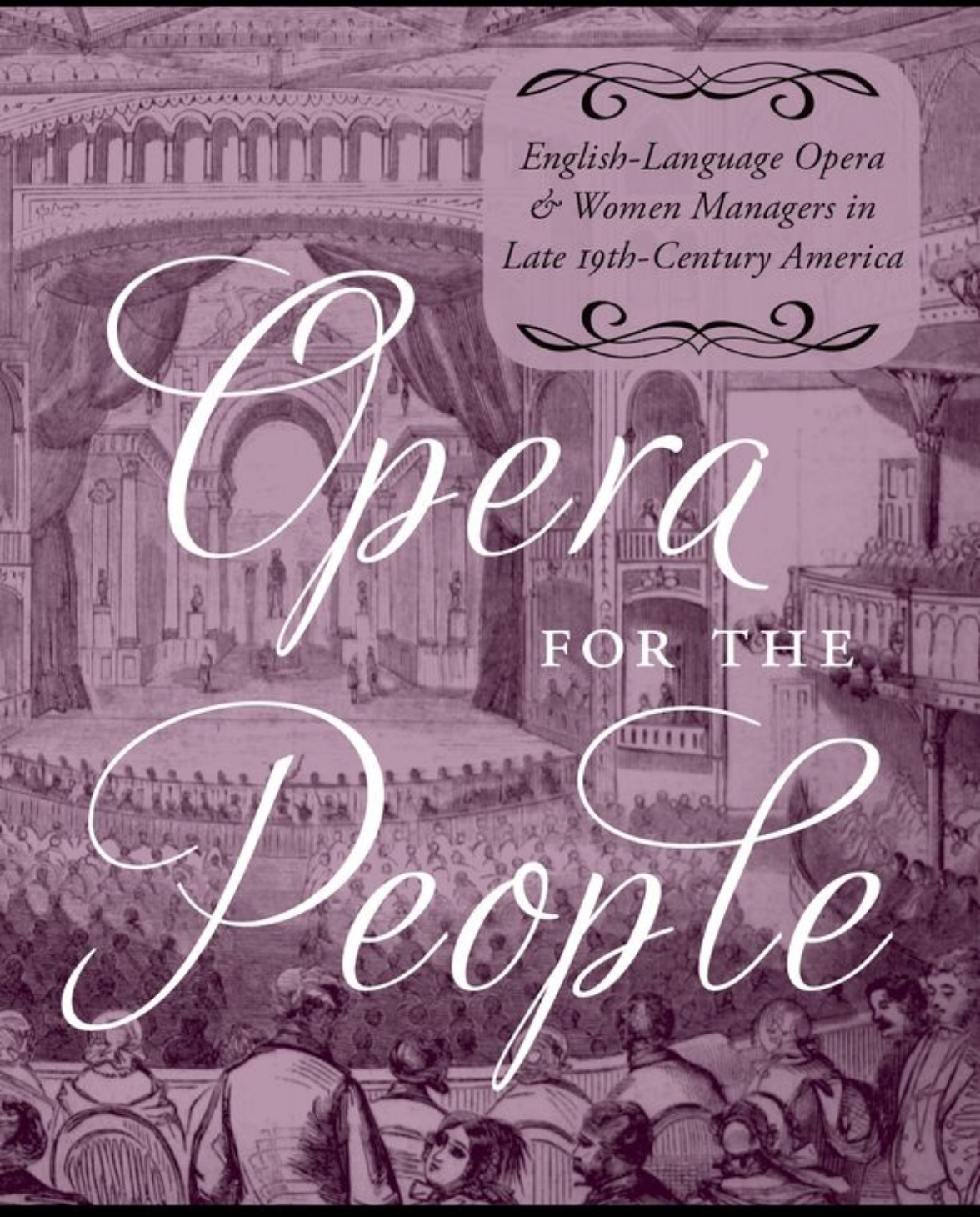
AMS Studies in Music



English-Language Opera & Women Managers in Late 19th-Century America

Opera for the People

Katherine K. Preston

OPERA FOR THE PEOPLE

AMS Studies in Music

Conceptualizing Music:
Cognitive Structure, Theory, and Analysis
Lawrence Zbikowski

Inventing the Business of Opera:
The Impresario and His World in Seventeenth-Century Venice
Beth L. Glixon and Jonathan Glixon

Lateness and Brahms:
Music and Culture in the Twilight of Viennese Liberalism
Margaret Notley

The Critical Nexus:
Tone-System, Mode, and Notation in Early Medieval Music
Charles M. Atkinson

Music, Criticism, and the Challenge of History:
Shaping Modern Musical Thought in Late Nineteenth-Century Vienna
Kevin C. Karnes

Jewish Music and Modernity
Philip V. Bohlman

Changing the Score:
Arias, Prima Donnas, and the Authority of Performance
Hilary Poriss

Rasa:
Affect and Intuition in Javanese Musical Aesthetics
Marc Benamou

Josquin's Rome:
Hearing and Composing in the Sistine Chapel
Jesse Rodin

Details of Consequence:
Ornament, Music, and Art in Paris
Gurminder Kaur Bhogal

Sounding Authentic:
The Rural Miniature and Musical Modernism
Joshua S. Walden

Brahms Among Friends:
Listening, Performance, and the Rhetoric of Allusion
Paul Berry

Opera for the People:
English-Language Opera and Women Managers in Late 19th-Century America
Katherine K. Preston

OPERA FOR THE PEOPLE

English-Language Opera and Women Managers in Late 19th-Century America

Katherine K. Preston

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford. It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Preston, Katherine K.
Title: Opera for the people : English-language opera and women managers in late 19th-century America / Katherine K. Preston.
Description: New York, NY : Oxford University Press, [2017] | Series: AMS studies in music | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2017012245 | ISBN 9780199371655 (hardcover : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780190690113 (epub)
Subjects: LCSH: Opera—Social aspects—United States—History—19th century. | Opera—United States—19th century.
Classification: LCC ML3918.O64 P74 2017 | DDC 792.5082/0973—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2017012245

1 3 5 7 9 8 6 4 2

Printed by Sheridan Books, Inc., United States of America

CONTENTS

ILLUSTRATIONS

TABLES

ABOUT THE COMPANION WEBSITE

Oxford University Press has created a website to accompany *Opera for the People.* There are eight appendices featured on the website. Seven of them are itineraries for many of the opera companies discussed in the book (including dates and venues); the eighth is a gathering of information about the identities, backgrounds, and affiliations of many of the music critics whose voices are heard throughout the book. The appendices are as follows:

Appendix 1 Richings Opera Company Itineraries, 1866–1870
Appendix 2 Itineraries of the Parepa-Rosa English Opera Companies, 1869–1870 and 1871–1872
Appendix 3 Richings-Hess Combination Company Itinerary, 1870–1871
Appendix 4 Kellogg Opera Company Itineraries, 1873–1877
Appendix 5 Itineraries of the Boston Ideals Opera Company, 1879–1885
Appendix 6 Emma Abbott Grand Opera Company, Sample Itineraries (1879–1880; 1884–1885; 1889–1890)
Appendix 7 Itineraries of the American/National Opera Companies, January 1886–June 1887
Appendix 8 Music Critics File

The reader is encouraged to take advantage of this cache of elusive information.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author of a book as large and far-ranging as this one—and one that has taken so many years to complete—is deeply indebted to many people (friends, colleagues, librarians, archivists) and to institutions (libraries, universities, foundations, grant-giving organizations) for invaluable assistance. It is impossible to thank everyone personally.

The College of William and Mary in Virginia has been incredibly supportive, providing summer research grants and several sabbatical leaves over the last fifteen years during which I have conducted research all over the country; Kate Conley, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, also provided a subvention that paid for indexing this book, for which I am very grateful. Many colleagues in the Department of Music furthermore have lent support and encouragement. Since 2005 I have had the good fortune to serve as the David N. and Margaret C. Bottoms Professor of Music at the College, a position that includes annual development funds that have paid for many research trips. I also benefited from a Plumeri Award for Faculty Excellence from the College, which included a significant award that allowed me to pay graduate students to complete essential tasks toward the end of the project (checking footnotes, conducting photo research). I sincerely thank David N. Bottoms Jr. and Joseph Plumeri, both of New York, for this invaluable assistance.

I am also grateful for many residencies and fellowships that have contributed to my research. At the very beginning of this project I benefited from a NEH Summer Seminar at the Peabody Conservatory/Johns Hopkins University; a residency at the Harry Ransom Humanities Center in Austin, Texas; and fellowships from the American Council of Learned Societies, the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, and the Gilder Lehrman Institute for American History (for work at the New-York Historical Society). I also thank the Fulbright Scholar Program of the U.S. Department of State for the Walt Whitman Distinguished Chair of American Culture (2009) at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands, which freed up time for writing. Two other indispensable fellowships in recent years allowed me precious time to finish the book: the William J. Bouwsma Fellowship in

Musicology at the National Humanities Center in North Carolina (2010) and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship (2014).

Many colleagues have read chapters, listened to papers, shared their own expertise (and in some cases their unpublished scholarship). I am deeply grateful to each of these individuals. They include Douglas Bomberger for observations on Edward MacDowell's reaction to English-language opera and assistance with some online archival research; Candace Bailey for information on singer Isabella McCullough; Bethany Goldberg for information about (and illustrations of) the New York Academy of Music; Joseph Horowitz, who shared a chapter of his book *Moral Fire* (on Henry Krehbiel) before it was published, and who read and provided valuable feedback in particular on chapters 5 and 6; Elise Kirk, who sent me research notes on Clara Louise Kellogg; June Ottenberg for generously sharing an unpublished article on Caroline Richings and notes about Gustav Hinrichs and for reading and providing feedback on an early version of chapter 2; Hilary Poriss, who supplied information about Adelina Patti's interpolation of songs and carefully read and commented on the entire book; Gillian Rodgers, who shared ideas and photographs; Douglas Shadle, who read several chapters and shared information on editor William Thoms's overall attitude toward Theodore Thomas; Kristen Turner, who lent research materials related to Henry Savage; and John Ward of Manchester, England, who shared useful information and valuable research notes on Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa's performances in the United States, including her itineraries, the cache of Diego de Vivo articles in the *New York Sun,* and new information about the impresario Clarence D. Hess. I interviewed Norman Rogers and Neuman and Eileen Hall of New Hartford, in Connecticut (about Louis Kellogg) and corresponded with Eugene Cropsey (Tampa, Florida) about issues related to opera performance in Chicago. I also thank Ms. Elvira Bass of the Blue Hill (Maine) Historical Society for a photograph of Effie Ober Kline, and several students who worked on the project at various times, including Elise Steenberg, Lisa Sparks Carpenter, and (especially) Mariaelena DiBegnino. I also thank Chris Reynolds for soliciting this book for the Studies in Music series of the American Musicological Society and the AMS Publications Committee for a generous subvention that paid for the wonderful illustrations. I owe a great deal also to the two anonymous readers who scrutinized the entire manuscript and provided both encouraging words and detailed suggestions. I am sincerely and deeply grateful to Jann Pasler, Chair of the Publications Committee of AMS, who closely edited the entire book, read and reread most chapters, and provided much sound advice that improved the final version immeasurably.

For help in specific libraries and archives, I am grateful in particular to Eliza Robertson and Joshua Drewry, library staff at the National Humanities

Center when I was a fellow; John Pennino, Archivist at the Metropolitan Opera Company; Annette Fern (emerita), Dale Stinchcomb, and other staff members of the Harvard Theatre Collection; the late Joyce Tracy and (in particular) Georgia Barnhill, Director of the Center for Historic American Visual Culture (emerita) at the American Antiquarian Society; Ron Wiecki, the late Geraldine Laudati, and Jeanette Casey, of the Mills Music Library, (Tams-Witmark Collection), University of Wisconsin; Kirsten Tanaka of the Museum of Performance + Design, San Francisco; Geraldine Duclow and Karin Suni, Theatre Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia; Helen Adair and Richard Watson, Performing Arts Library, Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center; Wayne Shirley (retired), Susan Clermont, and other librarians in the Performing Arts Reading Room, Library of Congress; James Stimpert of the Sheridan Libraries, Johns Hopkins University; George Boziwick, Chief of the Music Division and Jeremy MeGraw, Photography Librarian, NYPL for the Performing Arts, and the staffs of many other libraries, historical societies, and archives that I visited around the country. I am also deeply grateful to the hard-working behind-the-scenes reference staff at Swem Library of the College of William and Mary, especially Mary Molineux, Katherine McKenzie, Kathleen DeLaurenti, Alan Zoellner, Don Welsh, Hope Yellich (retired), and in particular the indispensable Cynthia Mack, Christine Arntz, and Carol Frieden of the Library's Interlibrary Loan Department.

