC. 24, 1863
The Hall will be splendidly decorated and additional chandeliers placed therein.
Wittich's full Orchestra is engaged.
The Band will play the following selections for the Promenade Concert:

Grand Coronation March	Kliber
Air from the Opera of Verdi	Rossini
Q. S. Combination	Sturblebink
Waltz, Germania	Walch
Song, "Rock me to Sleep Mother"	Leslie
Q. S. Winchester	Stratton
Serenade, "The Light of Other Days"	Sturblebink
Waltz, A La Graffuil	Graffuli
Song, "Jenny with the Light Brown Hair"	Dobworth
Q. S., "Who will Care for Mother now," and answer	Sturblebink

As opportunities for structured entertainment increased around the holidays, public lawlessness decreased. Traditions of misrule and frolicking persisted into the nineteenth century and were a catalyst for many of the family-oriented traditions that were developed by John Pintard, Clement Moore, and others. Even in 1840, this was a concern, as noted in Baltimore. "Thanks to our energetic Mayor and police, we have had

[406] "Ringgold Cornet Band," *Reading Times*, December 24, 1863, p. 2.

less firing and less mischief than is usual during the festivities of Christmas."[407]

Throughout this time, Christmas customs in America were growing in popularity, even without any soundtrack of dedicated Christmas music. As detailed in the previous chapter, the family, community, and a focus on gift giving and children were of increased importance during the early nineteenth century, along with the church observances already in place. *The Greensboro Patriot* noted the uptick in Christmas celebration in 1842. "Sorry *we* did not take more Christmas; had no idea it would be so much the fashion."[408] As Christmas traditions and festivities were increasing, the discourse surrounding the holiday was slowly coagulating around a musical idea. American Christmas Music would begin to develop out of a nostalgic discourse.

The Nostalgic Turn towards Christmas Music

The shift towards Christmas music in America happened in the same fashion as the development of many other Christmas traditions. When John Pintard began to develop new traditions of the family and community, he did so under the guise of returning to something old, something pure. Similarly, the development of Christmas music came with a turn towards the ancient, towards nostalgia.

Amidst the barren landscape of Christmas traditions in the early nineteenth century, there are few nostalgic calls for Christmas music. One of the earliest descriptions of "old" Christmas music occurred in 1838. Advertised in the *Evening Post*, the popular

[407] *The Sun*, December 30, 1840, p. 4.

[408] Editorial, *The Greensboro Patriot*, January 4, 1842, p. 3. (emphasis in original) It is also worth noting that, in my examination of many varied newspaper archives, I noticed a large uptick in the number of post-Christmas sales and bargains.

"Peter Parley" series included a new addition that year.[409] *Peter Parley's Christmas Tales* positioned many traditions as old-fashioned, including carols. Although these accounts focus primarily on perceived English traditions, the American author Samuel Griswold Goodrich wrote them, creating a new mythology. The author lamented that, "Good old Christmas, as it used to be commemorated, has clean passed away."[410] In his discussion of old carols, Goodrich lauded religious carols and deplored all others:

> In olden times carols were sung by bishops themselves among the clergy, and when the words were well chosen, and chaunted with devotional feelings, this practice must have had an excellent effect; but Christmas carols, that should be confined to the praise of the Saviour, have been so wretchedly put together, and so mingled with other subjects, that they often lower, rather than heighten our reverence for divine things: this is to be regretted.[411]

Goodrich encouraged Christmas carols, so long as they focused on Christian themes. He went on to write that "Bad as Christmas carols, on the whole are, yet, here and there, good verses are to be found."[412]

On December 25, 1837, there was not a single mention of Christmas in the Baltimore *Sun*.[413] The following year, however, began a long, annual series of flowery Christmas editorials published on Christmas Day. This first editorial in 1838 acknowledged Christmas traditions that readers enjoyed, recalling child-like wonder. "Who is there that cannot revert to the days of childhood, when this day was an era in their life! The anxious anticipation — the visions of roast turkey, mince pie, and filled stockings bulging out almost to bursting with sweets." The editorial goes on to note that,

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[409] "New Books for Children," *The Evening Post*, December 3, 1838, p. 3.

[410] "Samuel G. Goodrich," *Peter Parley's Christmas Tales* (London: Thomas Tegg & Son, 1838), 134.

[411] Ibid., 138.

[412] Ibid.

[413] *The Sun*, December 25, 1837, p. 1–4.

"true, we have not the Christmas carol." The editorial concludes with "Speaking of Christmas carols, we think the publication of the following, written in 1695, will not be amiss at this time." The carol, "A Christmas Song," begins with the following lines and is likely the type of non-religious carol referenced by Goodrich.

> Now thrice welcome, Christmas,
> Which brings us good cheer:
> Minc'd pies and plum-pudding,
> Good ale, and strong beer;
> With pig, goos, and capon,
> The best that may be;
> So well doth the weather
> And our stomachs agree.[414]

A poem published anonymously in the *Vermont Phoenix* expressed a nostalgic, yearning for music of days past. The poem privileges the past, while viewing the present rather negatively. This poem was the only mention of Christmas in any edition of the paper from December 21 through January 4, 1839, excluding a few advertisements.

> Ah, this was wont to be a festal time,
> In days gone by! I can remember well
> The old familiar melodies that rose,
> At break of morn from all our moss-clad hills,
> To welcome in each Christmas. Never since
> Hath music seemed so sweet. But the light hearts,
> Which to those measures beat so joyously,
> Are tamed to stillness now. There is no voice
> Of joy through all the land.[415]

A story originally printed in the *Southern Ladies Book* appeared in a North Carolina newspaper in 1840. The main character, a young maiden, engages in dialogue with a mysterious stranger that appears at a Christmas Eve ball. In the course of this

[414] "A Merry Christmas to You," *The Sun*, December 25, 1838, p. 2.
[415] "Christmas," *Vermont Phoenix*, January 4, 1839, p. 4.

conversation, the stranger privileges the celebration of past years over current traditions.

> "Why is this night chosen as a scene of festivity?" asked the sweet voiced stranger.
>
> "It is Christmas eve," replied the maiden, "the birth-night of our Saviour, and it is our custom to celebrate it with music and dancing."
>
> "It was once celebrated in ancient days," said the stranger, "with a splendor and beauty that would shame the decorations of these walls. While the shepherds of Chaldea were watching their flocks beneath the starry glories of midnight, they heard strains of more than mortal melody gushing around them—rolling above them—the thrilling of invisible harps, accompanied by celestial voices, all breathing one sweet, in triumphant anthem—Glory to God, the Highest; on Earth peace and good will to men."[416]

A Christmas Day editorial in the 1841 *Boston Post* quoted many old carols, admittedly "from memory, and may not be exact." The carols quoted did not explicitly reference the Nativity in lyrics. "These were the songs of our ancestors, which, with other things, contributed to make their hearts glad in 'Christmas day in the morning'." The editorial included the lyrics to "the first drinking song composed in England," quoted below.

> Lordlings, it is our host's command,
> And Christmas joins him hand in hand,
> To drain the brimming bowl;
> And I'll be foremost to obey —
> Then pledge me, sirs, and drink away,
> For Christmas revels here to-day,
> And sways without control.
> Now *wassel* to you all! And merry may you be,
> And foul that wight befal, who *drinks* not *health* to me.[417]

A similar Christmas Eve editorial in the *Brooklyn Eagle* appeared in 1855. "In former times the celebration of Christmas began in the latter part of the previous day—

[416] "The Stranger at the Banquet," *Mecklenburg Jeffersonian*, October 5, 1841, p. 4. Reprinted from *Southern Ladies Book* by Mrs. Caroline Lee Hentz.

[417] "Christmas-Christmas," *Boston Post*, December 25, 1841, p. 1–2. (emphasis in original)

Christmas Eve … small parties of songsters went about from house to house, or through the streets, singing what were called Christmas Carols—simple popular ditties full of joyful allusions to the great gift from God to man in the Redeemer." The editorial goes on to quote the carol "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen."[418]

Even in 1874, despite the addition of Christmas carols into American culture by that time, an editorial in the *Brooklyn Eagle* was nostalgically pessimistic. "We don't sing so many carols on Christ's birthday as our fathers did, and when we do we don't sing them so cheerily nor with so full a heart … There was a time when big men became one with little children in their Christmas glee."[419] According to an editorial in the *Chicago Tribune* that same year, "Carols were always sung on Christmas Day." The editorial noted that some carols "are very beautifully commemorative of the story of the Saviour's nativity" and "others are simply riotous songs." The editorial includes one stanza of a carol.

> Lo! Now is come our joyful'st feast!
> Let every man be jolly;
> Each room with yvie leaves be dreet,
> And every post with holly.
> Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
> And Christmas blocks are burning,
> Their ovens they with baked meats choke,
> And all their spits are turning,
> Without the door let sorry lie;
> And if, for cold, it hap to die,
> Wee'le bury't in a Christmas pye,
> And evermore be merry.[420]

These examples illustrate the nostalgic call for "old" Christmas music. Topics

[418] "Christmas," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1855, p. 2.
[419] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1874, p. 2.
[420] *Chicago Tribune*, December 25, 1874, p. 1.

varied widely, including the nativity, goodwill, feasting, and drinking. Despite this nostalgic discourse, early examples of Christmas music in America are infrequent and largely unrelated to the past. In the following section, I highlight a variety of early types of Christmas music in order to demonstrate the diversity and lack of any accepted Christmas music canon, despite calls to return to the Christmas music of days of old. I do not sort the examples in this section based upon the sacred/secular divide. Furthermore, the examples in this section often appear unrelated, which I believe is a realistic description of Christmas music at that time.

Early Examples of Christmas Music in America

A scarce amount of music published in the eighteenth century meets our present definition of Christmas music. Nissenbaum noted that, "during the 1760s nine different Christmas [hymns] were published in New England"[421] and "between 1760 and 1799 at least thirty different Christmas songs were published in New England."[422] Nissenbaum also primarily cites the work of composer William Billings when discussing Christmas

[421] Nissenbaum lists these sources: William Knapp, "An Hymn of the Nativity," in Thomas Walter, *The Grounds and Rules of Musick Explained* (Boston, [1760]); William Tans'ur, "An Anthem for Christmas Day," in [Daniel Bayley,] *The Royal Melody Complete* (Boston, 1761); "An Hymn for Christmas Day," in Daniel Bayley, *A New and Complete Introduction to the Grounds and Rules of Musick* (Newburyport, Mass., 1764); William Knapp, "An Anthem for Christmas Day,"; anon., "A Christmas Hymn"; and Joseph Stephenson, "O Zion that Bringest," all in Joseph Flagg, ed., *Sixteen Anthems* (Boston, 1766); Stephenson, "Hark, Hark"; "Boston, A New Hymn for Christmas Day"; "Great Milton" ("Joy to the World"); and Stephenson, "An Anthem Out of the Fortieth Chapter of Isaiah" ("O Zion that brings glad tidings"), all in Daniel Bayley and A. Williams *The American Harmony* (2 parts, Boston, 1769).

[422] Nissenbaum, 34–36.

music in the late eighteenth century.[423] It is important to remember, however, that, "any celebration of Christmas, including a musical one, was apparently suspect during Billings's time," likely as a result of anti-Catholic sentiment.[424] For example, Billings heavily cited the scriptural sources for the lyrics of his hymn "Shiloh for Christmas," found in the opening of the *Suffolk Harmony*.[425] "In view of his contemporaries' mistrust of making Christmas a special occasion," wrote McKay and Crawford, "it may be that Billings set forth his verses bristling with documentation to show that Jesus's birth was depicted in the Bible as a festive time and that the use of song to celebrate the nativity had ample scriptural precedents."[426]

As discussed in chapter four, British holidays—including Christmas—vanished from the American calendar following the Revolutionary War in 1783. The slow evolution of the Christmas holiday into the nineteenth century included few early examples. One of the earliest Christmas songs composed in America never mentions Christmas by name. Composed in 1831, "Star of the East" is a nativity song with words by Bishop Heber and music composed by G. J. Webb, a colleague of Lowell Mason at the Boston Academy. The text begins:

> Brightest and best of the sons of the morning,
> Down on our darkness, and lend us thine aid!

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[423] The Christmas songs of William Billings include "An Hymn for Christmas or Charlston" [sic] and "Boston, for Christmas," both published in *The New-England Psalm Singer* (1770); "Boston," "Judea," ad "Bethlehem," (all in *The Singing-Master's Assistant*, [1778]); "Emmanuel for Christmas" (in *The Psalm-Singer's Amusement* [1781]); "Shiloh, for Christmas" (in *The Suffolk Harmony* [1786]); and "An Anthem for Christmas" (in *The Continental Harmony* [1794]). See Nissenbaum, 327; David P. McKay and Richard Crawford, *William Billings of Boston: Eighteenth-Century Composer* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

[424] McKay and Crawford, 145.

[425] William Billings, *Suffolk Harmony* (Boston: J. Norman, 1786).

[426] McKay and Crawford, 145.

Star of the east the horizon adorning,
Guide where our infant Redeemer is laid![427]

There are some curious, non-religious examples that stick out amidst the dearth of Christmas music. *The Evening Post* published an early Christmas song on Christmas Eve, 1831. "The Invitation: A New Song on an Old Subject" was intended to be sung to the existing tune of "Barney Brallagan," and was an advertisement for the local jeweler Jo Bonfanti. Like a modern-day television jingle, the gentleman found himself on Christmas Eve looking for a present for his lady.

It was on Christmas eve,
The weather never fairer,
As William took his leave.
He thus address'd his Sarah:
The holidays are nigh,
The night is clear and pleasant,
And I'm resolved to buy
My girl a Christmas present.
Only say,
In what your gems are scanty;
Don't say nay,
Let's to Jo Bonfanti. [428]

Advertisements for sheet music were frequent during the early nineteenth century, but Christmas music was scarce. There is an early example of Christmas music in 1832, in an advertisement for "Christmas and New Years Gift" by J. G. Osbourn, subtitled, "Amusement pour le Piano Forte."[429] Upon the examination of the printed score, however, the piece is a set of three waltzes composed as a holiday gift for three "Ladies

[427] Bishop Heber and G. J. Webb, *Star of the East* (Boston, C. Bradley, 1831). Accessed via the Library of Congress on December 15, 2014. www.loc.gov/item/sm1831.360360/
[428] *Evening Post*, December 24, 1831, p. 3.
[429] "New Music," *The Evening Post*, March 23, 1832, p. 3

of Philadelphia."[430] The only relationship with the holiday was the intent of the composer for it to serve as a present.

It is important to note the 1833 publication of *Christmas Carols: Ancient and Modern* by William Sandys in London. The collection included the first published version of "God Rest You Merry, Gentlemen" and "The First Noel." Other carols included in the volume are "I Saw Three Ships Come Sailing In," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "To-morrow Shall Be My Dancing Day."[431] This collection does not appear to have been widely available for purchase in America; however, the renewed interest in Christmas music in England no doubt influenced that same interest in America.

The Garrison Juvenile Choir performed a concert in Boston on February 7, 1834. The program included twenty-five numbers, mostly for chorus, and concluded with "The National Hymn: My Country 'tis of Thee." The ninth selection—a duet—was titled "Christmas Hymn." The lyrics and composer for this selection are unknown.[432] This program is a rare example during this period of "Christmas" being used to describe a musical selection, particularly during a concert in February.

Musical collections published in the early nineteenth century contained few Christmas songs. For example, Lowell Mason's *Boston Glee Book*, published in 1838, contains several seasonal songs, particularly springtime songs for the month of May. There are no Christmas songs in the collection.[433] Mason's 1854 publication *The*

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[430] J. G. Osbourn, *Three Waltzes*, 1832.

[431] William Sandys, *Christmas Carols, Ancient and Modern* (London: Richard Bleckley, 1833).

[432] "Vocal Concert," *Boston Post*, February 3, 1834, p. 3.

[433] Lowell Mason and George Webb, *The Boston Glee Book* (Boston: Wilkins, Carter & Palmer, 1838).

Hallelujah contains "tunes, chants, and anthems, both for the choir and congregation." In that volume, Mason includes one Christmas carol: "Christ was born on Christmas Day."[434]

With so few examples, it is difficult to classify emergent themes. Several examples, however, reference Christmas bells. In 1839, the Christmas editorial in *The Sun* waxed poetically: "The ground is covered with snow and the music of the merry sleigh bells is wafted to and fro."[435] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* published a poem "The Christmas Bells" in 1842. The poem begins with the following lines.

> The bells—the bells—the Christmas bells,
> How merrily they ring!
> As if they felt the joy they toll
> To every human thing.[436]

The poem, written by Reverend J. M. Brown of Long Island, New York, was set to music in 1842. The cantata *Christmas Bells: A Tale of Holy Tide* by Charles Horn premiered in New York City on December 23, 1842, and the following year in England. The cantata portrays "the ceremonies of an English life in a Cathedral Town, on the day of the Nativity; during the performance, which consists of Solos, Duettos, Trios, Quartettos, and Chorus, part of the Cathedral Services will be chaunted and sung by double Choirs."[437] Section titles of the cantata include "Descriptive of Christmas Morn before Sunrise" and "How the Christmas Bells cheer'd the old Man's heart."[438]

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[434] Lowell Mason, *The Hallelujah* (Boston: Mason Bros., 1854), p. 349.
[435] "Christmas," *The Sun*, December 25, 1839, p. 4.
[436] "The Christmas Bells," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 30, 1842, p. 2.
[437] "At St. John's Church," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, January 4, 1843, p.
[438] Charles Horn, *Christmas Bells: A Tale of Holy Tide* (London: D'Almaine & Co., 1842). Accessed via the Library of Congress on December 14, 2014 www.loc.gov/item/sm1846.792390/

J. E. Hatton composed a different take on Christmas bells in 1849. Hatton was "acclaimed for his piano performances of Bach and Mendelssohn," but also known for the composition *Christmas Sleigh Ride*. During performances of this piece, he would accompany himself at the piano, "incessantly shaking his leg, to which was attached a string of sleigh-bells, while an assistant contributed supplemental sound effects with an instrument that simulated the cracking of a whip."[439]

Moving away from Christmas bells, music publishers began to capitalize on the growing potential for Christmas music sales during this time. Advertisements for Charles Dickens' ghost story, *A Christmas Carol*, first appeared in an American newspaper in the *New York Tribune*, January 27, 1844.[440] Music publishers began publishing volumes of carols soon thereafter. D. Appleton & Co. advertised a "Book of Christmas Carols" in the *Evening Post* in 1845.[441] The Baltimore *Sun* announced a special "Dollar Newspaper" for the Christmas holiday in 1845, which included "a Christmas Carol, set to original music."[442] These advertisements were still the exception, rather than the rule. A common example included the following 1845 advertisement for "Music for the Holidays," which contains popular music intended for gifts, with no other relation to Christmas.

> **New Music for the Holidays.** Atwill, at his Music Repository, Sign of the Golden Lyre, below St. Paul's, No. 201 Broadway, has now a most extensive assortment of new, fashionable, and standard Musical Productions, embracing all of the admired Songs, Duetts, Trios, Waltzes, Marches, Quadrilles, Rondos, Variations, Fantasies, &c., from all the popular operas of "Bohemian Girl," "Norma," "Lucia di Lammermoor," "Bronze Horse," "Amilie," "Cinderella," "Gustavus the 3d," "La Fille du Regiment," "La Sonnambula," "Il Puritani,"

[439] Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music: The New York Music Scene in the Days of George Templeton Strong*, Volume I (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995): 539.
[440] *New York Tribune*, January 27, 1844, p. 3.
[441] *Evening Post*, December 31, 1845, p. 3.
[442] *The Sun*, December 24, 1845, p. 2.

> "Fidelio," "Fra Diavolo," "L'Ambassadrice," "Les Diamons de la Couronne," "Enchantress," "Le Domino Noir," "Preaux Cleres," "La Bayadere," "Les Lac de Fees," "Lucrezia Borgia," "Le Serment," "Maid of Artois," "Les Tocq," "Zampa," "Anne Bolena," "Zanetta," "De Postillion," "Guillaume Tell," "Robert le Diable," "Siege of Rochelle," "Semiramide," "La Double Echelle," "Belisario," "Don Pasqualle," "Otello," "La Serene," etc. etc.[443]

Soon, the practice of holiday music sales extended to taking popular music of the day and superimposing Christmas on top of it. For example, consider the "Santa Claus' Quadrilles" of 1846 (Figure 5-1). With the exception of the title page reproduced below, the printed score does not relate to Christmas. The illustration on the title page, however, combines eighteenth century revelry with the early nineteenth century developments of the holiday and Santa Claus.[444]

[443] *The Evening Post*, December 23, 1845, p. 3.
[444] Harvey B. Dodworth, "Santa Claus' Quadrilles" (New York: Firth & Hall, 1846).

Figure 5-1.
"Santa Claus' Quadrilles"
Library of Congress

I close this chapter with an example of an early American Christmas song published in 1849. William Ives composed "Shout the Glad Tidings: A Christmas Glee," which is overtly religious. The first few lines begin

> Shout the glad tidings exultingly sing
> Jerusalem triumphs Messiah is king.
> Zion the marvelous story be telling
> The son of the highest how lowly his birth
> The brightest archangel in glory excelling
> He stoops to redeem thee he reigns upon earth.[445]

[445] William Ives, *Shout the Glad Tidings: A Christmas Glee* (New York: Ives & Co., 1849). Accessed through the Library of Congress on December 14, 2014. www.loc.gov/item/sm1849.460310/

These disconnected examples of early American Christmas music illustrate the lack of any tradition during the first half of the nineteenth century. Most of the music described above has not remained a part of current American Christmas culture. Christmas practices, along with its music, had yet to gain momentum. The emergence of a Christmas music genre would eventually appear in the churches, Sabbath schools, and Sunday schools.

CHAPTER SIX:
Christmas Music in the Churches, Sabbath Schools, and Sunday Schools

At the start of the nineteenth century, Christmas music was scarce in America. Other than some old carols, music specifically for the holiday season did not exist because there was no holiday season. Despite relationships with gift-giving, family celebrations, nostalgia, and other non-religious themes, Christmas is a religious observance for the Christian faith. It is no surprise that, when certain types of music evolved as Christmas music, it happened quite visibly in the churches. This section presents a disparate glance at the growing frequency and popularity of Christmas selections in churches. What once was just musically another day has grown to be much more. This is not a careful accounting or comparison of the repertoire performed throughout this period. This section is a series of examples to illustrate the trends of the time.

Christmas Music in the mid-Nineteenth Century Churches

One of the earliest Christmas music traditions to develop in America is from Handel's *Messiah*. As noted in the previous chapter, performances of "Hallelujah Chorus" occurred frequently around Christmastime. Its inclusion as a Christmas music tradition seemed to solidify by the mid-1850s. According to a review in *The New York Times* in 1856: "Last evening at the Tabernacle, the New-York Harmonic Society afforded to the lovers of choral harmonies an opportunity of hearing the magnificent, massive and time-honored strains of the *Messiah*. It has become customary, and on the

evening of each, returning Christmas day the public naturally expect it."[446] However, while performances of the *Messiah* often took place in churches, they usually occurred separately from a church service, such as the annual performances by the Handel & Haydn Society in Boston. What was happening in the actual church services?

There is little evidence of special Christmas music in the churches during the early and mid-nineteenth century. However, a few examples exist. An early example from 1857 hints at the progression toward special music on Christmas. An Episcopal service in South Carolina promoted that "the room is duly decorated with evergreens for the occasion; and the Choir, we believe, are practising [sic] some special pieces adapted to the reflections of the season."[447] We do not know what those special pieces were for Christmas Day.

