

NEVER ON A SUNDAY:
A STUDY OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE AND
SUNDAY PUBLIC MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN
THEATRES IN MELBOURNE, 1890-1895

Submitted by
Laurence James Moore
B.A. BMus.(Hons) MMus.(Research) (ACU)

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**School of Arts and Sciences
Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

**Australian Catholic University
Research Services
Locked Bag 4115
Fitzroy, Victoria 3065
Australia**

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ABSTRACT

Those who experienced Melbourne Sundays prior to the 1960s will recall a city remarkably devoid of commercial activity and public entertainment. The genesis of this situation lay in legislation in force during the 19th century. This was informed by the British protestant heritage reaching back to the 17th century and strongly supported by the puritanical stance of influential Melbournians. Yet for a brief time between 1892 and 1896 vast numbers of Melbourne's citizens enjoyed entertainments on Sundays held in theatres (hitherto closed by law on Sundays) and concert halls that embraced sacred and secular music. Emerging when the colony was in the throes of severe economic depression, these affordable entertainments provided relief from every-day uncertainties. For theatre managements financially strapped by the depression and operating in a colony where commercial public entertainment was banned on Sundays, such entertainments both offered a new opportunity as well as something of a challenge.

This study reveals the nature of Sunday entertainments and reasons for their strong appeal. In so doing it reveals in particular the part played by the Wesley Pleasant Sunday Afternoon in legitimising and perpetuating these entertainments. Legal and other challenges faced by theatre managements in staging the entertainments are explored, along with their creative efforts to circumvent the current restrictive legislation. The study also investigates legal disputes arising from Sunday entertainments and the action of government, fuelled by the dogged persistence of Sabbatarian protagonists, in bringing about their demise thus restoring the traditional Sabbath.

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CHAPTER 1

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY: AN OVERVIEW OF SUNDAY OBSERVANCE IN MELBOURNE, 1846-1890

Introduction

The gold rush saw Melbourne develop from a tent city in the 1850s to a thriving metropolis in the 1880s, rivalling any city in the world. Its progress and industrial expertise was displayed in the Great Exhibition of 1880 and by 1890 the colony boasted 3,000 large factories, 215 brickyards, 165 large sawmills, 128 tanneries, 93 flour mills, 68 breweries, and 6 distilleries.¹ From 1850 Melbourne was in the possession of a well-stocked library and from 1861 an equally impressive art gallery. Education was free, compulsory and secular from 1872. In 1885 a bumper harvest and the high price of wool added to the prosperity of the colony. In the 1880s the newly instituted telephone exchange made for immediate communication between households, and the introduction of the steam press and mechanical typesetting, coupled with the electric telegraph, disseminated news from the country and overseas the next morning.²

¹ Michael Cannon, *The Land Boomers* (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1986). p. 7.

² *Ibid.* p. 9.

Shops were open until late at night six days a week, and attracted large numbers of people to the city to ‘window shop’, ‘do the Block’, or to visit the diversity of shops present at the Eastern Market, a favourite of the workers. The popularity of suburban shopping also attracted large crowds to the fashionable strips of Smith Street, Collingwood, and Chapel Street, Prahran. Even with the introduction and enforcement of the Factories Act of 1886, which culminated in the closure of shops at 7 p.m. on weekdays and 10 p.m. on Saturday, Melbourne still presented itself as a bustling city. The introduction of the Factories Act afforded more leisure time to shop assistants, who hitherto worked 10 to 15 hours a day, six days a week. The closure of shops prompted a writer in *Victoria and Its Metropolis* of 1888 to observe that ‘the gloomy look after seven o’clock of streets that had formerly been so bright and cheery far on towards midnight imparted a feeling of resentment’³ from those who believed that they should have the freedom to shop whenever they pleased.

The gloomy look of Melbourne on weeknight evenings also prevailed throughout the whole of Sunday, the only sign of life being the comings and goings of church attendees. An American merchant visiting Melbourne as early as 1857, recorded in his diary that ‘Melbourne is full of churches of every denomination – Episcopal, Catholic, Baptist, Unitarian, Scotch, and all the branches’⁴ and furthermore that ‘the denizens of Melbourne are a church-going people. Sunday is as quiet as a country town at home, and the order observed on every hand shows most forcibly the absurdity of our bringing out so many revolvers’⁵.

³ quoted in *Ibid.* p. 11.

⁴ George Francis Train, *An American Merchant in Europe, Asia and Australia* (G. P. Putnam & Co, 1857). p. 395.

⁵ *Ibid.* p. 396.

Melbourne was a bastion of moralists and reformers from all religious denominations and, owing to its quiet Sundays became known as a wowsers city.⁶ In 1875 citizens were reminded that bye-laws were in place ‘compelling omnibus drivers to walk their vehicles past churches during divine service on Sunday’, risking court proceedings and if they did not comply⁷. In 1878, the Legislative Assembly sought an explanation from the Minister of Land and Works of why the Botanical gardens were closed between the hours of 11 am and 1 pm, even though they were open earlier in the day.⁸ No doubt these were the hours that people should be in church. Even as late as 1938 a Protestant clergyman was prompted to boast that Melbourne on Sunday was the ‘quietest city in the Empire’⁹. With the exception of other groups such as Seventh Day Adventists and the Jewish community, Protestants and Roman Catholics alike observed Sunday (the first day of the week) as a day to celebrate and remember Christ’s passion and resurrection.¹⁰

However during the time frame of this study the concept of the Puritan Sunday was vigorously challenged, leading to the provision of a wide variety of entertainments in the city and suburbs. This chapter will firstly investigate how cultural (and particularly religious) influences shaped Melbourne’s Sunday before the 1890s, with particular emphasis on Protestant values and influence. Secondly an overview of the history of the Acts that controlled Sunday activities will be undertaken. Thirdly it

⁶ Keith Dunstan, *Wowsers* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1968).

⁷ , *Argus*, 17 Dec. 1875. .p. 5.

⁸ , *Argus*, 3 December 1878. p. 5.

⁹ F. Barry. Smith, "Sabbatarian (Sunday Observance)," in *Encyclopedia of Victoria*, ed. Shurlee Swain Andrew Brown-May, et al. (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ For detailed historical accounts of Sunday observance see Willy Rordorf, *Sunday :The History of the Day of Rest and Worship in the Earliest Centuries of the Christian Church*, trans. A.A.K. Graham. (London: S.C.M. Press, 1968). Samuele. Bacchiocchi, *From Sabbath to Sunday :A Historical Investigation of the Rise of Sunday Observance in Early Christianity* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1977).

will identify and analyse early challenges to the concept of Sunday observance which became increasingly evident from the mid 1870s. This will provide valuable context for the ensuing discussion of the main theme of this thesis: Sunday Observance and Public Musical Entertainment in Melbourne 1890-1910.

The central research questions of the chapter are:

1. What were the historical and legal foundations of Sunday observance in colonial Melbourne?
2. How did the various Christian denominations traditionally perceive the notion of Sunday observance?
3. How, why and by whom was Sunday observance challenged?
4. What were the responses of the various Christian denominations to changes in the observance of Sunday from the 1860s?

While freedom of practice was afforded to all religious groups, the Victorian population was primarily Christian and predominantly Protestant. For Protestants¹¹, the Sunday obligation was to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, and in so doing to abstain from labour and indulgence in entertainments. Those who followed these precepts strictly were known as Sabbatarians, and were fond of depicting the community as 'Protestant, English and democratic' as opposed to 'popish and infidel priest-ridden'.¹² Nevertheless Sunday observance varied among the Protestant population ranging from a day devoted to personal piety (in the case of Sabbatarians)

¹¹ in which is included the Church of England

¹² F. Barry Smith, "The Sunday Observance Controversy in Melbourne 1874-1910" (BA (Hons), University of Melbourne, 1956). p. 13.

to one including the possibility of a trip to Melbourne to benefit from the bucolic surroundings provided by Melbourne's public gardens.

On the other hand, Roman Catholics, who constituted a much smaller proportion of the population, having met their only obligation to attend mass for fear of committing mortal sin, were accustomed to treating the remainder of Sunday as any other day of the week. Many of them, migrants from such countries as Italy, Spain and Germany, were familiar with observing Sunday with greater freedom than was customary for the Protestant majority; in fact the leaders of the 'Catholic fifth of the people constantly held up Italian and Spanish life as the exemplar for this sunny land'¹³. As a result Catholic clergy felt little of the stress of their Sabbatarian counterparts regarding the Sunday question.¹⁴

Foundations of the Melbourne Sunday

From the beginnings of British colonisation of Australia in the late 18th century, and indeed into the first half of the 20th century, laws governing Sunday observance were directly transplanted from English ecclesiastical and civil law. Given also the strong Protestant presence, especially in the political arena, it is not surprising that the preservation of a Christian Sabbath in Victoria would be maintained. As Smith writes:

Patterson, Balfour, Davies, Langridge, Mirams, Nimms, Munro and the rest, were mostly gold-era migrants who had achieved affluence and power during the land-boom. They were narrow, forceful men, mostly Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents from Scotland and Ulster,

¹³ Ibid. p. 13.

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 13.

and they used their political dominance to carry into legislation the social tenets of their churches.¹⁵

However it is wrong to lay blame for Sabbatarian practice primarily on the Reformed traditions of the above mentioned Victorians, as Australian Sunday legislation (as it stood during the period of this study) originated in Britain well before the Reformation. Even prior to 1066, Sunday laws in England formed part of the Roman legislature banning Sunday marketing and various forms of recreation and entertainment such as hunting. Ecclesiastical in substance and Papal in legislation, the prime focus of this legislation was compulsory observance of Sunday as a Christian holy day.¹⁶

While such legislation appears harsh, it was the period from the post-Reformation to the 19th century that gave rise to the most stringent Sunday Observance legislation. During the reign of Henry VIII, *The Statute of Six Articles* (1534) made it an offence to refuse to be confessed or to receive communion.¹⁷ Repealed by Edward VI in 1547 *The Statute of Six Articles* (1534) was replaced in 1551 by his *Act of Uniformity*,¹⁸ which required all to attend church or chapel 'upon every Sunday and other days ordained and...kept as Holidays, and then and there to abide orderly and soberly during the time of the Common Prayer, Preachings and other service of God ...upon Pain or Punishment by Censures of the Church'¹⁹ Church historian Philip Schaff suggests that it was the compulsion to attend Church services, and the obligatory

¹⁵ F. Barry. Smith, "Joseph Symes and the Australasian Secular Association," *Labour History*, no. 5, November (1963).

¹⁶ Law Reform Committee of South Australia, "Inherited Imperial Sunday Observance or Lord's Day Acts," (Adelaide: 1987). 5. Further measures were taken by Parliament in 1448 with the *Sunday Fairs Act*, which prohibited markets and fairs on Sunday and principal religious feast days, excepting necessary foodstuffs, and harvest season. (Ibid 7).

¹⁷ *Statute of Six Articles*, sometimes called *An Act Abolishing Diversity of Opinions* (31 Hen. VIII c.14). passed in 1534 it was repealed in 1547 by Edw. VI c.12. Ibid. p. 6.