Many colleagues have invited me to present papers on various aspects of this book over the years, which helped me to organize and work through ideas. I presented a public lecture in the College of William and Mary's Tack Faculty Lecture series in 2015, which allowed me to share my research with college and local community members. I read keynote addresses for the North American Conference on 19th-Century Music; a joint meeting of the Capital and Southeast Chapters, AMS; a Study Day at the Royal Academy of Music (London) (special thanks to Steven Martin for organizing it); and at a colloquium series at the Rothermere American Institute, University of Oxford (Oxford, U.K.). My sincere thanks to friends and colleagues who invited me to present papers related to this research in lecture series and colloquia at their universities, including Graeme Boone (Ohio State), William Brooks (York, U.K.), Daniel Goldmark (Case Western Reserve), Mark Katz (North Carolina), Marian Wilson Kimber (Iowa), the late Anne Dhu McLucas (Oregon), David Sanjek (Salford, Manchester, U.K.), Louise Stein (Michigan), JoAnn Taricani (Washington), Pat Warfield (Maryland), and Andrew Weaver (Catholic University). Other colleagues who invited me to contribute essays to anthologies or special issues of scholarly journals include John Graziano, Joseph Horowitz, John Koegel, Alan Lessoff, David Nicholls, and Louise Stein.

To all of these people—and the many others whom I have not named—I am deeply grateful. A work of this nature truly relies on the help, insight, scholarship, and hard work of many others.

Finally, I am deeply grateful for the love and support of my family over the many years occupied by this project: my husband Daniel Preston and our son William. Their support, companionship, and love make my life worth living. This book is dedicated to them.

NOTE ON CURRENCY CONVERSIONS

Approximate translation of nineteenth-century currency into modern terms is from Measures of Worth (www.measuringworth.com) on the webpage of the Economic History Association (www.EH.net), accessed 7 August 2016. The following is a table of the rough equivalencies used (if an annual contract covered parts of two years, the figure used for calculations is an average of the two). The equivalencies are for 2015, the most recent year available at press time.

1860 $29.40	1870 $18.70	1880 $23.90	1890 $26.90	1900 $29.10
1861 $27.80	1871 $20.00	1881 $23.90	1891 $26.90	1901 $28.80
1862 $24.30	1872 $20.00	1882 $23.90	1892 $26.90	1902 $28.40
1863 $19.50	1873 $20.40	1883 $24.40	1893 $27.20	1903 $27.80
1864 $15.60	1874 $21.50	1884 $24.90	1894 $28.40	1904 $27.50
1865 $15.00	1875 $22.30	1885 $25.40	1895 $29.10	1905 $27.80
1866 $15.40	1876 $22.80	1886 $26.00	1896 $29.10	1906 $27.20
1867 $16.50	1877 $23.40	1887 $25.70	1897 $29.50	
1868 $17.20	1878 $24.50	1888 $25.70	1898 $29.50	
1869 $17.90	1879 $24.50	1889 $26.60	1899 $29.50	

ABBREVIATIONS

ALS	Autographed Letter, Signed
ALC	Autographed Letters Collection
CWS	Companion Web Site

Reference Works or Frequently Cited Books (for full citations, see the Bibliography)

ANBO	*American National Biography Online*
CCM	*Cambridge Companion to the Musical*
CHAT I	*Cambridge History of American Theatre, Volume I: Beginnings to 1870*
CHAT II	*Cambridge History of the American Theatre, Volume II: 1870-1945*
DAB	*Dictionary of American Biography*
DATH	William Young, *Documents of American Theatre History*
EMT	*Encyclopedia of the Musical Theatre*
GDAM	*Grove Dictionary of American Music* (second edition)
GMO	*Grove Music Online*
Lawrence I	Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Volume I*
Lawrence II	Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Volume II*
Lawrence III	Vera Brodsky Lawrence, *Strong on Music, Volume III*
NAW	*Notable American Women, 1607-1950, A Biographical Dictionary*
NBAW	*Notable Black American Women*
NCAB	*National Cyclopedia of American Biography*
NGDAM	*New Grove Dictionary of American Music* (first edition)
Odell	George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*
OCAT	*Oxford Companion to American Theatre*
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*
OoR	Preston, *Opera on the Road*
WWoS	*Who's Who on the Stage, 1908*

COLLECTIONS, ARCHIVES, OTHER LOCATIONS

CHM	Chicago History Museum (formerly Chicago Historical Society)
CPL	Chicago Public Library
CTC/UP	Curtis Theatre Collection, University of Pittsburgh
GSC/TC	Glase Scrapbook Collection, Theatre Collection, FLP
FLP	Free Library of Philadelphia
FSL	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
HMPSA	Historic Mobile Preservation Society Archives
HRC	Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin
HSP	Historical Society of Pennsylvania
HTC	Harvard Theatre Collection
KCPL	Kansas City Public Library
LC	Library of Congress
MHML&RC	Missouri History Museum Library and Research Center, St. Louis
MHS	Maryland Historical Society
MWA	American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts
NL	Newberry Library
NYHS	New York Historical Society
NYPL	New York Public Library
PALM	Performing Arts Library and Museum, San Francisco (since 2007 Museum of Performance + Design)
SFPL	San Francisco Public Library
SLPL	St. Louis Public Library
Tams-Witmark	Tams-Witmark Collection at Wisconsin, University of Wisconsin, Madison
TC/FLP	Theatre Collection, Free Library of Philadelphia
UCB	University of California at Berkeley
UMCP	University of Maryland, College Park

NEWSPAPERS

AC	*Atlanta Constitution*
ADG	*Atchinson Daily Globe* (Atchison, Kansas)
ADN	*Aberdeen Daily News* (South Dakota)
AJ	*Albany Journal*
BB	*Baltimore Bulletin*
BDA	*Boston Daily Advertiser*
BDJ	*Boston Daily Journal* (SA *BEJ, BJ, BMJ,* and *BSJ*)

BDW&C	*Bangor Daily Whig & Courier* (Maine)
BEJ	*Boston Evening Journal* (SA *BDJ, BJ, BMJ,* and *BSJ*)
BESG	*Boston Evening Saturday Gazette*
BH	*Boston Herald*
BI	*Boston Investigator*
BJ	*Boston Journal* (SA *BDJ, BEJ, BMJ, BSJ*)
BMJ	*Boston Morning Journal* (SA *BDJ, BEJ, BJ,* and *BSJ*)
BS	*Baltimore Sun*
BSJ	*Boston Sunday Journal* (SA *BDJ, BEJ, BJ*, and *BMJ*)
BT	*Boston Times*
BTr	*Boston Transcript*
CC	*Cincinnati Commercial* (SA *CCT*)
CCT	*Cincinnati Commercial Tribune* (SA *CC*)
CDE	*Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* (SA *CE*)
CDG	*Cincinnati Daily Gazette*
CDT	*Chicago Daily Tribune* (SA *CT*)
CE	*Cincinnati Enquirer*
CEP	*Chicago Evening Post*
CEx	*Cork Examiner* (UK)
CH	*Chicago Herald* (SA CSH)
CMH	*Cleveland Morning Herald* (SA *DCH*)
CMDH	*Cleveland Morning Daily Herald*
CN	*Chicago News*
Critic	*The Critic* (Washington, D.C.) (SA *DC*)
CSH	*Chicago Sunday Herald* (SA *CH*)
CT	*Chicago Tribune* (SA *CDT*)
DA	*Daily Age* (Philadelphia)
DC	*Daily Critic* (Washington, D.C.) (SA *Critic*)
DCH	*Daily Cleveland Herald* (SA *CMH*)
DDN	*Duluth Daily News*
DDT	*Duluth Daily Tribune* (SA *DST*)
DEB	*Daily Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco) (SA *EB*)
DFJ	*Dublin Freedman's Journal* (Ireland)
DIO	*Daily Inter Ocean* (SA *IO and SIO*) (Chicago)
DMN	*Dallas Morning News*
DN	*Daily News* (Denver)
DNI	*Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.)
DNR	*Daily National Republican* (Washington, D.C.)
DNT	*Duluth News Tribune*
DP	*Daily Picayune* (New Orleans)
DR	*Denver Republican*

DSR	*Daily State Register* (Des Moines, Iowa)
DST	*Duluth Sunday Tribune* (SA *DDT*)
DT	*Denver Tribune*
EB	*Evening Bulletin* (San Francisco) (SA *DEB*)
EN	*Evening News* (San Jose)
ER	*Evening Register* (New Haven, Connecticut)
ES	*Evening Star* (Washington, D.C.)
ES-M	*Evening Star-Mail* (Kansas City)
GDN	*Galveston Daily News*
GFDH	*Grand Forks* [North Dakota] *Daily Herald*
GWT & GJ&M	*Georgia Weekly Telegraph and Georgia Journal & Messenger*
HDU	*Houston Daily Union*
ICN	*Illustrated Chicago News*
IDS	*Idaho Daily Statesman* (Boise)
ILN	*Illustrated London News* (UK)
IO	*Inter Ocean* (Chicago) (SA *DIO* and *SIO*)
IS	*Indianapolis Sentinel*
KCJ	*Kansas City Journal*
KCS	*Kansas City Star*
KCT	*Kansas City Times*
KS-WC	*Kansas Semi-Weekly Capital* (Topeka)
LAT	*Los Angeles Times*
LDC	*Lowell* (Massachusetts) *Daily Citizen* (SA *LDC&N*)
LDC&N	*Lowell* (Massachusetts) *Daily Citizen and News* (SA *LDC*)
LM	*Liverpool Mercury* (UK)
MDS	*Milwaukee Daily Sentinel* (SA *MMS* and *MS*)
MG	*Manchester Guardian* (UK)
MJ	*Minneapolis Journal*
MMS	*Milwaukee Morning Sentinel* (SA *MDS* and *MS*)
MO	*Morning Oregonian* (Portland)
MS	*Milwaukee Sentinel* (SA *MMS* and *MDS*)
MT	*Macon Telegraph* (Georgia)
NA	*North American* (Philadelphia) (SA *NA&USG*)
NA&USG	*North American and United States Gazette* (Philadelphia) (SA *NA*)
NAmer	*Nashville American*
NDG	*Nottingham Daily Guardian* (UK)
NDJ	*Nebraska Daily Journal*
NHDP	*New Haven Daily Palladium*
NHER	*New Haven* (Connecticut) *Evening Register*
N-OT	*New-Orleans Times*
NPG	*National Police Gazette*
NYC	*New York Clipper*

NYES	*New York Evening Sun* (SA *NYS*)
NYEW	*New York Evening World* (SA *NYW*)
NYDT	*New York Daily Times* (SA *NYT*)
NYDTrib	*New York Daily Tribune* (SA *NYTrib*)
NYH	*New York Herald*
NYL	*New York Letter*
NYM	*New York Mirror*
NYP	*New York Post*
NYS	*New York Sun* (SA *NYES*)
NYT	*New York Times* (SA *NYDT*)
NYTrib	*New York Tribune* (SA *NYDTrib*)
NYW	*New York World* (SA *NYEW*)
PC	*Pittsburgh Commercial*
PD	*Pomeroy's Democrat* (New York City)
PDP	*Portland* (Maine) *Daily Press*
PET	*Philadelphia Evening Telegraph*
PI	*Philadelphia Inquirer*
PL	*Public Ledger* (Philadelphia)
PT	*Philadelphia Times*
RDD	*Richmond* (Virginia) *Daily Dispatch*
RMN	*Rocky Mountain News* (Denver)
RT	*Rochester* (New York) *Times*
SES&DT	*Sheffield Evening Star and Daily Times* (UK)
SDR	*Springfield Daily Republican* (Massachusetts) (SA *SR* and *SSR*)
SFC	*San Francisco Call*
SIO	*Sunday Inter Ocean* (SA *DIO, IO*)
SJDN	*San Jose Daily News*
SLEC	*St. Louis Evening Chronicle*
SLG-D	*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*
SLR	*St. Louis Republican*
SR	*Springfield Republican* (Massachusetts) (SA *SDR* and *SSR*)
SSR	*Springfield Sunday Republican* (SA *SR* and *SDR*)
ST	*Sunday Times* (Chicago)
T-P	*Times-Picayune* (New Orleans)
TS	*The Scotsman* (Edinburgh)
TT	*The Times* (London)
WDP	*Wisconsin Daily Patriot*
WDS	*Worcester Daily Spy* (Massachusetts)
WiSR	*Wisconsin State Register* (Portage, Wisconsin)
WN&C	*Weekly News and Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina)
WP	*Washington Post*

WR	*Wheeling Register* (SA *WSR*)
WSR	*Wheeling Sunday Register* (SA *WR*)

JOURNALS

AA	*Art Amateur*
AAJ	*American Art Journal* (SA *Watson's*)
AM	*American Music*
Amateur	*The Amateur. A Repository of Music, Literature, and Art*
Appleton's	*Appleton's Journal of Literature, Science, and Art*
BI	*Boston Investigator*
BMT	*Boston Musical Times*
BMW	*Brainard's Musical World* (1864–1868: *Western Musical World*; 1891–1895: *Musical World*; 1895–merged with *Etude*)
DS	*Dexter Smith's Pictorial, Musical, Dramatic, Literary, Humorous, Art, Household and Fashion Magazine*
DSJ	*Donizetti Society Journal*
DJM	*Dwight's Journal of Music*
ETJ	*Educational Theatre Journal*
FM&D	*Freund's Music and Drama*
HNMM	*Harper's New Monthly Magazine*
HW	*Harper's Weekly*
JAH	*Journal of American History*
JRMA	*Journal of the Royal Music Association*
JSAM	*Journal of the Society for American Music*
KMR	*Kunkel's Musical Review*
Leslie's	*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Journal*
LMJ	*Loomis' Musical Journal*
M&L	*Music and Letters*
MA	*Musical America*
MB	*Musical Bulletin*
MC	*Musical Courier*
ME	*Musical Echo* (Milwaukee)
MH	*Musical Herald*
MI	*Musical Independent. A Monthly Magazine*
MP	*Musical Pioneer* (New York)
MT	*Musical Times*
MW	*Musical World* (London)
NPG	*National Police Gazette*
NPMJ	*North's Philadelphia Musical Journal*
NSJ	*Nebraska State Journal*