In 1862, *The New York Times* reviewed Christmas Day church services with little mention of music. Thus, it is notable that the paper listed that two Roman Catholic churches—St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Peter and Paul's Catholic Church—both included *Adeste Fidelis* in their service, likely due to its Latin text. At that point, it is reasonable to assume that the hymn had become an accepted Christmas standard. The *Times* referred to it as "the celebrated *Adeste Fidelis*" and noted that it was the "Christmas hymn of the church."[448]

In 1865, *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle* listed a detailed review of the Christmas Day service at The Church of the Holy Trinity. The paper noted that, "the service for the day

[446] "Sacred Harmonic Society," *The New York Times*, December 26, 1855, p. 8.
[447] "Christmas Services," *Edgefield Advertiser*, December 23, 1857, p. 2.
[448] *The New York Times*, December 26, 1862, p. 1.

was that of the usual morning prayers with special hymns and music appropriate to the great festival." Music for the Episcopal service included, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Cantique de Noel" and "Three Kings of Orient."[449] The following year, the *Daily Eagle* did not list as much music, but did specifically note that "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" was sung at St. Luke's Episcopal Church.[450] In 1869, however, the *Daily Eagle* listed a plethora of music performed at local Roman Catholic churches on Christmas Day. Selections included the "Hallelujah Chorus," "Adeste Fidelis," "Cantique de Noel," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," and "O Holy Night."[451]

By 1874, local Brooklyn churches were listing all special musical details in the newspaper in advance of Christmas Day. For example, this listing for St. Charles Borromeo includes both special Christmas music, as well as special musicians engaged to perform at this Roman Catholic Church.

> **St. Charles Borromeo.** Three masses will be celebrated at St. Charles Borromeo, on Sidney place and Livingstone street, Rev. Father Freel, pastor, on Christmas Day. The first at 4:30, the last at eleven o'clock. Prof. J. Hoffman has furnished a very attractive programme of music and secured Conterno's Twenty-third Regiment Band. The eleven o'clock mass will open with the "Adeste Fideles," arranged as quartet and chorus, with organ and orchestral accompaniment. The mass sung on the occasion will be the "Pastorale de Lambillotte" as solo, quartet, and chorus, "Veni Creator," by Cherubini. The offertory "Cantique de Noel," by Adam, closing with the "Hallelujah Chorus," by Handel. [452]

Similarly, in 1875, local papers listed church services on Christmas Day in Boston with very specific musical details. What had once been another day was now a special

[449] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1865, p. 2.
[450] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1866, p. 2.
[451] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1869, p. 2.
[452] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1874, p. 2.

musical event in the life of the community and church.[453] For example, the Christmas service at the Church of the Messiah contains specific details about both the music selections and the elaborate decorations for the season at this Episcopal church.

> **The Church of the Messiah**, on Florence street, Rev. Pelham Williams, S. T.D., rector, presents a fine appearance, having been decorated under the direction of Mr. George W. Roafe, of the choir. Not only are the evergreens visible on walls and gallery, but the flutings of the columns are each filled with a string of evergreen, producing a fine effect. A lofty rood screen has been erected between the front seats and the choir seats, through the openings of which the altar is visible, adorned with flowers. The services to-day, Rev. Pelham Williams officiating, will include the full choral service by twenty-four male voices, under the direction of the choir master J. T. Graham, and Harry Kershaw, organist. The following music has been selected for the occasion: Processional—Hark the herald angels sing; Venite, Gregorian; Psalter, Anglican; Te Deum, Tours; Jubilate, Grand Chant; Ante Communion; Introit—Anthem, "When all was in quiet silence," Macfarren; Kyrie Eleison, Elvey; Gloria Tibi, Tallis; Hymnus "While shepherds watched," etc.; Credo, Gregorian; Offertorium; Anthem, "In the beginning was the word," Allen; "Behold I bring you glad tiding"; Hymn, Adeste Fideles; Recessional—Carol, "The snow lay on the ground."[454]

The local newspaper in Reading, Pennsylvania, printed the program for the Christmas morning chimes at an Episcopal church in 1877.[455]

> **Christ Cathedral Chimes**. Mr. James Harrison will ring Christ Cathedral Chimes on Christmas morning, commencing at 7 a.m. The following is the programme:
> 1. Christians awake, Salute this Happy Morn.
> 2. Awake for the trumpet is sounding.
> 3. Christmas Carol.
> 4. Carol, Carol Christians.
> 5. Carol Brother.
> 6. Hail! Hail this Happy Day. (continued)

[453] Musical details seem to occur most frequently around Christmas. For example, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* listed the Christmas Day musical programs—including titles and composers—for fifty-seven churches in 1880. This detailed announcement occurred on December 24, 1880, one day prior to Christmas services. That same year, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* did not list musical details about Easter services in advance, although church service reviews on Monday, March 29, 1880, included some details about the music performed.

[454] *Boston Post*, December 25, 1875, p. 3.

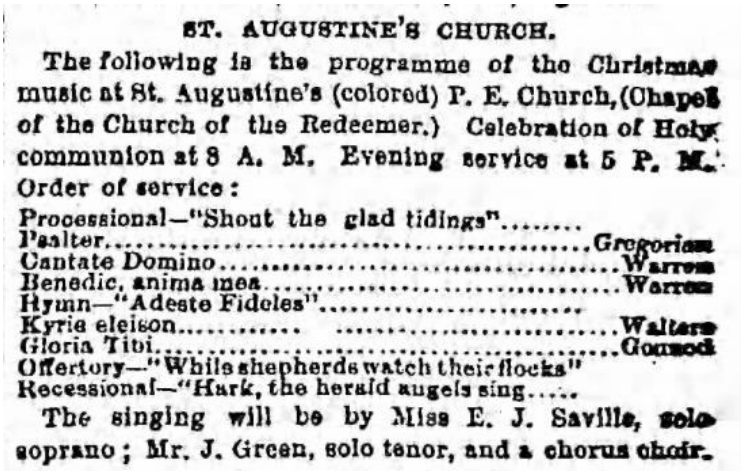
[455] A church chime is a carillon of fewer than two octaves.

7. Hail! Thou long expected Jesus.
8. O Du Liebes Jesus Kindt.
9. Ring, Ring, Sweetly Ring, on this Glad Morn.
10. Sweet peace on earth Good Will to Men.
11. Star of Bethlehem.
12. The Happy Christmas Morn.
13. Wonderful Night.
14. While Shepherds watch their flocks by night.
15. Zion, thy King behold. [456]

This example illustrates the growing expectation that Christmas is a holiday that has special music, and the program of this music is newsworthy.

By 1877, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* published the Christmas Day music programs for nearly every church in the area.[457] In 1880, this newspaper listed Christmas Day music programs for fifty-seven churches. The following program from "St. Augustine's (colored) P. E. Church" is representative of the style in which all Christmas programs are listed, as well as the type of Christmas music common to most churches (Figure 6-1).[458]

[456] *Reading Times*, December 25, 1877, p. 1.
[457] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1877, p. 2.
[458] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1880, p. 2. "Colored" refers to the segregated congregation of the time.



ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH.

The following is the programme of the Christmas music at St. Augustine's (colored) P. E. Church, (Chapel of the Church of the Redeemer.) Celebration of Holy communion at 8 A. M. Evening service at 5 P. M. Order of service:

Processional—"Shout the glad tidings".....
Psalter.....Gregorian
Cantate Domino.....Warren
Benedic, anima mea.....Warren
Hymn—"Adeste Fideles".....
Kyrie eleison.....Walters
Gloria Tibi.....Gounod
Offertory—"While shepherds watch their flocks"
Recessional—"Hark, the herald angels sing....."

The singing will be by Miss E. J. Saville, solo soprano; Mr. J. Green, solo tenor, and a chorus choir.

Figure 6-1.
St. Augustine's Church, Christmas Day Services
The Brooklyn Daily Eagle, December 25, 1880

In 1885, similar attention to Christmas music programming occurred in Pennsylvania[459] and New York when newspapers listed numerous church programs.[460] In Kansas City, Missouri, there were similar examples of Christmas Day music programming, including the following.

> **Church Services To-morrow.** Christmas services at the Grand avenue M. E. [Methodist Episcopal] church will be held to-morrow. The musical programme is as follows: Morning service—Organ voluntary in G—By Clark—Mr. Charles Beade; Christmas Anthem—(Selected)—Choir; Offertory—Noel (Christmas song), (Gounod)—Leroy Moore. Evening service—Organ voluntary—Trammerer—Schumann; Anthem—"There were Shepherds"—(Buck)—Choir; Offertory—Solo and quartette, "O Holy Night" (Adam), choir. [461]

In 1886, an editorial in *The Times* (Pennsylvania) noted, "Christmas is the occasion, next after Easter, when organists and choir-masters make the most elaborate preparations for the music of the church services."[462] An editorial in 1899 noted:

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[459] *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 26, 1885, p. 1.
[460] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1885, p. 7.
[461] *The Kansas City Star*, December 25, 1886, p. 1.
[462] "Christmas Music," *The Times*, December 24, 1886, p. 2.

> Preparations, more or less elaborate, have been made for the holiday programmes in our city churches this year, and they are expected to be given on a grander scale than ever before … The various choirs have been kept hard at rehearsal by their directors for some weeks past, and the worshiper tomorrow will hear something exceptional.[463]

There were many ways churches marked the special event. For instance, churches often added instruments for Christmas services, which might have resulted in more arrangements of holiday music for instrumental ensembles being written. In Pennsylvania, 1892, a review following Christmas Day services indicated that, "The special services last evening at Heidelberg [Reformed Church] were perhaps the most beautiful and successful in the history of that stirring little church …. The music, however, was the leading feature of the occasion. An excellent orchestra made up of some of York's best musicians … sustained the voices admirably."[464]

In 1887, the *Oakland Tribune* noted a wide variety of music programs, listed in the same style as in New York.[465] The *Chicago Daily Tribune* listed the same variety of church Christmas services in 1890.[466] A rare example of Santa Claus featured in a church cantata occurred in 1888 in Topeka, Kansas, at an African Methodist Episcopal church. Presented on Christmas Eve, the details of the cantata included the following.

> **The A. M. E. Church.** The beautiful cantata "Santa Claus House" was rendered at the A. M. E. church last evening with the following personations:
>
> Santa Claus—Ruben Wade.
> Frost Queen—Miss D. W. Langston.
> Snow Flake—Miss C. C. Watson. (continued)

[463] *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 23, 1899, p. 1.
[464] *The York Daily*, December 26, 1892, p. 1.
[465] *Oakland Tribune*, December 24, 1887, p. 5.
[466] *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 26, 1890, p. 2.

> [Cast included sixteen other assorted characters]
> Santa concludes to give away the contents of his castle and gladdens those who have listened by presents useful and ornamental.[467]

The listing of Christmas Day church music services is commonplace throughout the end of the nineteenth century. For example, the first page of the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* on December 24, 1891, lists "Adeste Fideles" twenty-five times, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" fourteen times, "Cantique de Noel" six times, and "Hallelujah Chorus" five times.[468] By 1899, the *Daily Eagle* noted the lack of variety of the established Christmas music of the annual church services.

> While a close inspection of the programmes of the music prepared this year by the churches for the annual Christmas celebration reveals comparatively little that has not been heard before at previous festivals, the selections themselves are among the best that have been used for that purpose.[469]

At this juncture, we have observed the slow evolution that began with no real canon of Christmas music in America. By the end of the nineteenth century, music was a central component of the Christmas holiday in the churches, utilizing a repertoire specific to the holiday season. This transformation did not happen only in the churches, but also in the Sabbath schools.

Christmas Music in the Sabbath Schools

The first Sabbath school in America opened in Virginia in 1783.[470] Sabbath schools originally provided poor children with minimal education in reading and writing,

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[467] *The Topeka Daily Capital*, December 25, 1888, p. 3.
[468] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1891, p. 1.
[469] "Music on Christmas Day," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 23, 1899, p. 6.
[470] "Sunday-Schools and the American Sunday School Union," *The American Journal of Education* 41 (Dec. 1865): 706.

along with moral training. Because these children had to earn money during the week, school met on the Sabbath—the only day students were not at work.[471] In 1865, *The American Journal of Education* differentiated between Sabbath schools, as described above, and Sunday schools, held in conjunction with church services for the purpose of religious instruction. There was often a low opinion of the students who attended Sabbath schools, as evidenced in this description. "The teachers were hired; the children were for the most part of the very ignorant and often vicious children of the lowest classes, and the spelling-book and hymn-book were the principal text-books required."[472]

The evolution of Christmas music in Sabbath schools is similar to that already described in churches. Special music unique to the Christmas season was uncommon in the early nineteenth century. The Christmas holiday, and eventually its music, began to build momentum. Sabbath schools reflected the expansion of the holiday. However, the *type* of Christmas music generally incorporated into Sabbath schools was often quite different from that in the churches. First, I examine music intended specifically for Sabbath schools.

Ezra Barrett published *Sabbath School Psalmody* in 1828, one of the earliest collections of songs specifically for Sabbath schools. It is unlikely that any Christmas music was included in the collection.[473] Also intended specifically for Sabbath schools, Lowell Mason published *Sabbath School Harp* in 1836 and *Sabbath School Songs* in

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[471] Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, *A Brief History of the Massachusetts Sabbath School Society and of the Rise and Progress of the Sabbath Schools* (Boston: A J. Wright, 1850).

[472] "Sunday-Schools and the American Sunday School Union," 706–707.

[473] I examined an incomplete copy of this text; therefore, I cannot say with certainty that it omits Christmas music. Ezra Barrett, *Sabbath School Psalmody* (Boston: Richardson & Lord, 1828).

1841. Neither contains Christmas music or references to the nativity.[474]

Several collections targeted a wide audience, possibly including Sabbath schools. The next three examples suggest parallel content developing for common schools, juvenile schools, and singing schools during this time. Lowell Mason and G. J. Webb published *The Juvenile Singer* in 1837. The inscription at the beginning of the collection notes: "The design of this work is to furnish such a collection of Songs as is wanted for juvenile classes and singing schools; or for common schools, and academies, where music is made a regular study, or where singing has been introduced."[475] None of the songs in this collection relates to the nativity or Jesus. Several are based upon winter themes, including "'Tis Winter, Winter Far and Wide," "Haste Thee, Winter, Haste Away," and "Summer Joys Are Over (Winter Song)."

William Bradbury and Charles Sanders published *The Young Choir* in 1842 for use by "Juvenile Singing Schools, Sabbath Schools, Primary Classes, &c."[476] It contains a wide variety of music, including sacred, patriotic, and temperance songs. Only one song, listed below, contains lyrics that refer to Christmas themes, specifically the nativity.

> Hark! What mean those holy voices,
> Sweetly sounding through the skies;
> Lo! th'angelic host rejoices;
> Heavenly halleuiahs rise.
> Hear them tell the wondrous story,
> Hear them chant in hymns of joy,
> Glory in the highest—glory!

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[474] Lowell Mason, *Sabbath School Harp* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1836); Lowell Mason, *Sabbath School Songs* (Boston: Massachusetts Sabbath School Society, 1841).

[475] Lowell Mason and G. J. Webb, *The Juvenile Singer* (Boston: J. H. Wilkins & R. B. Carter, 1837), ii.

[476] William Bradbury and Charles Sanders, *The Young Choir* (New York: Mark Newman, 1842), iii.

Glory be to God most high!

Christ is born, the great Anointed,
Heav'n and earth his praises sing!
Oh receive whom God appointed,
For your Prophet, Priest, and King.
Haste, ye mortals, to adore him;
Learn his name and taste his joy;
Till in heav'n ye sing before him,
Glory be to God most high.[477]

Bradbury and Sanders published another popular collection in 1842: *The School Singer*. Only two songs relate to Christmas in the collection of over one hundred and fifty songs "for juvenile schools, Sabbath schools, public schools, academies, select classes, etc."[478] The book contains all four verses to "Hark the Herald Angels Sing"[479] as well as a winter song entitled "The Sleigh Ride" which begins with the following lyrics.

O! See the snowy wreaths, they lie
Here on the hills,
There in the vales,
Jump in with muffling fur,
Jack Frost's abroad the blood to stir;
O'er slipp'ry snow We briskly go,
With jingling bells a glad cheer ho![480]

Bradbury and Sanders intended the previous two collections for use in a variety of educational settings for children. Bradbury wrote his 1850 publication, however, for "all Sabbath School occasions." *Bradbury's Sabbath School Melodies* contains over one hundred songs, including some related to Easter and the resurrection. There are no songs

[477] Bradbury & Sanders, *The Young Choir*, 93.
[478] William Bradbury and Charles Sanders, *The School Singer* (New York: Mark Newman, 1842), title page.
[479] Ibid., 194.
[480] Bradbury & Sanders, *The School Singer*, 122.

related to Christmas or the nativity.[481]

Some early examples of Sabbath school music practices around Christmastime exist from 1841-1843. None of these examples included anything remotely resembling our current definition of Christmas music. On Christmas Day, 1841, the Centre Street Mission Sabbath School hosted a Christmas feast. The feast was "interrupted only at short intervals by temperance addresses and temperance songs … it was indeed a 'merry christmas'."[482] The First Presbyterian Church of Philadelphia held a "Juvenile Concert" presented by one hundred fifty Sabbath school children on New Year's Day, 1842.[483] The Western Methodist Episcopal Church held a Sabbath school exhibition and concert on December 26, 1842.[484] In the following chapter, I address the relationship between school examinations, exhibitions, and exercises, as they relate to Christmas music performances. This relationship between examinations, exhibitions, and exercises applies to the Sabbath schools.

There is a striking contrast in the 1843 and 1845 annual exhibitions of the Sabbath school attached to the Forsyth Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. The first example took place on December 25, 1843. The newspaper announcement mentioned singing, but there is no reference to Christmas. This example is also significant as it uses the terms "Sabbath school" and "Sunday School" interchangeably, referring presumably to a school for the education of poor children.

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[481] William B. Bradbury, *Bradbury's Sabbath School Melodies and Family Choir: A Complete Collection of Hymns and Music for all Sabbath School Occasions* (New York: Division & Phinney, 1850).

[482] "Christmas Feast," The Evening Post, December 30, 1841, p. 2.

[483] "A Juvenile Concert," *Public Ledger*, December 28, 1841, p. 3.

[484] *Public Ledger*, December 26, 1842, p. 2.

> **Sabbath School Exhibition.** The annual exhibition of the Sunday School attached to the Forsyth st. M. E. Church, will take place on Monday evening, 25th inst. in the M. E. Church in Forsyth st. near Division. The exercises of the evening will be varied with addresses, dialogues, &c. by the pupils, together with singing by the children. … Proceeds to be applied for the benefit of the Sabbath School cause.[485]

Just two years later, the Forsyth Street Methodist Episcopal Church held the very same event, with a very different name.

> **Juvenile Concert** and S. S. Celebration.—The annual Christmas Celebration of the Sabbath School attached to the Forsyth st. M. E. Church, will take place on Thursday evening next, at 6 ½ o'clock, in the Forsyth st. Church. The exercises will consist of a Juvenile Concert varied by other exercises, such as Infant Class Exercises, Dialogues, Addresses, &c. by the scholars. [486]

This celebration featured similar content to the 1843 annual exhibition. The 1845 descriptors "Juvenile Concert" and "annual Christmas Celebration," however, are indicative of a crucial switch. The annual exhibition became a Christmas Celebration with a greater focus on music.

Similar transitions occurred throughout America during this period. For example, the *New-York Tribune* advertised a Christmas Celebration in 1844 at the Allen Street Methodist Episcopal church. This celebration contained virtually the same content as earlier exhibitions. "There will be a great variety of exercises of the most interesting character, consisting of Addresses, Dialogues, Recitations, Singing, Infant Class Exercises, &c. All persons friendly to the Sunday School cause are respectfully invited to attend."[487] Another similar example from Philadelphia occurred in 1845.

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[485] "Sabbath School Exhibition," *New-York Tribune*, December 23, 1843, p. 3. Although this article is unclear, it is possible that the actual Sunday school (congregation members) gave the program to raise money for the Sabbath School.

[486] "Juvenile Concert," *New-York Tribune*, December 25, 1845, p. 2.

[487] "Sunday School Christmas Celebration," *New-York Tribune*, December 24, 1844, p. 3.

> **Christmas Celebration.**—The Christmas Celebration of the NAZARETH SABBATH SCHOOL will be held in the Church, on THIRTEENTH Street, near Vine, THIS EVENING. Doors open at 6, and services commence at half past 6 o'clock. On the occasion a number of youthful speakers will address the audience in pieces of Prose, Poetry and Dialogue, interspersed with Singing by the Choir, Sabbath School and Infant groups. Tickets of admission 10 cents—to be had at the door this evening.[488]

As Christmas in America gained momentum, Christmas music began to appear in reports of Sabbath school programs. The Baltimore *Sun* reported upon the proceedings of Sabbath school exercises on Christmas evening, 1846. "The exercises of the Sabbath School attached to McKendree Chapel, were exceedingly rich, and elicited enthusiastic applause from the audience." The exercises included "Christmas celebration, sung by the school" and "scripture questions, by superintendent to school."[489] In 1855, an entire Sabbath school sang "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing" to open the Christmas exercises at Sands Street Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City.[490]

A noticeable shift in discourse occurred well into the 1850s. Here is a particularly descriptive account of singing in Sabbath school exhibitions, printed in the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* in 1858.

> **Sabbath School Exhibitions.** Perhaps of the multitude of juvenile celebrants of our glorious Christmas festival, none entered with more fervor into the spirit of the occasion than the Sabbath School connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church on Hanson Place. The edifice was full to the brim, and it was a beautiful sight all those promising girls and boys, in holiday apparel, seated upon and in front of the platform, prepared with one voice and full hearts to swell the choral anthem of praise "Glory to God in the highest—on earth peace, good will towards men."[491]

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[488] "Christmas Celebration," *Public Ledger*, December 25, 1845, p. 2.
[489] *The Sun*, December 30, 1846, p. 3.
[490] *The New York Times*, December 26, 1855, p. 2.
[491] "Sabbath School Exhibition," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 27, 1858, p. 2.

The following year in 1859, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* continued reporting a wide variety of Sabbath school celebrations. The paper included the following report: "Christmas was very generally celebrated yesterday by religious exercises in the churches and social festivities among the people. We subjoin reports of the various Sabbath School and other religious performances." The reports contain detailed description of the addresses read and music sung for the Christmas holiday.[492] On Christmas Day, 1860, the *Cleveland Daily Leader* promoted a concert by the Plymouth Sabbath School. The paper noted that, "it is the intention of the managers of this school, as we understand it, to make singing a prominent feature in the children's education."[493] To that end, the concert promised to raise funds to purchase a piano for the school.

Students sang Christmas carols in New York, 1867, according to the *Daily Eagle*. "In some of the other churches, notably the Congregational and Methodist churches, the children of the Sabbath school were gathered informally to sing Christmas carols and exchange the merry salutations of the morning."[494] That same year, the Sabbath school of the Second English Lutheran Church observed the nativity with the performance of a cantata in Pennsylvania, described below.

> **Christmas Festival.** The Sabbath School of the Second English Lutheran Church will celebrate Christmas Eve by a festival, at which time will be performed the cantata of the "Christian Graces," the "Crowning of the Queen of Graces," a tableau of a scene in the birth of Christ, and other exercises.[495]

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[492] "Christmas Celebration," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 27, 1859, p. 2.
[493] "Plymouth Sabbath School Concert," *Cleveland Daily Leader*, December 25, 1860, p. 1.
[494] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1867, p. 2.
[495] Christmas Festival, *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 24, 1867, p. 3.

Sunday Schools and Santa Claus

Sunday schools occurred in conjunction with church services for the purposes of religious instruction. A rare listing of an entire Sunday School Exhibition program in 1863 provides a glimpse into a combination of Christmas themes (prior to mainstream development of Christmas music in America) and patriotic themes (amidst the Civil War), along with religious education. Musical selections are largely untitled, with only the context of the surrounding recitations and scenes to offer a glimpse into the overall Christmas exhibition.

SUNDAY SCHOOL EXHIBITION
In the Evangelical Methodist Church, 8th St.
On Friday, (Christmas Evening,) 1863.
Programme.

1. Music, 'Happy greeting to all.'
2. The Lord's Prayer
3. Prayer, by the Pastor.
4. Music.
5. Infant Address.
6. A Word.
7. First Attempt.
8. The Pet Rabbit.
9. George Washington.
10. The Sabbath School.
11. The Child's Inquiry.
12. The Prayer.
13. The Speech.
14. Dying Child (to her Mother)
15. My Mother Dear.
16. Jewels of the Heart.
17. The Young Wife.
18. Music.
19. Rally Round the Flag.
20. A Poetic Address.
21. What is Time?
22. A Dialogue for Christmas (seven characters.)
23. The Child's Prayer (five characters.)
24. The Child's Address.