¹⁸ *Act of Uniformity* 5 & 6 Edw. VI c. 1. Ibid. p. 6.

¹⁹ Quoted in Ibid. p. 6.

responsive reading of the Decalogue (as required by the Prayer Book) that perpetuated the obligation of the fourth commandment in the minds of the people.²⁰ Nicolas Bownd's *The True Doctrine of the Sabbath* published in 1595 offered the first clear exposition of the Puritan theory of the Christian Sabbath. He claims:

that the Sabbath or weekly day of holy rest is a primitive institution of the benevolent Creator for the benefit of man, and that the fourth commandment as to its substance (that is, the keeping holy one day out of seven) is as perpetual in design and as binding upon the Christians as any other of the Ten Commandments, of which Christ said that not 'one jot or one tittle' shall pass away till all be fulfilled.²¹

During the reign of Charles I (1625-1649), further laws governing Sunday were passed in response to 'unruly Sundays', leading to the adoption in 1625 of *An Act Punishing Divers [sic] Abuses Committed on the Lord's Day Called Sunday*.²² The preamble to this document maintains that:

'...the true service of God in very many places of this realm hath been and now is profaned and neglected by the disorderly sort of common plays and other unlawful exercises and pastimes upon the Lord's day...neglecting divine service both in their own parishes and elsewhere.'²³

²⁰ Rev. J Laurence Rentoul also held this understanding. In 1883 in a written symposium organised by *The Melbourne Review* to discuss the Sunday question in light of the possible opening of public libraries and art galleries on Sunday he states that: 'Into the daily service of the Church of England Cranmer introduced it [the Decalogue]. In the "Second Book of Homilies" it is distinctly connected with the Sabbath law' (J. Laurence (John Laurence) Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 318. In answer to this assertion, Rev. Horace F. Tucker says: 'Rentoul is altogether in error speaking of Cranmer as having introduced the Sabbath into "the daily service of the Church". There is —thank God—allusion to it in our "daily service". In the Communion Office the Fourth Commandment is read, as a parable, or Old Testament Lesson. The response we make leads us to contemplate *the spirit* of each command, to which we hold. The Church Catechism deduces from the Forth Commandment our duty to "serve God truly all the days of our life"—to keep a perpetual Sabbath. (Horace F. (Horace Finn) Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 323. Regardless whether the Decalogue was part of a daily service or that of the monthly Communion Service, the explanation by Tucker was the understanding of the clergy. The question that needs to be asked is was this also the understanding of the laity.

²¹ Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, 6th ed., vol. I The History of Creeeds (CCEL).

²² *An Act Punishing Divers Abuses Committed on the Lord's Day Called Sunday*, 1 Charles I., Cap. 1, (1625). in *Victorian Statutes* vol. VII, (1890). pp. 976-7.

An Act for the Further Reformation of Sundry Abuses Committed on the Lord's Day, Commonly Called Sunday, 3 Charles I., Cap. 1., (1627). in *Victorian Statutes* vol. VII, (1890). pp. 977-8

²³ *An Act Punishing Divers Abuses Committed on the Lord's Day Called Sunday*. in *Victorian Statutes* vol. VII, (1890). pp. 976-7

The statute also banned various recreational activities, including sports and hunting, and furthermore states that ‘there shall be no meetings assemblies or concourses of people out of their own parishes’ and offences will be binding ‘within this realm of England or any the dominions thereof...’. In enforcing religious conformity and preventing other forms of assembly, the law was aimed at engendering social order and an end to unruly Sundays. Penalties for offences were heavy. Any of the above attracted a fine of three shillings and four pence to be paid to the poor box. Failing this, the statute provided for goods to be sold to the value of the penalty, and failing that, the offender was to ‘be set publicly in the stocks by the space of three hours.’²⁴ In 1627 a further statute *An Act for the further Reformation of sundry Abuses committed on the Lord’s Day, commonly called Sunday*, further banned the use of carriages, wagons, carts, the droving of cattle, and the carriage of persons on Sunday, the penalty for which was twenty shillings for each offence. Butchering or the sale of meat was also prohibited, carrying a penalty of six shillings and eight pence for each offence. Provision was made for the fines to ‘be employed to and for the use of the poor of the parishes where the said offences shall be committed or done’.

Legislation governing Sunday observance/activity in Australia in the first half of the 19th century had its direct origins in the Protestant document titled *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1647) and was directly informed by Chapter XXI para. VIII of the Confession.²⁵ Established under direction of the English Parliament (July 5,

²⁴ Ibid. p. 977.

²⁵ This Sabbath is to be kept holy unto the Lord when men, after a due preparing of their hearts, and ordering of their common affairs beforehand, do not only observe an holy rest all the day from their own works, words, and thoughts about their worldly employments and recreations, but also are taken

1643) during the English Civil War period (1642-1651), the Westminster Assembly was initially convened for ten weeks to revise the Thirty-nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England; the chief purpose ‘to free and vindicate the doctrine of them from all aspersions and false interpretations.’²⁶ Although finding the Articles doctrinally sound, the Assembly desired to make them more explicitly Calvinistic, thus bringing them in line with the Lambeth and Irish Articles²⁷. However, by order of Parliament (October 12, 1643), work was suspended in favour of a focus on Church government, which in turn was also suspended to satisfy a Parliamentary order ‘to frame a Confession of Faith for the three kingdoms, according to the Solemn League and Covenant’²⁸, the acceptance of which saw Scottish influence in the framing of the Westminster Confession.²⁹

up the whole time in the public and private exercises of His worship, and in the duties of necessity and mercy. (*Westminster Confession of Faith* Chapter XXI para. VIII)

²⁶ "Lambeth Articles" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. E. A. Livingstone. Oxford University Press, 2006.

²⁷ Lambeth Articles – Nine Calvinistic propositions compiled at Lambeth in 1595 by a committee which met under Abp. J. Whitgift. They were never authorized. See ("Lambeth Articles" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. E. A. Livingstone. Oxford University Press, 2006. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Australian Catholic University. 19 December 2006) <http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t95.e3306>

Irish Articles. The 104 articles of faith adopted by the Church of Ireland in 1615 at its first Convocation. Apparently compiled by J. Ussher, they were more Calvinistic than the Thirty-Nine Articles of the C of E (accepted in Ireland in 1635). see ("Irish Articles" *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Ed. E. A. Livingstone. Oxford University Press, 2006. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press. Australian Catholic University. 19 December 2006). <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t95.e2983>>

²⁸ **Solemn League and Covenant** - The agreement between the Scots and the English Parliament in 1643. Its professed aims were the maintenance of the Presbyterian of Scotland, the reformation of the Church of England, uniformity of the Churches in the British Isles, the preservation of the rights of Parliaments and the liberties of the kingdoms, and defence of the just power of the King. For a time the proceedings of the Westminster Assembly took a Presbyterian turn, but after 1644 the Independents came to power and the Covenant was a dead letter in England.

See ("Solemn League and Covenant." *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Ed. E. A. Livingstone Oxford University Press, 2006. Oxford Reference Online. Oxford University Press.). <<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t95.e5407>>

²⁹ Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The

For this reason the document is of strong Scottish Calvinist persuasion and informed not only the mores of the Protestant church but of those of the State. It also called for worship as instituted and revealed by God, and the upholding of scripture as the supreme authority. Biblical in its context, and proofed with relative biblical warrants, it still continues to today as a primary document of faith for some Protestants, such as the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, the Reformed Church of Australia, and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales. Framed at the same conference as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*(1647) were the *Shorter Catechism*(1648) and the *Larger Catechism*(1648). The *Shorter Catechism* was prepared for the guidance of the laity on matters of doctrine and belief, while the *Larger Catechism* provided a more comprehensive purview of the subject. Both documents readily illustrate the ideals and the austerity of the Puritan Sabbath as a day of worship and rest.

The Shorter Catechism:

Q. 60. How is the Sabbath to be sanctified? – The Sabbath is to be sanctified by an holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days³⁰; and spending the whole time in the

History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).Philip Schaff, ed., *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes*, Sixth Edition ed., vol. I The History of Creeds (CCEL).

³⁰ Exod 20:10, Neh 13:15-22, Is 58:13-14.

public and private exercise of God's worship³¹, except as much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy³².

The Larger Catechism:

Q 117: How is the Sabbath or the Lord's day to be sanctified? — The Sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by an holy resting all the day,³³ not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful;³⁴ and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy)³⁵ in the public and private exercises of God's worship:³⁶ and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day³⁷.

Of interest is Question 118 of the *Larger Catechism*, which is directed to heads of families, and employers.

Q. 118. Why is the charge of keeping the sabbath more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors? — The charge of keeping the sabbath is more specially directed to governors of families, and other superiors, because they are bound not only to keep it themselves, but to see

³¹ Exod 20:8, Lev 23:3, Lk 4:16, Acts 20:7.

³² Matt 12:1-13.

³³ Exod. 20:8, 10

³⁴ Exod. 16:25-28; Neh. 13:15-22; Jer. 17:21-22.

³⁵ Matt. 12:1-13

³⁶ Isa. 58:18; 66:23; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; I Cor. 16:1-2; Psa. 92; Lev. 23:3

³⁷ Exod. 16:22, 25-26, 29; 20:8; Luke 23:54, 56; Neh. 13:19

that it be observed by all those that are under their charge; and because they are prone oftentimes to hinder them by employments of their own.³⁸

On the positive side, employers were obligated to ensure that employees had Sunday as a day free from work for relaxation and refreshment from the week's toil. Furthermore while providing a day of rest for employees, employers and heads of families were bound to ensure that all under their roof keep the Sabbath with the same stringent observance as required by the *Directory*.

Following the Puritan-led Commonwealth in 1660, the Restoration Parliament adopted the following statute of Charles II: *An Act for the better observation of the Lord's Day, commonly called Sunday*³⁹. Paragraph 1 endorses 'all laws enacted and in force concerning the observation of the Lord's day and repairing to the church thereon be carefully put in execution' and (in sympathy with the *Westminster Confession*) 'that all and every person and persons whatsoever shall on every Lord's day apply themselves to the observation of the same by exercising themselves thereon in the duties of piety and true religion, publicly and privately'.