NYM	*New York Mirror* (SA *NYDM*)
NYDM	*New York Dramatic Mirror* (SA *NYM*)
OG	*Opera Glass*
OQ	*The Opera Quarterly*
PM	*Popular Music*
S&HMR	*Sherman & Hyde's Musical Review*
Spirit	*Spirit of the Times*
SJ	*Song Journal*
SM	*Song Messenger of the Northwest*
SMM	*Song Messenger Monthly*
THS	*Theatre History Studies*
TM	*Theatre Magazine*
Watson's	*Watson's Art Journal* (also *Watson's Weekly Art Journal*; (SA *AAJ*)
WMG	*Whitney's Musical Guest*
WMW	*Western Musical World* (SA *Brainard's Musical World*)

INTRODUCTION

> In this country, the English opera has entered the arena in good earnest, and we are inclined to think that eventually, the Italian opera will have to yield to the pressure of the English. (1872)
>
> The principal duty is to bring Americans nearer the understanding of matters of art, to make them feel art; and we only can reach that point through operatic performances in a language they can speak themselves and can understand. (1880)
>
> Opera will not be on the right American footing . . . till we can hear the opera commonly in our vernacular. (1888)
>
> The time appears ripe for the organization of an English opera company in this country. (1893)[1]

Many late nineteenth-century American critics—writing in newspapers and music periodicals—lobbied for the support, performance, and establishment of English-language opera in the United States. Their campaigns echoed similar sentiments expressed in the 1840s and 1850s, when opera in the vernacular had been an important part of the American popular stage and commentators had advocated for institutions to sustain its performance.[2] The reasons articulated by such critics include some of the arguments mentioned above: opera, as an art and a business, would succeed only

1. "English Opera," *BMW*, ix:1 (January 1872), 5; "The Future of Opera in this Country, II," *MH*, i:4 (April 1880), 78; "Opera in the Vernacular," *KMR*, xi:6 (January 1888), 33; "Music and Musicians. The Operatic Outlook," *DIO*, 30 July 1893, 25.

2. Institutions created to sustain the performance of English-language opera required large amounts of money—either from government subventions (as in Europe) or from the wealthy. Even in the 1850s, however, the latter were primarily interested in foreign-language opera as an elite and exclusive style of entertainment.

if middle-class Americans supported it; reaching out to the "masses" required performance in English because foreign-language opera was incomprehensible; popular support for opera in English would foster American musical culture. Others noted that foreign-language companies regularly mounted translated works (sometimes poor versions) and that the translation of operas into the vernacular should be acceptable in the United States because it was a regular practice in Europe. "We cannot see why we should be obliged to listen to an opera in Italian, and *bad* Italian often at that, when the company can as well sing it in English," Karl Merz (editor of *Brainard's Musical World*) wrote in 1872.[3] The final, and perhaps most powerful, argument was that an American style of opera could evolve only when the dominant performance language was English. William Thoms of the *American Art Journal* reiterated in 1891 an argument that he had been making for decades, asserting that "the performance in English of those operas which do appeal to the cultivated taste of music lovers" would lead "to the development not only of higher art and a finer public taste, but [also] to . . . an American school of composers."[4] This quest for "American" art, of course, was hardly specific to music, for it echoed similar attempts by nineteenth-century American poets, playwrights, novelists, painters, sculptors, and other creative individuals.

By the late 1850s and early 1860s, however, an antebellum operatic culture that once included both English- and foreign-language opera had changed, with much of the prestige and financial support now reallocated to opera sung in Italian. This situation became even more pronounced in the immediate postwar period, for the American moneyed classes ("society") expanded with the addition of entrepreneurs, bankers, and captains of industry who had benefited from the war and a postwar economic boom. This meant that wealthy Americans (especially New Yorkers) who for decades had been trying to make foreign-language opera-going into an exclusive and expensive style of entertainment now had the requisite numbers to do so. To compound matters, the Panic of 1873 (at that point the worst depression in the nation's history) convinced many middle-class American theatregoers—who formerly supported opera of all types—to abandon foreign-language opera as too expensive. By 1883, when nouveau riche New Yorkers built the Metropolitan Opera House (at 39th Street and Broadway) to compete with the Academy of Music (located at 14th Street and Irving Place and where long-established wealthy New Yorkers owned all the boxes), the identity of foreign-language opera as brilliant, expensive, and exclusive was solidified in the minds of many Americans. This identity was reinforced by those critics

3. "English Opera," *BMW*, 5 (emphasis in original).

4. F. Henry Drown, "English Opera," *S&HMR*, ii:7 (July 1875), 318–319; "Opera in English," *AAJ*, lvi:19 (21 February 1891), 50.

who focused on this style of opera and neglected most English-language performances because they believed that the latter were merely popular entertainment and of no interest to most of their readers. The implication, in fact, was that English-language opera had disappeared from the American stage.

In reality, however, English-language companies proliferated during this period. New forms of light opera, including operetta and opera bouffe (first in French, then in English), emerged to complement and sometimes replace the repertory that English-opera companies had been mounting since the 1840s. Also important was the appearance in the late 1860s and early 1870s of so-called English grand opera companies that mounted both the decades-old ("standard") English repertory and translations of more recent continental works in response to a demand by middle- and professional-class Americans who continued to be interested in opera as long as it was performed in the vernacular and without the pretensions and high prices of the fashionable foreign-language troupes. Many of these companies were managed by women who had discovered a non-mainstream niche to exploit.

The *apparent* domination of the American operatic stage by foreign-language companies continued into the 1880s and 1890s, but with the introduction of a new element. A growing subset of American critics active during this period applied the ideas of German romanticism to the music they reviewed. These individuals (who were overwhelmingly male) became convinced that music should function as much more than "mere" entertainment: it should serve as a means for cultural uplift—a concept that was particularly applicable to opera, as Richard Wagner had demonstrated with his music-dramas. This group of critics also increasingly believed that their principal responsibility was to educate Americans about good (European) music in general and about this higher form of opera in particular, and they endeavored to instill in their readers the idea that opera was culturally uplifting. This development is important to our discussion because it divided the supporters of foreign-language opera into two groups that differed significantly in terms of attitude. The social elites who supported opera in Italian still regarded opera attendance as an exclusive style of entertainment; the cultural elites, on the other hand, were completely uninterested in entertainment and instead sought inspiration and enrichment.[5] Both groups, for different reasons, dismissed English-language performances even of the continental repertory: the first because opera in the vernacular undercut Society's basic purpose of opera attendance (as an expensive and exclusive style of entertainment), the second because English-language companies promoted opera as entertainment and did so with the wrong (continental/Italian) repertory.

5. Joseph Horowitz discusses this development in some detail in *Wagner Nights: An American History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

Many of the critics who considered themselves part of the American cultural elite were also members of the country's musical establishment. Their dismissal of English-language opera as unimportant (and unworthy of notice) had a significant impact on their reception of this style of opera, for many late-century American operagoers (especially those members of the country's social and cultural elite) either ignored or dismissed vernacular-language opera during the1880s and 1890s. This contemporary indifference or disdain furthermore influenced our historical understanding of the period, for several of these critics wrote early books on American musical history, and they limited their coverage of operatic activity to foreign-language troupes. Frédérick Louis Ritter's *Music in America* (1884), for example—one of the earliest studies of music in the United States—includes a brief chapter titled "Opera in New York—French Opera in New Orleans" (eleven and one-half pages) that covers opera performance from 1860 to 1880. Ritter devotes five pages to opera performed in German, three to Italian-language troupes, and two to opera bouffe and operetta (the remaining one and one-half pages cover opera in New Orleans). The chapter in the revised second edition (1895), titled "Opera in New York: Italian, German, American—Opera in New Orleans," has twenty-seven pages devoted to German- or Italian-language performances and two pages to French opera in New Orleans. English-language opera merits three and one-half pages, but the coverage is exclusively of Jeannette Thurber's disastrously unsuccessful American (or National) Opera Company. Henry Krehbiel's *Chapters of Opera* (1909) deals almost exclusively with foreign-language opera (although he devotes several paragraphs to the Thurber endeavor), and although Louis Elson mentions English-language opera in the chapter "Opera in America" in his *History of American Music* (1904), he limits his discussion of postbellum activity (excepting three paragraphs) to foreign-language opera. John Tasker Howard includes scattered mentions of opera in his *Our American Music* (1931), but the focus of his book is composition rather than performance history.[6]

6. See Frédérick Louis Ritter, *Music in America*, 1st ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), 329–341, and 2nd rev. ed.,(New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 441–474; Henry Krehbiel, *Chapters of Opera* (New York: Henry Holt, 1909); Louis Elson, *The History of American Music* (New York: Macmillan, 1904), 95–122; and John Tasker Howard, *Our American Music: Three Hundred Years of It* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1931). Annals of opera performances provide valuable information but no analysis. See Julius Mattfeld, *A Hundred Years of Grand Opera in New York, 1825-1925* (New York: New York Public Library, 1927); W. G. Armstrong's *A Record of the Opera in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: Porter & Coates, 1884); and George C. D. Odell's *Annals of the New York Stage*, 15 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1927–1949). The most comprehensive treatment of English opera is Eric Walter White's *A History of English Opera* (London: Faber &

The authors of more recent surveys of American music, such as H. Wiley Hitchcock or Charles Hamm, tend to focus on American composers and compositions rather than on performance. Since opera companies rarely mounted operas by native composers, these authors completely ignore the rich history of operatic performance in America during this period because the repertory was overwhelmingly European. Even Richard Crawford's magisterial *America's Musical Life* (976 pages), for which he asserts that "performance rather than composition" (ix) was his starting point, fails to mention the significant place of opera in the musical culture of late nineteenth-century America. This leaves the discerning reader with the impression that opera was essentially unknown in the United States during the period.[7]

Faber,1983); more recent is Paul Rodmell's *Opera in the British Isles, 1875–1918* (Farnham, Surry, UK: Ashgate, 2013). Neither covers North American performances.

7. H. Wiley Hitchcock and Kyle Gann, *Music in the United States: A Historical Introduction*, 4th ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 2000); Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983); Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life. A History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001). More specialized studies include John Cone, *First Rival of the Metropolitan Opera* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983); Quaintance Eaton, *Opera Caravan: Adventures of the Metropolitan on Tour, 1883-1956* (London: Calder, 1957); George Martin, *The Damrosch Dynasty* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1983); James Henry Mapleson, *Mapleson Memoirs: The Career of an Operatic Impresario, 1858-1888*, edited by Harold Rosenthal (London: Putnam, 1966); Ezra Schabas, *Theodore Thomas: America's Conductor and Builder of Orchestras, 1835-1905* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1989); and Horowitz's *Wagner Nights* and, to a lesser extent, his *Moral Fire: Musical Portraits from America's Fin de Siècle* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). All were concerned with Italian- or German-language opera troupes, to the complete neglect of vernacular opera. Even John Dizike's error-ridden *Opera in America: A Cultural History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) focuses exclusively on opera bouffe and operetta during the 1860s and 1870 and foreign-language opera in the 1880s and 1890s.

Several other books and articles have been of great help in my research, including Ronald L. Davis, *A History of Opera in the American West* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965); Eugene H. Cropsey, *Crosby's Opera House: Symbol of Chicago's Cultural Awakening* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999); June Ottenberg, *Opera Odyssey: Toward a History of Opera in Nineteenth-Century America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994); Emanuel Rubin's articles on Jeannette Thurber and the American Opera Company ("Jeannette Meyer [sic] Thurber [1850–1946]: Music for a Democracy," in *Cultivating Music in America: Women Patrons and Activists Since 1860*, ed. Ralph Locke and Cyrilla Barr [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977], 134–163; "Jeannette Meyers Thurber and the National Conservatory of Music, *AM*, viii:3 [Fall, 1990], 295–315; and "American Opera in the Gilded Age: America's First Professional Touring Opera Company," in *Opera and the Golden West: The Past, Present, and Future of Opera in the U.S.A.*, ed. John L. DiGaetani and Joseph P. Sirefman [Rutherford, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994], 78–93); Ottenberg's articles on Caroline Richings ("An Unsung Nineteenth-Century American Prima Donna: the Formative Years and Early Career," unpublished manuscript); and Gustav Hinrichs ("Gustav Hinrichs and Opera in

My goal is to rectify this omission by examining in detail the forgotten world of English-language opera, a dominant style of performance on the American stage during the last three decades of the century. Such an investigation is valuable because it fills a lacuna in American music history and provides insight into late-century American social culture, for opera and operetta evolved in response to the desires and needs of audiences. This study will also shed light on a growing American middle-class disenchantment with and disparagement of foreign-language opera during this period. Furthermore, an examination of the large and enthusiastic 1880s and 1890s audiences for English-language performances will help to clarify the appeal of newer styles of musical theatre that emerged around the turn of the twentieth century. Finally, scrutiny of the activities of many of these companies' managers will provide insight into the work of strong, active women who refused to be constrained by a dominant social order that still affirmed they did not belong in the public sphere.