(continued)

25. Music.
26. The S. S. Arch.
27. Revelation (two characters)
28. How to lead a Child (three characters.)
29. Battle Song of Freedom.
30. Tree of Freedom.
31. Free Speech and Free Thought.
32. We are Passing Away.
33. Music.
34. Kiss Kindle (two characters.)
35. Sick of being Punished (two characters.)
36. The Farmer's Girl.
37. The Miser.
38. Present and Future.
39. Hints in a Nut Shell (two characters.)
40. Lager Beer (ditto)
41. Missionary Dialogue (ditto)
42. Music.
43. The Drunkard's Wife.
44. The World (two characters.)
45. Questions and Answer (ditto)
46. Poetic Dialogue (ditto)
47. The Rainbow (eight characters)
48. The Man and the Money (four characters)[496]

In 1866, an editorial in *The Evening Telegraph* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) noted the growing popularity of Sunday School Christmas celebrations, framed within the familiar nostalgic call for old carols. The editorial quoted several stanzas from "I Saw Three Ships," then summarized as follows. "Although the singing of Christmas carols has never obtained much footing in this country, we have a ceremony of similar character in the lays sung by the children at the Sunday School anniversaries, which have of late become an indispensable element in the American Christmas."[497]

As Christmas music began to take hold in the churches, a different type of

[496] *Reading Times*, December 24, 1863, p. 2.

[497] *The Evening Telegraph*, December 24, 1866, p. 8. During this time, a Sunday school "anniversary" is synonymous with "exhibition" or "exercises."

musical celebration appeared in the Sunday schools: Santa Claus. For example, look to the 1862 Sunday School Christmas Festival of the Lee Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church in New York City. Following the opening prayers and music, the program concluded with the song, "Santa Claus is coming." The *Daily Eagle* contains a description of the scene at the end of the program.

> As if by magic, the three curtains simultaneously dropped and disclosed to view *four* Christmas trees and a fire-place and chimney on the stage, with a real live Santa Claus in the top of it. The emotion of those hundreds of young hearts knew no bounds, and they gave vent to their feelings in one great roar, and all rose on tip-toe. When order had been restored, Santa Claus descended the chimney, and coming out at the fire-place below, proceeded to fill several pairs of stockings with the presents which he carried in his pack.[498]

A similar account occurred in the *New York Times* in 1868, for the Sunday schools of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Library Hall. "Two mammoth trees were erected on the stage, Santa Claus appeared at the chimney-top, the reindeers appeared, and everything afforded the utmost amusement to the children."[499] The Sunday school at Summerfield United Methodist Church in New York City gave its concert on Christmas Day, 1873, with dialogues, singing, and recitations from the students. "After the children had performed their share of the entertaining, they were the recipients of handsome presents from a veritable Santa Claus, who impartially gave to all of the best he had."[500]

On Christmas night, 1882, the Methodist Episcopal Church congregation in Garnett, Kansas, gathered for the Sunday school performance. The program included the songs "Christmas Anthem" and "Christmas Bells," and the recitation "St. Nicholas." The

[498] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1862, p. 2.
[499] *The New York Times*, December 26, 1868, p. 2.
[500] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1873, p. 2.

Garnett Journal described the final portion of the evening as follows. "Santa Claus (as represented by R. T. Stokes, who never fails to make a success of the character), went down the centre aisle of the church in a grand locomotive, with smoke-stack and bell clanging, and we have no hesitancy in saying it is the best thing we ever saw at a Christmas entertainment."[501]

In Topeka, Kansas, the English Lutheran Sunday school presented the cantata "Birth of Christ" on Christmas evening, 1882. This focus on the nativity merged with additional Christmas themes. *The Topeka Daily Capital* reported that, prior to the performance, "The Shepherds, the Frost King, and 'Old Santa Claus' will appear in full costume. Presents will be distributed among the children."[502]

In Oakland, California, Sunday school students gave the following performance in 1889, described as follows. "The beautiful Christmas cantata, *St. Nicholas* will be given at the First Methodist Church Monday evening by the Sunday school, accompanied by a large choir and orchestra."[503] In that same city, a Sunday school Christmas performance featured Santa Claus as special guest.

> **Santa Claus Was There.**
> Christmas at the Chase Street Congregational Church.
>
> The Sunday school of the Chase Street Congregational Church held a Christmas tree festival last evening at Hansen's Hall, West Oakland. On the stage was two well laden trees lit up with candles. An old fashioned fire-place had been arranged in the back part of the stage, through which Santa Claus was to enter. The Sunday school pupils, accompanied by their parents, attended in large numbers. The evening's enjoyment opened with an entertainment, of which the following is a programme: Singing by the school; recitation, "The Two Welcomes," … recitation, "The Three Kings," … dialogue, "The Dime," …

[501] *Garnett Journal*, December 30, 1882, p. 3.
[502] *The Topeka Daily Capital*, December 24, 1882, p. 6.
[503] *Oakland Tribune*, December 28, 1889, p. 10.

> recitation, "Money at Interest," … recitation, "Willie and Annie's Prayer," … Singing by the school, "What do You do at Your House When Christmas Comes?" … "Christmas Greeting," composed by Mrs. Thrope for the primary class, concluded by ushering in Santa Claus (Dr. Collum) who distributed gifts to the little ones. [504]

Composers responded to the growing demand for Santa Claus throughout this time, merging elements of the nativity with the legend of Santa. For example, consider "Santa Claus: A Christmas Cantata" written by W. Howard Doane in 1879. Themes of the nativity are explored through songs, including, "When the Shepherds Watched" and "The Prayer Song" ("Now I Lay Me down To Sleep"). Eventually, Santa Claus appears later in the cantata.[505]

Thomas Martin Towne, a prolific Sabbath school and temperance song composer, wrote several cantatas including "Santa Claus' Dream: A Christmas Cantata for the Use of Sunday-Schools" (see Figure 6-2).[506] Other cantatas by Towne include, "The Gruff Judge and Happy Santa Claus: a Christmas Cantata for Sabbath Schools,"[507] "Around the World with Santa Claus: Christmas Cantata"[508] and "Getting Ahead of Santa Claus: Christmas Cantata for Sunday Schools."[509]

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[504] *Oakland Tribune*, December 28, 1889, p. 10.

[505] W. Howard Doane, *Santa Claus: A Christmas Cantata* (Chicago: Biglow & Main, 1879). Accessed via the Library of Congress. http://www.loc.gov/item/sm1879.15345/ February 19, 2015.

[506] Thomas Martin Towne, *Santa Claus' Dream: A Christmas Cantata for the Use of Sunday Schools* (Chicago: David C. Cook, 1894). Towne's wife, Belle K. Towne, wrote the libretto.

[507] Thomas Martin Towne, *The Gruff Judge and Happy Santa Claus* (Chicago: T. S. Denison, 1887).

[508] Thomas Martin Towne and Ida Scott Taylor, *Around the World with Santa Claus: Christmas Cantata* (Chicago: David C. Cook, 1903).

[509] Thomas Martin Towne and John P. Hamilton, *Getting Ahead of Santa Claus: Christmas Cantata for Sunday Schools* (Chicago: David C. Cook, 1907).

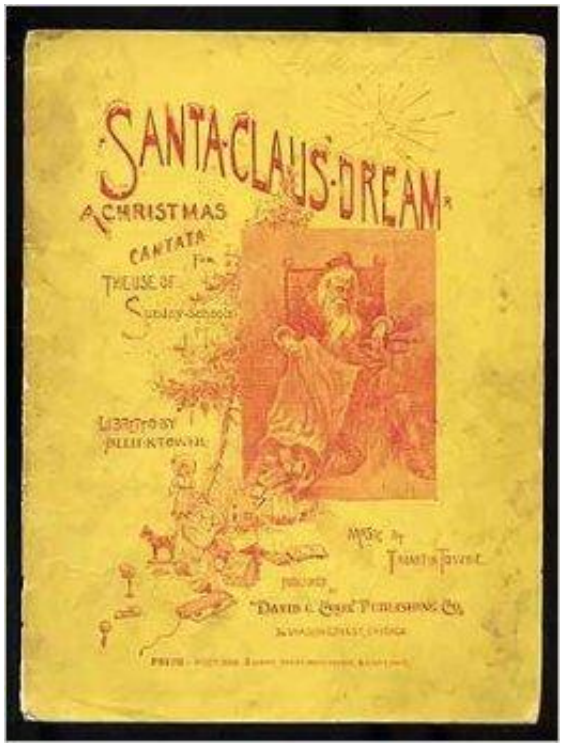

Figure 6-2
"Santa Claus' Dream: A Christmas Cantata for the Use of Sunday Schools"
David C. Cook, publisher

Certainly, not all Sunday school performances included Santa Claus. In the same year as the example above, we find the following Sunday school program in Pennsylvania. This performance is also notable due to the instrumental arrangement of "O Come All Ye Faithful." According to the *Altoona Tribune*:

> The Christmas festival was celebrated at Christ Reformed church on Christmas evening. It was one of the most delightful and instructive this Sunday school ever held … The service began with the singing of that old Christian hymn, *O Come All Ye Faithful*, arranged for clarionets and cornets. The entire programme was then followed as arranged in the service. The names of the chants and hymns sung are: Gloria in Excelsis, Joyously Sing, Star of the East, The Angel's Message, Glad Tidings of Salvation, While Shepherds Watched, Christmas Bells, and Gloria Patri.[510]

[510] *Altoona Tribune*, December 27, 1889, p. 1.

Many times, however, sacred music merged with Santa Claus at Sunday school performances of the late nineteenth century. For a final example, consider two Methodist Episcopal programs from Christmas Day, 1897, in Macon, Missouri. Both merged elements of the nativity with gift giving, ending each program with gifts from Santa Claus.[511] The following example features one of the two similar programs (Table 6-1).

Table 6-1
Sunday school, Methodist Episcopal (South)
***The Macon Republican*, December 24, 1897**[512]

Song	Joy to the World
Prayer	—
Anthem	Choir
Class Exercise	Merry Christmas
Recitation	Babe of Bethlehem
Class Song	Christmas Consecration
Recitation	Remembering Christmas
Class Exercise	What the Bells Say
Duett	Glory to God in the Highest
Recitation	Centuries Ago
Song	School
Class Exercise	Gifts for Jesus
Recitation	Santa and the Dollies
Song	School
Recitation	Christmas Eve
Duet	Story of the Stars
Recitation	A Message from "Santa"
Distribution of Presents	
Benediction	

In many Sunday school settings during this time, sacred elements of the holiday merged with traditions of gift giving. Despite the religious connotations of Saint

[511] *The Macon Republican*, December 24, 1897, p. 6.
[512] *The Macon Republican*, December 24, 1897, p. 6.

Nicholas, it seems odd to see the merger between sacred and Santa as we view these Sunday school performances from the perspective of the present. In the late nineteenth century, however, such a merger seemed to be a natural extension of the ongoing development of the American Christmas.

CHAPTER SEVEN:
Early Beginnings of Christmas Music in Public Schools

Christmas music was scarce in early nineteenth century America. As holiday traditions gained momentum, its music developed in turn. A nostalgic call for old carols persisted, yet many early instances of new American Christmas music did not last long into the future. However, a regular repertoire slowly developed through the annual Christmas Day services at many churches, as well as Christmas celebrations in the Sabbath schools. In the Sunday schools, new church Christmas music traditions merged with the recent invention of Santa Claus, reinforcing both the holiday's emphasis on the children and the blurriness of religious and non-religious traditions. The evolution of Christmas music in the public schools is a product of these varied elements, along with the infrastructure created by public examinations.

Public Examinations in American Education

Public examinations were a regular practice of colleges, Sabbath schools, and early public schools. The public, particularly parents and other community stakeholders, witnessed the examination of students. Whether through presentation or oral examination, students would publically present their knowledge for the community. I believe the practice has relevance to the emergence of Christmas music in the American public schools.

Schools of all types regularly engaged in public examinations and demonstrations at the ends of terms, including the end of December right around Christmastime. These public examinations created an infrastructure in which it became commonplace for

students to perform in special exhibitions or exercises in December. Performances would include examinations, declamations, speeches, and eventually music. Throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, examinations evolved into exhibitions and closing exercises, terms that were often used interchangeably in the primary sources. Both refer to school-wide celebrations at the end of the term in December.

In 1756, the *Pennsylvania Gazette* documented one of the earliest examples of public examinations. Described as part of a public notice for the College and Academy of Philadelphia, public examinations were included as a component of the educational progression.

> Those who can acquit themselves to Satisfaction in the Books laid down for the fourth Stage, after public Examination, are to proceed to the Study of the Sciences, and to be admitted into the College as Freshmen, with the Privilege of being distinguished with an Under-graduate's Gown.[513]

Ten years later, there were increasing mentions of public examinations in the same paper, included in an advertisement for a new academy.

> Private Examinations in Latin, English, &c., will be held every Week, and public Examinations once a Quarter. Notice will be given in this Paper of the particular Days. Parents, Guardians and others, may attend on public Examinations; but on private Examinations, none are to be admitted but Inspectors."[514]

These examinations often coincided with the Christmas holiday. In 1827, an advertisement for a female classical school noted, "[The Session] will commence on the 10th of September, and continue until Christmas. At the close of each Session there will

[513] *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, August 12, 1756, p. 1.

[514] *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 11, 1766, p. 8. Similar mentions of public examinations occurred in *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 10, 1771, p. 3; and *The Pennsylvania Packet*, October 2, 1775, p. 3.

be a public Examination."[515] In New York City, public examinations for the "Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb" took place on December 18, 1832.[516]

Often, the terms examination and exhibition were used interchangeably. Beginning on December 26, 1833, the Grammar School of Columbia College held a week of public exhibitions, in which family and friends were invited. The last day included "declamations and dialogues," as noted in the public advertisement.

> **The Semi-Annual Exhibition** of the Grammar School of Columbia College will commence on Wednesday, the 26th inst., in the College Chapel, and be continued throughout the week, and the ensuing one, beginning at 9 A. M., and ending at 1 P. M., each day. The Parents and Guardians of the Students and the friends of the Institution generally, are invited to attend.—On the last day there will be declamations and dialogues in the English, French, Spanish, German, Greek and Latin Languages.[517]

The Baltimore public schools held public examinations on successive days the week prior to Christmas, 1841. The Clerk of the Commissioners of Public Schools announced dates and locations for twelve Male and Female schools and one High School. "An examination of the Public Schools will commence on Thursday, 16th instant, at 9 o'clock, A. M. … The public are respectfully invited to attend."[518] The following year, the Baltimore *Sun* reviewed the December examination of Public School, No. 6, including mention of a group song.

> The recitations in the elementary branches of English study were listened to with pleasure and received much applause; those in history and geometry, displayed great diligence on the part of the pupils and reflected infinite credit on the instructors. The boys sung the 'Minute gun at sea'.[519]

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[515] *The Raleigh Register*, December 4, 1827, p. 4.
[516] *The Evening Post*, December 17, 1832, p. 3.
[517] *The Evening Post*, December 19, 1832, p. 3.
[518] *The Sun*, December 15, 1841, p. 3.
[519] *The Sun*, December 23, 1842, p. 2.

Also in 1842, an advertisement for a New Orleans "Young Ladies' Institute" included public examinations in music.

> Great care is bestowed on the cultivation of Music, both vocal and instrumental. The well-known reputation of the school in this respect, merits the attention of parents, who are desirous that their children should excel in that agreeable accomplishment. Public examinations in music, takes place on the evening of the first Saturday in each month, and towards the end of May, a general examination, followed by a distribution of prizes.[520]

Some Sunday school examinations included singing, including one example from Maryland in 1841. Topics included the life of Christ, Scripture, and other subjects. The presentation was "to be interspersed by appropriate Vocal Music."[521] The following week, the Baltimore *Sun* contained a synopsis of the examination.

> A Bible class from School No. 1, composed of ten children, was first examined. Next came a dialogue between four children, belonging to School No. 4. Then came an examination of a Bible class, from School No. 3. Next a dialogue by two children, from School No. 5. The whole was interspersed with appropriate singing by the children of the several schools present.[522]

Representative examples of public school examinations include the following three instances from the 1840s, all in the month of December. Published in New Orleans in 1842, "The public are respectfully invited to attend an examination of the [Third Municipality Public School].[523] According an 1841 advertisement in Philadelphia, "A Public Examination of the Pupils of the High School, upon the studies of the present term, will be held on Wednesday and Thursday next."[524] Similarly, the Gettysburg public schools requested the presence of parents, guardians, and the public at examinations that

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[520] *The Times-Picayune*, January 26, 1842, p. 1.
[521] *The Sun*, December 22, 1841, p. 3.
[522] *The Sun*, December 29, 1841, p. 2.
[523] *The Times-Picayune*, December 11, 1842, p. 3.
[524] *Public Ledger*, December 22, 1841, p. 3.

took place December 20-24, 1847.[525]

In the nineteenth century, schools of all types were regularly engaged in public examinations and demonstrations at the ends of terms, including the end of December right around Christmastime. These public exhibitions created an infrastructure in which it became commonplace for students to perform in special exercises in December. This element is but one that comprises the evolution of the practice of Christmas music in the American public schools.

Early Examples of Christmas Music in Public Schools

There are few examples of early public school music around Christmastime beyond those mentioned in the previous section on public examinations. The Baltimore *Sun* published an announcement for a concert on December 17, 1844. Based on the lack of evidence from the churches, Sabbath schools, and Sunday schools during this time, it is unlikely that any Christmas music was included on this program.

> **Public School Concerts.**—The first will be given by the First Classes (200 pupils) of the Schools in the western part of the city: Nos. 1, 4, 6 and 8, on TUESDAY NIGHT, 17th inst., at 7 o'clock in the SALOON of the HIGH SCHOOL, Assembly Rooms. The Music will be composed of Juvenile Choruses, Duetts, &c., interspersed with some three or four Recitational Addresses by young gentlemen of the High School. Tickets 25 cents … Avails are to be devoted to the supply of Music Books …
>
> N. B. Visitors, especially young persons, are cautioned against exposing their tickets before they are demanded by the door keeper. Last time many were snatched away by some villainous boys.
>
> The Second Concert by the Eastern Schools, will be a few days later duly advertised.[526]

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[525] *The Star and Banner*, December 17, 1847, p. 3.
[526] "Public School Concerts," *The Sun*, December 10, 1844, p. 2.

A Christmas Day celebration in New York City that same year featured an interesting combination. Public school children sang several numbers. The main attraction, however, seemed to be the address by the School Superintendent in defense of Bible reading in the public schools.

> **Christmas Celebration at the Tabernacle.** D. Meredith Reese, Esq., County Superintendent of Common Schools, will deliver, in the Broadway Tabernacle, on Christmas afternoon at 2 o'clock, AN ADDRESS upon the necessity and propriety of reading the Bible in our Public Schools.
>
> The Officers and Trustees of the Public School Society; the Commissioners, Trustees and Inspectors of Common Schools, and the Teachers, together with the children connected with the New-York Public Schools, are respectfully invited to attend. … The friends of the Bible and of Education are respectfully invited to attend.
>
> Several pieces will be sung by children connected with the Public Schools, The entertainment will be enlivened by music from a Brass Band. [527]

There is little evidence of public school concerts during this time; thus, rare examples stick out, however mundane and minor. For example, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* noted that the pupils of Public School No. 7 rehearsed on December 16, 1856, in preparation for their concert held at the York Street Methodist Episcopal Church the following evening.[528]

A striking contrast took place in the December examinations of Public School No. 13. The first examination, held on December 20, 1850, had no apparent relation to the Christmas holiday.

> **School Examination.**
>
> The first annual examination of public school No. 13, was held on Friday, 20th instant. … A large number of visitors attended the examination and were highly pleased with the manner in which it was conducted. Among them we remarked Mr. Joseph McKeen, the Superintendent from New York, who took

[527] *New-York Tribune*, December 24, 1844, p. 3.
[528] "Public School Concert," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 16, 1856, p. 2.

> occasion to express himself to that effect shortly before the close of the proceedings.
>
> The order of these comprised the usual branches taught in our public schools, including in some of the higher classes, the Greek, Latin, and French languages. The study of these languages does not necessarily form a part of public instruction; but it is allowed where its introduction will not interfere with a due attention to the ordinary branches. We cannot particularize the routine of the exercises in detail. But the answering of the several classes—so far as we had an opportunity of hearing it—was very satisfactory; evincing a general proficiency on the part of the pupils, and on that of the teachers, a high degree of capacity and care. Our attention was called to the promptitude with which the pupils in some of the classes responded to the questions put by the examiner. [529]

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reviewed the closing exercises of Public School No. 13 nineteen years later, by which time the "Annual Examination" had evolved into closing exercises. In this program, held on December 23, 1869, the difference is striking (Table 6-1). The students performed a number of Christmas selections, ranging from "Hark the Herald Angels Sing" to "Christmas Carol."

> **PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 13.**
>
> The exercises at this school on Degraw street, between Hicks and Henry, were held yesterday afternoon, and passed off smoothly and to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. … The exercises yesterday reflect much credit both upon the efficient Local Committee, the pupils and the faithful corps of teachers. The programme was as follows (Table 7-1).[530]

[529] "School Examination," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 23, 1850, p. 2.
[530] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1869, p. 3.

Table 7-1
Closing exercises of Public School No. 13
***The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1869**[531]

MALE DEPARTMENT	
Chorus—"Hark the Herald Angels Sing"	—
Selection—"A Christmas Dinner"	By Allie Cromwell
"Charge of the Light Brigade"	Henry Seavens
Chorus—"Progress"	—
Selection—"Labor"	Masters Kennedy and Butler
Dialogue—"Change in the Kitchen"	Misses McConnell, Keck and Conway
"Evangeline," Pianoforte	George Baker
Selection—"Somebody"	Charley Storrs
Chorus—"Carol, Christians, Carol!"	—
Declamation—"Spartacus"	Henry Spooner
FEMALE DEPARTMENT	
Chorus—"The Angels Song"	—
An order for a Picture	Nettie Van Saun
The Passing Wish	Hattie Gilmore
Ring on Wild Bells	Helen Wolfe
Dialogue—"The Fortune Teller"	Annie Bernstein and Jennie Bogue
Chorus—"Christmas Carol"	—
One by One	Tina Gray
Little Orphans	Percie Dunn
Who was Santa Claus?	Minnie McGee
Baby's Stocking	Fannie Bursley
Sunday Morning at the Dil-dins	Bella Meafoy
Chorus—"Passing Year"	—

Significant examples continue to appear in the late 1860s. On December 23, 1868, Public School No. 9 in New York presented closing exercises. As part of the program, the pupils all sang an unidentified Christmas carol.[532] The following year, there is another descriptive account of a public school Christmas program, albeit without the frequency of

[531] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1869, p. 3.
[532] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1868, p. 2.

Christmas selections as found at Public School No. 13.

> **PUBLIC SCHOOL NO. 27** was most tastefully decorated with ground pine, bittersweet and holly, with appropriate mottoes for the occasion. The Primary Deparment exercises consisted of recitations, songs and calisthenics. In the Grammar Deparment the "Bugle Call" and the "Dying Year" were beautifully recited. The "Boy and the Angel," and the "Child's Prayer" were faultless in rendering. A young Miss repeated "Colin's Coming Home," with an accent that would make any Scotchman's heart glad. The music was spirited and appropriate, and just enough of it to be pleasant. A "Jubilate," solo and chorus, was sung with pleasing effect. "A.B.C.," by Wm. Porter and Jane Kane, was very amusing. …The following was the programme: "Canzonetta," "Girl's Recitation," "Child's Prayer," "Ring out the Bells," "The Snow," "The Dying Year," "Boy and the Angel," Solo, "Bugle Song," "The Neighbors," "Unfinished Work," "Boys' Troubles," "People Will Talk," "Colin's Coming," "Jubilate," (solo).[533]

Public schools sometimes joined in community celebrations. On December 17, 1869, Elyria High School (Ohio) gave an "Entertainment" at the town hall. The program included some Christmas selections, including a Christmas Eve tableaux and the music "Sleigh Ride" and "Christmas Song." Table 7-2 lists the entire program, consisting primarily of non-Christmas recitations, dialogues, and music.[534]

[533] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1869, p. 2.
[534] *Elyria Independent Democrat*, December 15, 1869, p. 2.