This law was transplanted to the colony where the intent of it was first tested in the 1826 South Australian judgement, *Fennel and another v. Ridler*. The judgement noted that 'the spirit of the Act is to advance the interests of Religion, to turn a man's thoughts from his worldly concerns, and direct them to the duties of piety and

³⁸ Exod 20:10, Josh 24:15, Neh 13:15, 17, Jer 17:20-22, Exod 23:12

³⁹ *An Act for the Better Observation of the Lord's Day Commonly Called Sunday*, 29 Chas. II., Cap 7, (1676).

religion...'⁴⁰. Both the Charles I and Charles II Acts were repealed in Victoria by the Statute Law Revision Act 1863, and replaced by the 1781 Act of George III⁴¹. Like its predecessors this Act reflected Puritan principles and biblical literalism by highlighting the ideals of the Christian Sabbath as a day of rest. The chief purpose of the legislation was 'to encourage church attendance and religious conformity through the prohibition of secular activities on Sundays, and by restricting employment which may have impeded religious observance'⁴². Another intention of the Act was 'the restriction of any assembly for political purposes on the one work-free day of the week'.⁴³ This restriction had a profound influence on the political street meetings of the 1890s in Melbourne, where members of the Socialist movement and others were fined for holding meetings on a Sunday. Also included in the act, and pertinent to this study, was a provision that 'prohibited any public entertainment on Sunday for which an admission fee was charged'.⁴⁴ It also banned work and travel, with exceptions provided for the sale of perishable foodstuffs. Throughout Australia it became the model for Sunday legislation to the middle of the 20th century.⁴⁵

The concept of a Protestant Sunday in 19th-century Victoria therefore consisted of three parts – (i) that Sunday as the Sabbath was ordained by God as a day of rest and worship: 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy' (ii) the prohibition of sports and recreation on Sunday (iii) the cessation of non-essential work so that Sunday could be

⁴⁰ *Fennel and Another V. Ridler*, 5 B&C 406; 108 ER 151 (1826). as cited in Law Reform Committee of South Australia, "Inherited Imperial Sunday Observance or Lord's Day Acts." Also Law Reform Committee, "Review of the Theatres Act 1958," (Melbourne: Parliament of Victoria, 2001). 21

⁴¹ *An Act Preventing Certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, Called Sunday*, 21 Geo. III., Cap. 49, (1781).

⁴² Law Reform Committee, "Review of the Theatres Act 1958." p. 21.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 21.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 21.

⁴⁵ In America and Canada such laws introduced by the Puritans became known as 'Blue Laws'. As these were civil rather than ecclesiastical laws and did not impinge on the maintenance of the separation of Church and State their endurance was assured.

observed as a day of rest. For the Victorian, and indeed the Australia population, Sunday observance and Sabbatical practice was the result of both ecclesiastical and statutory requirements, therefore both a requirement of the laws of God and the realm. The first significant challenge to the established concept of Sunday observance in Melbourne involved a major public institution, stimulating a heated and sustained public debate.

The ‘Opening’ Debate: Denominational perspectives of Sunday (Sabbath) Observance⁴⁶

On 30 April 1883 the Trustees of the Melbourne Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery made the decision to open the Technology Museum and Galleries to the public each Sunday during the month of May from 1.30 to 5 p.m. Originally proposed by trustee Professor C. H. Pearson (also Head of the Presbyterian Ladies College) the decision contravened government legislation resulting in widespread interest and strong feeling.⁴⁷ Such was the outrage to the proposal from Sabbatarians that on 1 May 1883, Premier James Service (a Scot), received a deputation of protest by Melbourne citizens and clergy of various denominations, the majority representing the Presbyterian Assembly. The deputation immediately sparked the formation of the rival Sunday Liberation Society⁴⁸, which met that very evening in the Town Hall. Mr Justice Higinbotham was in the chair and speakers included the Rev. Dr J. E. Bromby (Anglican), two Jesuit priests (T. Capel and H. Daly) and many leading citizens. Rev Charles Strong was the only Presbyterian representative. Dr Bromby moved support for the ‘...opening of public libraries and museums, art galleries and public

⁴⁶‘Opening’—the opening of public entertainment on Sunday. ‘Openers’—The collective name given to those in favour of Sunday opening.

⁴⁷ Alfred J. Gabay, *Messages from Beyond: Spiritualism and Spiritualists in Melbourne's Golden Age 1870-1890* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001). p. 154.

⁴⁸ They included lawyer-politician Sir Archibald Michie, the Revs. Horace Tucker and H. B. Bromby, Henry Gyles Turner, Mr Justice Holroyd.

institutions of similar elevated tendency on Sunday...'⁴⁹ This prompted a special meeting of the institution Trustees the next day, when it was decided by just one vote to proceed with the opening regardless of the Premier's request to delay action until Parliament had met. The public overwhelmingly embraced the initiative; on 6 May 5,752 people passed through the turnstiles with another 300 turned away. Of those attending on the second day three-quarters were working class folk, many between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four. Over four Sundays the estimated attendance was 18,902.⁵⁰

Not surprisingly there was Sabbatarian opposition. A Sunday Observance League was hastily formed and met on 7 May 1883, the night after the first opening of the gallery. Its supporters packed the Town Hall to capacity resulting in one of the largest meetings ever seen in Melbourne. Predictably the platform presented a strong Presbyterian presence⁵¹, and although gathered to consider the opening of the gallery and museum it seems that there was an ulterior motive.⁵² Rev. Charles Strong's blatant support for the Sunday Liberationists met with immediate response from McEachran: 'I did not expect to see him join Unitarians, Roman Catholics and Secularists in an attempt to break down the sanctity of the Sabbath and turn it into a partial holiday'.⁵³ This response not only highlighted the Presbyterian Church's disfavour of Sunday activities but also their sectarian attitude. Although primarily a Melbourne concern the Sunday Observance League spread its net beyond the city and canvassed for signatures at church porches throughout almost every electorate in Victoria. Because

⁴⁹ Frank Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity* (Melbourne: Joint Board of Christian Education, 1984). p. 35.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p.35.

⁵¹ Francis Ormond in the chair, accompanied by Reverends Murdoch Macdonald, D. S. McEachran, Alexander Yule and J. Laurence Rentoul.

⁵² Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*. p. 36.

⁵³ Cited in Jillian L. Roe, "Challenges and Response: Religious Life in Melbourne, 1876-1880," *Journal of Religious History* 5, no. 2 (1968). ('A History of the Scots Church Case'. p. 8.)

of the extent of petitioning by the Sabbatarians few Parliamentarians were willing to debate the issue. Thus on 4 July 1883, to a half empty house, the motion was carried 37:12 in favour of closing the Museum and Art Gallery. Their doors remained closed on Sundays until 1904.⁵⁴

It should be noted that this was not the first attempt at Sunday opening of these institutions. In 1871 public demand for Sunday opening was mounted, and the matter was debated in Parliament. Strong public support was expressed in a petition of 38,000 signatures collected by the Victorian Sunday League. An opposing petition organised by the Sunday Observance Society (formed under the leadership of Anglican Dean Macartney) contained just 11,000 signatures. Regardless of the overwhelming public support for the opening of the Public Library and Art Gallery the 'openers' petition failed to persuade Parliament; conservative Presbyterian power dominated, and the institutions remained closed.⁵⁵ Jillian Roe notes the strength of Presbyterianism when she writes that 'its influence extended into the debates of the Legislative Council' and into the commercial and professional world, 'its particularly narrow morality permeated the city'.⁵⁶ Moreover Presbyterian polity gave its adherents preparedness for Parliament, and Smith points out that 'the moves which characterized the squabbles in the Assembly, the appeal to law, the manipulation of lobbies, the direct and unexpected thrust, and ruthlessness in combat were carried over into the secular political arena'.⁵⁷ Also within the Parliament there was a 'well organized group of about a dozen Presbyterians, with James Balfour as the 'Whip',

⁵⁴ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*. p. 36.

⁵⁵ M Sturrock, *Bishop of Magnetic Power: James Moorhouse in Melbourne, 1876-1886* (Australian Scholarly Publishing, 2005). p. 222.

⁵⁶ Roe, "Challenges and Response: Religious Life in Melbourne, 1876-1880."

⁵⁷ F. Barry Smith, "Religion and Free Thought in Melbourne, 1870-1890" (MA, University of Melbourne, 1960). p. 11.

and its intelligence, provided by way of 'Balfour's advance information to the Assembly Hall was invaluable in securing a flood of petitions to discourage the faint-hearted MLA who intended to vote for "Opening" '. Being the main guardian of Sabbath observance, the Presbyterian Church was able to provide from its congregations a large, ever-ready and easily mobilised source of pressure from within its ranks.⁵⁸

The Opening Question Forum, 1883

During the four consecutive Sundays in May 1883 when the Library and Museum did in fact open, as related above, the strong polarisation of opinions concerning the matter was represented in a series of essays under the title of 'The Sunday Question' published in the *Melbourne Review*. In the form of a written symposium its purpose was 'to bring prominently forward the logical arguments on which each side claims to build its respective views of what is right' from writers associated with the movement. It provided a forum for discussion 'removed from the excitement and attendant irritation of the platform and unrestrained by the necessary limitations of space in a daily journal'.⁵⁹ For the purpose of this study 'The Sunday Question' provides representative and especially insightful accounts of denominational perspectives not only of the issue of Sunday opening but of Sunday observance in general. Contributors were the Irish Presbyterian Rev J. Laurence Rentoul, who represented the most conservative arm of that tradition, and lay Presbyterian Alexander Sutherland, founding editor of the *Melbourne Review* and whose diametrically different and very liberal stance reflected the views of the controversial Rev Charles

⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 11. (*Minutes of the Public Questions Committee of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria* 18 August 1901 [vol 131 of Collected records in Assembly Hall])

⁵⁹ Editor, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 298.

Strong, of whose congregation at Scots' Church he was a member. A further Presbyterian contributor was Mr Andrew Harper. Revs. William Fitchett and Horace Tucker (founder of the Brotherhood of St Laurence) represented the Wesleyan and Anglican Churches respectively. The presence of a woman in the forum is most surprising and the fact that she was a minister even more-so. Representing the Unitarian Church, which provided a religion instituted 'without creed, asking no conformity, requiring no promises and no pledges',⁶⁰ and which 'espoused a rationalistic and humanistic theism concerned with human conduct and well-being...while rejecting the dogma and ritual trappings of orthodoxy',⁶¹ Mrs Webster was equipped to make a rather different contribution to the issue of Sabbath observance than that of her colleagues. There was no Roman Catholic input into the forum.

Biblical and Dogmatic Foundations

While there was consensus among the contributors to the forum on the principle that one day in seven should be set aside for rest and worship, individual denominational perceptions of the status and understanding of Sunday either as a day of total abstinence from activity or one spent in leisure activities were coloured by their understanding of biblical pretexts and the Westminster Confession, which directly or indirectly, articulated the dogma of most British reformed traditions.

Unitarianism aside, there was general agreement among all writers that the Genesis account of the seventh day indicated the divine authority of the day of rest. For

⁶⁰ Roe, "Challenges and Response: Religious Life in Melbourne, 1876-1880." p. 151. Quoting H. G. Turner, "Mr Higinbotham on Pulpit Influence," *Melbourne Review* 8, no. 32. p. 365.