This book is not intended as a comprehensive history of opera performance in America during the second half of the nineteenth century. While writing it, however, I discovered that we know distressingly little about American musical culture of the 1860s and 1870s in general and even less about operatic performance and reception in particular. With the exception of the Mapleson and Metropolitan companies, there is almost no primary research into the performance history of foreign-language opera during the second half of the century—information that I needed as context for the activities of English-language troupes. As a result, I undertook primary research about foreign-language opera companies and devote significant portions of several chapters (especially chapters 1 and 3) to this history.

I omit some aspects of the story from this narrative—in particular, amateurs' widespread engagement with operas and operatic music during the postwar period. Amateur, semiprofessional, and parlor opera companies flourished, especially in response to the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta craze of the 1870s and 1880s. Young American women also collected sheet music related to operas, played on their parlor pianos the countless potpourris and fantasias fashioned from the most popular operatic melodies, and sang translations and original versions of operatic arias. Such melodies regularly found

Philadelphia, 1888–1886," *OQ*, xv:2 [1999]), 196–223; and "Hinrichs, Gustav," *GMO*); and Jim McPherson's essays on the Castle Square Opera House ("The Savage Innocents. Part I: King of the Castle: Henry W. Savage and the Castle Square Opera Company," *OQ*, xviii:4 [Autumn 2002], 503–533) and "The Savage Innocents. Part 2: On the Road with *Parsifal, Butterfly*, the *Widow*, and the *Girl*," *OQ*, xix:1 (Winter, 2003), 28–63). This book, however, is the first detailed or systematic examination of the performance history of English-language opera in late-century America.

their way into the American soundscape as music for dance (waltzes, polkas, lanciers, and quadrilles), marches (via medleys), and compositions that accompanied various social activities, ranging from picnics and bicycle races to overtures and *entr'actes* music in theatres, as well as concerts performed in band shells.[8] This amateur engagement was both a reaction to and encouragement of professional performances. Nevertheless, although the resulting ubiquity of such music in America was an important part of a flourishing operatic culture, I limit my focus to the most important professional performers and companies, for they set the standards, introduced the stage versions of the works, and shaped the development of taste. Some of the most engaging images of popular opera stars I cover in the book, however, are from contemporary sheet-music imprints, and my use of these illustrations should remind readers of that parallel realm of operatic consumption in contemporary American society.

It is fiendishly difficulty to find empirical data related to the American operatic audience—both its makeup and its changing tastes. Rare indeed are comments in reviews that mention audience members who are not "fashionable" or "elite," but the range of ticket prices charged for admission suggests a more varied audience base, as does the occasional comment about audience members "hanging from the galleries" or standing and sitting in the aisles for an entire performance. Such information provides insight into an audience that was economically and socially varied. To underscore its heterogeneity, I provide this type of information regularly—and frequently contrast the cost of tickets for opera performances with those charged for dramatic and other theatrical offerings in the same or similar theatres. It is also important to note that most American theatres of this period continued to be divided into discrete sections, with different prices of admission for each, different entrances, and clear-cut expectations about which social class should sit where. If the auditorium of such a theatre is described as "packed from pit to dome," then one can conclude with some certainty that the audience was socially or economically diverse. Throughout the book I use the notoriously ambiguous term "middle class" (which evolved and changed over this period) to refer to professionals and their families: lawyers, doctors, entrepreneurs, teachers, businessmen and businesswomen, ministers, politicians, white-collar

8. My first book, *Music for Hire: A Study of Professional Musicians in Washington, 1877-1900* (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1992), an in-depth examination of music performed in white Washington, D.C., is based on a gig book kept by a local musician. I first realized the ubiquity of stage music (opera and operetta) in the late-century American soundscape when examining countless playbills, programs, reports of concerts, dance cards, and other ephemera for that work. A shorter treatment of the topic is "Popular Music in the 'Gilded Age': Musicians' Gigs in Late Nineteenth-Century Washington, D.C.," *PM*, iv (1984), 25–47.

managers, and other workers who enjoyed the luxury of discretionary time and money.

Many late-century advocates for English-language opera regularly reiterated their belief that the American middle class would not completely accept opera until performances in the vernacular became the norm. Popular support for opera was important, these critics argued, because American composers would not seriously undertake writing such works (and perhaps create an American school of opera) until there was a chance that such compositions might be produced. It is possible, in fact, that the groundswell of support for English-language opera that erupted in the 1870s and 1880s encouraged some native composers to undertake the herculean task of writing operas. By 1886 (according to critics William Thoms and I. D. Foulon), over thirty composers active in the United States had already written multi-act operas in English (both light and serious). Few American companies, however—even English-language troupes—were willing to risk mounting unknown works; most relied primarily on a repertory that was already successful in Europe because of their financial dependence on the box office. This situation changed only in the later 1880s, when several American composers (including Reginald de Koven and Victor Herbert) began to write operettas. I cover this development in some detail in the final chapter, for the Bostonians was a company instrumental in commissioning such works. The vast majority of troupes I consider, however, performed a repertory that was almost exclusively European.

The issue of performance practice is also pertinent to these companies. However, since review of the adaptations, translations, interpolation of arias and songs, and the addition of improvised *fioriture* by each of the troupes would be needlessly repetitive, I limit this discussion to those companies with significant supporting documentation: performance materials from the Richings company (chapter 2) to illustrate the adaptation of continental operas to the English-language stage; numerous changes that Boston Ideals' singers suggested in letters to exemplify the general malleability of operas (chapter 4); and Emma Abbott's deletions, interpolations, and addition of extra embellishments (chapter 5) to epitomize her crowd-pleasing approach. Detailed consideration of one company's approach to its repertory, however, should be considered illustration of a general practice.

The issue of translations (good or bad) was likewise contentious throughout most of this period. Many critics who decried the prevalence of foreign-language opera in America pointed out that one could hear operas in the vernacular in France, Germany, Russia, and even Bohemia. Others dismissed outright the artistic validity of operas translated into English, but at the same time overlooked (or were ignorant of) the routine practice by foreign-languages troupes of singing translations, an apparent hypocrisy that

Clara Louise Kellogg pointed out (see chapter 3). Finally, critics frequently complained of "bad" or "incompetent" translations. A systematic attempt to assess the validity of such comments, however, would require close examination of performance materials that frequently are unavailable; furthermore, this task is beyond the scope of this book.[9]

For documentation I rely heavily on the words of critics and commentators from contemporary newspapers and periodicals. I have approached much of this material with caution, however, for it is rarely "objective." It is important to recognize the musical background of a critic when assessing the veracity of his or her commentary, and this information (or even the identity of the writer) is frequently unknown. Even musically sophisticated critics frequently had their own axes to grind and sometimes panned or praised a performer or company for ulterior reasons. Furthermore, troupes' advance men (publicists) supplied "puffs" to newspapers, which were sometimes published verbatim. I draw the reader's attention to these pitfalls throughout the book, and as a rule generally cite multiple voices to buttress my conclusions.

Finally, a word about terminology. At the time, American critics and commentators referred to opera companies as either "Italian," "German," or "English," based on the language of performance and irrespective of repertory, which (for all companies) was continental in origin. French operas were well represented in the repertories of all companies, but very few troupes (beyond those that mounted operas bouffes) performed in French during the late-century period. The term "grand" opera (when used by English-language companies) does not refer to works in the style of Meyerbeer, but rather to continental operas translated into English. In the realm of comic opera, the terms "light opera," "comic opera," and operetta were apparently synonymous; "opera bouffe," however, was generally reserved for French comic operas, whether translated or not. This imprecision of terminology (especially in relation to "Italian" and "German" companies) is preserved by the early historians of American music history cited above (e.g., Ritter, Krehbiel, Howard). Whenever practical I use the adjectival terms "Italian-language," "German-language," and "English-language" to refer to such companies, but the reader should keep in mind that during this period in

9. A study of extant translations (for example, Richings or Abbott company materials in the Tams-Witmark Collection) would be extraordinarily valuable. A scholar engaged in such work could query whether the changes were mere translations or a more profound alteration of the text, or determine whether textual modifications required musical adjustments, and so forth. Roberta Montemorra Marvin, for example, examines various alterations of operatic arias in "Verdian Opera in the Victorian Parlor," in *Fashions and Legacies of Nineteenth-Century Italian Opera*, ed. Marvin and Hilary Poriss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 53–75, but a thorough examination of adaptations mounted on the American stage awaits attention.

America, "Italian," "German," and "English" opera companies performed a varied repertory. There is also rampant imprecision in relation to opera titles, which are translated in various ways (and sometimes not translated at all). For the most part, I use titles in English, German, Italian, or French, depending on the performance language of the company and the version of the title generally used by troupes performing in each of those languages.

★ ★ ★

Contemporary critics frequently commented on opera companies that appeared on the American stage during the postbellum period. In 1893, in fact, Charles Nixon of the Chicago *Daily Inter Ocean* provided a succinct summary of English-language opera activity during the 1870s and 1880s. He pointed out that "competent management made the Kellogg Opera company a signal success," and described its successor, a troupe managed by C. D. Hess and William Carleton, as "very creditable." He continued: "Every one knows what Miss Ober developed with the Boston Ideals, starting from the 'Pinafore' basis, and the success of Emma Abbott in America was far more successful, financially, than that of the vaunted Carl Rosa [English] Opera company in England."[10] Nixon's litany of success was clearly an attempt to neutralize an impression of English-opera failure that lingered after the disastrous collapse of the heavily subsidized American Opera Company (1886–87), a troupe that he pointedly did not name. His list, however, either explicitly or implicitly mentions many of the companies that are featured in this study.

The book is organized into seven chapters: three are overviews of particular periods; four are case studies of important troupes that illustrate different issues related to English-language opera performance and reception during these tumultuous years. Chapter 1, "English-Language Opera in Postwar America," summarizes opera production from the end of the 1850s, through the Civil War, and into the halcyon postwar period. I examine the beginning of the opera bouffe craze and the activities of light and grand opera companies, all within the context of the successful foreign-language troupes during and after the Civil War. Clara Louise Kellogg exemplifies a successful American prima donna who later became the manager of her own English-language company; during these years, however, she sang in Max Maretzek's Italian-language ensemble. The operatic activity of this chapter is set against the background of a turbulent period of American social and cultural history; the narrative ends just prior to the Panic of 1873.

Chapter 2, "The Renaissance of English Opera in America: Caroline Richings and Euphrosyne Parepa-Rosa," is a close examination of the two

10. "Music and Musicians," *DIO*, 30 July 1893, 25. This essay is also quoted in the epitaph to this introduction.

most important English-language troupes active during the late 1860s and early 1870s. Richings, known as a "manageress" or "directress," was a prima donna before, during, and after the war. Her company's success shows conclusively that Americans of the immediate postwar period were still interested in English-language opera, even though many critics believed that this style of performance was old-fashioned and passé. Most Americans of the time rightly hailed Richings as responsible for a renaissance of English-language opera in the United States, for she re-created an American demand for this style of opera and her successful company satisfied it until it was upstaged by another English-language "directress," who became a competitor. The Scottish soprano Euphrosyne Parepa arrived in America in 1865 as part of an itinerant concert troupe. She sang in Italian-language opera with the companies of both Max Maretzek and Max Strakosch, but was so inspired by Richings's success that she organized her own English-language troupe, which quickly eclipsed that of her competitor. The success of these two prima donnas—especially in the face of skepticism about Americans' interest in vernacular opera—illuminates the operatic tastes of American audiences in the immediate postwar period.

Chapter 3, "Foreign-Language Opera Is Exclusive; Vernacular Is 'For the People,'" starts with the Panic of 1873 and its profound impact on operatic production in 1870s America. The failure of Italian- and German-language troupes facilitated the triumph of grand opera in the vernacular—especially the company of Clara Louise Kellogg, which enjoyed extraordinary success during the worst years of the Long Recession. Also important during the 1870s and 1880s was comic opera (including operetta, light opera, and opera bouffe) which we encounter through the endeavors of several pivotal performer/managers (Emily Soldene, Sallie Holman, Alice Oates). As context for the subsequent chapters, I discuss Italian- and German-language activity during the late 1870s and through the 1880s, and summarize the generally unsettled operatic times of the mid-1880s, when German-language opera and its associated principle of cultural uplift first challenged and ultimately replaced Italian-language opera (temporarily) in the American foreign-language market. The chapter ends with the explosion of vernacular-opera activity in the 1880s and the incredible enthusiasm among American audiences for all types of opera performed in English.