Table 7-2
Elyria High School "Entertainment at the Town Hall"
December 17, 1869[535]

Music	Greeting Song
Recitation	Mortality and Immortality
Music	Footsteps on the Stairs
Tableau	Joan of Arc
Music	Take me home
Dialogue	Excitement in Kettleville
Declamation	Boy's Rights
Dialogue	Artist's Studio
Music	O'er the Lake
Tableau	The parting on the Eve of Waterloo
Music	Rock me ye Billows
Recitation	Songs of Seven
Music	O'er the Bright Waters
Tableau	Christmas Eve
Music	Sleigh ride
Dialogue	Love in all corners
Tableau	Blue Beard
Music	Christmas Song

Into the late nineteenth century, not all public school performances began to include Christmas music in December. For example, a public school concert in Newton, Kansas, took place at the Presbyterian Church on December 15, 1876. The purpose of the concert was to raise funds to purchase an organ for the school building. According to the report, "the music was furnished by outsiders, instead of by the school … [the teacher] thinking it would take too many from their studies, and too long to prepare for the same." The program consisted of comic and sentimental songs, duets, and choruses. There is no mention of Christmas in the announcement.[536]

[535] *Elyria Independent Democrat*, December 15, 1869, p. 2.
[536] "Concert," *The Newton Kansan*, December 7, 1876, p. 3.

An announcement regarding Public School Exhibition Concerts on December 21, 1878, does not specify if Christmas music was included in the program. The advertisement does note that the trains available to take "people interested in good music" will give those people a chance to see the city in "its Christmas garb." The concert included a "grand chorus from the schools."[537]

A similar review of a public school concert in Morganton, North Carolina, does not indicate the repertoire. Other than "Friday night before Christmas," there are no other identifying factors for the program. The review noted, "We were both surprised and gratified to see with what proficiency the little girls and boys performed their parts in each scene…we think it has a happy effect upon the children."[538] Another similar review of a public school concert in Kinsley, Kansas, does not indicate any presence of Christmas music. Held on December 20, 1889, the public school concert was "a decided success." The review noted that, "the programme was rather long but it was of such an order that great interest was manifested throughout."[539]

The *Altoona Tribune* (Pennsylvania) began listing public school closing exercises in December 1892. The paper editorializes about the number and variety of Christmas programs. "That the almost phenomenal activity pervading the heralding of the holiday season of '92 in this city, found its way into the public schools, during the past week, was duly exemplified in the happy and appropriate closing exercises of yesterday afternoon." In other words, Christmas was part of the public schools. The Christmas programs of

[537] *The Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 19, 1878, p. 4.
[538] "The Public School Concert," *The Morganton Star*, January 4, 1889, p. 3.
[539] *The Kinsley Mercury*, December 26, 1889, p. 3.

seven different public schools all featured a combination of music, recitation, declamation, and reading.[540] The following year, the *Altoona Tribune* listed a greater number of Christmas selections performed by the local public schools. Part II of the Jefferson School closing exercises from 1893 is a representative example (Table 7-3). These exercises featured Public Schools Nos. 6-10.

Table 7-3
Public Schools Nos. 6-10
***Altoona Daily Tribune,* December 24, 1893**[541]

Recitation	Piccoli's Gift
Song	Christmas Bells
Song	Our Christmas Tree
Recitation	Annie and Willie's Prayer
Quartette	Christmas Carol
Recitation	Jack Frost and the Christmas Tree
Song	Merry Christmas
Duet	Beautiful Thoughts of Christmas
Declamation	Christmas
Dual Recitation	Miss Mousie's Christmas Gift and Two Little Stockings
Solo and Chorus	When the Roll is Called Up Yonder
Recitation	Christmas Party
Recitation	Visions of Christmas Eve
Song	Sweet Silvery Christmas Bells
Grand Finale	Beautiful and Intricate March

Elsewhere in Pennsylvania, the *Harrisburg Telegraph* reported similar Christmas exercises in its public schools on December 23, 1896. For example, the Walnut Street

[540] *Altoona Tribune*, December 24, 1892, p. 4, my emphasis.
[541] *Altoona Tribune*, December 23, 1893, p. 2.

boys' grammar school performed selections that included the song "Ring Out Wild Bells," the recitation "Christmas Story," and a variety of instrumental music featuring violin, fife, and mouth organ.[542] That same date, the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* reported the closing exercises of Flushing High School. These exercises included "an interesting programme of vocal and instrumental music, recitations and declamations … the little ones had a Christmas tree, with appropriate exercises."[543] In Decatur, Illinois, *The Daily Review* reported, "Exercises at Schools … Held in Observation of the Holiday Season" in 1897. These exercises contained recitations and special music for the season. Some of the musical selections included "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas," "Upon the House Top," and "Jingle Bells."[544] In Sacramento, California, that same year, similar public school exercises occurred. At Harkness Grammar School, students performed a variety of music, including songs "The Christmas Welcome" and "Christmas Bells" as well as marches "Under the Double Eagle" and "Clayton's Grand March."[545] In 1899, The No. 19 school in Scranton, Pennsylvania, performed several Christmas songs and recitations, including "Welcome Beautiful Christmas Day" and "Christmas Bells."[546]

Into the twentieth century, the common practice of end-of-term Christmas exercises continued in the public schools. On December 24, 1902, students at Girls' High School in New York City sang a number of songs, including "Joy to the World," "Christmas Hymn," "Cantique de Noel," and "Holy Night."[547] The School for the Deaf

[542] "Christmas in the Schools," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 23, 1896, p. 1.
[543] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1896, p. 5.
[544] "Exercises Held at Schools," *The Daily Review*, December 25, 1897, p. 2.
[545] "Harkness Grammar," *The Record-Union*, December 23, 1897, p. 4.
[546] *The Scranton Tribune*, December 23, 1899, p. 8.
[547] *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 24, 1902, p. 7.

in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, sponsored a Christmas program in 1903.[548] The Fifth Ward Schools of New Castle, Pennsylvania, held special exercises on Friday afternoon, December 21, 1906. The local paper noted, "Everything suggested Christmas, and the advent of the holiday season." The students presented a wide variety of music and recitations.[549]

Two examples from 1907 are particularly interesting amidst the great number. An example from Public School No. 3 in New York City includes the following observation. "In all the public schools, except those in the Hebrew districts, the Christmas exercises were of the same character as those of past Christmases." [550] Not only does the article note the lack of Christmas celebration by Jewish students, it offers a glimpse into the nature of communities during that time. Schools were grouped by neighborhoods, and people of similar cultural and religious background lived in the same neighborhoods. Furthermore, the article notes the repetitive nature of annual Christmas exercises. The article goes on to list the assorted program of songs and recitations, reproduced in Table 7-4.

[548] *The Daily Telegram*, December 18, 1903, p. 1.
[549] "Fifth Ward Schools," *New Castle News*, December 21, 1906, p. 24.
[550] "Public School No. 3," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1907, p. 6.

Table 7-4
Public School No. 3
December 26, 1907[551]

Song, by the school	"Nazareth," by Gounod
Reading of the Bible	
Selection by the school orchestra	Led by Melville Rossi
A Drama in One Act	"Santa Claus Outwitted"
Recitation	"Old Christmas"
Song by the school	"Christmas Carol"
Recitation	"The Night Before Christmas of 1907"
Recitation	"The Ruggles' Christmas"
Christmas quotations	—
Song by the school	"Christmas Time
Recitation	"Signs of Christmas"
Recitation	"On Christmas Day"
Recitation	"What If?"
Recitation	"Over the Crossing"
Recitation	"Just Ma and Pa"
Recitation	"The Little Gray Lamb"

A second example from 1907 pointedly illustrates just how the end-of-term examination and Christmas exercises have morphed together. Throughout readings and recitations on a variety of subjects, including government, philosophy, and arithmetic, the students come together in Christmas song. This lengthy article illustrates how Christmas music weaves in and out of the pseudo-examinations of other subjects.

> **STUDENTS TO RENDER CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME**
>
> The students of Room No. 7 in the High school building, taught by H. A. Walter, will render the following Christmas programme at the school on Friday afternoon. The exercises begin at 1:30 o'clock sharp, and everyone is invited to attend.
>
> Calling to order by the president; reading of the minutes by the secretary; music by the school; recitation; reading; current events; essay on "Christmas";

[551] "Public School No. 3," *The Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 26, 1907, p. 6.

> referred question, "Who first used the expression 'A government of the people and for the people'"; autobiography; three minutes' talk on "How to Study History"; declamation; music, "Christmas Hymn"; quotations; "Biography of Thomas Jefferson"; sextette; referred question, "What is meant by 'long term' and 'short term' applied to the United States Congress?"; reading; essay; duet, "The Olden Christmas"; dialogue, "Aunt Kitty's Shopping"; essay; quotation; duet, "The Bells Are Ringing"; three minutes' talk on "How I Study Arithmetic"; reading; referred question, "Why was the treaty of peace at the close of the Revolutionary War signed at Paris?"; debate, "Resolved, That elocution is more uplifting to society than music"; music, "Christmas Bells"; quartette; referred question, "What is the difference between a common law and a statute law?"; essay; autobiography; reading; music, "The Gift Divine"; quotations; referred question, "To what plain does most of the surface of France belong?"; music by school; adjournment.[552]

Public school Christmas exercises continued in many forms for many years. The examples listed above have some notable features. Largely, they occurred during school hours and involved the entire school. There is not a clean transition, a break at which time many Christmas music productions began occurring after school hours, as many do in our present. In addition, some programs retain the style of the closing exercises, occurring during the school, particularly in elementary grades.

To illustrate the widening variety, on December 23, 1927, Jessup Public Schools in Scranton, Pennsylvania held Christmas exercises to close the school term. The orchestra performed "O, Come All Ye Faithful," the Glee Club sang "Yuletide," and there were a number of songs and recitations.[553] These closing exercises typified the customary Christmas performances of the late nineteenth century. However, one year prior in Wellsboro, Pennsylvania, the Wellsboro High School Singers performed a Choral Concert on December 22, 1926. The performance did not occur during the school day. It

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[552] All student names omitted for brevity. *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, December 18, 1907, p. 7.

[553] Jessup Notes, *The Scranton Republican*, December 24, 1927, p. 24.

did not take the traditional form of end-of-term exercises or exhibitions. Moreover, it involved only sixty students. [554] In the following chapter, I use this concert as a starting point to discuss varied forms and instances of Christmas music in the public schools in the twentieth century.

[554] Fine Christmas Music, *The Wellsboro Gazette*, December 29, 1926, p. 1.

CHAPTER EIGHT:
Christmas Music in the Twentieth Century Public Schools

By the early twentieth century, the varied elements described in previous chapters had gained critical mass. Christmas music was a regular practice in public schools. A single, stereotypical example of this practice, however, does not exist. Rather, local conditions determined what Christmas programs might be possible. The wide variety of examples presented in this chapter demonstrates the importance of context and community expectations.

For a moment, let us fast-forward to 2014 in Pennsylvania. The Wellsboro High School Band and Chorus presented their Christmas Concerts on a poinsettia-lined stage. The program included a variety of selections that spanned themes of the nativity, winter, and family. The band performed *A Christmas Festival* by Leroy Anderson, including instrumental versions of "Joy to the World," "Deck the Halls," "God Rest you Merry Gentlemen," "Good King Wenceslas," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Silent Night," "Jingle Bells," and "O, Come All Ye Faithful." The chorus sang "A Doo-Wop Christmas (With You)," "Light a Candle," and "Sleigh Ride."[555]

At the same school back in 1926, we find a markedly different scene. The Wellsboro High School chorus performed a musical pageant at St. Paul's church. According to *The Wellsboro Gazette* "Dr. Van Waters read a portion of scripture and said a prayer, voices were heard chanting, 'Alleluia! Alleluia.' The singers entered and the congregation joined them in singing "It Came upon Midnight Clear." Additional numbers

[555] Accessed on December 21, 2014. Band: www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKXH0IjeWDU Chorus: www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4_dN43SkS8

were “Watchman Tell Us of the Night,” “Hark! What Mean Those Holy Voices?” “O Little Town of Bethlehem,” and “Hark the Herald Angels Sing.” At the conclusion of the evening, the students and audience knelt and sang “Silent Night! Holy Night!” At that time, “the curtains were drawn to show a beautiful and impressive tableau, *The Holy Night*.” “O Come All Ye Faithful” closed the pageant.[556]

Just a few years later at that same school, the Wellsboro Parent-Teacher community Christmas festival occurred on December 21, 1931. The program featured both the high school chorus and orchestra. Students performed selections including “Silent Night,” “It Came upon a Midnight Clear,” “Star Divine,” “Little Town of Bethlehem,” “We Three Kings,” Glorious is Thy Name,” and “Joy to the World.”[557]

Each of these three Wellsboro High School performances represent different contexts, different possibilities along a spectrum of choices. How did the scene at Wellsboro High School in 2014 come to be? I do not wonder how that particular concert evolved through the course of Wellsboro High School’s history. Rather, how did the spectrum of choices, which include the 2014 scene above, come to be available for us in our present? I have previously listed examples of varied elements from the nineteenth century that influenced and established Christmas music in American public schools. In this chapter, I describe a variety of examples of Christmas music in twentieth century American public schools, including examples that resemble worship services, the merging of sacred and secular elements, school music textbooks, and holiday music at the intersection of community and schools.

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[556] *The Wellsboro Gazette*, December 29, 1926, p. 1.
[557] *The Wellsboro Gazette*, December 16, 1931, p. 1.

Christmas Music as Worship Service

The Wellsboro High School chorus performance of 1926 is an exemplar of church music performed by public school students. The setting was a church. The program resembled a worship service. The audience became the congregation. In this section, I highlight public school music programs that most closely identify with this instance. The examples mentioned in this section include only music that directly relates to the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ. I discuss examples prior to 1963, the same year the Supreme Court ended school-sponsored prayer.

These examples typify the presumably homogenous makeup of local communities. The conditions of possibility allowed for Christian worship in the public schools. When locating examples, the repertoire often offers the only clue to the type of program. For example, consider three sacred music programs from the late 1920s. At Williamsburg High School in Pennsylvania, students presented a Christmas program which included "Joy to the World," a scripture reading, and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."[558] In Waco, Texas, the high school glee club sang "Holy Night," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "The First Noel," "And There Were Shepherds," and "O Little Town of Bethlehem."[559] In Abilene, Texas, six hundred public school students presented a program of Christmas music, which included "Joy to the World," "The First Noel," "Good Christian Men Rejoice," "Away in a Manger," and the cantata, "On to

[558] Williamsburg, *Altoona Tribune*, December 28, 1927, p. 6.

[559] Christmas Music Being Practiced at High School, *The Waco News-Tribune*, December 18, 1927, p. 18.

Bethlehem."[560] All of these selections directly relate to birth of Jesus Christ.

Setting also influences the perception of the practice.[561] For example, the Edison Junior High School Treble Choir performed the Christmas cantata, "In Bethlehem," in 1931. The singing of sacred music likely felt *more* sacred due to the performance location at Christ Lutheran Church, where members of the Junior Choir led the processional hymn carrying lighted candles.[562] Similarly, school choirs in Texas presented a Christmas Musicale at the First Methodist church in 1939.[563] The program included a processional, invocation, benediction, recessional, and a variety of music, including "O, Little Town of Bethlehem," "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing," and "Silent Night."[564] Location, costumes, decorations, and lighting contribute to the overall effect and meaning of performance.[565]

These types of examples resemble worship services, but they also resemble elements of end-of-term examinations from the previous century. Recall the 1907 closing exercises in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The complete program is in the preceding chapter;

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[560] Public School Students Present Yule-Tide Program, *Abilene Reporter-News*, December 15, 1929, p. 3.

[561] See for example, "Church Schools Active," *The Salt Lake Tribune*, December 18, 1949, p. 75. The West High School *a cappella* choir performed at the Sunday morning service at First Congregational Church. This brief mention in the local paper is noteworthy in relation to the 1996 court case involved with the same Utah high school, *Bauchman v. West High School*, as discussed in chapter two.

[562] Treble Choir in Christ Church, *The Evening News*, December 19, 1931, p. 4.

[563] When churches are the setting for public school concerts, it is likely for a variety of reasons. In many communities, a church might be the only location that could accommodate all the performers and a large audience.

[564] "City Public School Choirs to Present Christmas Music," *Corsicana Daily Sun*, December 13, 1939, p. 7.

[565] See for example, "Glenn Groups to Offer Public Concert," *The Terre Haute Tribune*, December 20, 1959, p. 38. The high school art department built a manger scene for the Christmas concert. See also, for example, "Yule Parade Draws Crowd," *Florence Morning News*, December 3, 1961, p. 1. An estimated crowd of 50,000 gathered to watch the local Christmas parade. "Special prizes went to the Lake View band bedecked in Biblical costumes and playing Christmas music."

here is an excerpt: "… Declamation; Music, "Christmas Hymn"; quotations; "Biography of Thomas Jefferson" …"[566] This alternation of speaking and singing resembles the structure of early public school Christmas programs. In some communities, it is possible that the framework established by these end-of-term exercises created space to mimic religious exercises, in which there is a mixture of praying, reading, and singing. For example, consider the 1938 program of Mather High School in Michigan (Table 8-1).

Table 8-1
Mather High School, 1938[567]

Processional	O Come All Ye Faithful
Reader	The Story of the Shepherds
Chorus	Little Town of Bethlehem
Chorus	It Came upon a Midnight Clear
Chorus	While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks
Chorus	The First Noel
Reader	The Story of the Three Wise Men
Chorus	Silent Night
Chorus	We Three Kings
Chorus	Away in a Manger
Chorus	Joy to the World
Recessional	Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

This program has elements of worship service, end-of-term exercises, and storytelling. Exclusively sacred programs often used the story of the nativity as the organizing element.[568] Consider the following example from Iowa in 1943, where

[566] *Harrisburg Daily Independent*, December 18, 1907, p. 7.

[567] "High School Music Program is Tonight," *The Escanaba Daily Press*, December 21, 1938, p. 7.

[568] See for example, "1000 Pupils to Give Christmas Music Program," *The Evening News*, December 13, 1941, p. 10. Student musicians from Catholic High, William Penn, and John Harris performed a variety of music related to "the telling of the Story of the Nativity." For a later example, see "School Assembly Will Feature Christmas Music," *The Daily Mail*, December 19, 1953, p. 5. Titled, "The Heaven's Are Telling," the assembly included the following elements. "The speech classes will present the scriptural Christmas story in choral speaking groups … The

students presented a program by candlelight in the high school auditorium. According to the local newspaper:

> The entrance to the high school building and all of the halls were aglow with candlelight, and the traditional carol records were playing as the house assembled … The massed choir sang a carol as they entered the auditorium, proceeding to their standards by the light of candles which each singer carried. The versed choir, which read Bible selections about the Christmas story, was composed of seventh and eighth grade students … In this atmosphere of song, living pictures of the birth of Jesus Christ were portrayed on the stage.[569]

Similarly, the theme of the Roseville (Ohio) High School program in 1953 was "The Child Jesus." Sections included The Promise, The Annunciation, The Apparition to the Shepherds, The Adoration of the Shepherds, The Star, The Wise Men, At the Manger, Mary's Lullaby, Song of Devotion, The Child Jesus, and Adeste Fideles.[570] Later in this chapter, I discuss Christmas programs that have moved away from the nativity as an organizing element, with examples including the legend of Santa Claus, "Christmas around the World," and elements of family and the season.

Programs organized around the nativity often focused on the "true" meaning of the holiday, as perceived by the local community. For example, the Rushville (Indiana) City Schools ended the term in 1954 with a program of Christmas music presented by the high school concert choir. The local newspaper editorialized as follows. "Teachers in general take the opportunity of the holiday season to teach the true meaning of Christmas in the celebration of the birth of the Christ Child."[571]

Wise Men, Shepherds, and the Holy Family will be spotlighted." The chorus sang "Adoramus Te," "Away in a Manger," "O Holy Night," and "Hallelujah Chorus."

[569] "Xmas Pageant is Presented Sunday Night," *The Independent*, December 16, 1943, p. 1.

[570] "Band and Chorus to Give Program," *The Times Recorder*, December 16, 1953, p. 7.

[571] "City Schools To Close Wednesday for the Holidays," *Rushville Republican*, December 21, 1954, p. 1.

A similar example took place in the Hopewell City Schools of Virginia, albeit with a different holiday. The local paper, in an article titled "Holiday Programs Slated in Schools," described a Thanksgiving holiday program in 1962. The description closely matches many of the end-of-term Christmas programs already mentioned in this section. The program included prayers, Bible verses, and recitations on the "true meaning of Thanksgiving." The Hopewell High School Choir performed "To Thee We Sing," "O, Give Thanks Unto the Lord," and "A Hymn for Thanksgiving."[572]

Later in this chapter, I discuss Christmas music at the intersection of public schools and community. For many Americans in the early and mid-twentieth century, however, church was inseparable from other elements of community. Would there have been any difference from having a local pastor speak at a public school music program, as opposed to the mayor? For example, in 1946, the school term concluded with a special assembly at the local high school in Belvidere, Illinois. The assembly occurred during the school day and featured the high school chorus singing carols and hymns, as well as a scripture reading by the pastor of the local First Presbyterian Church. The student council sponsored the program.[573]

Similarly, programs adjusted to accommodate the local communities. For example, in Waukesha, Wisconsin, the annual program of Christmas music shifted to the evening in 1947. "Growing from requests of those not able to attend the regular school assemblies at which the program is presented, the evening performance is designed to

[572] "Holiday Program Slated in Schools," *The Progress-Index*, November 20, 1962, p. 12.
[573] "Yule Program is Planned Friday in High School," *Belvidere Daily Republican*, December 18, 1946, p. 4.

allow parents and others interested in the Christmas program to see and hear the music and the tableau depicting the birth of the Christ Child."[574] Several years later, high school choir members continued to present the same program of "traditional religious Christmas music." Held in the high school auditorium on the evening of December 17, 1952, the program included "the tableau of the Nativity."[575]

The Supreme Court declared school-sponsored prayer unconstitutional through rulings in *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) and *Abington School District v. Schempp* (1963).[576] In the wake of the 1963 Supreme Court decision on school prayer, the Adams County school system in Pennsylvania went ahead with their usual Christmas programs. In a telephone survey of school administrators, the consensus seemed to be that, "the U.S. Supreme Court decision banning required Bible reading and prayer does not affect the holiday observance." According to the local school superintendent, "It seems that this is an observance of a national holiday. Of course, it's a religious holiday, too, but the observance in schools is not generally in the nature of a religious service." No program information is available for Adams County schools that year.[577]

Although it is likely that the practice continues in isolated incidents, it is no longer common for public school Christmas celebrations to resemble church worship services. Prayers and Bible-reading are no longer part of public school practices. Sacred Christmas music, however, continues into our present as part of the wide array of choices

[574] "Prep Choir Sings Tonight," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 16, 1947, p. 3.

[575] "High School Choir to Sing Dec. 17," *Waukesha Daily Freeman*, December 4, 1952, p. 15.

[576] J. J. Jurinski, *Religion in the Schools: A Reference Handbook* (Santa Barbara: Contemporary World Issues, 1998), xi.

[577] "Christmas To Be Observed As Usual In Schools Here," *The Gettysburg Times*, December 5, 1963, p. 1.

available to teachers in the public schools.

Merging Religious and Non-Religious Elements

In the previous section, all musical selections directly relate to the birth Christ. If challenged in the courts today, these public school performances would violate the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. In the examples in the following sections, the spectrum of choices broadens. In many instances, sacred music remains. However, the addition of a wider variety of music, the elimination of prayers, and the removal of candles, church settings, and other factors have diffused the effect. Reconsider the Wellsboro High School examples from the introduction to this chapter. Both the 1926 and 2014 programs included "Hark the Herald Angels Sing." However, the contexts of the two performances were very different. In 2014, the lack of candles and scriptural reading, along with the variety of selections (e.g., "A Doo-Wop Christmas"), possibly diffused the religious effects of the hymn.

A multitude of stereotypical Christmas programs exists. *The Columbus Telegram* highlighted this variety in a 1972 editorial that dealt with *how* music teachers select repertoire. This editorial exemplifies the traditional view of the sacred/secular binary.[578]

> This is the season to be merry, to buy and wrap presents, to bake cookies,

[578] For additional instances of the traditional sacred/secular binary, see for example, "High School Christmas Music Program Sunday," *The Pomeroy Herald*, December 16, 1954, p. 1. The program included "spirituals, sacred, secular, and Christmas numbers." See also, "Holiday Concert," *The Salem News*, December 19, 1964, p. 6. The junior high school program consisted of "secular and religious pieces," including "Beautiful Savior," "Jolly Old Saint Nicholas," and "Jingle Bells." See also, "Christmas Music Set," *The Bakersfield Californian*, December 16, 1974, p. 27. Students performed "an evening of sacred and secular seasonal music," including "Choral Fanfare for Christmas," "Jingle Bells," "Sleigh Ride," "Silver Bells," and "Christ in a Stranger's Guise."