⁶¹ Gabay, *Messages from Beyond*. p. 17.

example the Methodist Fitchett claimed the Sabbath to be ‘a Divine institution⁶² and equated the “Divine” authority of the Sabbath to the ‘organic want of human nature’⁶³. He also echoed the Westminster Confession in declaring that ‘the need of the Sabbath, moreover, is wrought in human nature; it is that demand of every faculty of man’s soul and body; it is the necessary condition of healthful life and sustained and efficient work.’⁶⁴ It is ‘a sign betwixt God and man, an act of homage to the great Giver and Judge of all time’.⁶⁵ Rentoul agreed, noting that when Christ was questioned by the Pharisees regarding the divine meaning of the Sabbath, he returned to the primal principle of Genesis, and man’s nature, answering that the Sabbath was made for man.⁶⁶ Even the liberal Presbyterian Alexander Sutherland respected the Genesis account which he regarded as:

the only passage quoted in the “Confession of Faith” which has the remotest resemblance of perpetual obligation is that from the second chapter of Genesis—“God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it He had rested all His work which God created and made.”⁶⁷

Mrs Webster however curtly dismissed these traditional interpretations, pointing out that the Genesis account had been totally invalidated by geological scientific discoveries.⁶⁸

Another prominent theme in the forum was the status of the fourth commandment and its implications for Christian observance. All but one writer agreed that the Christian

⁶² William Henry Fitchett, "The Sunday Question," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 341.

⁶³ *Ibid.* p. 343.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* p. 343.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* p. 347.

⁶⁶ Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath."p. 311

⁶⁷ Alexander Sutherland, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 301.

⁶⁸ Martha Webster, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath," *The Melbourne Review* 8, no. 31 (1883). p. 336.

Lord's Day was a development of the Jewish Sabbath, although disagreement concerning the relationship between the two was apparent. The conservative Presbyterian view was that Sabbatical obligations required under Jewish law (i.e. abstinence from work, travel and recreational activities) applied also to the Christian Lord's Day, a line vigorously espoused by Rentoul (with reference to Westminster documents) and shared by his contemporary Anglican colleague Dr Bromby. Others were less convinced of the connection. Horace Tucker (Anglican) rejected the Jewish Sabbath as obligatory to Christians because it was constituted as a 'federal mark' for the Israelites and that there is no evidence of inculcation on Gentile congregations to observe Jewish Sabbath obligations. He claimed that 'The Catechism of the Church of England deduces from the Fourth commandment our duty to "serve God truly all the days of our life"—to keep a perpetual Sabbath',⁶⁹ and that 'He [Christ] has taught us, indirectly, that there should be rest and worship; He has blest the day which the Church has specially set apart for that purpose; but nowhere has He given rules as to how its hours shall be spent.' Similar views were presented by Sutherland who vehemently disagreed with the puritanical notion of the 'Christian Sabbath', maintaining there was an absence of scriptural proof. The Wesleyan Fitchett, who took the fourth commandment seriously, maintained that 'the obligation of Sabbath keeping is absolute and universal'. The Decalogue is 'wrought with all our morality, and with the very framework of society'.⁷⁰ Nevertheless he aligned with Anglican colleagues by stating that the Sabbath 'has imperative authority over the human conscience' and therefore 'is to be settled in the realm of the individual conscience'.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 323.

⁷⁰ Fitchett, "The Sunday Question." p. 344.

⁷¹ Ibid. p. 341.

Given Rentoul's Presbyterian conservatism, it is surprising to find in his essay an instance of 'modern biblical criticism', that is an example of biblical interpretation not directly drawn from traditional dogma. He referred to Christ's example as being 'a living and nobler commandment'.⁷² Christ performed good deeds on the Sabbath, so too should Christians put the Lord's Day to good effect:

If the "Sunday Society" were seeking room and verge, on the rest-day, to do works like Christ's works—works of humanity, saving of life, curing the leprosy of vice, teaching neglected children, going amongst the sick, heralding the gospel of peace, or any of a hundred deeds of unselfish love—then there would be meaning in their appeal to Christ's example.⁷³

It is thus apparent that biblical sources accounted for a firm belief in the need for at least some degree of special Sunday observance on the part of most traditions represented in the forum,

Historical Traditions

Although the stance on Sunday observance by some, but not all denominations was informed by biblical text, perceptions were also grounded in historical terms (although the Anglican Tucker saw history playing no part in this debate, his interest being the immediate implications of Sunday opening for the people of Melbourne). The matter of historical tradition was especially apparent in the Presbyterian Rentoul's essay. Surprisingly he emphasized a patriotic British stance noting that any relaxation of the Sabbath would be a backward step and a return to the conditions of the 'fleshly and lawless Sundays of James I'.⁷⁴

⁷² Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 315.

⁷³ Ibid. pp. 314-5.

⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 308.

The Sabbath, or Lord's Day (call it by what you will), is interwoven with the whole tissue and vesture of our modern British life...Free England and England's "Sabbath" have grown together. England's strength of moral manhood, the iron of the nation's blood, has been intermixed for more than the last two hundred years with the faith, worship, reverence, home-memories, and religious sanctions of the British Lord's Day.⁷⁵

For Rentoul, the British Lord's Day contributed two things to English culture: first, it freed the nation from the 'tyranny of priestisms and of innumerable binding church festivals'⁷⁶; secondly, and of particular relevance to this study, it gave the nation 'moral earnestness and strength' by downing 'the awful depths of the vileness of the *Sunday theatres* in England, with their crowds of evil, bedizened women, until the Protestant (i.e., Puritan) Lord's Day arose and shamed them into silence'. Rentoul declared that the loss of this tradition would seriously impair the greatness of British and, by implication, Australian society.

Other writers did not consider the British heritage to be relevant, a point made prominently by Tucker.⁷⁷ Indeed, the more liberal Presbyterian Sutherland regarded the notion of British Sabbath tradition as having being 'handed down from generation to generation with unquestioning reverence'⁷⁸ especially open to critical challenge.

Contributors considered early Christian practices and writings, especially with regard to the relationship between the Jewish Sabbath and Christian Lord's Day. Those from Presbyterian⁷⁹ and Anglican⁸⁰ traditions noted that Hebrew followers initially

⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 308.

⁷⁶ Hallam, *Rise of the Sabbatarian Question*. p. 318.

⁷⁷ Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 320.

⁷⁸ Sutherland, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 298.

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 303.

⁸⁰ Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 321.

observed both the last and the first day of the week, while the growing number of Gentile followers kept only the first day of the week. Rentoul added that ‘the solemnities of worship and the alms-giving...[and] for deeds of mercy that marked the seventh-day Sabbath’ were continued⁸¹, quoting a variety of early church writings to support his claims. However other writers were able to argue the opposite case with reference to sources of the same period. In response to Mrs Webster’s (Unitarian) use of such material the Methodist Fitchett noted her ‘limited acquaintance with the Fathers’, claiming that ‘she does not know that she could be easily bombarded with quotations of an exactly opposite character to those she gives’.⁸²

The rather unorthodox Sutherland eschewed both biblical and patristic writings for the origins of the contemporary notion of Sunday, focussing instead on Emperor Constantine (c.274-337CE)⁸³ whose clear and precise decree distinctly enunciated and determined the conduct of Christians on Sunday. It stated: ‘let all magistrates, and inhabitants of cities, and the shops of every trade rest on the venerable day of the sun’,⁸⁴ sailors and soldiers were excepted. Sutherland claimed that in cities, work but not amusement was abandoned, thus hailing the later ‘universal practice in the medieval Church [which] was to hear mass and scatter for enjoyment.’⁸⁵

Historical precedents set by 16th-century reformers also informed the discussion.

Sutherland and Webster saw the emergence of the Christian Sabbath as deriving from

⁸¹ Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 315.

⁸² Fitchett, "The Sunday Question." 345

⁸³ Sutherland, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 304.

⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 304.

⁸⁵ Ibid. p p.304-5.

Puritan sentiment while Rentoul saw it due mainly to the influence of John Knox and Thomas Cranmer⁸⁶. Not surprisingly Rentoul quoted John Calvin: 'God first rested; then He blessed that rest, that the day might be sacred *among men through all ages....It should serve as a perpetual rule.*'⁸⁷ For the less conservative Sutherland the contemporary Sunday owed much to the wave of Puritan feeling that swept England, Scotland and Holland after the Reformation. The Puritan's fight for existence led them from the congeniality of the New Testament to the sanguinary nature of the Old Testament in search of the 'God of battles'⁸⁸. In the process Sutherland regretfully claimed that they 'converted that *festival* of the Sunday which they had inherited from their predecessors into a close semblance of that day of restraint that had been enjoined on their prototypes, the Jews'⁸⁹. Mrs Webster agreed, describing the modern Sabbatarian as one who is prepared to return to 'sit at the feet of the Jewish law-giver', surrendering 'Christian liberty in order to claim for the institution the authority of direct Divine command'. She went even further, arguing that the Puritan Sabbath was enforced 'with a rigid austerity unknown to Judaism'. Originally, she claimed, the Jewish Sabbath was a 'festival to commemorate the creation' and was intended to be a free, joyous, human holiday, however it was Rabbinical injunctions, imposed before the time of Christ, that prohibited thirty-nine types of work and fixed limits on Sunday journeys that narrowed the legitimate use of the day.⁹⁰ However, even within these stringent restrictions the Jewish Sabbath was still a time for visiting, and

⁸⁶ Rentoul stated that the British Sabbath was influenced by Archbishop Cranmer's introduction of the Decalogue into the service of the Church of England, and the distinct connection he made with the Sabbath Law' in his Second Book of Homilies. (Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 318).

⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 317.

⁸⁸ Sutherland, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath."

⁸⁹ Ibid. p. 306.

⁹⁰ Webster, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 338.

enjoying the beauties of nature, unlike the Scottish clerics who taught ‘that walking out on the Sabbath was an act of heaven-daring profaneness’.⁹¹

The very different influence of Martin Luther on the status of Sunday in Germany was a point of contention. Mrs Webster admired Luther’s lack of stricture with regard to Sunday observance, quoting the reformer’s rejection of Mosaic Law:

Some would bind us at this day to certain of Moses’ laws that like them best, as false apostles would have done at that time...for if we give Moses leave to rule over us in anything, we are bound to obey in all things. Wherefore we will not be burdened by any law of Moses. We grant he is to be read amongst us, and to be heard as a prophet and a witness-bearer of Christ;...that out of him we may take good examples of good laws and holy life, but we will not suffer him in any wise to have dominion over our conscience, In this case let him be dead and buried, and let no man know where his grave is.⁹²

On the other hand, both the conservative Rentoul and the less conservative Fitchett had little regard for the ‘German Sunday’, which they attributed to Luther’s influence. According to Fitchett, Luther’s teaching on the Sabbath ‘visibly blighted and maimed’ the Sunday of Protestant Germany and dulled the national conscience, allowing it almost to perish.⁹³ In evidence Fitchett quoted Professor Brandes of Gottingen, writing in the *Catholic Presbyterian*:

Our manufactories make no difference between Sunday and other days...Sunday has been made the day for every kind of pleasure. ...people to a great extent have lost not only the true knowledge of religion, especially of the work of Jesus Christ for and in us, but also of human duty, and even simple honesty. Their own profit is often enough the only rule for their actions and the only impulse within.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ibid. p. 338.

⁹² Ibid. p. 336

⁹³ Fitchett, "The Sunday Question." p. 345

⁹⁴ quoted in Ibid. p. 346.