The next three chapters are case studies of different kinds of English-language companies active in the 1880s, the high-water mark for an American English-opera movement. All three were managed, organized, or subsidized by women. In chapter 4, I concentrate on the Boston Ideal Opera Company, a comic opera troupe. Its founder, Effie Hinckley Ober (the "Miss Ober" in Nixon's essay) was not a performer but, rather, a businesswoman who owned one of the first musical management firms in the country. Her success in a male-dominated business provides valuable insight into how an ambitious

and enterprising woman could navigate a distinctly competitive, virile world in the postwar American social landscape. This chapter covers the Boston Ideals only during the Ober period (1879–1885) and illustrates techniques of management, a hitherto unknown relationship between opera production and the emergence of lyceum bureaus, and performance practice. The company mounted both operettas and some of the standard works that had been performed by English-language troupes for decades; after Ober's retirement it continued until 1904 under a new name (the Bostonians) and new management.

The focus of chapter 5, "Emma Abbott, the 'People's Prima Donna'" is the most successful English Grand Opera Company of the decade, also under the artistic direction of its prima donna. Unlike Richings, however, Abbott was thoroughly trained in the Italian school and performed primarily translated versions of the same continental repertory mounted by companies like Mapleson's. A self-made woman who thoroughly understood marketing, Abbott was extraordinarily successful for eleven years (1879–1891). She created a new audience of middle-class American opera lovers who flocked to her performances of a middlebrow style of opera that was located on the operatic continuum somewhere between comic or light opera and the socially or culturally elite foreign-language styles performed in Italian or German. But her techniques and goals (opera as entertainment) were antithetical to the objectives of some establishment critics who wanted to remove opera from the world of popular entertainment; they dismissed her as a charlatan who enjoyed "popular" rather than "artistic" success. Despite their efforts, Abbott was extremely popular, financially successful, and tremendously influential on American musical culture until her untimely death at age forty-one.

Chapter 6, "The American Opera Company: Good Intentions, Managerial Disaster," tells a significantly different story. Jeannette Thurber, a New York philanthropist and music lover, organized this troupe in 1885 to encourage high-caliber performances of continental operas translated into English. Her company was well advertised and heavily supported financially (mostly by her wealthy New York associates). Many critics firmly believed that it would succeed, a level of response to English-language opera that was a sea-change from the original reaction to Richings's company a scant twenty years earlier. But both Thurber and her musical director Theodore Thomas seriously misunderstood the segmented American opera audience of the 1880s.To succeed, they had to attract cultural elites, the "fashionables" (society), and "the masses" (Thurber's term). Thomas mounted serious operas and music dramas designed for cultural uplift, which pleased the self-identified cultural elites, but this demographic was small, especially outside of New York. The other two groups (society and middle-class operagoers) enjoyed opera primarily as entertainment,

and had little interest in the more-serious repertory. Furthermore, society members were not interested in English-language opera because it eliminated a primary marker of exclusivity (foreign-language performance); middle-class operagoers were repelled both by the trappings of elitism (associated with the company's backers) and by tickets that were significantly higher in price than was the norm for English-language opera. A close examination and reinterpretation of the company's failure reveals much about the splintered American opera audience of the period, a reassessment that is important in the context of this book because scholars have blamed the company's spectacular demise on a general lack of American support for English-language opera.

Chapter 7, "English-Language Opera at the End of the Century," addresses operatic activity in the 1890s—in particular, an insatiable public appetite for comic opera and operetta that eventually eclipsed interest in the translated continental repertory. After close inspection of representative English grand opera and light opera companies, I conclude with a discussion of two ensembles that enjoyed extraordinary success in the late 1890s: the Bostonians (the comic opera continuation of Ober's Boston Ideals) and the Castle Square Opera Company (a successor to Abbott's grand opera company). In the face of changing American tastes for musical theatre at the turn of the century, one company (the old-fashioned Bostonians) eventually failed, while the other (Castle Square) succeeded. The latter company's director Henry Savage had a foot firmly planted in each century. His willingness to adopt modern techniques and respond to contemporary audience demands illustrate the continued appeal of both English-language opera (in the late nineteenth century) and the more flexible, colloquial, and indelibly American style of musical theatre that emerged (in the early twentieth).

The book ends with a brief epilogue in which I grapple with some important questions: how could the vibrant, conspicuous, and ubiquitous performance culture that is depicted in remarkable detail in this book simply disappear from our knowledge of American social and cultural history? And how can we, as scholars, avoid making the same mistakes in the future?

I

ENGLISH-LANGUAGE OPERA IN POSTWAR AMERICA

BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW TO 1860

All types and flavors of opera functioned as a vital part of the American theatre from 1825 to 1860, especially in the fifteen years prior to the Civil War.[1] Operas were mounted in French, Italian, English, and—to a lesser extent—German, and performances of these works attracted American audiences of varied social and economic classes. Troupes that sang in Italian proliferated in the 1840s, 1850s, and into the 1860s, and flourished in particular during

1. See Preston, *OoR*; "To the Opera House? The Trials and Tribulations of Operatic Production in Nineteenth-Century America," and "Notes from (the Road to the) Stage," *OQ*, xxiii/1 (Winter 2007), 39–65, 103–119. Also see George Martin, *Verdi at the Golden Gate: Opera and San Francisco in the Gold Rush Years* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Karen Ahlquist: *Democracy at the Opera: Music, Theater, and Culture in New York City, 1815-60* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and John H. Baron, *Concert Life in Nineteenth-Century New Orleans: A Comprehensive Reference* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013). John Dizikes's *Opera in America. A Cultural History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993) is riddled with errors and is unreliable. See my review-essay, "*Opera in America* (John Dizikes) and *Verdi at the Golden Gate* (George Martin)" in *JAH*, lxxxi:4 (March 1995), 1699–1701; and Tom Kaufman's review, "*Opera in America. A Cultural History* by John Dizikes," *AM*, xiii:1 (Spring 1995), 104–106. Elise Kirk's *American Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001) is about operas composed by Americans; and June Ottenberg's *Opera Odyssey: Toward a History of Opera in Nineteenth-Century* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994) provides the beginnings of a survey of opera performance in nineteenth-century America. For contemporary summaries, see C. D. Hess, "Early Opera in America," *Cosmopolitan*, xxxii:2 (December 1901), 139–152; and Richard Grant White, "Opera in New York," *Century Magazine*, xxiii:5 (March 1882), 686–703, as well as xxiii:6 (April 1882), 865–882; xxiv:1 (May 1882), 31–43; and xxiv:2 (June 1882), 193–210. See also Max Maretzek, *Revelations of an Opera Manager in 19th Century America: Crotchets and Quavers* and *Sharps and Flats* (two volumes bound as one), ed. Charles Haywood (New York: Dover Publications, 1855 and 1890/1968; and *Further Revelations of an Opera Manager in 19th Century America*, ed. Ruth Henderson (Sterling Heights, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2006).

the decade prior to the outbreak of hostilities. English-language opera, however, was the dominant style of operatic performance during most of the antebellum period; companies mounted works written in English, as well as translations of the standard continental repertory.[2] Americans consumed their opera readily and happily. Although opera (especially foreign-language performances) was generally one of the more expensive options on the American stage, there was nevertheless little sense during most of the thirty years prior to the war that this style of musical theatre was not a normal part of the miscellany of theatrical entertainments, which also included drama, melodrama, ballet, blackface minstrelsy, acrobatics, pantomime, mesmerism, burlesque, and magic. Furthermore, opera in translation was not generally regarded as inferior to opera in the original language; some argued, in fact, that translations were superior because they were intelligible to most Americans.

By the early 1850s, however, the relationship between foreign-language and translated opera had begun to change. Opera sung in Italian gradually became the dominant style in terms of reputation, allure, and fashion.[3] By the midpoint of the decade, many Italian-language troupes—which had the economic backing of wealthy subscribers—had become large and lavish: the performances featured elaborate scenery and gorgeous costumes, large choruses, full orchestras, and some of the best singers of Europe.[4] Foreign-language opera during this period, as a result, became fashionable. This image was cultivated by wealthy citizens of East Coast cities, whose numbers were almost sufficient to support activities that were exclusive—including attendance at particular types of opera. The attempts to make opera-going fashionable included building theatres specifically for opera, such as the Academies of Music in both New York City (1854) and Philadelphia (1857), and establishing dress codes, charging admission prices that were higher than normal

2. The 1830s–1850s repertory included English works by Balfe, Bishop, and Wallace, as well as older English comic opera repertory. Continental composers were Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, and Verdi (Italian); Adam, Boieldieu, and Auber (French); Mozart (although usually his Italian works), Beethoven (rarely), and Weber (German). See Preston, *OoR*.

3. This assertion is thoroughly documented in Preston, *OoR*.

4. The New York Astor Place Opera Company (1847–1851) is typical; its mounted works suggest that the "Italian" repertory was, in fact, primarily Italian. The company occasionally performed translations of Weber's *Der Freischűtz* and Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*, but the vast majority of works were bel canto operas. See Preston, *OoR*, 168–169. By Mapleson's first American tour (1878), however, his "Italian" company regularly mounted a continental repertory (in Italian) of Italian, French, German, and English operas. See James Henry Mapleson, *The Mapleson Memoirs*, ed. Harold Rosenthal (New York: Appleton-Century, 1966), 120–121, 125.

for theatrical events, setting curtain times later than practical for audience members who had to work the next day, and supporting performances in foreign languages precisely because most audience members could not understand them.[5]

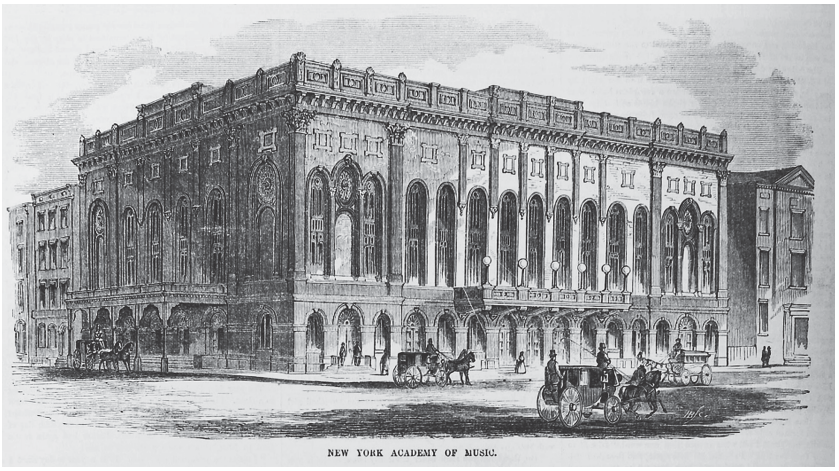
But this change was not clear-cut, for the wealthy were not yet quite numerous enough—even in New York—to support an opera company by themselves. As a result, even a troupe that performed in a theatre with aristocratic pretensions like the Academy of Music (capacity 4,600) needed to attract more than wealthy subscribers to survive because of the sheer number of seats. Furthermore—like most theaters of the time—the Academy was divided into sections (with independent entrances and different ticket prices) that separated the audience socially and economically; see figures 1.1a and 1.1b. The Academy's upper-tier "amphitheatre," for example, was completely unsuitable for members of the "Upper Ten" (the wealthy), and vice versa.[6] As a result, a capacity audience at the Academy for performances of foreign-language opera (always Italian), by definition, included many who were neither aristocratic nor wealthy. According to one critic, for example, a performance of Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in 1856 attracted "a very large house, particularly upstairs, where the 'masses' oozed over the amphitheatre railing with extatic [*sic*] and attentive enjoyment."[7] This economic reality, however, did not impede the deliberate process of image creation in which the elite had been busily engaged for several decades. By the late 1850s and into the 1860s, foreign-language opera was acquiring an aura distinct from and superior to that of opera sung in English; as such—at least in terms of *image*—it was being removed from the American popular stage. This changed status occurred primarily in large cities of the East Coast, but the idea of opera as an exclusive

5. Wealthy New Yorkers had been trying to make opera fashionable and exclusive since the 1840s, and had constructed venues for that purpose. These efforts had failed, however, because they could not support a company without the help of the middle classes, a situation that continued through the 1860s. By the early 1850s, however, the wealthy classes began to control the *image* of foreign-language opera. See Preston, *OoR*, Chapter 3, "Italian Opera Companies, 1825-60," 99–148; and John Graziano, "An Opera for Every Taste. The New York Scene, 1862-1869," in *European Music and Musicians in New York City, 1840-1900*, ed. John Graziano (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 253–272.

6. Lawrence II:527–529; and Graziano, "An Opera for Every Taste," 253–272. Capacity for the Academy is for the first theatre, built in 1853–54 (burned in 1866). The term "Upper Ten Thousand," shortened to "Upper Ten," was coined by the poet Nathaniel Parker Willis (1806–1867) to refer to New York's upper classes; it later referred to the wealthy in general.

7. Similar audience descriptions are in "Academy of Music," 5 January 1856, 4, "Musical," 28 June 1855, 4, "Amusements," 11 September 1856, 1, all three in *NYDT*.