> and to attend Christmas programs. There is always a variety of such programs in the Columbus area, usually of the "vocal concert" type. Several organizations and of all three area high schools have this kind of Christmas program.
>
> High school music directors choose their music in various ways. One director selects 75 per cent sacred music and 25 per cent secular music. Another music teacher uses mostly popular songs, with at least one difficult sacred piece. Students help select the music here, while at another high school they have no voice in the matter. …
>
> Everyone has his favorite Christmas song, and music directors are no exceptions to the rule. Choices listed as favorites were Oh Holy Night, Hallelujah Chorus, Silent Night, and What Child Is This?
>
> Are the changing times reflected in Christmas concerts? Is the modern program different from the first one directed by an area music teacher? One director felt that such concerts really haven't changed. Another said that the musical content has become a little more popularized, but that the basic idea never changes."[579]

If a wide variety of Christmas programs exists, then it is problematic to organize these examples. We cannot ignore the sacred/secular divide, but it cannot be the only means of analysis. In this section, I discuss a variety of examples, including those that *appear* to divide along sacred/secular lines, with the understanding that the line is blurry.

Diffusing Religious Elements

There are many examples of Christmas music in the public schools that consist primarily of sacred music, although not as rigidly as in the previous section. In some instances, programs resemble a concert more than a religious service. There are examples that include candles, prayers, or other effects possibly found in a traditional worship service. However, other elements partially diffuse the religious nature of the total program.

[579] "Holiday Music Rings Throughout Town," *The Columbus Telegram,* December 16, 1972, p. 30.

Consider the following three examples, in which the nativity story remains an organizing element. In these examples, the local conditions have allowed for spaces in which other themes and elements have become part of the practice. First, the following high school Christmas program resembles several examples from the previous section. Sacred music alternates with prayer and scripture reading. However, the band opened the assembly with Christmas music unrelated to the nativity story. This small detail grows in significance, in light of the previous examples. The program for this 1953 Ohio high school includes elements of community, worship, school exercises, and winter themes.

Table 8-2
Waldo High School, 1953[580]

Jingle Bells Rhapsody	Band
Christmas Greetings	Band
Invocation	Reverend W. F. Kissell
O Come, All Ye Faithful	Audience
Christmas Scripture Reading	Reverend Robert Fichter
O Holy Night	Band
Song of Bethlehem	Mixed chorus
We Three Kings of Orient Are	Band
Christmas Lullaby	Girls' glee club
Lo, How A Rose E're Blooming	Boys' glee club
Adeste Fideles	Band
Ring Christmas Bells	Mixed Chorus
For Unto Us A Child is Born	Mixed Chorus
Hallelujah Chorus	Mixed Chorus
Benediction	Reverend S. C. Long
The Lord Bless You and Keep You	Mixed Chorus
March of the Three Kings	Band

[580] "Waldo School Musicians To Give Program," *The Marion Star*, December 18, 1953, p. 16.

Similarly, the next example also combines themes of the nativity and winter. In 1960, the Belvidere (Illinois) High School music department presented a "Winter Wonderland Christmas Concert," which included "old and new Yule favorites." According to the local paper, "the traditional carols of many lands, the soft music telling of the birth of the Saviour, the sprightly songs telling of the festivity of the season and vibrant songs telling the joy of the season were offered." The descriptive account continued: "The curtain opened to reveal a background of winter wonder, showing a colorful winter scene complete with home and road and snow covered evergreens. The religious aspect of the holiday was revealed as Mary placed the Christ child in the manger as the theme song "Winter Wonderland" was presented."[581]

A third example includes common themes of nativity and worship, combined with elements of gift giving and non-holiday music. This 1953 performance did not include a scripture reading, but the Glee Club closed with a Benediction response. The band, however, closed with a march by John Philip Sousa. The program consisted of the following.

Troy School Band
Silent Night
O Little Town of Bethlehem
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear
Hark, the Herald Angels Sing
O Come All Ye Faithful
You to the World
Jolly Old Saint Nicholas
O' Faithful Pine
Jingle Bells
Washington Post March

[581] "BHS Yule Concert Heard By 1,000," *Belvidere Daily Republican*, December 15, 1960, p. 3.

Glee Club
The Music of Christmas (a carol Cantata)
Glory Be to God
The Magi
Little Lord Jesus
The Living Song
Benediction Response[582]

In these examples, the addition of a wider variety of music can have many possible meanings. Was the community growing more diverse? Did somebody make a suggestion or complaint? Did the spectrum of available music from publishers diversify in light of the expanding cultural holiday? Consider the 1945 program in Ironwood, Michigan. The musical selections consisted of a wide array related to the nativity, including "Jesu Bambino," "Silent Night," "Ave Maria," "Adeste Fidelis," and "Christ of the Christmas Bells." However, the final three selections included, "Deck the Halls," "Joy to the World," and a contemporary (yet nostalgic) selection, "White Christmas."[583] Lankford cited the release of "White Christmas" in 1942 as watershed moment for the future of popular Christmas music.[584] The inclusion of popular music in public school programs reflected the growth of the popular Christmas song in American culture.

It is possible that the addition of popular Christmas selections (e.g., "White Christmas") diffused the religious impact of other selections, whether or not that was the intent. For example, the Anahuac (Texas) High School choir sang "The Lord's Prayer" for their fellow students at the end-of-term assembly in 1967. Other selections included, "Ring, Silver Bells" and "Carol of the Drum." The band performed, "Silent Night,"

[582] "Music Program at High School," *The Edwardsville Intelligencer*, December 24, 1953, p. 8.
[583] "Annual Christmas Observance Friday," *Ironwood Daily Globe*, December 19, 1945, p. 8.
[584] Lankford, 12–15.

"Merry Christmas," and "Brazilian Sleigh Bells." Both groups combined at the end to perform "White Christmas."[585]

It is possible that the pairing of "White Christmas" with "The Lord's Prayer" and "Silent Night" diffused the religious impact of the overall program. However, it is also possible that the pairing blurred the line between sacred and secular Christmas selections. Even though Bing Crosby is dreaming of a white (secular) Christmas, does that version of Christmas connect to the nativity when paired with "Silent Night?"[586]

Sometimes, programs split sacred/secular music between performing ensembles. Consider the following three examples. First, in the 1927 Abilene public schools Christmas program, the glee clubs sang religious selections, including "It Came upon the Midnight Clear," "Silent Night," and "The First Noel." The high school band, however, performed three non-Christmas selections: "Officer of the Grand March," "Dance of Imps," and "Roses of Memory."[587]

The 1954 Christmas program by American Falls (Idaho) High School included two very different halves of music. The band performed a program of non-holiday selections, while the chorus performed a sacred, candlelight ceremony.

Band
Star Spangled Banner
Blackjack March
A Westchester Overture
Comet March
Bayou Tune

[585] "Anahuac High," *The Baytown Sun*, December 27, 1967, p. 9.

[586] The singer Bing Crosby first performed "White Christmas" on Christmas Day, 1941. Lyrics include, "I'm dreaming of a white Christmas," and the dream includes glistening treetops, sleigh bells, Christmas cards, and snow. Lankford, 36–41.

[587] "Abilene Schools to Give Christmas Program," *Abilene Reporter-News*, December 18, 1927, p. 29.

The Velvet Gloves
Little Red Riding Hood
Johnson Rag
Atlantic Seaboard March

Chorus
O Come All Ye Faithful
Joy to the World
Gloria in Excelsis Deo
Christmas Alleluia
Kentucky Babe
Shadows of Night
Tea for Two
Silent Night
Adeste Fidelis
A.F.H.S. Alma Mater[588]

As a final example of this type of split between sacred and secular, consider the Las Cruces (New Mexico) High School Christmas concert in 1958. The program included strikingly different orchestra and chorus repertoire, perhaps due to the lack of published Christmas music for orchestra at the time.

Orchestra
O Come All Ye Faithful
Waltz of the Flowers
Haydn's Moderato
Rachmaninoff's Piano Concert No. 2
Finale from "Orpheus"

Chorus
Lo, How a Rose Er'e Blooming
Christmas Day
Christmas Roundelay
The Sleep of the Child Jesus
Now the Holy Child is Born
Carol of the Bells
Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones
March of the Kings

[588] "A. F. High School To Give Program," *Idaho State Journal*, December 13, 1954, p. 14.

I Saw Three Ships
Sanctus
Shepherds, Shake Off Your Drowsy Sleep
Pat-a-pan
Make We Merry[589]

Other times, programs seemed to split equally between sacred and secular elements. This practice mirrored a historical trend of the popular recording industry. According to Lankford, "When the holiday long player album became a possibility in 1948 (with the 33 1/3 format), performers often divided the A- and B- sides between secular and religious material."[590] The following two examples are similar in practice.

First, the 1938 Menasha (Wisconsin) High School program divided into three parts, with the final section consisting of music relating to the nativity. Elements of nationalism, popular music, and Christmas persist throughout.

Part I
America
My Hero concert march
Star Dust
The Flight of the Bumble Bee
The Stars and Stripes Forever
North Iowa Band Festival

Part II: Vocal Music by the A Cappella chorus
Finlandia
John Peel, old English Hunting Song
Lo! How a Rose
Soldier's Chorus

Part III: Christmas music by the Menasha High School band
Joy to the World
The Rosary
The Bells of St. Mary's

[589] "High Schools' Yule Concert Set Thursday," *Las Cruces Sun-News*, December 14, 1958, p. 1.
[590] Lankford, 18.

The Holy City
Beneath the Holly
The Star Spangled Banner[591]

Similarly, the 1955 Petersburg (Virginia) High School program had two sections, advertised as "sacred" and "lighter." The first, sacred section included

Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light
Glory to God
Carol of the Bells
Christmas Hymn
O Gather Clouds
I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day
Silent Night
The First Noel
What Child Is This (Greensleeves)
It Came Upon the Midnight Clear

The lighter portion of the program included:

Jingle Bells
Jolly Old St Nicholas
Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer
We Wish You a Merry Christmas
Deck the Halls
Winter Wonderland
Sleigh Ride[592]

Santa Claus is a major theme of many school performances. The nineteenth century Sunday school programs often combined elements of the nativity and Santa Claus. Twentieth century public schools often divided programs between sacred elements and Santa Claus.[593] Consider the following four examples from 1946-1949.

In Marysville, Ohio, the local high school chorus and orchestra participated in a

[591] *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern*, December 13, 1938, p. 10.
[592] "Glee Club Concert Set," *The Progress-Index*, December 8, 1955, p. 15.
[593] See, for example, "Benson Students Present Program," *Arizona Independent Republic*, December 20, 1939, p. 33. The program included an operetta, "In Quest of Santa Claus," and concluded with "a short carol service portraying the Nativity."

carol sing in 1946. Songs included "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," "The First Noel," "O Holy Night," and "Silent Night." The chorus also performed "Who? Santa Claus."[594] At Rapid River (Michigan) High School, students did not have any Santa Claus music in their Christmas program. However, Santa Claus was the "candy and treat chairman," while musical selections consisted of "Silent Night," "First Noel," "Come unto Him", and "In Bethlehem Town."[595]

In New Hampshire, an annual program divided into two parts. The first section consisted of Biblical passages of the Nativity and related music selections as sung by the High School Glee club. The second part contained a recitation of "Twas the Night before Christmas," along with the singing of Fred Waring's choral arrangement of the same poem. The announcement in the local newspaper the day prior to the performance contained the following reveal. "The Glee club will be assisted in their interpretation it was revealed today, by Santa Claus."[596]

The Music and Physical Education Departments of the local public schools in Camden, Arkansas, presented their Christmas program on December 17, 1947. The program was advertised as "a very entertaining Christmas program, depicting the birth of Christ, the arrival of Santa Claus, revival of old Christmas songs, and the introduction of new songs."[597]

At times, the focus was solely on Santa Claus, and, by extension, gift giving.

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[594] "Christmas Program," *The Marysville Tribune*, December 20, 1946, p. 3.

[595] "Rapid River Pupils To Give Yule Program," *The Escabana Daily Press*, December 13, 1949, p. 12.

[596] "Christmas Music Assembly at High School on Friday," *Nashua Telegraph*, December 18, 1947, p. 23.

[597] "Christmas Song Event Dec. 17," *The Camden News*, December 10, 1947, p. 1.

There are considerably fewer of these instances, which at times include the singing of carols, which likely reference the religious themes. These following examples indicate the possibility that Christmas music only includes themes of Santa Claus, fantasy, and gift giving. In Chandlerville, Illinois, grade school children presented a Christmas operetta, "Toys That Were Left," in 1937. Following the operetta, members of the high school glee club toured the town singing Christmas carols.[598] In 1947, the Mt. Pleasant Township schools (Pennsylvania) conducted their annual Christmas Festival. The centerpiece was the performance of the operetta, "When Santa Claus Listened In," and the program included a solo version of "Santa is coming to Town."[599]

Christmas music was a regular, daily custom at Sugar Grove (Indiana) Elementary School. According to *The Terre Haute Tribune*, "The beautiful Christmas tree which annually is placed in the center of the hall on the first floor at Sugar Grove School is again lighted and shining with its decorations, and the custom and assembling around the tree and singing carols each day is giving much pleasure to all the children of the school." Even Santa Claus made an appearance by the end of the term.[600] All of the selections revolved around themes of gift giving, winter, and Santa at Port Kenyon (California) school in 1953. Music included "My Shining Christmas Tree," "Where Did My Snow Man Go?" "Too Fat for the Chimney," "Santa's Brownies," and "Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer."[601]

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[598] "Presents Christmas Operetta at School," *The Jacksonville Daily Journal*, December 25, 1937, p. 10.

[599] "Mt. Pleasant Township," *The Daily Notes*, December 22, 1947, p. 8.

[600] "Holiday Programs at Sugar Grove School," *The Terre Haute Tribune*, December 20, 1953, p. 30.

[601] "Yule Program at Port Kenyon," *The Times Standard*, December 24, 1953, p. 11.

Other examples include the Lake Park (Iowa) school Christmas program in 1956. The students in kindergarten through sixth grade presented the operetta, "He Said He Was Santa." The seventh and eighth grade students presented "Christmas in an Alpine Village," a story with Christmas folk songs.[602] In 1972, fourth graders at Skippack (Pennsylvania) Elementary School presented an operetta, "Merry Christmas, Mr. Snowman." According to local teacher Elaine Ford, "the operetta revolves around a snowman built by two children." Characters include Santa Claus, a sandman, and a snowflake queen.[603]

Many Variations on Many Themes

Many school Christmas programs are not solely sacred, secular, or an attempted split of the two. The following, varied examples contain some common themes. Many Christmas programs were multicultural celebrations, such as "Christmas in Other Lands." Others relied on tradition and the familiar. Many simply included a wide variety of music. These programs mash together many different elements, such as the nativity, Santa, goodwill, family, nostalgia, and winter. These examples most commonly represent those found in our present—a postsecular type of program that I shall discuss in the final chapter.

First, consider three examples of programs that contain a little bit of everything. This variety reflects the multitude of possibilities available. The following Maryland

[602] "School Program Next Wednesday," *The Lake Park News*, December 13, 1956, p. 1.
[603] "Schools Underscore Holiday With Music," *Pottstown Mercury*, December 20, 1972, p. 13.

newspaper review includes many different diverse elements in this 1942 program.

> With the exception of a Bach number, "Glory Now to Thee Be Given," and the brilliant "Noel" … all the vocal numbers were carols of other nations, two from France and Spain being sung in their native languages." The orchestra performed selections from *The Messiah*, along with Strauss' *Emperor Waltz*. "The program closed on a modern note, with "White Christmas" again being sung by the glee club and a march by the orchestra.[604]

A similar, assorted program took place at Hawarden (Iowa) High School in 1949. The program featured a variety of music, with themes ranging from the nativity, winter, nostalgia, and nationalism.

> Mixed Chorus
> While Shepherds Watched - arr. Jungst-Tkach
> Susanni - arr. Tom Scott
>
> Girls Glee Club
> The Nightingale - Tchaikovsky
> Gesu Bambino - Yon
>
> Boys Glee Club
> A Log on the Fire - Fishburn
> Silent Night - Gruber
>
> Band
> Military Escort March - Bennett
> Gypsy Festival, Overture - Hayes
> Officer of the Day March - Hall
> Cossack Invocation and Dance - Lenikov
> Normal March - Bennett
> Hallelujah - Youmans
> Jingle Bells - arr. Hal Leonard
> Christmas Selection - arr. Yoder
> Star Spangled Banner[605]

As another example of similar diversity, the Helena (Montana) High School band,

[604] "Yuletide Program Given at Assembly," *The Morning Herald*, December 23, 1942, p. 4. It is worth noting that the Christmas program of this same school (Hagerstown High School) from 1953 is listed in the previous section containing only religious music relating to the nativity.

[605] "Concert To Be Given Sunday," *The Independent*, December 15, 1949, p. 1.

choir, and orchestra presented a Christmas program on December 20, 1954. As advertised in *The Independent Record*, it listed the following repertoire.

> Variations in the program will be from such numbers as "Here Comes Santa Claus" by the philharmonic choir and ensemble to the symphony orchestra playing "Danzas De Panama" by William Grant Still. Vocal soloists will be Kenneth Baily, singing "O Holy Night," and George Lewis singing "What Child This?" Before the program is brought to a close the band, choir, orchestra and audience will join together and sing a medley of Christmas carols.[606]

The variety in these examples reflects broader expectations in communities.[607] In addition to carols and popular Christmas music, these examples included "legitimate" repertoire often performed at contest or festival. Such examples persist into our present, such the 2011 performance of the River Trail Middle School band in Georgia. Students performed four band standards, including "March of the Belgian Paratroopers," "The Lark in the Clear Air," "Prairie Songs," and "Celebration Tribalesque." The fifth selection was "A Christmas Flourish," a setting of "Angels We Have Heard on High," and described as "a spiritual fanfare" that "heralds the coming of Christ by the angel choir."[608]

A multicultural theme often tied together a wide variety of Christmas music, as demonstrated in the following examples. In 1949, the students of Highland (North Carolina) High School performed the pageant, "Christmas in Many Lands," on December

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[606] "Helena High School Christmas Program," *The Independent Record*, December 19, 1954, p. 17.

[607] See, for additional examples, "Spanish Fork Christmas Concert Set," *The Sunday Herald*, December 18, 1966, p. 40. The program included selections from *Oklahoma*, "Hallelujah Chorus," and "favorite Christmas music." See also, "Dale Christmas Concert," *The Herald*, December 18, 1967, p. 7. The program included, "everything from Latin American music to the standard *White Christmas*."

[608] River Trail Middle School, December 9, 2011. Printed program from my personal archive.

15, 1949. Students were "garbed in costumes representing seven nationalities, including England, Germany, Norway, China, Japan, and France."[609]

Multicultural themes often featured a wide diversity of music from different countries, times, and traditions.[610] In the following example from 1953, the variety included "serious" and "novelty" selections. Non-musical elements include candlelight and wassail. The Palatine (Illinois) High School music department presented its annual Christmas festival featuring the band and chorus. According to *The Daily Herald*

> The music itself will represent different countries and various periods in history. Selections by the composers Haydn, Handel, Masinet [sic], Britten and Berlin, and carols from Germany, Wales, England, France, Russian, and Germany, and works from the early seventeenth century as well as those from our own times, are some of the musical numbers to be included. Both "serious" and novelty numbers will make up the program. A candlelight procession, a varied program, and a Wassail Party after the concert in the cafeteria will comprise the entertainment designed to please the families in our community.[611]

Often, teachers include Hanukkah music in an effort to include a wider diversity of holiday music, despite its history as a minor Jewish holiday. The earliest example I could find of Hanukkah in a school music program dated from a multicultural concert on December 10, 1950. The Bangor (Pennsylvania) elementary schools presented a program

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[609] "Highland Pageant Set For Thursday," *The Gastonia Gazette*, December 12, 1949, p. 5.

[610] Multicultural program often privilege music from familiar traditions and/or stereotypes, while ignoring many others. See, for example, "Christmas Music Given," *The Mason City Globe-Gazette*, December 5, 1956, p. 28. Selections on this "multicultural" concert included "Calypso Carol," "Pat-a-Pan," "Lo! How a Rose," and "Silent Night." See also, "Smiley Parents Entertained by School Children," *Redlands Daily Fact*s, December 15, 1959, p. 3. The theme was "Christmas in Many Lands," featuring the music of Germany, France, and Mexico. For a more eclectic example, see, "Choir Presents Christmas Music," *Pottstown Mercury*, December 17, 1962, p. 3. The choir performed "an international program of Christmas music," including selections from Chile and Poland, along with spirituals.

[611] "High School Music Department Christmas Program Sunday," *The Daily Herald*, December 10, 1953, p. 52.

titled "Christmas the World Around." According to the music supervisor, "the program was planned to culminate class projects with the children planning, writing and singing their way through Christmas in various countries. On the program will be the Jewish Chanukah; English Yule; Mexican Christmas eve fiesta; German legend; American Christmas shop, and universal worship." It is unlikely that the program included any Hanukkah music; the elementary chorus performed the musical component, which provided "a background of Christmas music."[612]

Themes of tradition and nostalgia also serve as an organizing element to programs of varied Christmas music. School programs often assume roles as recurring traditions in the community. For example, consider the Warren Area (Pennsylvania) High School music department Annual Carol Festival of 1962. As advertised, the concert was "long a traditional part of the pre-Christmas season in the community."[613]

Other times, elements of tradition are more subtle. For example, a Pennsylvania Christmas program in 1939 played upon nostalgic feelings for Merrie Olde England, drawing upon invented traditions without regard for historical accuracy. Following a short concert of Christmas music by the high school band, the students presented an operetta, "Yuletide at the Court of King Arthur." The program concluded with "a Cathedral scene during which the high school mixed chorus [sang] Christmas selections."[614] Fennville (Michigan) High School juxtaposed nostalgic themes with new technology in the Yule Musical, titled, "An Old Fashioned Christmas." The local paper

[612] "Bangor Schools to Present Yule Program," *The Daily Record*, December 7, 1950, p. 6.

[613] "High School Music Department," *Warren Times Mirror*, December 10, 1962, p. 6.

[614] "Yule Program at Hershey," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 16, 1939, p. 14.

noted that, "a highlight of the performance will be the finale in which ultra violet lights will be used for an unusual effect."[615]

Because tradition is an important factor in many instances, it is interesting to examine an instance of a "first" Christmas program. In 1962, Soquel (California) High School presented its first annual Christmas music program. The program included familiar elements of the nativity, gift giving, Santa, nationalism, and multiculturalism.

Band
Star Spangled Banner
Go Down Moses
Little Christmas Suite

Orchestra
Beneath the Holly
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer

Girls Glee Club
Carol of the Russian Children
Mary at the Manger
Ding, Dong, Merrily on High

Concert Choir
Carol of the Bells
Did Mary Know?
Ave Verum (with orchestra)[616]

In many communities, Christmas music is a tradition that permeates the schoolhouse in December. Consider the following example set in Kansas. Christmas music was a presence during the last week of classes for the term in 1955. The mixed chorus gave a program of carols at the junior high school assembly, and led the school in singing of carols in the hallways each morning prior to the start of the school day. The

[615] "Fennville Sets Yule Musical," *The News-Palladium*, December 18, 1957, p. 5.
[616] "Soquel High Sets First Christmas Music Program," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, December 19, 1962, p. 9.

junior high school also played Christmas records during the noon hour. On the last day of classes, the music department presented the annual Christmas program during the activity hour.[617]

These traditions represent community-defined expectations, formed through the power-knowledge relationship. The actions constituting practices influence what the community *knows* to be true, or traditional. This knowledge affects future practices. This lens also applies to examples in which certain pieces become traditions. For example, many school programs use music from *The Nutcracker* as an annual Christmas tradition.[618] Consider the following three examples, in which the sacred/secular divide, the nativity, and tradition all interact. In Ohio, a 1951 program divided into two sections. The first section featured choruses from Handel's *Messiah*. During intermission, the audience was encouraged to sing along with the students on three unnamed Christmas carols. The second section consisted of Fred Waring's choral arrangement of Tchaikovsky's *Nutcracker Suite*.[619]

The Mt. Vernon Township (Illinois) High School presented, "Carols, Anthems and Other Christmas Music," on Sunday, December 17, 1950. Most of the music on the program related to the birth of Christ, such as "Song of Christmas," a seventeen-minute collection of twenty carols and anthems telling the story of the Nativity. Other selections included "Ye Bells of Bethlehem," "Joy to the World," "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Away in the

[617] "Christmas Music at High School," *The Ottawa Herald*, December 20, 1955, p. 1.