Neither Rentoul nor Fitchett wished for such a lax state of affairs to take hold in the city of Melbourne.

Social Concerns

To this point the Sunday Forum essays have shown little agreement on matters biblical or historical, but all writers agreed unequivocally on the value of one full day being set aside for physical rest and refreshment, providing a haven from the working week. With the exception of Sutherland, all contributors made a particular point of highlighting the recuperative benefits of Sunday rest from work. The divisive issue concerned exactly what could and could not be done on Sundays.

Support for the expansion of Sunday recreational activities came from Methodist, Anglican and Unitarian contributors. Webster suggested that the 'wiser and more religious use of Sunday is to widen the method of observance...to meet the expanding needs of a people whose wider culture and more varied interest and pursuits demand a different kind of "rest" ' from that of the ecclesiastical conception. The opening of institutes of learning will be a benefit to all and enable the 'joys of art and literature that is the privilege of our time'. Furthermore she believed that 'some hours given to rational and elevating recreation' and minds 'braced by study and expanded by art' would also have a bearing on church attendance and elevate theology to a more human and Christian plane.⁹⁵ The Anglican Tucker agreed, pointing out that one should be free to do whatever on Sundays: whether it is to sit still at home, walk or ride, or spend part or all the day in devotion, study pictures or books either at home or in the Public Library. He also contended that the opening of these facilities gave an

⁹⁵ Webster, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 341.

alternative to the excuse of 'real Sabbath-breakers that the street and bar parlours were the only public places open to them on the Lord's day'.⁹⁶

However the opening of these institutions on Sunday presented Fitchett and Tucker with a dilemma, as support for 'opening' also meant a denial of Sabbath rest to others. Fitchett stated that behind a general sanction of Sunday amusements always stood Sunday labour, and pointed out that the principles of the Sunday Opening Society would create another Chicago or San Francisco with the introduction of Sunday theatres, Sunday newspapers, and a Sunday racecourse.⁹⁷ Such an outcome was also of grave concern to the conservative Presbyterian Rentoul, for whom 'opening' would engender social inequality and create 'toil, and ever more toil, of man and beast, to the end that a few loungers may be gratified'.⁹⁸ His Anglican colleague agreed in principle, but pointed out that the opening of the Public Library and Museum in Sydney in 1877 had in fact proved such a view incorrect.⁹⁹

While all contributors alluded to the physical and mental benefits of a rest day, Fitchett alone dwelt at length on this theme. As with his theology, his approach to the social benefits of the Sabbath was both practical and objective, no doubt informed by the socio-economic background of his Methodist congregations. Utilizing the proceedings of the 1882 Genevan International Health Congress, and drawing attention to the fact that its members were neither divines nor theologians, Fitchett noted the following resolutions: (i) that 'Man is so formed that he requires one day in the week for rest from bodily and mental work', further noting that neglect would

⁹⁶ Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 323.

⁹⁷ Fitchett, "The Sunday Question." p. 348.

⁹⁸ Rentoul, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 319.

⁹⁹ Tucker, "The Sunday Question: Sunday or Sabbath." p. 324.

result in ‘pathological disorders, waste of frame, a progressive and incurable languor, incapacity for effort, and premature death’; (ii) that while rest may result in preventing the above ‘it does not suffice that the labourer rests on any one day of the week...all should enjoy the same day, so as to secure a quieter and more peaceful day than others’; (iii) as a result, recommendation should be made to all Government authorities and manufacturers to grant ‘as far as possible...a rest-day in every week, and to arrange for the working out of the above-stated hygienic principles.’¹⁰⁰

The wide ranging views expressed in the Sunday Forum debate reveal a degree of liberalism on the matter of Sunday observance, even from Presbyterian protagonists. Further challenges to the traditional understandings were concurrently appearing in conjunction with major developments in scientific knowledge and secularist thought

Further Challenges to the Melbourne Sunday

The revelation of Darwin’s ‘*Origin of the Species*’ (1859) had the capacity to decimate the very being of Christianity, and in the case of Protestantism it assailed its traditional thinking and fundamental biblically-based dogma. Journals such as *The Victorian Review* and *The Melbourne Review* were published between 1876 and 1886 with the purpose of covering the widest possible range of cultivated thought. It was also during this period that many of the denominations discussed and overcame (albeit with mixed reception) the various problems associated with Darwinian revolution as

¹⁰⁰ Fitchett, "The Sunday Question." pp. 343-4.

well as 'arguments drawing strength from textual criticism, ...anthropological evidence, and historicism...'.¹⁰¹

For some, curiosity generated by these concepts left doubt in their minds and many questioned their faith in Christianity. Out of such inquisitiveness and thirst for knowledge many societies were spawned to debate, discern and reflect on new advances in thought and science. Utilising the platforms of theatres and halls in Melbourne on Sunday evenings to spread their 'gospel', these societies crusaded against orthodox religion, declaring the Bible incompatible with science, seeking to expose Christianity's inner contradictions and moral flaws. Adherents generally hailed from evangelical Protestant backgrounds and comprised Sunday school teachers, lay preachers such as Thomas Walker, and ordained ministers like Joseph Symes (Methodist), who later became President of the Australasian Secular Association.¹⁰²

Interest in freethought ideals ushered in secularism, embracing Rationalism and Atheism, along with the more esoteric ideals of Spiritualism and Theosophy. Spiritualism attracted the wealthy, influential, and educated, among them John McIlwraith, Alfred Deakin (future Prime Minister of the Commonwealth) Dr Walter Lindsay Richardson (father of author Henry Handel Richardson), Dr James Bridgenorth Motherwell (instrumental in the establishment of the first medical school in Australia at the University of Melbourne in 1865) and David Syme (publisher of

¹⁰¹ Roe, "Challenges and Response: Religious Life in Melbourne, 1876-1880." 150-51 also see Walter Phillips, "The Defence of Christian Belief in Australia 1875-1914: The Response to Evolution and Higher Criticism," *The Journal of Religious History* 9, no. 4 (1977). pp. 405-18.

¹⁰² Phillips, "Defence of Christian Belief." pp. 402-3.

the *Age* newspaper).¹⁰³ Organisations such as the Eclectic Society (1867-1894) provided a popular forum for debates on religion and philosophy, and included in its membership journalists, lawyers and bank officials, while the Sunday Free Discussion Society (1870-1886, 1890)¹⁰⁴ focused on secular and political debates, drawing its members mostly from the working class,¹⁰⁵ 'partly because there was nothing else for working men to do on Sunday evening'.¹⁰⁶ The Australasian Secular Association included in its membership artisans and shopkeepers and spouted 'the principles and rights of free thought and their application to the secular improvement of mankind'¹⁰⁷.

Membership of these associations fluctuated. In 1871, a year after its foundation, the Victorian Association of Progressive Spiritualists had 1200-1500 adherents and asserted a membership of well over 300. By 1881 membership was 853 with 790 in 1891. The Australasian Secular Association¹⁰⁸ attracted 600 members in its first year and for several months drew upwards of 2000 to its Sunday evening 'Freethought' lectures. Established in 1882, the Australasian Secular Association was a union of the materialistic division of the Sunday Free Discussion Society and the minority Atheist/Agnostic group from the Victorian Association of Spiritualists.¹⁰⁹ The association produced the magazine the *Liberator* and in 1883 staged an intercolonial

¹⁰³ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*. pp. 33-4.

¹⁰⁴ Associated with the Sunday Free Discussion Group were the Land Tenure Reform league and the Democratic Association of Victoria, a section of the First Working Men's International. (Ibid. p. 33).

¹⁰⁵ Ibid. pp. 33-34.

¹⁰⁶ Smith, "Religion and Free Thought in Melbourne, 1870-1890". p. 184.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. p. 170, quoted from the Objects of the Society

¹⁰⁸ For a background to the establishment of this union see Gabay, *Messages from Beyond*. pp. 146-151.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p. 151

conference..¹¹⁰ In its early history the main drive and draw card behind the Australasian Secular Association was English born Thomas Walker (1858-1932).

Although originally from the Victorian Association of Spiritualists, Walker denounced spiritualism as fraudulent and became the Australasian Secular Association's inaugural self-appointed president and lecturer in 1882¹¹¹, bringing with him his eminent reputation as a speaker. Before coming to Australia he was 'hailed as a great 'physical' medium.'¹¹² However this was short lived for soon after his arrival in Sydney in 1877 an article in the *Harbinger of Light* suggested scepticism towards his teaching—'that he was all in his normal condition when he appeared to be in his alleged trance state'¹¹³. Accordingly he was denounced as an impostor in Melbourne on the 18th January 1878, an accusation that followed him during his 1878 colonial tour.¹¹⁴ Regardless, support for the young Walker came from the prime mover of Spiritualism, William H. Terry. He observed that 'the fact of a young and comparatively uneducated man being able to discourse both logically and eloquently for one to two hours on any theme an assemblage...may select is a phenomenon deserving the attention of the thoughtful and scientific portions of the community'¹¹⁵. Walker's charismatic demeanour certainly fascinated the community, for his lecture at the Princess's Theatre normally attracted an attendance of about 600 people.¹¹⁶ Like other freethinkers, Walker ensured that denunciation of traditional religion was in the forefront of any lecture. This was evidenced in his unconditional condemnation

¹¹⁰ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*. p. 34

¹¹¹ Gabay, *Messages from Beyond*. pp. 148-9.

¹¹² *Ibid.* p. 138.

¹¹³ *Harbinger of Light*, September 1877. cited in *Ibid.* p. 139.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 139.

¹¹⁵ *Harbinger of Light*, March 1878. cited in *Ibid.* p. 139.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.* p. 140.

against traditional religion in his censure of Calvin for the death of the freethinker Servetus, which was accompanied by a vivid description of ‘the sufferings of that unfortunate man at his martyrdom’. In a Sydney lecture he attacked both clergy and church-goers by declaring that: ‘views held by the orthodox clergy and laity of the day differed widely from those held when these creeds, articles, and other formulas of faith were written, regarding as disingenuous all attempts to make the views of the present day harmonize with them’.¹¹⁷

While Walker’s attitude toward traditional religion and its clergy was scathing, ecclesiastical thought on the subject of Spiritualism varied. According to Alfred Gabay ‘most clergymen, while acknowledging the reality of the phenomena, condemned the new deviation as emanating from the source of evil’.¹¹⁸ In a lecture at the West Melbourne Congregational Church on 11th July 1870, the Rev. Alexander Gorman proffered some examples of his personal experiences of the spiritual phenomena, and while offering no explanations he nevertheless ‘considered it useless to deny the existence of the phenomena, and equally absurd to contribute them to the Devil’. In contrast the Anglican Dean of Melbourne Rev. Husey Burgh Macartney acknowledged during a meeting at the Footscray Town Hall, also in July 1870, that he had on the one hand a personal belief in spiritual phenomena, while on the other, with the aid of scriptural texts, he denounced witchcraft and familiar spirits, attributing them to the workings of the devil¹¹⁹. Dean Macartney’s condemnation sparked a lively debate between supporters and disbelievers in the Spiritualist monthly

¹¹⁷ Ibid. p. 140.