(a)



(b)

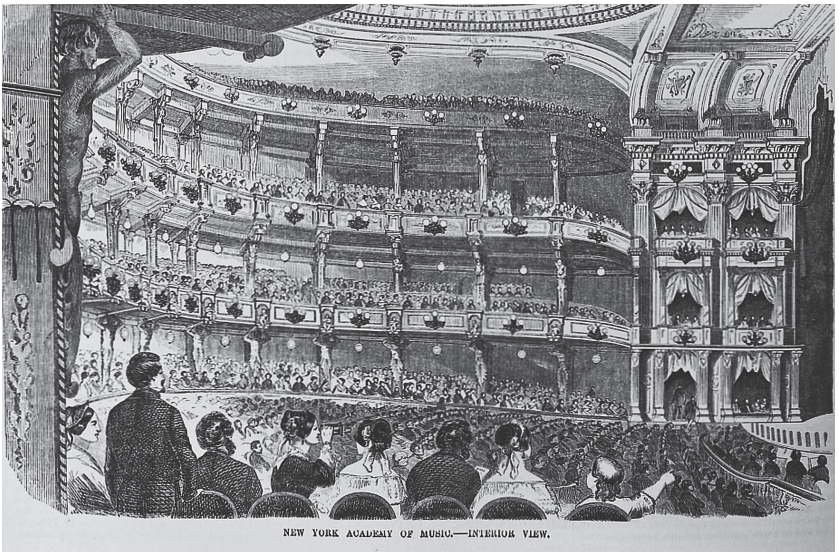


FIGURE 1.1A AND 1.1B. New York Academy of Music exterior and interior, prior to the 1866 fire.

From *Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion*, 29 March 1856, p. 200. General Research Division, The New York Public Library Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

pastime was communicated to the rest of the country by articles in music journals that were based primarily in the Northeast, but also in Chicago and Cleveland.[8]

8. Opera companies in antebellum America were both marvelously successful and utter failures; impresarios, however, almost never made money. See Maretzek, *Revelations*

Although this emerging image was not yet a fait accompli in the late 1850s, it nevertheless had an impact on the reception of English-language opera in America in several ways. First, because the wealthy supported Italian-language companies financially, the caliber of their performances steadily improved, as did the quality of performances overall in the United States. Many of the most successful European singers performed in Italian, and managers—in order to attract the patronage of the wealthy—competed with each other for the services of better and better European operatic stars. By the 1850s, in fact, Americans could hear some of the preeminent living operatic celebrities, singing in companies that traveled widely; as music historian Frédérick Louis Ritter wrote in the 1890s, "company after company—often comprising some of the greatest living European artists—appeared" in America during this period.[9] This inevitably led not only to heightened audience expectations but also to greater contrast between the performance caliber of Italian- and English-language troupes. By the middle of the century, in fact, opera lovers all over the country were no longer satisfied (as they once had been) with performances by second-rate "stars"—whether they sang in Italian, German, French, or English.

Patronage of Italian-language opera by the "Upper Ten" also created a gulf between those who supported opera in the vernacular and operagoers who preferred Italian-language performances. In the 1850s there were still many working- and middle-class Americans all over the country who regarded opera as a normal part of the popular stage and who regularly patronized performances in their local theatres by itinerant companies that mounted works in English, Italian, and (less regularly) French or German.[10] The changed image of foreign-language opera (and the assertion by some critics that it was the only "real" kind), however, began increasingly to alienate many theatregoers and music lovers. Many considered as un-American the Old World aristocratic trappings and New World snobbery that had become integral to

and *Further Revelations*; Bruce McConachie, "New York Operagoing, 1825-50: Creating an Elite Social Ritual," *AM*, vi:2 (Summer 1988), 181–192; and Preston, *OoR*, 134–141.

9. Frédérick Louis Ritter, *Music in America*, 2nd rev. ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 307.

10. The history of German-language opera in nineteenth-century America has not been written. For antebellum French performances, see Preston, *OoR*; Sylvie Chevally, "La première Saison Theatrale Française de New-York," *French Review*, xxiv:6 (May 1951), 471–479; and "Le Théâtre d'Orléans en Tournée dans les Villes du Nord, 1827-1833," in *Comptes-Rendus de l'Athénée Louisianais* (New Orleans: Imprimerie Franco-Americaine, 1955), 27–71; Henry Kmen, *Music in New Orleans: The Formative Years, 1791-1841* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1966); and Jennifer C. H. J. Wilson, "The Impact of French Opera in Nineteenth-Century New York: The New Orleans French Opera Company, 1827-1845," Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 2015.

this identity of opera. To complicate matters, Italian-opera divas frequently canceled performances without warning and were often arrogant and self-centered, which had irritated Americans for years. As a result, already discernible differences in taste and support escalated during the 1850s at the same time that Italian-language opera companies proliferated.

It is nevertheless clear that many middle-class Americans at the time—including those who happily attended celebrity performances by visiting Italian-language troupes—did not believe that opera in English was inferior to that in Italian; as one journalist pointed out in 1857, the former was the only kind that could thoroughly satisfy "the great mass of our people." The remarkable success enjoyed by the Pyne and Harrison English Opera Company during its three-year visit to the United States (1854–1857) suggests that such performances, properly and skillfully mounted, still had significant audience appeal.[11] But the important issue was quality of performance: audiences whose expectations had been heightened by hearing excellent stars singing in Italian (and by the generally superior quality of their ensembles) now also had higher expectations for English-language companies. And although the Pyne and Harrison troupe could not compete in terms of star power or size with Maretzek's troupes or with companies formed around such European operatic celebrities as Henriette Sontag (1806–-1854), or Giovanni Matteo Mario (1810–1883) and Giulia Grisi (1811–1869), the company's stars Louisa Pyne (1832–1904) and William Harrison (1813–1858) were veterans of the London stage and maintained high standards on their American tour. Audiences, as a result, flocked to their performances despite an increased emphasis in the media on foreign-language opera.[12]

After Pyne and Harrison returned to London, however, Americans faced an English-opera drought. There was no lack of opera sung in Italian in this period: during the single year of 1858–59, for example, Max Maretzek, Bernard Ullman, Maurice Strakosch, and Teresa Parodi each managed a tour by a different Italian-language troupe. But there were no complementary English-language companies that could live up to the standards set by either the Italians or Pyne and Harrison. And the fate of several small and less polished English-language troupes that attempted seasons in New York and Boston indicates that by the late 1850s (at least in the minds of the critics), the battle between the two types of opera had clearly been won by the Italians.

11. *MW*, 11 July 1857, 437, quoted in Preston, *OoR*, 259. Pyne and Harrison first appeared in New York in October 1854; the final benefit concert was early May 1857. See "Musical and Dramatic," 10 October 1854, 1, and "Amusements," 29 April 1857, 2, both in *NYDT*.

12. For discussion of the Pyne and Harrison company tour, see Preston, *OoR*, chap. 6, 258–304. Mario was the stage name of Giovanni Matteo De Candia.

Performances by the Cooper and the Lucy Escott English opera companies, for example, would have been perfectly acceptable to most American audiences in the 1840s, but both troupes failed in New York in 1858. That such companies continued to attract large audiences in population centers elsewhere in the country was immaterial to the majority of American critics, whose negative critiques cast a pall over English-language opera in American music periodicals well into the 1860s.[13]

Beyond the reality that the underfunded vernacular companies were outclassed, the primary problem in the late 1850s was that many Americans were now quite familiar with the operas performed by the Italian-language troupes. The favorite tunes of this repertory, of course, had permeated the American soundscape for decades, but by mid-century more and more middle- and professional-class Americans had actually attended performances of the works in Italian. Furthermore, Eastern critics increasingly asserted their conviction that recitative sung in foreign languages was the only "correct" performance style. English translations of the operas and spoken dialogue, according to one critic (writing about the Cooper Opera Company), were "altogether a mistake. No one wishes to see the Italian repertoire mauled, and [adaptations] amount to this and nothing more."[14] Although it would become clear later in the 1860s that Americans were perfectly willing to disregard critics' harping about the "incorrectness" of English translations, this would occur only in response to performances of a sufficiently high caliber, as mounted by the Richings, Parepa-Rosa, and other English-language companies during the 1860s and 1870s. English troupes that were not up to the competition were shown no mercy: critics excoriated them, and the urban East Coast public stayed away in droves.

After the New York failure of the Cooper and Escott companies in the late 1850s, many critics dismissed the efforts of English-language troupes and declared that the days of vernacular-language opera in America were over. These journalists considered such companies—inadequately supported and understaffed, and more akin to ensembles of singing actors than trained operatic performers—to be typical of all ensembles that performed in English, forgetting already the success of the Pyne and Harrison troupe, as well as many other skilled and successful English-language performers from earlier

13. Preston, *OoR*, chap. 3 and 339–340; also chap. 5, "English Opera Companies, 1841-60," esp. 243–257, and app. D, esp. 361–364. For background information on the critics discussed in this chapter (and throughout the book), see Appendix 8, Music Critics File, on the companion website.

14. See "Epilogue," Preston, *OoR*, 305–317; and Charles Hamm, chap. 4 of *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979), 62–88. "Things Theatrical," *Spirit*, 18 September 1858, 384.

years. The late 1850s through the mid-1860s, in fact, represented the nadir of English-opera performance in nineteenth-century America, and the bias was not limited to the East Coast, for the anti-English opera attitudes were readily communicated all over the country by the musical press. This negative critical residue, in fact, colored the reception of several good English-language troupes when they began to reappear in the 1860s. As Henry Watson pointed out in early 1867, many English-opera standards that formerly had been audience favorites had become "quite unpopular" because of performances "by incompetent parties."[15] Whatever the reason, by the eve of the Civil War, there was a clear divide in the adherents of Italian- and English-language opera in America.

OPERA PERFORMANCE DURING THE CIVIL WAR

What performers of opera in English faced during the 1860s and how support for this repertory was rekindled shortly after the war can best be understood in the context of foreign-language opera activity during the years of the Civil War.

One might assume that the war seriously interrupted most cultural activities in America, and some scholars support this belief. Frédérick Ritter notes that during hostilities "nearly all peaceful occupations came to a stand-still," especially "the cultivation of art," and theatre historian George Odell likewise reports that the conflict had a deleterious effect on stage performances in New York. The "war times dampened ardor for theatricals," he wrote of the 1860–61 season, adding that the situation was worse in 1862–63, for "the Academy [of Music] suffered badly during these war years; one often looked in vain for opera."[16] Other scholars, however, contradict this description. Historians Charles and Mary Beard point out, for example, that as "consuming as were the events of the war . . . the thought and activity of the people on both sides of the struggle were by no means wholly monopolized by it. The life and work of millions . . . continued to be civilian in nature and emphasis." Music historians agree. Robert Gerson wrote in his history of music in Philadelphia that "opera performances did not stop or even abate during the Civil War period," and critic Louis Elson (1848–1920), who lived through the conflict, remembered that the "interruption of operatic matters [was] not nearly as great . . . as might have been imagined."[17] The historical

15. "English Opera—Olympic Theatre," *Watson's*, vi:13 (19 January 1867), 200.

16. Ritter, *Music in America*, 349; Odell, VII:378, 512.

17. Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *A Basic History of the United States* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1944), 281. Robert A. Gerson, *Music in Philadelphia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1940/1970), 120; and Louis C. Elson, *History of American Music* (New York: Macmillan,1904), 114. In an earlier edition of his *Music in America,*

record also suggests that life went on while the war was being fought, especially after its first year.

During the early 1860s, wealthy Eastern urbanites continued to support opera companies that performed in Italian. It was also immensely helpful that several skilled Italian-opera impresarios remained in New York and actively encouraged and promoted such productions. Earlier, two of the three Italian-opera impresarios active in America during the antebellum period returned to Europe: Maurice Strakosch (1825–1887) and Bernard Ullman (1817?–1885), who had alternately collaborated and competed with each other during the 1850s, left in 1861 and 1862, respectively.[18] But others took up the managerial slack: Max Maretzek (1821–1897) (the third member of the prewar trio), Max Strakosch (1834–1892) (Maurice's younger brother), and Jacob Grau (1817–1877); see figures 1.2–1.4. Strakosch spent 1862 to 1864 organizing tours by the pianist Louis Moreau Gottschalk, and waited until the cessation of hostilities to turn to opera.[19] But during the first half of the 1860s, Grau and Maretzek organized and led Italian-language troupes in New York and elsewhere. Both enjoyed success, attracting audiences that sought diversion and entertainment, especially once civilian life settled down after 1861.

During 1861–62, Grau managed a troupe, primarily of New York singers. He had no first-rank stars, because most of the visiting European performers left in 1861 and did not return until 1865 or 1866. Nevertheless, Grau's troupe performed opera in Italian, and the general consensus was that it was better than nothing. After spending some time on the road in the fall, the company returned to New York and mounted four short seasons at the Academies of Music in Brooklyn and Manhattan during winter and spring.[20]

Frédéric Ritter wrote, "after the first excitement of the war-fever was over, people in large cities . . . began to flock in crowds to places of amusements, in order to seek temporary forgetfulness of the terrible drama that was being enacted on the battle-field"; see Ritter, *Music in America*, 1st ed. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1884), 331.