[618] See, for an example of another selection as tradition, "Band at Honey Creek Presents Convocation," *The Terre Haute Tribune*, December 23, 1956, p. 28. "The program was closed as it is every year with *White Christmas*."

[619] "Christmas Music Program," *Wilmington News-Journal*, December 13, 1951, p. 5.

Manger," "Sleep Little Jesus," and "We Three Kings of Orient Are." The orchestra did perform a selection from *The Nutcracker Suite*.[620] Twenty-four years later in 1974, the Mount Vernon Township High School program consisted of "the traditional processional," followed by "Sing We Now of Christmas," a twenty-minute arrangement of Christmas carols. The orchestra presented "A Dream of Christmas," and the program concluded with the massed performance of "O Come All Ye Faithful" by all student performers.[621]

The Wilmington (Ohio) High School annual Christmas program in 1959 featured a few lengthy works by the Concert Choir. These included "*Childe Jesus* by the contemporary American Joseph W. Clokey … the work consists of several traditional carols, original solos and choruses and a narrator." The Concert Choir also sang an arrangement of four movements from Tchaikovsky's ballet *The Nutcracker*. Finally, the performance included the Christmas cantata *For Us a Child is Born* by Johann Sebastian Bach.[622]

Along with tradition, familiarity is another common descriptor of Christmas music programs. The Ludlowe (Connecticut) High School band and choir performed on December 14, 1962. The students performed "familiar carols as well as some less-familiar Christmas music." Selections included "Christmas Festival," "Carol of the Drum," "Ye Watchers and Ye Holy Ones," "Praise Ye the Lord," and "Christmas

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[620] "Christmas Musicale at High School on Sunday," *Mt. Vernon Register-News*, December 14, 1950, p. 17.

[621] "Annual Christmas Music Program," *Mt. Vernon Register-News*, December 10, 1974, p. 1.

[622] "WHS Choral Groups To Give Christmas Program," *Wilmington News-Journal*, December 10, 1959, p. 10.

Oratorio."[623] Similarly, the 1962 Trumbull (Connecticut) High School Christmas concert included "community singing of the traditional Christmas carols."[624]

The previous year at the same high school, the band and chorus presented "The Christmas Story." Unlike the story of the nativity told in many examples earlier in this chapter, this version combined elements of nostalgia, winter weather, and gift giving, along with the birth of Jesus Christ.

Chorus
Joy to the World
It Came Upon a Midnight Clear
Angels We Have Heard on High
O Come All Ye Faithful
Night before Christmas
We Wish You a Merry Christmas
Winter Wonderland

Band
Yuletide at Yorkshire
Jingle Bell Rhapsody
The Twelve Days of Christmas
O Come, O Come Immanuel[625]

In several of the examples throughout this chapter, nationalism is a common element found in the wide variety of music. Instances of patriotic songs during Christmas celebrations predate World War I. For example, the first public Christmas tree lighting in New York City culminated with the singing of the national anthem, which was, in 1912, "My Country 'tis of Thee."[626] For another public school example, examine the variety found in the Humboldt (Iowa) High School band and choir Christmas concert from 1972. The band performed music ranging from "Toccata and Fugue" by Johann Eberlin, to

[623] "Christmas Concert," *The Bridgeport Post*, December 13, 1962, p. 7.
[624] "Yule Concerts Planned," *The Bridgeport Post*, December 16, 1962, p. 65.
[625] "Christmas Music Program," *The Bridgeport Post*, December 17, 1961, p. 64.
[626] "Tree of Light Beckons Thousands," New York Times, December 25, 1912, p. 3.

"Sleigh Ride" by Leroy Anderson. The choir repertoire included selections ranging from "The Declaration," a music setting of the Declaration of Independence, to "What Child is This."[627]

I close this section with a quote from the *Pottstown Mercury* in 1972. "If most area students aren't filled with a song in their hearts this Christmas season, it won't be for lack of music in the schools."[628] Amidst the wide variety of the previous examples, one common theme persists. The consistent merging of sacred and secular music blurs the line between the two. This final example includes many familiar elements, including the nativity, nostalgia, popular music, old carols, the winter season, and others. The Southwest (Missouri) High School Christmas concert contained a variety of selections in 1977. Selections by the band included "Carol of the Drum," "Sleigh Ride," and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing." The mixed chorus sang "White Christmas," "Scarborough Fair," "Christmas Is a Feeling," and "Holiday Blessing." The junior high school recorder ensemble performed "Jingle Bells," "Coventry Carol," and "Away in a Manger."[629]As explored in the next chapter, "Christmas music" becomes a postsecular genre that expands beyond the sacred/secular categories.

School Music Textbooks

The examples in this chapter have largely focused on the performances of

[627] "HHS Band, Choir To Hold Christmas concert Sunday," *The Humboldt Independent*, December 2, 1972, p. 1.

[628] "Schools Underscore Holiday With Music," *Pottstown Mercury*, December 20, 1972, p. 13.

[629] "Southwest R-1 To Give Christmas in Music," *The Chillicothe Tribune*, December 16, 1977, p. 17.

specialized groups of students: choirs, bands, and orchestras. Now, I briefly describe a few of the many options available to teachers in the twentieth century for teaching general music, as they relate to the Christmas holiday. These five examples illustrate the expanding repertoire of Christmas music throughout the twentieth century. As more music became available, it reflected the broadening possibilities for Christmas in local communities.

The Lyric Music Series, published between 1912-1913, consisted of songs to teach students music in three volumes. The Christmas music in this collection largely reflected sacred themes. Consisting of over one hundred songs, holiday selections in the *First Reader* included "Christmas Angels," "Christmas Carols," "Christmas Carol Song," "Christmas Hymn," and "Yule-tide Night."[630] These same selections repeated in the *Second Reader*, with the exception of "Christmas Carol Song" and the addition of "Christmas Bells."[631] The *Third Reader* contained no new Christmas selections.[632]

Published in 1914 and reprinted in 1920, the popular Silver Burdett *Progressive Music Series* contained four volumes of songs. Each volume contains over one hundred and fifty songs, including Christmas selections that explore a variety of themes including Santa, gift giving, the winter season, and seasonal celebration. In general, selections do not reference the Nativity or other religious themes. Book One, for second and third grades, contained holiday selections including "Dear Old Santa Claus," "The Elves and the Shoemaker," "Kind Old Winter," "O Christmas Tree," and "On Christmas Day in the

[630] Arthur Edward Johnstone and Harvey Worthington Loomis, *Lyric Music Series: First Reader* (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1912).
[631] Ibid., Second Reader.
[632] Third Reader, 1913.

Morning."[633] Intended for fourth and fifth grade students, Book Two included holiday selections "Christmas Bells," "Christmas Carol," "Christmas Eve," "Noel," "The Sleigh Ride," "Sleigh Song," "Snow, Beautiful Snow," and "The Wassail Song."[634] Continuing in the series, the third book contains songs for sixth and seventh grade students, including "Jack Frost," "Jingle, Jingle," "The Month of December," "The Snowflakes," and "Ye Olden Christmas."[635] The final volume, intended for eighth grade students, curiously includes only two selections that can even remotely be associated with the Christmas holiday: "Snow Song," and "The Holly."[636]

The popular "Thirty Minutes" series featured abridged versions of operas and introductions to composers. Examples include a Christmas musical play: *Thirty Minutes with Santa Claus: Childhood Dreams Come True with Old Saint Nick*. Characters include the biblical Mary and Joseph, as well as Santa Claus. Musical selections range from "O Come All Ye Faithful" to "Jingle Bells."[637]

The 1965 collection, *The Magic of Music,* is a textbook series for students containing both Christmas and Hanukkah selections. The first volume, for Kindergarten students, includes a section titled "Music Helps Us Celebrate." Themes include the Nativity, gift giving, and winter weather. Selections include "Santa's Helpers," "Christmastime," "March of the Toys," "Jingle Bells," "I Saw Three Ships," "Mary's

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[633] Horatio Parker, Osbourne McConathy, Edward Bailey Birge, and W. Otto Miessner, *The Progressive Music Series Book One* (Boston: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1920).

[634] Ibid., Book Two.

[635] Ibid., Book Three.

[636] Ibid., Book Four.

[637] H. L. Bland, *Thirty Minutes with Santa Claus: Childhood Dreams Come True with Old Saint Nick* (Long Island: Belwin, Inc., 1939). For other works in this series, see *Thirty Minutes with Mozart* and *Thirty Minutes with Stephen Foster*.

Lullaby," "Silent Night," "Away in the Manger," and "We Three Kings of Orient Are," as well as "Hanukkah Time" and "Hanukkah Latkes."[638] Several of these selections are repeated in Book Two and Book Three, along with additional selections such as "O Come, Little Children," "O Come, All Ye Faithful," and "Silent Night,"[639] as well as "It's Hanukkah" and "O Jesu Sweet."[640] Two other textbooks published around this time have no Christmas music whatsoever: *Sing and Learn*[641] and *The Gambit Book of Children's Songs*.[642]

Two collections of children's songs published in the 1990s contain some Christmas music. *The Complete Collection of Children's Favorite Songs* contains a variety of popular and older Christmas songs. Themes include gift giving, charity, goodwill, carnival, winter weather, and the Nativity. Published in 1990, popular selections include "You're a Mean One Mr. Grinch," "A Holly Jolly Christmas," and "Rockin' around the Christmas Tree." Older selections include "Silent Night," "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day," and "Jingle Bells."[643] *One, Two, Three ... Echo Me!*, published in 1991, includes a section of "Holiday/Seasonal Songs." This section includes an approximately equal number of Halloween, Thanksgiving, Hannukah, Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter songs. None has any reference to religious themes.

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[638] Lorrain E. Watters, Louis G. Wersen, William C. Hartshorn, L. Eileen McMillan, Alice Gallup, and Frederick Beckman, *The Magic of Music: Kindergarten* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1965).

[639] Ibid., Book 2.

[640] Ibid., Book 3.

[641] John W. Antey, *Sing and Learn: Simple Songs and Rhythms that Retarded Children Can Enjoy While Learning Basic Lessons* (New York: The John Day Company, 1965).

[642] Donald Mitchell and Roderick Biss, *The Gambit Book of Children's Songs* (Boston: Gambit Incorporated, 1970).

[643] Carol Cullar, *The Complete Collection of Children's Favorite Songs* (Miami: Belwin, Inc., 1990).

December songs include "Spin the Dreidel," "Santa Needs Another Elf," and "Christmas Train."[644]

Public School Christmas Music & Community

Christmas music often occurs at the intersection of public schools and community. The sociologist Robert D. Putnam divided social connections into two loose categories: formal and informal.[645] Largely, school music programs have interacted with formal community organizations, as opposed to informal groups of carolers portrayed in nostalgic stories of Merrie Olde England. In the following section, I establish the context of these types of community/public school interactions through a series of varied, historical examples.

School Concerts as Community Events

In 2014, the local Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) at Riverwatch Middle School in Suwanee, Georgia, held its bi-annual meeting in conjunction with the December band concert, just as they have every year since the school opened in 2004.[646] This practice is not new. For example, consider Appleton, Wisconsin, in 1923. According to the local paper, "The Christmas program to be given in the auditorium Thursday evening by children of the public graded schools and the high school will be presented

[644] Loretta Mitchell, *One, Two, Three … Echo Me! Ready-to-Use Songs, Games, and Activities to Help Children Sing in Tune* (West Nyack: Parker Publishing, 1991).

[645] Robert D. Putnam, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000), 93–94.

[646] As the band director at Riverwatch Middle School, I offer that example from personal experience.

under the auspices of the community Parent-Teachers association formed a short time ago. A meeting of the association will follow the program."[647]

PTA concerts span the many themes explored in previous sections. They reflect the conditions of possibility of the local community. Consider the following three examples. In 1954, a PTA in Iowa held a December meeting in conjunction with the school program and the community Christmas party. The grade school music department presented the Christmas operetta, "Merry Christmas, Mister Snowman." The high school chorus also sang Christmas music.[648] In Indiana, a PTA held its 1962 Christmas program at the First Methodist Church. School choirs sang a variety of Christmas music, including "O Holy Night" and "The Angel's Message."[649] In Salem, Ohio, the elementary choirs and the junior high school band performed Christmas music for the PTA meeting in 1973. The program concluded with the combined groups performing Christmas carols as the audience sang along.[650]

In the previous example, the audience sang Christmas carols with the students. Community singing is another common theme, as demonstrated in the following two examples. In Ohio, grade school and high school students presented a carol program for the community in 1940. The students invited "villagers to sing Christmas music." Selections included "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "We Three Kings of Orient Are," "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Deck the Halls," "The Heavens Rebound," and "Things I

[647] "Three Schools in Christmas Program," *The Post-Crescent*, December 19, 1923, p. 6.
[648] "School Program and P.T.A.," *The Malvern Leader*, December 23, 1954, p.
[649] "Yule Program To Be Tonight," *Anderson Daily Bulletin*, December 9, 1954, p. 24.
[650] "Wash'ville," *The Salem News*, December 8, 1973, p. 2.

Like About Christmas."[651] In Oklahoma, a "Community Christmas Sing" took place in 1965. The program included a prelude of Christmas music by the Miami High School band, followed by "congregational singing." The First Methodist church choir sang "Rise up Shepherd and Follow" and "Silent Night." The high school choir sang "Beautiful Savior" and "Hodie Christus Iatus Est." Local pastors delivered the invocation and benediction.[652]

These final two examples are variations on the theme of community concerts. First, a 1962 Kansas Christmas program was a "gift to the community." The performance included "The Coming of The King," advertised as a "modern version of the Christmas story."[653] As a gift to the community, this program combined elements of gift giving, goodwill, community, the nativity, and modern elements.

In terms of modern elements, a radio broadcast replaced a previous tradition of schoolchildren singing Christmas carols in the town square in 1938. The "Community Christmas program" in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, featured over one thousand students from four public high schools. Each school performance broadcasted live on the radio on the same evening. A police escort transported the recording engineers from each location "to assure Carol Program continuity."[654]

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[651] "Plan Carol Program In Navarre Wednesday," *The Evening Independent*, December 17, 1940, p. 10.

[652] "Christmas Sing Here Sunday Night," *Miami Daily News-Record*, December 16, 1965, p. 1.

[653] "Christmas Program Tonight," *The Belleville Telescope*, December 20, 1962, p. 1.

[654] "Police Escort," *Harrisburg Telegraph*, December 12, 1938, p. 13.

Town Celebrations

Town Christmas celebrations were a common practice throughout the twentieth century. In many instances, these celebrations have included musicians from local public schools. For example, in 1936, the Anniston (Alabama) High School Band performed at the county courthouse to "officially open the holiday season and herald tidings of good cheer to all." The celebration also featured the arrival of Santa Claus. The Women's Club decorated trees around the courthouse, "so that fat old Santa Claus will feel at home when he arrives."[655]

In this example, there are themes of Santa Claus and commerce. The "opening of the holiday season" is an important economic time for businesses. This element reflects the reinforcement of community Christmas expectations. Local businesses sponsor these events, often through the Chamber of Commerce or other associations. A successful community Christmas includes healthy profits for local businesses.

Consider the following four examples, all sponsored by their respective town Chambers of Commerce. The Garner (Iowa) High School band performed in a town Christmas program in 1939, which included an appearance by Santa Claus.[656] In Santa Cruz, California, children attended a special Christmas party at the town library in 1947. The high school band performed, and Santa Claus was transported "in a gayly lighted airplane" to distribute gifts.[657] That same year, community carol singing took place on the

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[655] "Anniston Prepares Greeting for Jolly Old Santa Claus," *The Anniston Star*, December 2, 1936, p. 1.

[656] "Plan Yuletide Event in Garner," *The Mason City Globe-Gazette*, December 9, 1939, p. 3.

[657] "Santa Claus Coming Here By Airplane," *Santa Cruz Sentinel*, December 12, 1947, p. 1.

lawn of the Miami County (Indiana) Court House. The school music supervisor led the singing of students from the local high school and junior high school.[658] In Kentucky, a Christmas parade and tree lighting in 1974 featured several bands. Following the parade, the tree lighting took place at the First United Methodist Church, where high school madrigal singers performed, along with a high school band.[659]

Other times, an individual local business sponsored Christmas music events. For example, the Gettysburg (Pennsylvania) High School choir sang in the lobby of the Gettysburg National Bank in 1947. As onlookers filled the lobby, the students sang Christmas music for an hour from the balcony.[660] Many times, the town government sponsored the celebration. For example, the town square of Statesville, North Carolina, held a "formal opening" of the 1947 Christmas season. This celebration included a speech by the mayor and a program of Christmas music by the high school glee club. The square featured decorations and "Christmas scenes."[661]

Similarly, a 1953 Christmas street party in Missouri began at the town courthouse and featured a performance by the Chillicothe High School band. The party also included a visit by Santa Claus with treats and prizes.[662] In Texas, the "big program of the [1958] Christmas season" took place at the local courthouse. The program began with a presentation of Christmas music by the Vernon High School Mixed Chorus. Following the singing, "Santa Claus will arrive in a gala parade" to distribute candy to the

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[658] "Plan Carol Singing," *The Kokomo Tribune*, December 20, 1947, p. 2.
[659] "Christmas Parade Is Monday," *The Corbin Times-Tribune*, November 29, 1974, p. 1.
[660] "Hear High School Choir Sing," *Gettysburg Compiler*, December 27, 1947, p. 1.
[661] "Elaborate City Decoration," *Statesville Landmark*, December 5, 1947, p. 1.
[662] "The City's Annual Christmas Street Party," *Chillicothe Tribune*, November 25, 1953, p. 1.

children.[663]

Parades sponsored by town governments are another variation on this theme. In Panama City, Florida, the 1967 Christmas parade featured three high school bands. Santa Claus rode "aboard his modern-day sleigh." The local paper also noted that, "several of the floats stressed a patriotic theme, with particular emphasis on the Vietnam conflict."[664] In 1970, a Christmas parade in Texas featured five high school bands "playing jolly Christmas music." Eighteen floats included depictions of the story of the Nativity. Santa Claus appeared in the final float of the parade.[665]

I turn to the state of Texas for the final two examples of town celebrations. These contain a variety of themes, including elements of worship service, commerce, and Santa Claus. First, consider the Seguin "Spirit of Christmas" festival in 1986. The event began with the high school marching band performing Christmas music. Following the performance, a local pastor delivered an invocation, followed by a Christmas message. The festivities closed with the arrival of Santa Claus on a fire truck.[666] In Danbury, "just about everyone turns out for the city's annual Christmas in the Park celebration." In 1998, the festivities included Christmas music by the high school band, as well as the arrival of Santa Claus by helicopter.[667]

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[663] "Christmas Lights," *The Vernon Daily Record*, November 16, 1958, p. 1.

[664] "Parade Held Saturday," *Panama City News-Herald*, December 3, p. 5.

[665] "Temple's Annual Holiday Parade," *Waco Tribune-Herald*, December 5, 1970, p. 21.

[666] "Central Park Tree," *The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise*, November 30, 1986, p. 1. The same celebration in Seguin was nearly identical the following year. See, "Spirit of Christmas," *The Seguin Gazette-Enterprise*, December 6, 1987, p. 1.

[667] "Danbury Christmas In The Park," *The Facts*, December 2, 1998, p. 3.

Club Meetings and Outreach

Local community groups have long included public school performances as part of their meetings. The inclusion of school music at these meetings reinforces the relationship between community and public schools. Among the various community groups, there is a plethora of examples featuring student performances at Kiwanis Club meetings. Consider the following five brief examples spanning fifty-five years.

In Lincoln, Nebraska, the 1938 Kiwanis Club luncheon featured a program of Christmas music by the high school a cappella choir.[668] In 1952, the Central Junior High School chorus sang Christmas music at the Kiwanis Club of Ogden, Utah. The students received treats and movie tickets in appreciation.[669] The following year, the Salem (Oregon) High School choir sang "sacred Christmas music" at the Chamber of Commerce luncheon, and again at the local Kiwanis club meeting.[670] In 1962, the Chambersburg Kiwanis Club in Maryland sponsored their annual Christmas program. "The highlight of the evening was presentation of Christmas music by the Senior High School Choristers."[671] The Greenwood (South Carolina) High School Show Choir performed at least eight community performances in 1993. These included performances for the Kiwanis Club, the Festival of Trees, and the local hospital.[672]

Similarly, local Rotary Clubs frequently enjoyed student performances. The following four examples illustrate the common relationship between Rotarians and school

[668] "Kiwanis Program," *The Lincoln Star*, December 24, 1938, p. 5.
[669] "Kiwanians Hear Christmas Music," *The Ogden Standard-Examiner*, December 24, 1952, p. 11.
[670] "Christmas Music Slated," *The Oregon Statesman*, December 21, 1953, p. 5.
[671] "200 Hear Annual Kiwanis Club Christmas Show," *The Morning Herald*, December 12, 1962, p. 2.
[672] "Group Entertains at Kiwanis Club," *The Index-Journal*, December 5, 1993, p. 6.

music programs. In 1942, the local high school band performed for the Rotary Club in Casa Grande, Arizona. The meeting included a special dinner while the band performed "Christmas carols and religious songs.[673] Two years later, the annual Christmas party of the Wilmington (Ohio) Rotary Club featured holiday music performed by local high school students. The high school music supervisor directed the performance, which included "O Little Town of Bethlehem," "Jesu Bambino," and "Joy to the World."[674]

The Rotarians in Kerrville, Texas, enjoyed a similar program at their meeting in 1945. The high school choral club performed. "Members of the [Rotary] club were loud in their praises of the beauty and sweetness of the voices of the children."[675] The Kokomo (Indiana) High School choir performed for the Rotarians at their meeting in 1950. "The beautiful music of the Christmas season was sung with all its lovely reverence." Selections included "Cradle Hymn," "While Shepherds Watch," "Jingle Bells," and "O Holy Night."[676]

There are countless examples of Christmas music found at the intersection of community and the public schools. For a final example, I look at yet another division between secular and sacred Christmas elements. In Galesburg, Illinois, the Senior Woman's Club meeting included a performance by the local high school choir in 1953. The performance included "Sing We Noel," "Christmas Candles," "Fan Fair for Christmas Day," and "While Shepherds Watched." One of the club members read "The

[673] "High School Band Gives Concert for Rotarians," *Casa Grande Dispatch*, December 25, 1942, p. 1.

[674] "Rotary Anns Entertain," *Wilmington News-Journal*, December 12, 1944, p. 5.

[675] "High School Groups Present Program for Rotarians," *Kerrville Mountain Sun*, December 20, 1945, p. 1

[676] "Choir Delights Rotarians With Christmas Songs," *The Kokomo Tribune*, December 12, 1950, p. 13.

Christmas Tree" and "Our Risen Lord." According to the local paper, "listeners were impressed with the thought that we all know Santa Claus, but we should become better acquainted with the Lord."[677]

Conclusion

The historical examples of Christmas music in the American public school schools are varied and plentiful. There is, of course, no possible way to include every example that exists. I purposefully listed a cross-section of different settings, selections, mediums, and themes. The evidence in this chapter serves to provide a context of the many ways Christmas music in the public schools has existed in the twentieth century.

[677] "Woman's Club," *Galesburg Register-Mail*, December 7, 1953, p. 9.

CHAPTER NINE:
Conclusions and Implications

Personal Reflection

While writing this dissertation, I have frequently reflected upon the music I have selected for my students over the years. In particular, I recall my first concert as a public school teacher in 2004. As the only music teacher in a small, rural high school, I programmed a mixture of non-holiday selections and Christmas music for the joint performance of the band and chorus students.