¹¹⁸ Ibid. p. 55.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. p. 96. see also , *Harbinger of Light*.

Harbinger of Light, a journal that provided a forum where clergy and others could express their opinions.¹²⁰

Spiritualist associations aside, the above-mentioned societies stimulated debate of a secular nature, offering an alternative to traditional religion. Yet, despite wide popularity from the working class to the intelligentsia, they were no competition for ‘the oppressive intolerance of the Protestant establishment, particularly through their vigorous action to prevent public activity on Sundays’.¹²¹ For these societies, and indeed anybody who desired a change to the Sunday laws, a two-pronged challenge had to be faced. It involved not only overcoming the oppressive Protestant establishment and clergy *per se*; but also the not-so-easy matter of expunging the Sunday laws, particularly as the Parliament had a large contingent from the Protestant establishment who applied their denominational dogma to any legislation.

Conclusions

The foregoing discussion has highlighted the role played by Sabbatarianism (particularly from the Presbyterian denomination) in restricting commercial and public free time activities on Sundays in 19th-century Melbourne. The closure of the Public Library, the Museum, plus the restricted opening hours of the Botanical Gardens was particularly hard on the working class who lacked personal libraries and large houses with spacious private gardens in which to relax. Furthermore it has shown evidence of the cultural power of the Protestant clergy and the economic elite. It has been seen that Sunday observance in Melbourne was grounded in legislation of

¹²⁰ Gabay, *Messages from Beyond*. p. 96-99.

¹²¹ Engel, *Australian Christians in Conflict and Unity*. p. 35.

British origin and tradition. The majority British protestant presence in the colony, whose wealth and education wielded power both commercially and legislatively, ensured the continuance of the Sunday laws and the continuation of Sundays that can only be described as dour. It has also been established that perceptions of Sunday observance in 19th-century Melbourne were also steeped in protestant denominational dogma and biblical literature.

Regardless of both legislative and ecclesiastical laws, it has been seen that various Christian denominations in 19th-century Melbourne were by no means in agreement on the matter of Sunday observance. Until the 1880s the Presbyterian Church, the Church of England and the Wesleyans were evangelical in nature and held traditional Sabbatarian views. However the 'Opening Question Forum' published in *The Melbourne Review* in 1883 provided valuable insight into changing denominational attitudes to the issues of Sunday observance. It was found that more liberal views adopted by the Church of England suggested that the Sunday question was a matter of conscience, thus allowing for relaxation of the more austere convention while still maintaining the status of Sunday as religious day and a day of rest and refreshment from the working week. With the exception of the conservative Dean Macartney, Anglican personnel appear to have had little participation with the anti-Opening issue.

Wesleyan perceptions of Sunday observance as represented in the writings of Rev. W. H. Fitchett, were seen to take into account the socio-economic background of their congregations. Fitchett believed that there was an obligation to keep the Sabbath, not only for religious reasons but also for the mental and physical health of the human

being and that its mode of keeping was a matter of individual conscience. However while leaving the matter to individual conscience, he still called for closure of public institutions (such as the Art Gallery) on Sunday as opening would involve Sunday labour and therefore a denial of respite for some.

The same relaxation however was not afforded to the staunch members of the Presbyterian Church whose literal interpretation of the Bible imposed restriction, as did their adherence to the tenets of *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, *The Directory of Public Worship*, and the Catechisms. However both the forum and the ‘opening meetings revealed that some clergy and laity of the Presbyterian Church had reappraised their view of Sunday and were willing to take a stance with the ‘openers’.

Devoid of any creeds or dogma and with a humanistic and rationalist outlook of religion Unitarianism formed a bridge between the established religions and the ideas of the free-thinkers.

The 1883 forum stands as a valuable marker of changing ecclesiastical perspectives on the subject while the continuing issue of the Sunday opening of the Art Gallery and associated institutions represented in itself a change in societal attitudes to Sunday observance.

The increasing outcry in the form of petitions, attendance at free thought meetings, increased leisure time, and the decline in church attendance of Protestant churches highlights the restlessness of the community in regard to the enforced austere Sunday

and their thirst for more Sunday activities. Furthermore frustration in implication is fired by what is seen as the impossible task of changing Sunday law due to the control in Parliament of Protestant church adherents. The experience of the Spiritualist movement in their attempt to charge entrance to their lecture further highlighted the power that the Chief Secretary wielded in regard to the use of theatres on Sunday and the interconnection between church and state on the question. Regardless of growing community support for a more relaxed Sunday, the austerity of Sunday continued.

CHAPTER 2

THE INFLUENCE OF PREVIOUS THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN MELBOURNE ON SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT REPERTOIRE

The discovery of gold in 1851 focussed worldwide attention on Australia, and in particular on the newly separated Colony of Victoria. The gold rush attracted gold prospectors, merchants and artisans from all corners of the globe increasing population, trade and wealth. With this growth was a growing demand for entertainment, the development of which established Melbourne as a centre of European culture. This chapter explores some of the most prevalent public musical entertainments presented in Melbourne prior to the 1890s. Given the main subject of this thesis, the survey will be restricted to public theatres and concert halls and will not include domestic music-making. In doing so it will attempt to reveal something of the general musical culture of the city and the preferred tastes of audiences who were presented with musical entertainments ranging from solo vocal and instrumental concerts, oratorio and choral concerts to opera and operetta, burlesque, sentimental ballads and comic songs. This chapter will also acknowledge that while there was much variety available in musical entertainment many people were excluded from attending particular venues and entertainment types for reasons of social standing, religious attitude and/or pecuniary restriction. The latter was particularly true of the working class who because of admission charges were unable to attend entertainments, particularly concerts of higher-class music.

Acclaimed as a success, the first documented professional concert was given in Melbourne on 17 December 1840 at the Adelphi Hotel, Little Flinders Street by

Monsieur and Madame Gautrot, who were accompanied by the recently formed 'Philharmonic' on instruments newly arrived from Sydney. In 1841 the Adelphi Hotel was also the venue for several concerts given by Mr. Isaac Nathan whose popularity ensured that the largest hall in Melbourne was filled to capacity.¹²²

By 1847 the Town of Melbourne, with a mere 2536 houses and a recorded population of 12,000¹²³, possessed a vibrant public and private music life. This was aptly illustrated in an advertisement in the *Argus* 16 June 1846 when Mr William Clarke announced the arrival of 'a large supply of musical instruments'. The shipment comprised brass, woodwind and stringed instruments as well as associated accessories necessary for their upkeep. Part of the consignment included sheet music of new quadrilles, polkas, waltzes and gallops, instrumental solos and duets, as well as 'new songs, and every other variety of piano and instrumental music'.¹²⁴

On 12 November 1848 a Music Class, established as part of the Mechanics' School of Art, gave their first concert in the Mechanics' Hall in Collins Street, and as the following programme illustrates, this may have benefited from the abovementioned and subsequent shipment of music and musical instruments. It was the intention of the class to present these concerts every two or three months.

Mechanics' School of Art

MUSIC CLASS

Patrons-His Honor the Superintendent. His Honor the Resident Judge.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CLASS beg to announce that they will give their first public Concert,

¹²² W. A. Carne, *A Century of Harmony: The Official History of the Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society* (Melbourne: Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society, 1954). p. 20

¹²³ *Argus* 18 May 1847, p. 3

¹²⁴ *Argus* 16 June 1846, p. 3

in the room of the MECHANICS' INSTITUTE, THIS EVENING, 21st INSTANT.

PROGRAMME :

FIRST PART.

Overture.... (Guy Mannering)... Bishop

Song.

Symphony... (Jupiter)....Mozart

Glee.

Waltzes.. (Alexandrine) ...Labitsky

Song.

Overture..(Bohemian Girl)..Balfe

SECOND PART.

Overture.. (Semiramide).Rossini

Song (They say there is some Distant Land)..Balfe

Solo, Flute (Non piu mesta) .Rossini

Glee.

Waltzes.... (Garbieleu). Strauss

Song. Overture (Fra Diabolo).....Auber

Tickets 2s. 6d. each to non-subscribers to the Music Class,
to be had of Mr. Roycraft, at the School of Arts,
and at Mr. Megson's Music Warehouse, Swanston-street.
Doors to open at half-past seven.
Concert to commence at eight o'clock.

Figure 1 The Music Class concert held at the Mechanics' Institute 21 November 1848.

(*Argus* 21 November 1848, p.3)

It can be seen from the above that audiences were presented with a variety of music, including the latest dance from the Continent, the waltz. The inclusion of a medley of tunes from well-known operas either in instrumental or vocal arrangements demonstrate the popularity of this theatrical genre. But as pointed out by an *Argus* correspondent there was one item popular in these concerts omitted. 'We miss, both from this concert, and that of last week, the violin solo, which used to form so interesting a feature on these occasions. We trust they are withheld from some better motive than a mere whim.'¹²⁵ It gained its rightful place in subsequent concerts. However the popularity of the violin was not restricted to the musical elite or the middle and upper classes for it was reported in the *Argus* the same day that the landlord of the Angel Inn Lonsdale-street was refused his application for a night

¹²⁵ *Argus*, 21 November 1848, p. 2

licence on the grounds that his was the ‘...worst conducted house in Melbourne, that he had seen persons drinking there at one o'clock in the morning, and that fiddling was heard at all hours...’.¹²⁶

The beginning of 1849 saw admission prices to the Music Class concerts rise to 2/6 for subscribers and 3/- for the public and at the same time there were stirrings among conservative members of the Institute bemoaning the fact that there was a great deficiency of vocalists in the class. In a letter to the Editor of the *Argus* 15 August 1849 it was suggested that this resulted in them repeatedly being

‘obliged to call in the services of ladies (I presume from the theatre), a feature in their concerts which has given them a tinge a little too theatrical to be exactly consonant to the idea of a Mechanics’ Institution, and which has had the effect of preventing the full co-operation of many members of the community who would otherwise be ready to give their efforts to the class... Happily that necessity will no longer exist, a movement having been made by the committee, and many talented musicians in town, for the purpose of immediately introducing “Oratorio and other Choral Music,” and commencing a vocal branch of the class.... I would particularly beg to draw the attention of the youth of Melbourne, the shopkeepers and working mechanics, &c, to the benefits to be derived from such a source of rational improvement and amusement.’¹²⁷

This letter tells us much about the social order of the time. It also highlights the influence wielded by the Protestant majority in the colony, their perceptions of acceptable entertainment, including distaste for anything theatrical.

The popularity of the Music Class concerts was such that from June 1851 they were held weekly, the proceeds being used to make extensive renovations to the Mechanics’ Institution buildings. The committee looked favourably on these concerts

¹²⁶ *Argus*, 21 November 1848, p. 2

¹²⁷ *Argus* 15 August 1849. p. 4

and described them as ‘conducive to harmless recreation for two hours in the week to the public, and to those members of the Institution whose physical labour, or mental application, requires an occasional cessation of arduous occupations’.¹²⁸ The programme was quite ambitious for what to all intents and purposes was an amateur orchestra. However the request for more vocalists in the music class seems not to be forthcoming for the majority of the vocal items were presented by professional singers from operatic rather than the oratorio repertoire.