18. For information on Strakosch and Ullman, see Jack Belsom, "En Route to Stardom: Adelina Patti at the French Opera House, New Orleans, 1860-1861," *OQ*, x:3 (1994), 113–130; Maretzek, *Sharps and Flats* (1890), 49–52; and John Frederick Cone, *Adelina Patti: Queen of Hearts* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1993), 45. See also William Brooks and Bethany Goldberg, "Ullman, Bernard," *GDAM*; William Brooks, "Strakosch, Maurice," *GMO*; R. Allen Lott, *From Paris to Peoria: How European Piano Virtuosos Brought Classical Music to the American Heartland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and "Bernard Ullman: Nineteenth-Century American Impresario," in *A Celebration of American Music*, ed. Richard Crawford, Carol J. Oja, and R. Allen Lott (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), 174–191. Ullman's departure is reported in "Theatrical," *NYTrib*, 11 December 1862, 3.

19. Katherine K. Preston, "Strakosch, Max," *ANBO*.

20. Lawrence III:429. For Grau's seasons in New York and Brooklyn, see Lawrence III:470–474, 485–487, 488–489.

FIGURE 1.2. Impresario Max Maretzek as a young man. Maretzek made his career primarily as a manager of Italian-language opera companies. Image from cover of sheet music for "Oeuvres Choisies de Max Maretzek," for piano.

Lithograph by C. G. Crehen (Philadelphia: Edward L. Walker, 1849). Courtesy of the Lester S. Levy Collection of Sheet Music, The Sheridan Libraries, The Johns Hopkins University.

Maretzek, who served as Grau's conductor during the second mini-season (29 January–15 February 1862) later complained that his employer had been successful only because he and Strakosch were absent. But Grau also enjoyed success because he adopted an unorthodox practice of mounting numerous short seasons interspersed with brief trips elsewhere and charged low ticket prices (because he had no high-priced European celebrities). This pattern worked, for Grau's company mounted eighty-five performances of complete operas that season, almost forty of them in Manhattan or Brooklyn.[21] During 1862–63, Maretzek departed for Havana with a company, and Ullman left for Europe, which gave Grau an open field; according to Vera Lawrence, he enjoyed a "remarkably successful wartime opera season." His final short season in early February, according to the *Times*, attracted "the largest and

21. For Maretzek's assessment of Grau, see Maretzek, *Further Revelations,* 49–50, and Lawrence III:472. In Washington, D.C., Grau's company charged admission prices that ranged from 50 cents to $1.50, and tickets to all parts of the New York Academy of Music for Grau's performances cost $1. See classified advertisements in the *DNI*, 24 November 1863, 3; *NYTrib*, 2 December 1862, 6; and *NYH*, 7 January 1863, 7. For other information, see Lawrence III:491.

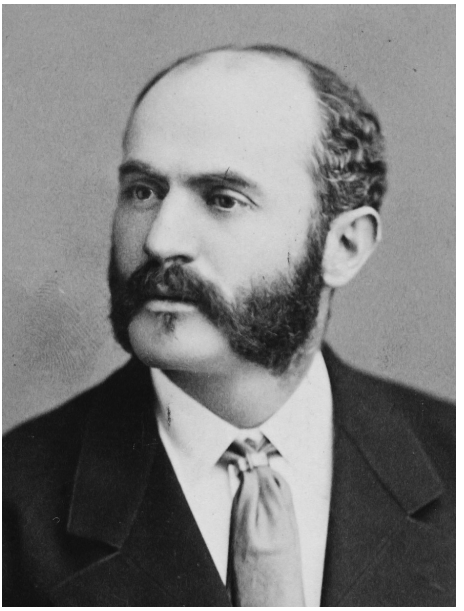


FIGURE 1.3. Max Strakosch. American impresario of Czech birth and major competitor with Maretzek in the realm of Italian-language opera.

Music Division, The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

most fashionable audiences ever seen here," and was "a source of considerable profit to the *impresario*."[22]

For this season Grau again assembled a company from available local talent, including several Americans, such as the sopranos Virginia Whiting Lorini (1833–1865) and Genevieve Ward (pseudonym Ginevra Guerrabella, 1838–1922), contralto Kate Duckworth (Catarina Morensi, dates unknown), mezzo Fanny Stockton (1844–1870), and tenor William Castle (1836–1909). This prompted Nathaniel Parker Willis to comment approvingly that the war presented "a rare opportunity for native operatic talent." Although Grau made this change out of necessity, it nevertheless represented a golden opportunity for American singers, many of whom had been unable to compete with imported Italian celebrities. This also allowed Grau to charge lower

22. Ullman's departure is reported in "Theatrical," *NYTrib*, 11 December 1862, 3; the Maretzek company was performing in Havana by 11 November, as reported in "News from Havana," *NYT*, 20 November 1862, 1. The quotation is from Lawrence III:517. For other performances, see Lawrence III:511–519; and Odell, VII:512–514. The second quotation is from [no title], *NYT*, 6 February 1863, 5.

FIGURE 1.4. Impresario Jacob Grau. Sometimes-manager of Italian-language opera companies but known primarily as an early importer of French opera bouffe to the United States.

Dramatic Museum Archives, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University.

ticket prices. American singers, in fact, benefited greatly from the absence of European operatic stars throughout the war years, and many critics (in newspapers and periodicals) encouraged the development. After Grau's company finished a run in Chicago in May 1865, for example, one critic bragged that "some of the best singers of these Italian troupes are Americans."[23]

23. Lawrence III:511–512; Willis is quoted in Lawrence III:511; Eugene H. Cropsey, *Crosby's Opera House: Symbol of Chicago's Cultural Awakening* (Madison, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1999), 363–366; "Musical Matters, *SM*, iii:3 (June 1865), 41.

In February 1863, Grau took his company to Boston for six weeks, and Max Maretzek, who had returned from Havana in late February with a strong Italian-language troupe, took advantage of his absence to regain control of the Academy and mount a successful five-week season in March and April.[24] The veteran Maretzek was well known and popular, and his troupe was vastly superior to Grau's. Furthermore, unlike Grau, he was a musician; as critic Charles Bailey Seymour (1829–1869) rather cattily wrote in a review of the season's opening night, "there was probably not an unprofessional auditor in that immense audience that did not feel a thrill of satisfaction at seeing a practical man once more at the head" at the Academy. Maretzek followed this successful season with a brief summer engagement in May, and during the subsequent year (1863–64), mounted twenty-one weeks of performances in New York. "The tide had turned," Odell rejoiced, "the wave of prosperity that had submerged war fears now carried the opera to success, and Maretzek was in a flood tide at last." The final year of the war saw "the indomitable Max" in firm control at the Academy, where his troupe mounted nineteen weeks of performances and enjoyed what Odell called "a very successful season."[25]

Maretzek—like other impresarios of Italian-language companies—was forced by circumstances to hire American singers. Although his 1863–64 and 1864–65 troupes were made up primarily of Italians (or Italian immigrants), both featured a number of native-born artists, including Fanny Stockton, Clara Louise Kellogg, and newcomers Laura Harris in the former season and Catarina Morensi (Kate Duckworth) and Jennie van Zandt (b. 1840) in the latter.[26] In reality, however, Maretzek's success in both years was due

24. Eugene Tompkins, *The History of the Boston Theatre* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), 98–99; "Amusements," *NYT*, 9 February 1863, 5; Maretzek, *Further Revelations*, 60–62. For the spring season, see Odell, VII:514–515.

25. Seymour quotation is from "Academy of Music. Opening Night of Mr. Max Maretzek's Operatic Season," *NYT*, 7 March 1863, 4. See also Ruth Henderson, "A Confluence of Moravian Impresarios: Max Maretzek, the Strakosches, and the Graus," in *European Music and Musicians*, ed. John Graziano (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2006), 235–252 (240). For Maretzek's summer season, see "Amusements," 2 May 1863, 4, and 19 May 1863, 4, both in *NYT*. For information on his activities in 1863–1865, see Maretzek, *Further Revelations*, 61–62, 66–69, and 78–79. The Odell sources are VII:582, 676–679; quotes are from VII:582, 678.

26. Odell, VII:580–583, 676–679. T. Allston Brown, *History of the New York Stage from the First Performance in 1732 to 1901*, 3 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1903/1964), 2:47–48. Laura Harris made her debut on 27 February 1864; she later (as Laura Zagury) became one of Mapleson's sopranos. Jennie Van Zandt (b. 1840) enjoyed a fairly successful career in America and abroad during the 1870s and 1880s; her daughter Marie (1858–1919) created the title role in Delibes's *Lakmé* in 1883. About Harris/Zagury, see Odell, VII:582–583; "Savage Engaged De Souza," *NYT*, 6 June 1911, 9. About Van Zandt, see Herman Klein and June Ottenberg, "Van Zandt, Marie," *GMO*.

primarily to the triumph of one American soprano, Clara Louise Kellogg. A brief examination of her early career illuminates how audiences and critics during this period responded to American singers who performed with Italian companies.

CLARA LOUISE KELLOGG AND ITALIAN-LANGUAGE OPERA DURING THE WAR

Clara Louise Kellogg (1842–1916) was born in Sumterville (now Sumter), South Carolina. Shortly after her birth, her parents returned to their native Connecticut to raise her in Birmingham (now Derby) and, after 1865, New York. Musically precocious, Kellogg studied with some of the best voice teachers in Manhattan, including Achille Errani (1824–1897) and Emanuele Muzio (1825–1890). In February 1861, the nineteen-year-old soprano made her New York opera debut as Gilda in Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto* at the Academy of Music with the Associated Artists company, an Italian-language troupe with which both Muzio (musical director) and Jacob Grau (business manager) were connected. Reviews of her debut, while not overwhelming, were nevertheless respectable (she suffered from first-night jitters). Seymour of the *Times*, however, described it as " a success of the first-class," and noted that the soprano "possesses evidently the secret of the lyric stage, and with practice will certainly obtain a high position on it." Kellogg subsequently accompanied the troupe to Boston for a season that was truncated by the outbreak of hostilities in early April.[27]

During the first months of the war, Maretzek's company had difficulty competing with the exhilaration, anticipation, and anxiety created by the tremendous national crisis. As Kellogg remembered, "the American people found the actual dramas of Bull Run, Big Bethel, and Harpers Ferry more absorbing than any play or opera ever put upon the boards." Maretzek, however, decided to mount Donizetti's popular *Daughter of the Regiment,* and crowded into the performance "every bit of martial feeling we could muster." Kellogg learned to play the snare drum, and the company interpolated American patriotic songs, bugle calls, and all sorts of "military business" in an attempt to create "a wartime atmosphere." It worked. Kellogg reported

27. Katherine K. Preston, "Kellogg, Clara Louise," *ANBO*. Kellogg reports that she was addressed as "Louise" in *Memoirs of an American Prima Donna* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1913), 259, 321. The Associated Artists' company was formed out of the wreckage of a disastrous partnership between Strakosch and Ullman. Kellogg's debut was 27 February 1861. See Lawrence III:396ff, 414; and "Amusements," *NYT*, 28 February 1861, 5. For Boston, see "Local Matters," *BDA*, 8 March 1861, [1]; and Thomkins, *Boston Theatre*, 86–87.

that operagoers in Baltimore and Washington, who were already wrought up "by the great national excitements," responded to performances in April and May with cheering, crying, and near hysteria.[28]

Throughout the war, Kellogg regularly sang in most of the Italian-language companies managed by Ullman, Grau, and Maretzek. Once the initial war-generated excitement wore off, the troupes attracted audiences, and Kellogg's performances demonstrated that the critics' 1860–61 expectations had been accurate. By early 1863 she was described as "the most brilliant of our native artists," "charming, delightful, an accomplished *artiste,*" and already an "established . . . favorite" among American audiences.[29] She also had an important role in Maretzek's success in 1863–64, in large measure because in late November she created in New York the role of Marguerite (in Gounod's *Faust*).

Kellogg was twenty years old when Maretzek ("the Magnificent," she called him) assigned her the part, which terrified her. "This," she wrote later, "was a 'large order' for a girl of twenty," primarily because Gounod's music, while fascinating, was completely different from what she called "the simple Italian school." In comparison with familiar roles such as Martha, Gilda (*Rigoletto*), and Linda (*Linda of Chamounix*), she had no idea how to react to Gounod's music. "I felt utterly at sea," she later confessed, "especially when I tried to sing what at that time seemed to be the remarkable intervals of this strange, new, operatic heroine, Marguerite." Although puzzled by the score, Kellogg reacted with the kind of Yankee pluck that American audiences would find endearing in Emma Abbott a decade later; in Kellogg's words, "I took my courage in both hands and resolved to make America proud of me."[30] She threw herself wholeheartedly into the assignment and created her own Marguerite, which became her greatest and most popular role—even though she regarded the character as "a little fool." Kellogg believed that most interpretations of Marguerite were too sophisticated and complex, and decided instead to portray her as something of a simpleton, a young woman

28. Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 55–56. I have been unable to verify Kellogg's report of these performances in either city.

29. For Ullman, see Lawrence III:427, 495–498; about Grau, see Lawrence III:429, 470–474; for work with Maretzek and Strakosch, see Kellogg, *Memoirs.* Quotations are from "Dramatic, Musical, Etc.," *NA&USG*, 14 March 1863, [n.p.]; and "Operatic and Theatrical. Musical," *NYH*, 23 February 1863, 5 (italics in original).