First, the chorus sang *Two French Canons* followed by "I Could Have Danced All Night." The band performed *Flourish for Wind Band* and *Chesford Portrait*. After a brief pause, the band and chorus jointly performed *Christmas Sing-A-Long*, which included "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Deck the Halls," Silent Night," "The First Noel," and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." The concert concluded with the band performance of *Do You Hear What I Hear?* and *Rudolph's Christmas Overture*.

There were thirty-three students in the band and twenty-five students in the chorus. Two members of the band and one member of the chorus left the concert following the first portion of the performance, prior to the Christmas selections. These students—Jehovah's Witnesses—were prohibited them from playing or singing any religious music. These students had been practicing individually in the instrument storage room during previous weeks while the band and chorus were rehearsing the Christmas selections during class. As a first year teacher, I was unaware that some students would not perform holiday music and was unprepared to address the issue. I was far more

concerned with classroom management and lesson plans than how my repertoire selections might affect student identity or cultural expectations.

My decision to program Christmas music involved a variety of factors. The community expected Christmas music, as expressed through comments from students, parents, and my principal. Nobody told me what to program, but there were hints and suggestions. For example, a neighboring band director mentioned to me that his band *always* performed a Christmas concert consisting entirely of holiday music. His statement was my first clue that I was generally unaware of community expectations. As a first year teacher, I decided to fall back upon my own experiences as a public school band student. I was accustomed to a December concert in which we played several pieces of non-holiday music followed by annual performances of *A Christmas Festival* and *Sleigh Ride*. Consequently, I followed a similar formula for my first concert as an educator. I chose to program Christmas music, even though it isolated three students who were not able to participate. My decision played out upon a spectrum of possible choices, which I describe as *conditions of possibility*. This term encompasses the environments formed by past actions and interactions that shape and constrain how we interact with the world around us. Our interactions upon this field of choices further condition our possibilities for the future.[678]

I seek to understand the conditions of possibility that enable the performance of Christmas music as a regular practice in the American public schools. I borrow the phrase conditions of possibility from the genealogical work of Michel Foucault. A genealogical

[678] Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 1–2, 17–18, 29.

approach lends itself to conducting a "history of the present" and seeks to explicate relationships across contexts and temporalities. Foucault did not write genealogies for the purpose of vindicating or subverting, but rather to "describe the conditions of possibility … of our capacities for various forms of judgment."[679] By understanding how the regular practice of Christmas music in the public schools has come to be, we can better understand the conditions that enable our possibilities for the future.

Research Question 1: How did the practice of performing Christmas music in the American public schools come to be?

Christmas music in the public schools is an unquestioned practice for many Americans, imbued with the weight of tradition. Perhaps we should simply recite the statistic that ninety-two percent of Americans celebrate Christmas; therefore, it is only natural that we include the music from this holiday as part of our student's educational experience.[680] However, we still must do our best to answer the question. No practice in music education or public education should be exempt from interrogation and examination. In particular, any practice that results in lawsuits, policies, and the exclusion of students deserves scrutiny and reflection. If we understand how Christmas music in the public schools came to be a regular practice, we can better understand the possibilities for the future.

In the previous chapters, I identified examples of the historical evolution of

[679] Koopman, 17–18.

[680] Pew Research Center, *Celebrating Christmas and the Holidays, Then and Now* (Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2013), 1.

Christmas music in the public schools. These examples included a variety of contexts and conditions that contributed to the formation of the practice. The *relationships* between these various contexts and conditions formed the conditions of possibility for the practice in our present.

Genealogy emphasizes that our present is contingently constructed. First, it is important to remember that Christmas music *as we know it* did not exist in early nineteenth century America. Second, it is unlikely that Christmas would occupy its current position as a national, cultural holiday today if the disruptive customs of misrule and mischief had not prompted a response from the upper class. Elements of family, children, and community became the focus of new, invented traditions. These traditions brought forth a greater focus on gift giving, and this commercial aspect of the holiday gained its own critical mass that continues to our present. The American economy is dependent on the Christmas season of gift giving, traveling, and feasting. This economic dependency has conditioned what we know Christmas to be. Commercials, television programs, and movies have all contributed to how we define Christmas in our present. In the nineteenth century, it was a poem by Clement Moore and a ghost story by Charles Dickens, among others, that conditioned what people knew Christmas to be.

American Christmas traditions draw heavily upon nostalgia. In the nineteenth century, the nostalgic call for ancient carols conditioned what people knew Christmas music to be. Amidst the growing hustle and bustle of the Industrial Revolution, Christmas music became a link to the past. Christmas music became a ritual, linking people to both past and future generations. The nostalgic call to return to ancient carols, ironically,

coincided with both the development of newer Christmas music and the establishment of a regular canon of Christmas music in the churches.

How do all of these factors relate to the practice of public examinations of school students, dating back to the eighteenth century? These public examinations set a particular expectation at the end-of-term. The community gathered as students presented their knowledge. In addition, the winter end-of-term usually coincided with the Christmas holiday season. Gradually, these examinations blurred into public exhibitions or exercises. Little by little, music became part of these exercises, which usually involved the entire school and community. Meanwhile in the mid-nineteenth century, Sabbath schools began having annual exhibitions, which developed into Christmas festivals, including recitations and music.

As Christmas music in the public schools gained its own momentum in the twentieth century, it continued to do so in the public eye. School Christmas celebrations typically happened during the school day as part of the end-of-term exercises that evolved from public examinations. Eventually, these exercises shifted to evening performances so working parents could attend. Often, performances occurred in conjunction with Parent-Teacher Association meetings. Many performances would also take place in town squares, for tree lightings, parades, and local community club meetings. These performances often blended public school students, community events, and commercial interests and further conditioned what Christmas in those communities meant to students, parents, and teachers.

The intersection of these contexts and conditions contributed to the evolution of

Christmas music in the public schools: (1) the growing momentum of invented Christmas traditions as a response to societal and commercial factors; (2) a nostalgic call for Christmas music; (3) the establishment of a regular canon of Christmas music in the churches, Sabbath schools, and Sunday schools; (4) the expectation of public, end-of-term examinations in December; and (5) the relationship between all of these factors in relation to the community and the public schools. These relationships are temporal and contextual. Genealogy emphasizes that the practices, meanings, and values that constitute Christmas are dependent upon location and time.

As a comparison, consider Christmas in present-day Japan. Although American practices influenced some traditions, Christmas in Japan is unique to that context and temporality. The vast majority of the country is not Christian. Major traditions include lights, decorations, music, and fried chicken. The restaurant chain Kentucky Fried Chicken records its single-day, highest gross receipts worldwide on Christmas Eve in Japan.[681] As another comparison, Christmas in Australia shares many customs with the United States. The holiday, however, occurs during the hottest season of the year in Australia. In America, many songs, decorations, and foods specifically relate to the winter theme of the holiday. In Australia, local customs have replaced winter themes. For example, six kangaroos pull Santa's sleigh as told in the Australian Christmas song "Six White Boomers."[682] I do not offer these examples to assert, "All Japanese eat fried

[681] K. Annabelle Smith, "Why Japan is Obsessed with Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas," Retrieved from http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/why-japan-is-obsessed-with-kentucky-fried-chicken-on-christmas-1-161666960/?no-ist on March 24, 2015.

[682] "Christmas Season Celebrations in Australia," Australian Government, retrieved from http://www.australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/christmas-season-celebrations on March 30, 2015.

chicken on Christmas" or "All Australian children believe Santa rides on kangaroos." That would be equally as dangerous as stating, "All Americans spend money on Christmas gifts." However, it is helpful to make general comparisons between countries. How is it that Christmas traditions flourished in Japan even though the country has very few Christians? How is it that cultural Christmas traditions are strong in Australia, despite the lack of any winter season that forms the basis of so many Christmas traditions? These types of questions have the potential to help us understand our practices better.

Genealogy explores not only the differences in a single practice across continents but also the relationships between related practices in a calendar year. For example, consider the Easter holiday in America. According to the Christian faith, Easter marks the resurrection of Jesus Christ following the crucifixion. Despite the massive Christmas holiday season, Easter is the most significant holiday on the Christian calendar.[683] Easter concerts in the public schools, however, are not a regular practice. Why did Christmas music become a regular practice in the public schools but not Easter music? There are certainly similarities between holidays, including a focus on the family, feasting, and giving gifts to children. For the Easter holiday, candy is the most popular gift for children. The Easter holiday season is the second-highest grossing period of the year for candy manufacturers in America, following Halloween.[684] Similar to Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny is an anthropomorphic figure that leaves candy and gifts for children on

[683] "Easter," In *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, Oxford University Press, 2005.

[684] "Easter by the Numbers," National Confectioner's Association, retrieved from http://www.candyusa.com/AllAboutCandy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=9985 on April 1, 2015.

Easter morning. There are Easter hymns in the churches, and songs about the Easter Bunny for children in popular culture. Why, then, do public schools regularly play Christmas music but not Easter music?

I pose this question to illustrate the contingency of the constellation of practices that constitute Christmas music in the schools. Arguably, the most noteworthy difference between holidays concerns time. Christmas is a fixed date on the calendar, while Easter Sunday falls between March 22 and April 25 annually, dependent on the cycle of the moon. The fixed date is noteworthy in relation to ancient celebrations that occurred around the same date, such as Saturnalia and Yule, whose traditions the Christian church adopted. The fixed date also allowed annual traditions to develop in relation to the fixed structure of the end-of-term activities. Once again, the relationship between Christmas in America and end-of-term examinations, exercises, traditions, and modern day celebrations is significant. This relationship does not exist with the Easter holiday, due to its shifting date each year.

In the early nineteenth century, newspapers contained roughly the same scarce mentions of both Christmas and Easter.[685] Both holidays were minor cultural observances. How did the conditions of possibility for both holidays come to be so different? Perhaps the commercial push for gift-giving gave the developing Christmas holiday more critical mass in early development. Perhaps the lawless traditions of misrule surrounding Christmas created greater impetus for wealthy New Yorkers to develop new traditions focused on the family and children, creating greater cultural weight behind the

[685] I make this assertion based upon my reading of early nineteenth century newspapers that forms the basis of the previous chapters.

religious holiday. What if traditions of gift giving never gained critical mass in commercial markets? What if John Pintard and Clement Moore had not developed new traditions? What if the Christmas holiday developed in a similar fashion to Easter?

As a final provocation, conceptualize Christmas musical traditions superimposed onto the conditions of possibility of the Easter holiday. Easter music is in the churches and the home, not the schools and radios. The Easter Bunny visits children in Christian homes, but generally does not transcend religions and cultures like Santa Claus. The sacred elements of the Easter holiday remain primarily in focus, while the non-religious elements remain in the background. There is not a "War on Easter" promoted by conservative television and talk radio. There are not angry parents over the removal or inclusion of Easter music from public schools. Schoolchildren generally do not perform Easter music as a springtime tradition. In some communities, there might be Easter egg hunts and other events, but they do not carry the musical soundtrack as a Christmas tree lighting or parade. The Christmas music genre in our present has permeated many spaces that the Easter holiday has not.

Research Question 2: How do these contexts and conditions shape and/or constrain the practice in our present?

Our present practice lies upon a spectrum of choices. The conditions of possibility in our present reflect the historical evolution of Christmas music in the American public schools. These conditions evolve over time and place, and they echo the evolution of the national religious and cultural celebration in relation to shifting values in communities.

Christmas in America has a multitude of meanings for different people. These meanings vary with context; the local community where one lives and teaches makes a difference. The religious and cultural makeup of each individual community influences those specific conditions of possibility for Christmas music in the local schools.

For example, Gordon Central High School is located in Calhoun, a small town in rural, northeast Georgia. The high school band performed only holiday selections at their 2014 Christmas Concert, including "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Holy Night, Silent Night," and "Ukrainian Bell Carol."[686] Compare with Marriotts Ridge High School, located minutes from both Washington D.C. and Baltimore, Maryland. The high school band played a variety of non-holiday selections at their concert in December 2014. The performance ended with a token Christmas selection, "Carol of the Bells."[687] At Gordon Central and Marriotts Ridge High Schools, the concert selections reflect conditions of possibility of the respective communities. These conditions signify a multitude of factors, including the historical evolution of Christmas in American, religious diversity, and community values.

For example, a community filled with young, Christian families might value school celebrations that focus on the children and involve Santa Claus. These values are likely a reaction to the commercial images of the idealistic, nuclear American family celebrating Christmas in a very particular way, as well as a reaction to nostalgic longing of parents to recreate the Christmas of their own childhood.

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[686] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NyQjbbGp8y8 on March 11, 2015.

[687] Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6-NxuQM6Rc on March 11, 2015.

As another example, a community that has recently grown more diverse might have several factions. Some residents might support inclusive, non-religious holiday celebrations that highlight the growing diversity of the community. These residents likely value cultural inclusivity and respect of different traditions. Newer residents to the community might embrace this inclusion. They may value being a part of the cultural American Christmas, equating this participation to acceptance by the community. Other residents, however, might value religious Christmas celebrations that deemphasize the commercial aspects of the holiday. Both groups of residents might actively support these different types of celebration as a reaction to the other. For example, the campaign to "Keep Christ in Christmas" has been a common reaction to non-religious celebrations since 1921.[688] This interpretation of the Christmas holiday emphasizes one "true" way to celebrate Christmas, without allowing for different groups and people to celebrate in other ways. This approach often uses an either-or dichotomy. Either you celebrate Christmas a particular, religious way, or you are not truly celebrating Christmas. I believe that the "War on Christmas" might motivate some teachers and parents to keep Christmas music in the curriculum in an effort to safeguard the values of the local, Christian community.

The values of the community influence and react to public practices and perceptions. Localized examples of Christmas music—concerts, musicals, assemblies, and parades—occur under the gaze of the community. In these public practices, we find subtle instances of normalization. Foucault discussed normalization as an exemplar of the

[688] The first instance I can find of the phrase "Keep Christ in Christmas" is in "Jesus Belongs to Every Nation: Let's Keep Christ in Christmas," *El Paso Herald*, December 24, 1921.

power/knowledge relationship found in examinations.[689] For example, powers of normalization are contained in our school examinations, which condition what students *know* to be normal. School music performances are no different. A Christmas concert conditions what members of the community know to be normal, or how far one is from the norm. This knowledge conditions the powers of normalization found in future performances. "Why do we perform Christmas music every December?" The common answer, "It is a tradition," reflects the conditions that the community accepts as normal. Normalization is an effect of the power/knowledge relationship. In that sense, traditions are technologies of normalization.

The element of the public gaze is a key component of normalization. These performances come under that same public gaze, both from members of the audience and, in our present, the entire world via YouTube and other methods of distribution. The performance of Christmas music affects what students and parents know to be normal in a community. How far from the norm is a Muslim student who performs Christmas music with the high school orchestra? How far away is a Jewish student who does not perform, but instead does homework in the media center during class time? According to May, "Power works by taking an open field of possible actions and constructing certain pathways of actions that are more likely to be taken."[690] This statement summarizes the effects of normalization upon the conditions of possibility regarding Christmas music practices.

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[689] Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random House, 1975/1995), 183–184.

[690] May, 82–83.

Ultimately, the conditions of possibility for music teachers involve a choice. Do I include Christmas music or not? In some communities, it might be problematic to include Christmas music in December. What are the recent traditions in that community? What do the parents and students expect and value? In other communities, it might be far more problematic *not* to include Christmas music. The conditions of possibility for Christmas music in the public schools are a reflection of the local community, in relation to the varied elements that constitute the modern American holiday. Christmas music in the schools is constrained by the actions that have come before, conditioned by what we know this practice to be. The implicit and explicit expectations and values of the local community affect this spectrum of choices.

Bennett Reimer discussed the relationship between music teachers and community using a conceptual model called the "Expectational Phase." Reimer described this model as follows.

> The culture as a whole, special interest groups within it, parents, students, education professionals, all bring to the enterprise their beliefs and values and needs from it. Education in every culture exists not in a vacuum but in a ferment of influences affecting what it can be and do. At both the theoretical and the practical levels, education reflects the expectations of all who have a stake in it. In this sense education, inevitably and no doubt appropriately, is a political phenomenon.[691]

Our local communities shape and constrain the choices we make as music teachers. It is simplistic, however, to suggest that it is an easy solution for music teachers to know their communities and meet those needs accordingly. For example, during my

[691] Bennett Reimer, *A Philosophy of Music Education: Advancing the Vision* (Upper Saddle River: Pearson, 2003), 244.

first year teaching, the community appeared to be entirely Christian. The clear expectation was Christmas music in December. Yet, I still had three students that could not participate. Excluding students from the classroom and concert is problematic. The power/knowledge relationship that constrains and conditions our choices also has an effect on the subject. I chose to program Christmas music with the knowledge that some students could not participate, reinforcing the following lesson. The music of the Christmas holiday is more important than the education and access of individual students. This knowledge reinforced the power relations embedded within the practice. The school principal and superintendent tacitly approved this action, further embedding it into the culture of the community and narrowing the possible choices for future years. What was the effect on the subject? In particular, what might have been the effects on those students who could not participate? How does this practice condition what they *know* their religious beliefs to be in relation to the norm within the context of a public school?

In that same community, it would also have been problematic to omit Christmas music. Reimer described the "ferment of influences" that summarizes the variety of beliefs, values, and needs of various groups and individuals in a community. I would likely have received several parent complaints had I removed Christmas music from the traditional holiday concert. Reimer described education as a "political phenomenon." This description, in light of community expectations, accurately describes the nature of the power/knowledge relationship found in our practices. Foucault stated, "Where there is power, there is resistance."[692] Todd May interpreted that statement to mean simply that

[692] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 95.

resistance often is found coupled with power relations.[693] This resistance can be tacit, such as a Jewish student that does homework in the media center during Christmas concert preparations. It can be explicit, such as parents who complain about the inclusion or exclusion of Christmas music in a December concert. Court cases involving sacred music in the schools are exemplars of this relationship between power and resistance.

Only a handful of court cases in America have dealt with sacred music in the public schools. Of those cases, only three involved Christmas music in the public schools. None of these cases reached the Supreme Court. The conditions of possibility for most music teachers do not seem to include the threat of legal action. I base this assertion on my own experience. Until I began working on this dissertation, I was unfamiliar with any case law involving sacred music in the public schools. The existing legal history did not affect my own circumstances as a teacher. Why does a general unfamiliarity pervade our current conditions?

The local, contextualized conditions of possibility include larger relationships to the Christmas holiday in America. I do not believe, however, that these relationships include these court cases. These lawsuits lose impact when divorced from the communities in which they occurred. Moreover, the courts ruled in favor of the local school board in every instance. The following two court cases are on the opposite ends of the spectrum with very different results, yet both bolster the authority and autonomy of the school. In *Florey v. Sioux Falls*, the school district purposefully included sacred Christmas music in performances, despite parent complaints. The court ruled in 1980 that

[693] May, 85.

the school district had the authority to allow Christmas music. In the 2009 decision in *Stratechuk v. Board of Education*, the district acted to omit sacred Christmas music from performances, despite parent complaints. The court ruled that the school district had the authority to exclude Christmas music.

In the school prayer cases of 1962 and 1963, the Supreme Court ruled that school-sponsored prayer is illegal under the First Amendment of U. S. Constitution.[694] This established a strong legal precedent without any room for loose interpretation. If any of the sacred music cases had been decided against the school, I believe that the resulting legal precedent would be much stronger than the current circumstances. Because all previous cases have ruled in favor of the school system, it has continued to be "business as usual" in the public schools, as long as teachers meet the normalized expectations of their local community.

The current conditions of possibility include limited threat of legal action. Existing case law influences this condition in relation to the problematic nature of the Christmas music genre. Christmas music is divisible into sacred and secular groupings from a Christian perspective. For example, "Silent Night" is about the Nativity. "Rudolph, the Red Nosed Reindeer" is about the mythological Santa Claus and his eight reindeer. For non-Christians, both songs are mythological in nature. Both the Nativity and Santa are elements of the Christmas celebration for Christians and non-Christians alike. Regardless, both songs are still Christmas music. The line between sacred and secular in Christmas music is blurry. I summarize this condition as *postsecularism*.

[694] See *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington School District v. Schempp*.

Postsecularism in our Present

Christmas music in the public schools evolved in relation to the development of the modern American Christmas. Throughout this continuing evolution, students have sang and played countless Christmas concerts, parades, assemblies, and musicals. As a genre, Christmas music spans a diverse collection of hymns, carols, popular songs, folk tunes, and movie soundtracks. In the previous chapter, I listed examples of various types of Christmas music selected by teachers throughout the twentieth century and into our present. These examples draw attention to the perceived sacred/secular divide among the Christmas music genre.

In *Lynch v. Donnelly*, the Supreme Court voted 5-4 that a nativity scene could stand on government property. The four dissenting judges summarized the difficulties of the case. "This case appears hard not because the principles of decision are obscure, but because the Christmas holiday seems so familiar and agreeable." The familiar and agreeable Christmas holiday blurs the intersection of religion, law, and government, including public schools. I believe that the familiar and agreeable Christmas holiday also blurs the sacred/secular divide.

Can we remove all religious elements and focus only on the secular aspects of Christmas in the public schools? It is problematic to assume a clean sacred/secular divide for several reasons. The label "sacred" privileges Christianity at the expense of other religions and traditions. In this context, sacred generally means Christian. The application of a sacred/secular dichotomy quickly becomes a continuum, but operates from the same premise of either/or binary. This false dilemma is problematic once we acknowledge that

Christmas has a variety of different, overlapping meanings for different people.

I propose that Christmas music be considered a postsecular genre in America. According to Scholes and Sassower, "Instead of the religious and the secular locked in a war, a postsecular context allows for the kind of relationship that effectively blurs the line between the two."[695] The cultural and religious elements that constitute the Christmas holiday are varied. A postsecular lens acknowledges the wide array of imports and meanings of the American Christmas held by different people, communities, and institutions. This lens acknowledges the privileged position of Christianity among the multitude of religions and traditions, and recognizes the impossibility of religious neutrality in the public schools.[696] It is necessary to discuss and negotiate this topic, at times uncomfortably. A postsecular lens accounts for the temporal nature of Christmas music and the realities of the practice that are unaddressed by policy and law. The application of this lens does not make current practice easier. Rather, it becomes more difficult and, hopefully, more thoughtful.

Christmas music in the public schools is rooted in tradition. As teachers select and teach Christmas music, it is without much interrogation or introspection. If we approach Christmas music as a postsecular genre, we open up space for discussions and questions about this seemingly natural practice, as well as about rituals throughout music and culture. Principles of democratic music education can work in tandem with this approach, in which class discussion and music selection occurs within safe, yet potentially

[695] Jeffrey Scholes and Raphael Sassower, *Religion and Sport in American Culture* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2014), 8.

[696] See for example, Marc Degilorami, "The Empty Bromide of Religious Neutrality," *Library of Law and Liberty*, July 24, 2015. Accessed on August 30, 2015. http://www.libertylawsite.org/2015/07/24/the-empty-bromide-of-religious-neutrality/

challenging, parameters. This approach opens space to discuss elements of music and culture that are important to students and their families. Such an inward change in perspective might not visibly change practice much, but will enrich the process.

A postsecular approach is useful with an eye towards history. The line was blurry even in the nineteenth century. Many Sunday school Christmas exhibitions of the nineteenth century merged sacred elements with Santa Claus. Recall the multitude of examples in chapter six in which Santa Claus featured prominently in Sunday school exhibitions. These church performances, focusing on the children, welcomed Santa Claus and elevated him to share the stage with Jesus Christ. These performances moved effortlessly between Jesus and Santa. At that juncture of course, Santa Claus was far more of a religious figure than today. Closely tied to Saint Nicholas, the Santa Claus of the nineteenth century was not the neo-commercial figure of our present. However, the mythology of Santa Claus that developed during this time did not relate to the nativity. It solidified the mythological figure later adopted by commercial interests into the twentieth century. A postsecular approach helps us to unpack these relationships while acknowledging the complexity of our present.

What are potential conditions of possibility for the future of this practice?

Genealogical methods help us understand how our present is contingently constructed. This understanding allows us to navigate the conditions of possibility in our future. As discussed, many factors related to the modern American Christmas forms our spectrum of choices in relation to our local communities.