Part 1

Overture.....Figaro
 Duet-Of Fairy WandMrs Testar and Mr Wheeler
 SongAmateur,
 Solo – Cornet.....Mr. Wheeler.
 Recit - Sediziosi Voci Aria.- Casta Diva .. Mrs Testar.
 Quadrille Mary Blane

Part 2.

OvertureMasaniello
 Song - Bid me Discourse, Mrs Testar.
 Comic Glee-Amateurs.
 Gallop.....Post Horn.
 Song - I dreamt I dwelt.....Mrs Testar.
 Buffo Song-Young English Lady.....Mr Cooze.
 Finale.....God Save the Queen

**Figure 2 A typical concert programme of the Mechanics' Institute Music Class
 29 January 1852**

The demise of the Music Class was not too far away as it was announced at the 1853 annual meeting of the Institution that although the class had been ‘highly successful in a musical and financial point of view’ it did however ‘interfere with the legitimate working of the institution’. Nevertheless the committee was prepared to allow the continuance of the weekly concerts on the proviso it did not incur any responsibility

¹²⁸ *Argus* 29 January 1852. p. 3.

on the Institution or its officers.¹²⁹ This was also the view of the Sydney Mechanics' Institution.¹³⁰ However the weekly Thursday Concerts continued under the leadership of Mr Megson.

Also in 1853 a Melbourne Philharmonic Society was formed 'for the purpose of presenting to the public a series of Concerts at which no expense shall be spared to secure the services of the finest musical talent in the Colony, and to perform the compositions of the most prominent composers'. The first of two concerts was held at the Protestant Hall on the 25 April 1853 under the musical direction of Mr. George Chapman,¹³¹ the second on Wednesday 27 April 1853. Both comprised ballads such as Annie Laurie, arias and overtures from opera, waltzes, quadrilles and polkas, and instrumental solos for oboe, violin and a cornet. Admission was 3/- and 2/-. These appear to be the only performances presented by this short-lived Society.¹³²

The name Melbourne Philharmonic Society was also adopted by quite different society in November 1853 with the aim of presenting both instrumental and choral works. Its 1854 annual report noted that the society 'introduced a class of music new to the Colony...an unexpected source of gratification to the refined taste of the lovers of the highest style of composition...popularising...the works of the great masters hitherto unknown to the bulk of the colonists'.¹³³ Held either at the Mechanics' Institution Hall or the Exhibition Buildings programmes included choral items and vocal music in the form of solos, duets or quartettes, ballads, operatic arias and excerpts from oratorio.

¹²⁹ *Argus* 27 January 1853, p. 5

¹³⁰ *Argus* 2 February 1853, p.2.

¹³¹ *Argus* 21 April 1853, p. 8.

¹³² *Argus* 23 April 1853. p. 12.

¹³³ Carne, *A Century of Harmony*. p. 30.

Vocal duets, solos and trios
Under the Tree Tops (Rutter)
The Joyous Birds (Spontone)
Softly Rise (Boyce)
Acis and Galatea (Handel)
Overture – Italiana in Algeri (Rossini)
Now Tramp o'er Moss and Fell (Bishop)

Figure 3 Mechanics Institute programme presented on 17 October

From 1862 to 1865 the conductor of the Philharmonic was Charles Horsley whose high musical ideals were evident in the repertoire of his Saturday afternoon concerts.¹³⁴ Under his direction the society presented a number of first performances¹³⁵, among them his own works. During the 1862 season 1600 people attended *The Melbourne Second Triennial Musical Festival*, presented over three nights (7th, 9th and 11th October. This series introduced Melbourne to four new works¹³⁶ as well as the first Australian performances of *Concert Stuck* (Weber) with pianist L. L. Lewis, and *Fifth Symphony* (Beethoven).¹³⁷

¹³⁴ The first of these was presented on 19th February 1862 the first of these programmes consisted of Piano Quartet in G minor (Mozart), *Songs Without Words* (Mendelssohn) played by Horsley, Quartet in G major (Haydn), *Moonlight Sonata* (Beethoven) and Trio in D minor (Mendelssohn), followed in subsequent weeks by programmes of a similar vein. A further series of four concerts was presented in 1864, this time with the inclusion of vocal music.

¹³⁵ 1862: *Requiem* (Mozart); *Too Late* (Horsley); *Stars of the Summer Night* (Rutter); *Symphony No. 8* (Beethoven); *Comus* (Horsley); *Inauguration Ode* (W. S. Bennett); *Grand Triumphal March* (Auber) Overture—*En forme de March* (Meyerbeer); *Concert Stuck* (Weber); *Symphony No. 5* (Beethoven); *Abraham* (Moliqne).

¹³⁶ *Comus* (C. E. Horsley); *Inauguration Ode* (W. S. Bennett); *Grand Triumphal March* (Auber); Overture—*En forme de March* (Exhibition) (Meyerbeer)

¹³⁷ Ann Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888" (Master of Arts, University of Sydney, 1963). p. 143.

The following example of Horsley's programming for a miscellaneous concert presented on 6 October 1863 displays a complete change from the concerts of ballads and instrumental items presented in previous Society concerts.

'The First Walpurgis Night' (Mendelssohn)
Overtures – Euryanthe (Weber)
 L'Etoile du Nord (Meyerbeer)
Symphony - Symphony No.4 (Mozart)

Figure 4 Horsley's programming for a miscellaneous concert October 6 1863

Although Horsley had presented music of the highest order, attendances at his concerts waned, causing the Society some financial grief. These problems were somewhat relieved by the appointment of David Lee in 1866. Lee's musical enterprise was one 'influenced by a desire to please the public and win popularity rather than promote the educational and progressive advance of musical art'¹³⁸ and his venture into concert performances of opera as part of its subscription season proved to be advantageous. Performances of Verdi's *Ernani* (September 8 and 25, 1869) and Balfe's *Bohemian Girl* (November 30, 1869) at The Duke of Edinburgh Theatre allowed the Society to escape from the burden of debt. While excerpts were given in miscellaneous concerts before and after Lee's time, it appears that entire opera performances were given only during the two periods of his conductorship (1866-1874 and 1876-1888). The standard of the Societies' concerts attracted the best of Melbourne artists and musicians as well as many international artists, among them sopranos Anna Bishop, Antoinetta Link, Carlotta Patti, and violinist Arabella Goddard, who also presented concerts and recitals apart from their commitments with the Philharmonic. Among the Philharmonic's concerts were regular performances of

¹³⁸ Carne, *A Century of Harmony*. p. 64.

oratorios and choral works by Mendelssohn, Handel, Haydn, Gounod, and Sullivan, many of them Australian or Victorian premiere performances.¹³⁹ Apart from the Philharmonic subscription concerts there were many occasional concerts of similar content.

While it was the major choral society and principal concert-giving body in Melbourne at this time, admission to the majority of their concerts however was restricted to members of the society and their guests. This precluded many citizens the opportunity to hear such works.¹⁴⁰

The popularity of the miscellaneous concert in its form set by those earliest concerts continued to well into the century. On 10 March 1880 the Melbourne Cricket Ground was the venue for a 'Grand Open Air Concert' given by the Metropolitan Liedertafel and a military band all under the directorship of Julius Herz at an admission price of 1/-, and 2/- for the stand. The programme comprised an overture, a march, waltzes, a quadrille and a gallop, part songs, and an instrumental arrangement of selections from Donizetti performed by the band.¹⁴¹ Part-singing was a feature of the Germany Liedertafel, the society having originated in private men-only singing clubs. The tradition was transplanted in Australia by German immigrants attracted by the 1850s gold rush. Apart from the members' private club atmosphere of convivial drinking, smoking and the singing of solos and part songs, they were in demand for public

For a complete list of works performed see *Ibid.* pp. 274-282.

¹⁴⁰ For a complete list of works performed see *Ibid.* pp. 274-282.

¹⁴¹ *Argus* 9 March 1880. p. 8

concerts and smoke nights¹⁴² and on a number of occasions members augmented the men's chorus of the Philharmonic Society.¹⁴³

Part songs were also popular with the working class of Melbourne. During 1855 the Brunswick Hotel Collingwood held what was advertised as a 'Chamber Concert' every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday night. For free entry the audience was entertained with songs, duets, glees and choruses sung by Messrs. Murphy, Robinson and King to the piano accompaniment of Mr Tom King.¹⁴⁴ A letter to the Editor of the *Argus* 25 August 1879 also alludes to musical activities of the working class. While defending allegations of disturbance emanating from his Wellington Street Collingwood coffee room the owner remarked that '...it is no mean thing to have accomplished, that in a short time we have gained some influence over between 200 and 300 young men, very many of whom are of this class, and appear to have had no other provision made for them'. At his premises he provided 'entertainments, lectures singing and music, books, games, &c.'. ¹⁴⁵ This certainly was rational entertainment. Other venues of entertainment for the working class were hotels. Beginning with earliest concerts in the Lamb Inn, hotels became a popular venue for many instrumental and vocal concerts. Hotel ballrooms often doubled as concert halls and some hotels even possessed dedicated concert rooms. For example the Clarence Hotel, Collins St. announced that its concert room was re-opening on 20 August 1850 with concert nights being held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, under the

¹⁴² 'Good Night' (Abt), 'The Three Glasses' (Fischer), 'Wanderer's Song' (Kuntze), 'Sing a Song of Sixpence' (Horsley), 'The Dance' (Otto), 'On the Mountains' (Abt), 'On the March' (Becker).

¹⁴³ Noel Wilmott, "Liedertafel," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997).

¹⁴⁴ *Argus*, 14 June 1855. p. 8.

¹⁴⁵ *Argus* 25 August 1879. p. 7.

direction of conductor Mr Wilson.¹⁴⁶ Likewise The Wool Pack Inn announced that a free concert would be held every Monday, Thursday and Saturday evening at 8 pm. The fact that it was published that a pianist would be in attendance suggests that it may have been a 'free-for-all' as far as the talent was concerned.¹⁴⁷ For the sum of 6d the audience at the Royal Colosseum could marvel at the skill of the snake charmer, swoon at the singing of the soprano and tenor voice, and enjoy the antics of performing monkeys.¹⁴⁸ The opening of Ellis's London Music Hall on 31 May 1869 provided a further form of working-class leisure. Sited in Bourke Street East adjacent to the Tattersall's Hotel, the venue provided for the consumption of alcohol and was described as the 'best appointed music hall in Melbourne'.¹⁴⁹ For the cost of 1/- patrons were entertained with comedy, duets, glees, operatic selections, and songs such as 'The Ballet Girl', 'Where is my Nancy Gone', 'Chickaleary Cove and the new song 'Velocipede'.¹⁵⁰ However the addition of the Continental Cafe to the London Music Hall in June 1870 added another aspect to the establishment. The new building was described as '...the most elaborate appointed SALOON in the Southern Hemisphere'. As part of its activities as a cafe it included 'attendance of first class waitresses [40] attired in "continental costume" combining to produce a scene of brilliancy and splendour'.¹⁵¹ It was open every evening from 7.30 pm. and afternoon from 2.30-6pm; the initial first three days opening (Saturday, Monday, Tuesday) attracting an attendance of 2500. Furthermore, it may be assumed that the entertainment was risqué and of a morally sensitive nature for the time. The advertisement pointed out that 'In order to meet the times and give every man a

¹⁴⁶ *Argus* 5 August 1850. p. 1.