30. Kellogg created the role of Marguerite in America in Italian. The Anschütz Opera Company, however, mounted the actual American premiere in Philadelphia (in German), scooping Maretzek by one week; Marguerite was sung by Mlle. Frederici. See Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 75; Alfred Loewenberg, *Annals of Opera, 1597-1940* (Totowa, NJ: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), 940; "Amusements," *PI*, 18 and 20 November 1863, 8, 8; Quotations are from Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 75 and 79.

FIGURE 1.5. American soprano Clara Louise Kellogg in her most famous role, as Marguerite in Gounod's *Faust*.

TCS 2, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

who was "dull, and sweet, and open to flattery" and "innocent to the verge of idiocy." She chose a simple white dress (which horrified the company's costumier), and because she was convinced that the German peasant girl was flaxen-haired, ordered a blonde wig from Europe to cover her own dark tresses.[31] Both the dress and the wig fascinated audiences (see figure 1.5).

The opera premiered at the Academy on 25 November 1863 and elicited only lukewarm reactions from both audiences and critics. But Kellogg as Marguerite was an unmitigated success. A frail, almost wispy young woman (5′4″ and 104 pounds) with big eyes that dominated her thin face, clad in the simple white dress, and crowned with the "wonderful golden" hair, Kellogg stole the show. *Frank Leslie's* critic wrote that she "sang most exquisitely, and the audience . . . appreciated the delicate and finely-marked shades of subdued, trembling but passionate emotion, which so clearly indicated the

31. Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 80–84.

modest, tender and unfortunate Margaret." Kellogg later wrote that the audience did not begin to warm to the performance until the love scene in Act III, when "we felt more and more that we were beginning to 'get them.'" She continued with a description of the end of that scene:

> There were no modern effects of lighting; but a calcium was thrown on me as I stood by the window, and I sang my very, very best. [Tenor Francesco] Mazzolini came up to the window, and the curtain went down, [and] there was a dead silence.
>
> Not a hand for ten seconds. Ten seconds is a long time when one is waiting on the stage. Time and the clock itself seemed to stop as we stood there motionless and breathless. Maretzek had time to get through the little orchestra door and up on the stage before the applause came. We were standing as though paralysed [sic], waiting. We saw Maretzek's pale, anxious face. The silence held a second longer; then—
>
> The house came down. The thunders echoed and beat about our wondering ears. "Success!" gasped Maretzek, "success—success—*success*!"

This opera would become the hit of Maretzek's season at the Academy: "Faust, Faust, Faust," Odell wrote, "carried the season very prosperously," because Kellogg's interpretation of Marguerite, "appealed irresistibly."[32]

American critics throughout this period were quite interested in native-born singers who performed with Italian-language troupes. Kellogg, Annie Louise Cary (1841–1921), and Adelaide Phillipps (1833–1882) were all recognized as important American prima donnas of "Italian" opera (see figures 1.6 and 1.7). A Washington critic, for example, wrote of Kellogg that "we are proud that America has produced an artist of such capacity and promise," a contemporary source described Phillipps (born in England but raised in the United States) as "one of America's greatest contralto singers"; Cary was one of America's first singers to achieve an international reputation (see also chapter 4). Furthermore, Kellogg was praised for resisting the trend (followed by many Americans) of changing her name to something more "European" sounding; as one critic pointed out, she sang "under her own proper American name, plain Miss Kellogg."[33] This

32. "Academy of Music. Gounod's 'Faust,'" *NYH*, 26 November 1863, 4; "Amusements," *NYT*, 26 November 1863, 4; Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 27, 78, 84–85; the quotation is from "The Idler About Town," *Leslie's*, 19 December 1863, 194; Kellogg, *Memoirs*, 87–88; Odell, VII:582–583.

33. "The Opera," *DNI*, 28 December 1865, [2]. Phillipps's operatic debut was in Milan in 1854, but her first important engagement was with Maretzek's company (1855–56). See F. O Jones, *A Handbook of American Music and Musicians* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1886/1971), 136; Anna Cabot Waterston, *Adelaide Phillipps: A Record* (Boston: A. Williams, 1883) (available online at https://archive.org/details/cu31924022451144); Victor Fell Yellin, "Phillipps, Adelaide," in *NAW*, 61–63; Peter G. Davis, *The American Opera Singer* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 41–45; Oscar Thompson, *The American Singer: A Hundred Years of Success in Opera* (New York: Dial Press, 1937), 42–50; and "Adelaide Phillipps" (obituary),

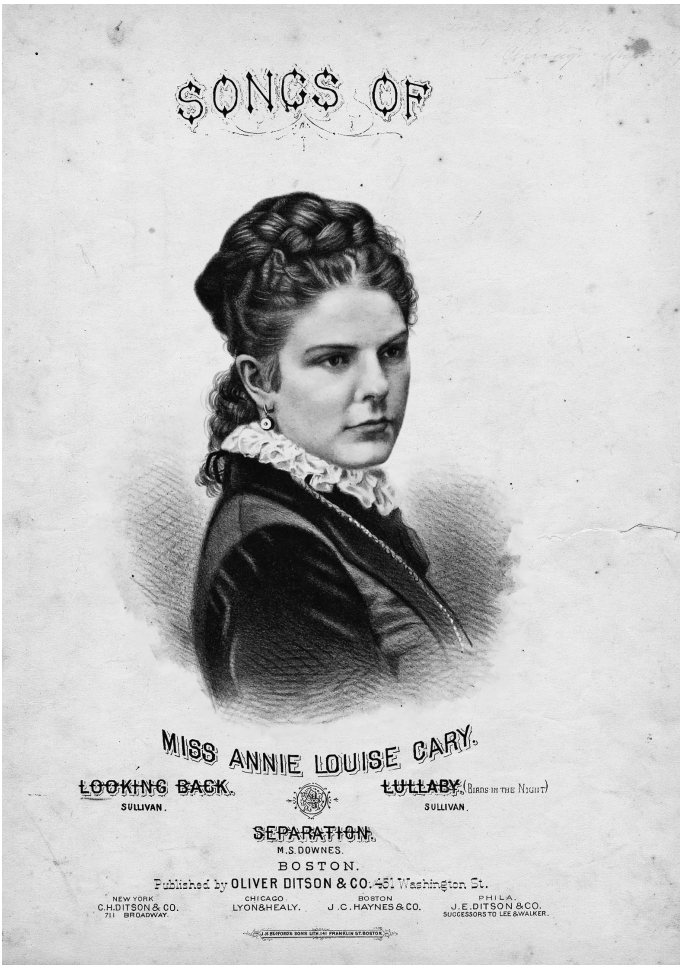


FIGURE 1.6. American contralto Annie Louise Cary, one of the first native-born singers to earn an international reputation.

From sheet music imprint of "Looking Back," by Arthur Sullivan (Boston: Oliver Ditson, n.d.). Americana Sheet Music Collection, The Mills Music Library Digital Collections, University of Wisconsin.

Folio, xxii:5 (November 1882), 408. For Cary, see Dee Baily and Katherine K. Preston, "Cary, Annie Louise," *GDAM;* Davis, *American Opera Singer*, 208–210; Thompson, *American Singer*, 79–84; "Raymond, Mrs. Annie Louise Cary," in *A Woman of the Century*, ed. Frances E. Willard and Mary A. Livermore (New York: Charles Wells Moulton, 1893); Harlan F. Jennings, "Cary, Annie Louise," *ANBO*; H. Earle Johnson, "Cary, Annie Louise," *NAW.* About Kellogg's name, "Dramatic, Musical, &c." *NA&USG*, 14 March 1863, [2].

FIGURE 1.7. Adelaide Phillipps, an English-born American contralto, made her reputation singing in Italian-language opera, but finished her career as a member of the vernacular-language Boston Ideal Opera Company.

Sheet music imprint of "Miss Adelaide Phillipps' Songs" (Boston: G. D. Russell, ca. 1869). Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

celebration of national pride is predictable during a socially cataclysmic period like the Civil War era, but critical support of native talent continued after 1865. In order to succeed in the world of foreign-language opera, however, American singers had to convince not just critics but also audiences, and this—as we shall see—would be more difficult in the prosperous postwar years.

GERMAN AND ENGLISH OPERA COMPANIES DURING THE WAR

Italian was not the only foreign language for opera performed in New York during the war. In addition to the troupes managed by Maretzek and Grau, there were also German-language companies organized by Karl Anschütz (1815–1870) and Leonard Grover (1835–1926). The former, according to Vera Lawrence, mounted "a durable and surprisingly successful" season in September 1862 of mostly German operas (in German) in Manhattan at Wallack's Theatre (renamed the German Opera House). Lawrence also reports that during the fall and early winter of 1862, Anschütz "continued to pile success upon success," and in early December the *Herald* described that theatre as "among our most popular places of amusement." John Graziano, however, argues that Anschütz was overly ambitious (his company gave more than one hundred performances over six months), and because he mounted a repertory of older works to target the city's German immigrant population, was not financially successful in competition with Maretzek, who offered more recent operas that appealed to a wider audience.[34]

During 1864–65, however, Grover enjoyed remarkable success in New York with companies that mounted a more up-to-date repertory, and with artists whom Odell later described as "among the most famous German singers heard up to that time in America." He also took his Grand German Opera Company on tour to Chicago, Washington, D.C., Milwaukee, Philadelphia, Providence, Boston, and elsewhere. By the midpoint of the decade, in fact, German-language opera was beginning to compete successfully with companies that sang in Italian.[35] A critic writing for the *New York World* (possibly Andrew Wheeler) summed up the situation in war-inspired language in April 1865:

> German opera has been trying hard to shove Italian opera to the wall within a year or two past. In the lesser cities of the Union the attempt has been quite successful, but in New York the fighting for position bids fair to be desperate. Maretzek is an old campaigner, covered with pocket scars received in Mexico, in Havana, at Astor Place, and even in Irving Place. But . . . like Napoleon, he has a destiny [and] his late engagements have been crowned with success. Grover first loomed up as

34. Lawrence III:504, 510; *NYH*, 1 December 1862, quoted by Lawrence III:519; Graziano, "An Opera for Every Taste," 257–258; Odell, VII:675–676, 679. Grover's dates are from census and death records on ancestry.com (accessed 10 November 2014).

35. He organized the two companies in September 1864 and April–May 1865. John Koegel, *Music in German Emigrant Theater: New York City, 1840-1940* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 55; Odell, VII:676. Grover's less-familiar works included French operas like *Faust* and *La Juive*.

> a Washington brigadier who distinguished himself a year or two ago by turning a prospective Bull Run defeat for Anschutz's German troupe into a Sherman-like campaign across the country. . . . Between Grover and Maretzek today is held the balance of operatic power in America. Whether the public shall finally resolve to have its "Trovatore" in German or its "Tannhäuser" in Tuscan is a question that now seasons the generally dull discussion of art in which the innocent amateur forces indulge.[36]

Other German-language companies followed and mounted German operas, as well as translations of the continental repertory. This battle between German- and Italian-language opera would become a major part of opera performance history in America during the 1880s and 1890s.

Meanwhile, despite the already mentioned rocky reception of English-language troupes in East Coast cities in the late 1850s, there were glimpses of successful English opera to come. During the period 1862 to 1864, Caroline Richings (1827–1882), not yet the star of her own company, successfully appeared in English versions of operas at Niblo's Theatre in Manhattan. The first instance was in April 1862, when this company supported Richings in a thirteen-week season that Odell called "extremely successful." The soprano returned to Niblo's for five weeks in 1863 and four in early 1864, and evidently was well received both times.[37] In general, it is clear that there was plenty of opera heard in New York during the war years. In his study of this topic, in fact, John Graziano points out that New Yorkers could expect to attend "between forty and fifty different operas each [annual] season" during this period. The audiences, furthermore, were socially and economically diverse, which made them similar in makeup to the norm during the antebellum period; as Graziano writes, even in the 1860s, "a mix of classes at a performance was vital to [a company's] success."[38]

Elsewhere in the country, the antebellum modus operandi continued apace during the war. From fall 1861 through early spring 1863, for example, Jacob Grau's company—between short seasons in New York—visited Newark, Boston, New Haven, Hartford, Springfield, Worcester, Buffalo, Toronto, Montreal, Quebec, Albany, Troy, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, Baltimore, Washington, and Philadelphia; in 1864–65, Maretzek's troupe appeared in New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Washington, and Baltimore.[39]

36. *NYW*, 27 April 1865, quoted by Esther Singleton, "History of the Opera in New York. From 1750 to 1898," *MC*, xxxvii:23 (1898), [n.p.].

37. Richings sang in Michael Balfe's *Enchantress* for the first eight weeks of the season. For the company's subsequent repertory, see Odell, VII:399–400 (quote from 400); and Lawrence III:540. Her Niblo's seasons were 23 February–28 March 1863 and 29 February–26 March 1864. For her repertory in 1863 see Odell, VII:486, 561.

38. Graziano, "An Opera for Every Taste," 253, 255.

39. Further research will certainly reveal additional companies that toured America in a manner similar to that of the 1850s, although the absence of Ullman and Maurice