Overall, the percentage of those self-identifying as Christians in America is declining.[697] In 2014, approximately seventy percent of Americans identified as Christian. This statistic reflects the entire country without accounting for variations in local communities throughout America. This statistic does not differentiate between practicing and non-practicing Christians. It also includes all Christian denominations, in which beliefs and practices can vary widely. As American communities diversify, there may be a widening variety of conditions of possibility. Some communities might fight for Christmas traditions amidst growing diversity. In chapter four, I introduced the idea that Christmas music practices are rituals. From a Christian perspective, these rituals lose effectiveness as society grows more complex, more diverse. According to Alexander

> The more simple the collective organization, the less its social and cultural parts are segmented and differentiated, the more the elements of social performances are *fused*. The more complex, segmented, and differentiated the collectivity, the more these elements of social performance become *de-fused*. To be effective in a society of increasing complexity, social performances must engage in a project of *re-fusion*. To the degree they achieve re-fusion, social performances become convincing and effective—more ritual-like. To the degree that social performances remain de-fused, they seem artificial and contrived.[698]

The "War on Christmas" is a battle to keep Christian traditions in the public eye. As statistics trend towards greater religious diversity, it is possible that some music teachers will face fierce opposition for presenting a non-religious holiday program. Some teachers will likely lead this battle themselves. This opposition is an effort to *re-fuse* Christmas music rituals despite the increasingly segmented religious and non-religious population.

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[697] According to the American Religious Identification Survey (ARIS), 86% of Americans identified as Christian in 1990; 76% identified as Christian in 2008. According to the Pew Forum on Religious Life, 78.4% of Americans identified as Christian in 2007; 70.6% identified as Christian in 2014.

[698] Jeffrey Alexander, "Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy," *Sociological Theory* 22, no. 4 (December 2004): 529.

For non-Christian Americans, it is also possible in some communities that Christmas music traditions will persist. New members of the community might embrace existing cultural traditions in an effort to assimilate into American society. The conditions of possibility allows for the religious significance of the holiday to move aside for the cultural traditions. The massive Christmas shopping season fuels the American economy in November and December. No matter the growing diversity, retailers and manufacturers will likely find new ways to perpetuate the traditions of gift giving in the holiday season. Their financial success is dependent upon American culture believing the culture of gift giving is the *normal* practice. Commercials, sponsorships, movies, and television will continue to promote this ideal.

Amidst this growing diversity, music teachers might wonder: Is it always appropriate to perform Christmas music? Is it always inappropriate to perform Christmas music? Our society looks for yes/no answers, either/or solutions. I do not believe this problem is dichotomous. Conditions of possibility imply that there is spectrum of choices available, which different people might perceive as right or wrong.

Having a choice implies freedom. The power and knowledge imbued within the practice, however, constrains any freedom we think we might have. Freedom—or, resistance—comes at a cost. The Foucaultian lenses of power, knowledge, and freedom are helpful tools, but perhaps we should think most carefully of the subject. In other words, teachers make decisions upon a spectrum of choices governed by the power/knowledge relationship found within our practices in our local communities. First, it is important to understand those conditions of possibility. Second, it is important to

understand the potential impact these decisions have upon students.

I propose the following set of reflective questions for teachers. These questions address both understanding of local conditions of possibility and the potential impact upon students.

Reflective Questions for Music Teachers

1. What is the religious and cultural makeup of your school community of students and parents?
2. How does your local community celebrate Christmas?
3. What, if any, are your local school policies about religious music and/or Christmas music?
4. How has your school incorporated Christmas music in the past?
5. How do your neighboring schools incorporate Christmas music?
6. What Christmas music do you believe is most valuable to your students? What makes it valuable? The musical content? The cultural context? Any other factors?
    a. If you believe that musical content is the primary reason to program Christmas music, should/would you consider performing it during a different time of the year?
    b. How does your religious and cultural background influence the decisions you make about Christmas music in your school?
7. Do you have students that cannot participate if you select Christmas music? What will they do during this time? How will they be affected? What message does this

send to these students and their peers?

Similarly, I propose new language for NAfME that reflects our changing present. The current position statement (found in Appendix A) heavily cites a handful of court cases and ignores others. It does not include any cases from the twenty-first century, including *Nurre v. Whitehead* (2009) and *Stratechuk v. Board of Education* (2009). The outcome of these cases established a different set of precedents than those currently cited. The current position statement leans heavily on the concept of religious neutrality without accounting for the realities of practice. Additionally, the current statement privileges Christianity, conflates sacred music with Christmas music, and assumes a clean typology of sacred and secular music. Instead of a new position statement, I propose new suggestions written from a postsecular approach. Perhaps the following recommendation might instigate thoughtful conversation and debate.

Proposed NAfME Suggestions on the Inclusion of Music of Sacred Traditions

The National Association for Music Education supports the thoughtful selection of repertoire by teachers of all levels and mediums in the public schools. *Grove Music Online* defines sacred music as

> Music that is used in religious ritual or as a setting for religious texts. Sacred music in America is so vastly diverse in genre and style as to defy adequate definition and defeat any effort to present it comprehensively.[699]

[699] Stephen A. Marini. "Sacred music." *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press, accessed March 22, 2015, http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com.ezproxy.bu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/A2225462.

Because of this vast diversity, personal definitions of sacred music vary from teacher to teacher. These definitions depend upon individual background and experience. Seventy-three percent of the United States identifies as Christian.[700] For many music teachers, sacred music is synonymous with Christian music. How can teachers work to expand their view of sacred music to include many religious traditions?

The United States Supreme Court forbids school-sponsored prayer in the public schools.[701] The study and performance of sacred music, however, is legal. How do we approach this in an educational context? How do we respect the backgrounds and traditions of all of the students in our classes? For many years, music teachers have balanced performances with a combination of sacred and secular selections. Sometimes, it is not possible to balance repertoire when there is limited performance time. When selecting a composition for a *limited public forum*, such as a graduation ceremony, school assembly, or a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, teachers should avoid sacred music.[702]

Often, teachers cite the musical qualities of a composition as the most important reasons for selecting the repertoire for study and performance. How do we determine the musical qualities of a composition? Is it possible to separate the musical qualities from the cultural and/or religious meanings? How do these meanings impact the lived experiences of our students? As teachers, we must carefully consider all aspects of the repertoire that we select.

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[700] According to the Pew Forum on Religious Life, 70.6% of Americans identified as Christian in 2014.

[701] See *Engel v. Vitale* and *Abington School District v. Schempp*.

[702] *Nurre v. Whitehead* (2009).

Access for All Students

The performance of sacred music can limit the educational experiences of some students in our music programs. The religious and/or cultural backgrounds of some students prohibit the playing and/or singing of certain types of music. If a student must leave the room during the study or performance of certain repertoire, what messages are we teaching? Does the importance of that repertoire outweigh the cost to the student(s) that cannot participate?

Holiday Music

Holiday music is often synonymous with Christmas music. Ninety-two percent of Americans celebrate Christmas.[703] For some, it is a purely religious holiday. For others, it is a cultural holiday. For many Americans, it carries a combination of religious and cultural significances. Choosing to include or exclude Christmas music is a difficult decision for many teachers. There are a number of questions for teachers to consider. Does your community expect Christmas music in the public schools in December? How do you balance the community expectations with the educational responsibility to all students? Some school systems have chosen to include only music celebrating non-religious aspects of the holiday.[704] However, secular Christmas music is still Christmas music, and carries multiple meanings for different people. Some students and parents may not differentiate between Christmas music with religious and non-religious themes.

[703] Pew Research Center, *Celebrating Christmas and the Holidays, Then and Now* (Washington D.C.: Pew Research Center, 2013), 1.

[704] See *Stratechuk v. Board of Education* (2009).

Depending on the background of students and parents, *all* Christmas music might be contrary or controversial to their beliefs and practices.

Conclusion of Proposed NAfME Suggestions

Teachers balance a wide variety of factors when selecting repertoire, including difficulty level, required state lists, curricular needs, aesthetic value, availability, and cost. The selection of repertoire becomes increasingly difficult when balancing those factors with the appropriateness of sacred music in the classroom. We encourage teachers to make thoughtful decisions that create safe, all-encompassing environments in the music room for all students.

Implications for Future Research

I have concluded that Christmas music is a postsecular genre in America. I believe that a postsecular lens will serve as a helpful framework for further study, allowing for the blurriness of the perceived sacred/secular divide and the accounting for a wide variety of perspectives and meanings. At the conclusion of this dissertation, I have more questions about Christmas music in the public schools.

For example, what do music teachers think about Christmas music in the public schools?[705] The reflexive questions I propose earlier in this chapter could serve as a starting point for interviews with teachers. In such a study, I recommend analyzing these

[705] I acknowledge that this question is simplistic. What teachers think and say (including me) is conditioned based upon the power/knowledge relationship in the sense that it influences our subjectivity.

interviews using a postsecular lens. To do so would require further development of the postsecular position. My use of the term postsecular rests upon very little existing scholarship and is in need of more development and thoughtfulness.

Similarly, what do students think about Christmas music in the public schools?[706] Although interviews would be interesting and could reveal rich description, I believe an ethnographic study in a public school could be the most valuable approach. It would be beneficial to spend time with a music program from the preparation process to the performance. In particular, it would be interesting at a purposefully chosen school, one with a diverse cross-section of cultures and religions. In such a study, a combination of interviews, observations, field notes, and recordings would combine to produce a narrative about that school community, one in which the decisions made by the music teacher play a central role. Of course, the music teacher makes decisions based upon the conditions enabled by past actions upon actions, according to the influences of the community.

Personally, I cannot ignore the possibilities for action research in my own classroom. As I discussed in the personal reflection at the start of this chapter, I have played and performed Christmas music with my students, and I will likely continue to do so. Despite my attention to thoughtful repertoire selection in recent years, I honestly have very little idea about what my students think. I have used informal, open-ended

[706] More broadly, I am increasingly concerned about the following question: How does repertoire affect student identity? This question is particularly significant in regards to religious music in the public schools. This topic has many potential branches connected to social justice, including feminism, race, heteronormativity, and cultural identity. It is difficult to study the impact of repertoire in a vacuum. For example, a college professor recently observed a student teacher in my classroom. At the conclusion of the lesson, the professor remarked to the entire class, "The girls must love this piece, but I bet the boys hate it!"

questionnaires with my students for other purposes, such as to improve my teaching. Quick, anonymous questionnaires with my students might give me greater insight into their views on Christmas music.

As I established in chapter two, Christmas music is often absent from the current literature. In the trade journals, Christmas music receives very little attention, despite the extraordinary focus on the development of "quality repertoire." This discrepancy is revealing, and deserves more scrutiny. If the music education profession (particularly large ensembles) places great value on "quality" repertoire, and if Christmas music is absent from that definition and/or judgment, then why do many music teachers select Christmas music that forms a significant portion of their annual repertoire? I believe an answer to the "why" part of this question exists in this dissertation. It would be useful, however, to examine Christmas music in relation to the socially constructed notion of quality repertoire.

In the previous section, I recommended a substitution to the current NAfME position statement. Although I took care to avoid "legalese" that might render these suggestions dense, I do cite two recent court cases that have received little attention in the literature. These cases—*Nurre v. Whitehead* (2009) and *Stratechuk v. Board of Education* (2009)—provide an in-depth view into localized, contextualized conflict.[707] As discussed in chapter two, Perrine conducted a philosophical review of *Nurre v. Whitehead*, defending religious music from the traditional view of Western art music. I recommend more attention to these two cases, both from a theoretical perspective, but also practice.

[707] For summaries of both cases, see chapter two of this dissertation.

How have these legal decisions impacted practice in their respective jurisdictions?

In my efforts to explicate the relationships constituting Christmas music in the public school, I became increasingly interested in two areas: nostalgia and ritual. Sociologically, I believe these concepts are valuable for music education. How does nostalgia intersect with our practices, both as teachers and as students? To what extent are teachers recreating musical rituals that they had as students, and how is nostalgia part of that practice? The questions form a starting point, an avenue that I look forward to pursuing.

Final Thought

The popular 1965 television special *A Charlie Brown Christmas* includes the following quote from Linus van Pelt: "Charlie Brown, you're the only person I know who can take a wonderful season like Christmas and turn it into a problem."[708] For me, Christmas is both a wonderful season and a problem. Throughout this dissertation, I have emphasized that Christmas carries a variety of meanings for different people. This statement is the core of the conditions of possibility of the Christmas season, and, by extension, its musical practices in the public schools. I am hopeful that teachers will make thoughtful, meaningful decisions about their own Christmas practices in relation to the impact they have on their students.

[708] *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, television special, 1965.

APPENDIX A

National Association for Music Education

Sacred Music in Schools (Position Statement)

Music with a Sacred Text

Does music with a sacred text have a place in the public schools?
It is the position of MENC: The National Association for Music Education that the study and performance of religious music within an educational context is a vital and appropriate part of a comprehensive music education. The omission of sacred music from the school curriculum would result in an incomplete educational experience.

The First Amendment…
The First Amendment does not forbid all mention of religion in the public schools; it prohibits the advancement or inhibition of religion by the state. A second clause in the First Amendment prohibits the infringement of religious beliefs. The public schools are not required to delete from the curriculum all materials that may offend any religious sensitivity. For instance, the study of art history would be incomplete without reference to the Sistine Chapel, and the study of architecture requires an examination of Renaissance cathedrals. Likewise, a comprehensive study of music includes an obligation to become familiar with choral music set to religious texts.

The chorales of J. S. Bach, the "Hallelujah Chorus" from George Frideric Handel's Messiah, spirituals, and Ernest Bloch's Sacred Service all have an important place in the development of a student's musical understanding and knowledge.

In order to ensure that any music class or program is conforming to the constitutional standards of religious neutrality necessary in public schools, the following questions raised in 1971 by Chief Justice Warren E. Burger in *Lemon v. Kurtzman*[1] should be asked of each school-sanctioned observance, program, or institutional activity involving religious content, ceremony, or celebration:

1. What is the purpose of the activity? Is the purpose secular in nature, that is, studying music of a particular composer's style or historical period?
2. What is the primary *effect* of the activity? Is it the celebration of religion? Does the activity either enhance or inhibit religion? Does it invite confusion of thought or family objections?
3. Does the activity involve excessive *entanglement* with a religion or religious group, or between the schools and religious organizations? Financial support can, in certain cases, be considered an entanglement.

If the music educator's use of sacred music can withstand the test of these questions, it is probably not in violation of the First Amendment.

Since music with a sacred text or of a religious origin (particularly choral music) constitutes such a substantial portion of music literature and has such an important place in the history of music, it should and does have an important place in music education.

Legal History

In the first court case that dealt specifically with music, Roger Florey, the father of a primary student, challenged the rules set up by the Sioux Falls, South Dakota, school board. The plaintiff, an avowed atheist, touched off a statewide furor in 1978 when he complained about the use of the hymn "Silent Night" in the school's Christmas program. He contended that the use of the song violated the doctrine of separation of church and state. At a hearing on the plaintiff's motion for an injunction in December 1978, the motion was denied. The plaintiff's request for declaratory and final injunctive relief was denied in February 1979. The case *Florey v. Sioux Falls School District 49-52*[2] was appealed to the Eighth U. S. Circuit Court of Appeals in St. Louis. This court, in April 1980, upheld the Sioux Falls school policy, allowing religious songs for educational purposes. The Appeals Court said the policy was not promulgated with religious purposes in mind.

In a more recent court case (1995), U. S. District Judge J. Thomas Greene dismissed a lawsuit (*Bauchman v. West High School*) filed by 15-year-old Rachel Bauchman over Christian songs performed by the choir at Salt Lake City's West High School. Ms. Bauchman claimed that the songs were sung prayers and therefore constituted a violation of the establishment clause. Rejecting this argument, the court said that music has a purpose in education beyond mere words or notes in conveying a mood, teaching cultures and history, and broadening understanding of arts and that the selection of the music had a primarily secular purpose of teaching music appreciation.[3]

Several other cases, most notably *Brandon v. the Board of Education of the Guilderland Central School District*,[4] involving free exercise of religion, and *Widmar v. Vincent*,[5] involving freedom of speech, suggest that in the court's opinion, college and university students have the maturity to understand the religiously neutral role that public schools must play in dealing with the subject matter of religion, where younger students may not. Therefore, college teachers may not be required to emphasize this neutrality so much. According to the Brandon decision, "Our nation's elementary and secondary schools play a unique role in transmitting basic and fundamental values to our youth. To an impressionable student, even an appearance of secular involvement in religious activities might indicate that the state has placed its imprimatur on a particular creed."

Teachers of young children have a special responsibility in treating this sensitive subject. Young students (and their parents) sometimes become confused and upset by what they view as contradictions to their religious teaching. It is important to communicate that

music learning, not religious indoctrination, is the motivation in choosing repertoire. One way to reinforce this is to list the music concepts/skills associated with each song in a printed program.

Religiously Neutral Programs

With this volatile topic, music educators should exercise caution and good judgment in selecting sacred music for study and programming for public performance. During the planning phase of each program, the following questions should assist the teacher in determining if the program is indeed religiously neutral:

1. Is the music selected on the basis of its musical and educational value rather than its religious context?
2. Does the teaching of music with sacred text focus on musical and artistic considerations?
3. Are the traditions of different people shared and respected?
4. Is the role of sacred music one of neutrality, neither promoting nor inhibiting religious views?
5. Are all local and school policies regarding religious holidays and the use of sacred music observed?
6. Is the use of sacred music and religious symbols or scenery avoided? Is performance is devotional settings avoided?
7. Is there sensitivity to the various religious beliefs represented by the students and their parents?

Abraham Schwadron summarized the problems facing the music educator in the use of religious music in the public schools:

Obviously, the key to an adequate solution rests ultimately with the sensitive and well-informed music educator. Of singular importance is the development of the attitude that participation in actual performance produces a better grasp of the aesthetic import of great music than mere listening or nonparticipation.

If it is possible to study Communism without indoctrination or to examine the ills of contemporary society without promoting the seeds of revolution, then it must also be possible to study sacred music (with performance-related activities) without parochialistic attitudes and sectarian points of view.

This position statement is not to be construed as finite. It cannot hope to answer all specifics. It does give some guidelines to help the music educator. Like any issue with legal ramifications, the final answers often can only be found in a court of law. However, this issue involves more than just court cases. It calls for increased understanding and sensitivity on the part of students, teachers, principals, and the community.

It is hoped that with sensitivity to the issues raised, with careful understanding of legal aspects, and with consideration for personal feelings, educators will use the full range of music literature in an appropriate contextual setting.

Notes

1. 403 U.S. 602, 612 (1971).
2. 619 F. 2d 1311 (8th Cir. 1980).
3. 900 F. Supp 254 (D. Utah 1995).
4. 635 F. 2d 971 (2nd Cir. 1980), Cert denied. 454 U.S. 1123 (1981).
5. 454 U.S. 263 (1981).
6. Abraham Schwadron, "On Religion, Music, and Education," *Journal of Research in Music Education* 18, no. 2 (Summer 1970), 157-66.

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News Articles

"Constitutional Rights: School Prayer." *The Daily Record*, December 24, 1993.
"Judge Limits School Prayer." Associated Press, Prodigy News Service, September 3, 1994.
"Teacher Is Fired in Music." *Boston Globe*, April 2, 1980.

APPENDIX B

Selected Archive of Newspapers

Title of Newspaper	State of Publication
Abilene Reporter-News	Texas
Altoona Tribune	Pennsylvania
Anderson Daily Bulletin	Indiana
Anniston Star, The	Alabama
Arizona Independent Republic	Arizona
Bakersfield Californian, The	California
Baytown Sun, The	Texas
Belleville Telescope, The	Indiana
Belvidere Daily Republican	Illinois
Big Spring Daily Herald	Texas
Boston Post	Massachusetts
Bridgeport Post, The	Connecticut
Brooklyn Daily Eagle, The	New York
Brownsville Herald, The	Texas
Burlington Weekly Free Press	Vermont
Camden News, The	Arkansas
Carroll Daily Times Herald	Iowa
Casa Grande Dispatch	Arizona
Chicago Tribune	Illinois
Chillicothe Tribune, The	Missouri
Cincinnati Enquirer, The	Ohio
Cleveland Daily Leader	Ohio
Columbus Telegram, The	Nebraska
Corbin Times-Tribune, The	Kentucky
Corsicana Daily Sun	Texas
Daily Herald, The	Illinois
Daily Mail, The	Maryland
Daily Notes, The	Pennsylvania
Daily Plainsman, The	South Dakota
Daily Record, The	Pennsylvania
Daily Review, The	Illinois
Daily Star	New York
Daily Telegram, The	Wisconsin
Eagle, The	Texas
Edgefield Advertiser	South Carolina
Edwardsville Intelligencer, The	Illinois
Elyria Independent Democrat	Ohio

Escanaba Daily Press, The	Michigan
Evening Independent, The	Ohio
Evening News, The	Pennsylvania
Evening Post, The	New York
Evening Telegraph, The	Pennsylvania
Facts, The	Texas
Florence Morning News	South Carolina
Freeport Journal-Standard	Illinois
Galesburg Register-Mail	Illinois
Garnett Journal, The	Kansas
Gastonia Gazette, The	North Carolina
Gettysburg Compiler	Pennsylvania
Gettysburg Times, The	Pennsylvania
Great Bend Tribune	Kansas
Greensboro Patriot, The	North Carolina
Harrisburg Daily Independent	Pennsylvania
Harrisburg Telegraph	Pennsylvania
Herald, The	Indiana
Humboldt Independent, The	Iowa
Idaho State Journal	Idaho
Independent, The	Iowa
Independent, The	North Carolina
Independent Record, The	Montana
Index Journal, The	South Carolina
Ironwood Daily Globe	Michigan
Jacksonville Daily News, The	Illinois
Kansas City Star, The	Kansas
Kerrville Mountain Sun	Texas
Kinsley Mercury, The	Kansas
Kokomo Tribune, The	Indiana
Lake Park News, The	Pennsylvania
Las Cruces Sun-News	New Mexico
Liberator, The	Massachusetts
Lincoln Star, The	Nebraska
Macon Republican, The	Missouri
Malvern Leader, The	Iowa
Marion Star, The	Ohio
Marysville Tribune, The	Ohio
Mason City Globe-Gazette, The	Iowa
Mecklenburg Jeffersonian	North Carolina
Miami Daily News-Record	Oklahoma
Montana Standard, The	Montana
Morganton Star, The	North Carolina
Morning Herald, The	Iowa

Morning Herald, The	Maryland
Mt. Vernon Register-News	Illinois
Nashua Telegraph	New Hampshire
Newport Mercury	Rhode Island
Newtown Kansan, The	Kansas
New Castle News	Pennsylvania
New York Times, The	New York
New York Tribune	New York
News-Palladium, The	Michigan
North Carolina Star, The	North Carolina
Oakland Tribune	California
Odgen Standard Examiner, The	Utah
Oregon Statesman, The	Oregon
Oshkosh Daily Northwestern	Wisconsin
Ottawa Herald, The	Kansas
Panama City News Herald	Florida
Pennsylvania Gazette, The	Pennsylvania
Pioneer, The	Minnesota
Pittsburgh Gazette	Pennsylvania
Pomeroy Herald, The	Iowa
Post-Crescent, The	Wisconsin
Pottstown Mercury	Maryland
Progress-Index, The	Virginia
Public Ledger	Pennsylvania
Raleigh Register, The	North Carolina
Reading Times	Pennsylvania
Redlands Daily Facts	California
Record-Union, The	California
Rhinelander Daily, The	Wisconsin
Richmond Dispatch	Virginia
Rushville Republican	Indiana
Salem News, The	Ohio
Salt Lake Tribune, The	Utah
Santa Cruz Sentinel	California
Scranton Republican, The	Pennsylvania
Scranton Tribune, The	Pennsylvania
Seguin Gazette-Enterprise, The	Texas
Standard-Speaker	Pennsylvania
Star and Banner, The	Pennsylvania
Statesville Landmark	North Carolina
Sun, The	Maryland
Sunday Herald, The	Utah
Terre Haute Tribune, The	Indiana
Times-Picayune, The	Louisiana

Times Recorder, The	Ohio
Times Standard, The	California
Topeka Daily Capital, The	Kansas
Treynor Record, The	Iowa
Valley Morning Star	Texas
Vermont Phoenix	Vermont
Vernon Daily Record, The	Texas
Waco News-Tribune, The	Texas
Warren Times Mirror	Pennsylvania
Waukesha Daily Freeman	Wisconsin
Wellsboro Gazette, The	Pennsylvania
Wilmington News-Journal	Ohio
York Daily, The	Pennsylvania

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