¹⁴⁷ *Argus* 17 August 1850. p. 1.

¹⁴⁸ *Argus* 22 June 1869. p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ *Argus* 31 May 1869. p. 8.

¹⁵⁰ *Argus* 2 June 1869. p. 8.

¹⁵¹ *Argus* 3 June 1870. p. 8.

chance to view the beauties of Melbourne, the admission will be by refreshment ticket. 1s.’, further stating that ‘To ensure the respectability of the establishment, the management have determined to exclude all females’¹⁵² The advertised programme simply read:

GRAND CONCERT,

Instrumental and Vocal, Talented Company, Splendid programme
MUSIC, SONGS, DANCES, FARCES, BALLETS, &c¹⁵³

Nevertheless the above activities were not exclusive to the working class. The demographic of the colony was such that those of middle class would also find enjoyment in these pursuits. The proceeds of the gold rush resulted in many inhabitants, who were previously working class in their native country, now possessed wealth and were being referred to as middle class. On Monday 22 July 1850, the Royal Hotel announced its eighth concert of Ethiopian Entertainment by the Waterland and Readings’ Company. Admission was 2/- and reserved seats 4/-.¹⁵⁴ Even at the cost of 2/- the price was still prohibitive for workers. It is of interest to note that the same company performed the following Wednesday at the Mechanics’ School of Arts Music Class, performing alongside works by Handel, Haydn, Bellini and Bishop. Admission was 4/- for non-members.¹⁵⁵ Such a mixture of genres was exemplified in a programme presented at the Academy of Music (Princess’s Theatre) 14 June 1870 in a farewell benefit to Miss Haydee Heller. It also highlights the appeal and interest in spiritualism and the supernatural. Although the content of this concert was probably shunned by the conservative and gentry of society (whose

¹⁵² *Argus* 8 June 1870. p. 8.

¹⁵³ *Argus* 8 June 1870. p. 8.

¹⁵⁴ *Argus* 22 July 1850. p. 3.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 3

religious and musical taste preferred that of the Melbourne Philharmonic) it was undoubtedly both appealing and accessible to the working and new middle class.

ACADEMY of MUSIC. (Princess's Theatre.)

FOR ONE NIGHT ONLY.

FAREWELL COMPLIMENTARY BENEFIT

To

Miss HAYDEE HELLER,

Who takes her departure from the Australian colonies
on Wednesday next, in the Great Britain.

This (TUESDAY) EVENING, JUNE 14.

Part I.

SOMATIC CONJURING.

1. Showing how a pair of canaries may be taken from a cage without difficulty.
2. The story of a handkerchief.
- 3 The witches' pole.
4. Cupid and the roses.
5. The plumes and flowers.
6. Strange freaks of a hat

Part II.

SUPERNATURAL.

SUPERNATURAL VISION will be EXPLAINED,

By a series of

Most Wonderful Exemplifications.

Part III.

MUSIC.

Mr. HELLER will perform on his magnificent Erard Grand PIANOFORTE .

Undoubtedly the finest instrument yet imported to the colonies,

1. Grand Fantasia on airs from "Semiramide,"
2. Auld Robin Gray, upon the Orgue Mélodique (Arranged by S. Thalberg)
- 3 Morceau de Concert, a piece for the pianoforte, entitled

SUNSHINE and STORM,

Being an original but every-day story transposed from words to music.

Part IV.

SENSATIONAL.

What is it?

Song by Miss Haydee Heller's Head,

Where is the Body?

A Most Wonderful illusion.

Prices of Admission :

Dress circle (no hats or bonnets admitted), 3s ; stalls, 2s, lower boxes and pit, 1s.

Doors open at half past 7- To commence at 8 o'clock.

Seats can now be secured at Wilkie, Webster, and Allan's music warehouse, Collins-street east.

G. COPPIN.

Figure 5 Programme for the farewell concert for Miss Haydee Heller

Opera

It can be seen from the above programmes that one of the enduring items in these concerts was the presentation of operatic excerpts; in instrumental or vocal arrangements. There was undoubtedly a general fondness for the tunefulness of the music across social classes. Opera existed alongside other entertainments in Australia from the early 1830s. Presented primarily by touring companies, early operatic presentations also formed part of seasons devoted to plays. A dearth of performers also meant the use of the forces available, resulting in contraltos singing soprano parts and *vice versa*, and contraltos even singing tenor roles.¹⁵⁶ The first true international opera singer of note to visit Australia was Irish soprano Catherine Hayes. Following appearances in Sydney she travelled to Melbourne where she performed *La sonnambula* (1831) on 22 October 1855 to a packed house at John Black's newly erected 3,500-seat Theatre Royal.¹⁵⁷ In this season of five operas¹⁵⁸ she was supported by Maria Carandini (who had sung in opera in Hobart in the 1840s), a chorus of 50

¹⁵⁶ Alison Gyger, "Opera," in *Currency Companion to Music & Dance in Australia*, ed. John Whiteoak and Aline Scott-Maxwell (Sydney: Currency House Inc., 2003).

¹⁵⁷ Said to be built at a cost of £95,000 and opened the same month (July) as George Coppin's less lavish Olympic Theatre, the Theatre Royal was illuminated with gas made on the property. The complex also consisted of an hotel and shops. (Alec Bagot, *Coppin the Great* (London and New York: Melbourne University Press, 1965). p. 200).

¹⁵⁸ Other operas in the season were *Lucia di Lammermoor*, (1835) *Norma* (1831) (the tenor part being shared by contraltos Sarah Flowers and Maria Caradini), *The Bohemian Girl* (1843) and *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833).

locals and a good orchestra.¹⁵⁹ The production was hailed as a success, and as Melbourne audiences were discerning, such accolades were not given freely. *The Argus* of 30 October 1855 reported:

...in appearing before a Melbourne audience, Miss Hayes underwent a more trying ordeal than any to which she had been exposed since leaving the great cities of the Atlantic. The society of this city has for a principal ingredient a class who have fresh in their recollection the merits of such artists as Jenny Lind, Grisi, and Viardot Garcia. This is the case to a far greater extent than in Sydney, where the population is mainly composed of older colonists, who generally have not had such an opportunity of instituting comparisons; but in the face of an audience capable of criticism the Swan of Erin comes from her trial with unruffled plumage.

At this time Melbourne had a population of 76,500¹⁶⁰ and supported four theatres with a total capacity of 8000 people¹⁶¹. On 11 June 1856 George Coppin's opera season¹⁶² in the Theatre Royal (now under the control of Coppin) featured the famous English Soprano Anna Bishop,¹⁶³ and in January 1857 Bishop presented a series of operatic concerts. In April 1857 John Black, now the manager of the new 2,500 seat Princess's Theatre, featured Bishop in an operatic season that not only opened the theatre but also introduced the operas of Verdi to Melbourne.¹⁶⁴ Such was their

¹⁵⁹ John Cargher, *Bravo! Two Hundred Years of Opera in Australia* (Melbourne: Macmillan Company of Australia Pty. Ltd., 1988). p. 16.

¹⁶⁰ Wray Vamplew, ed., *Australians: Historical Statistics* (Sydney: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1987). p. 29

¹⁶¹ Coppin's Olympic Theatre (1150 people), Astley's Amphitheatre, Queen's Theatre (800-900 people)

¹⁶² the repertoire included *Norma*, *Der Freischutz* (1821), *Flotow's Martha* (1847), *La sonnambula* (1831), *Lucia di Lammermoor* (1835) and *Lucrezia Borgia* (1833).

¹⁶³ Gyger, "Opera." p.469. Included in the cast were Emile Coulon, Lavenu, and J. B. Laglaise a newly arrived French tenor from San Francisco.

¹⁶⁴ Verdi's *Ernani* (1844) was staged in Melbourne with a cast of two sopranos, a contralto, two tenors, a bass and a chorus of 12 women and 22 men with George Loder conducting and contralto Sarah Flower singing the baritone role. The cast included local bass Robert Farquharson, Sarah Flower (contralto), Walter Sherwin (tenor), Emile Coulon (tenor), Julia Harland (soprano). (Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". pp 55-7).

popularity that more seasons of Verdi's operas followed in 1858¹⁶⁵, and between 1860¹⁶⁶ and 1861.¹⁶⁷

While opera in Melbourne had become a well-established tradition, the residency of the Lyster Opera Company in 1861 firmly confirmed the city as Australia's premier operatic centre. The company instituted seasons devoted exclusively to opera, and provided audiences with high-class performances over most of eastern Australia. The Irish-born William Saurin Lyster and his Royal English and Italian Opera Company arrived from San Francisco in 1861 armed with a repertoire of 33 operas and a company of singers¹⁶⁸. Among them were two Americans Lucy Escott (soprano) and Henry Squires (tenor), both of whom had sung on the opera stage in Italy. The presence of Squires in Lyster's Company contributed much to the advancement of opera in Melbourne. The *Melbourne Age* praised his perfect intonation, declaring that this was 'no little treat, when we have so often been compelled to experience the contrary', while the *Melbourne Argus* 22 December 1867 acknowledged that Squires' contribution to the furtherance of music in Australia was due '...in a great measure to his exertions and talents that musical taste in Australia had risen to so high a standard'.¹⁶⁹ Augmented by Melbourne locals¹⁷⁰ the company performed on 1497 days, giving consistently successful performances of 1459 operas, concerts and

¹⁶⁵ *Il trovatore* (1853)

¹⁶⁶ *Nino*, *Attila* (1846), *Macbeth* (1847), *Nabucco* (1841), *Rigoletto* (1851) and *La Traviata* (1853)

¹⁶⁷ Gyger, "Opera." p. 469.

¹⁶⁸ Rosalie Durand (wife of Fred Lyster), soprano, Georgia Hodson (later William Lyster's wife) contralto, Ada King ('secondo donna'), Henry Squires and Frank Trevor (tenors), Frederick Lyster (baritone), and conductor A. Reiff.

¹⁶⁹ quoted in Gyger, "Opera." p. 469.

¹⁷⁰ Geraldine Warden (soprano), Henry Wharton, Albert Richardson (baritones), Robert Farquharson (bass) and Armes Beaumont (tenor)

oratorios in Australasia between 1861 and 1868.¹⁷¹ Lyster offered an expanding repertoire of operatic styles, the most lavish of these being the first production of French grand opera in the country, Meyerbeer's *Les Huguenots*¹⁷². Presented in Melbourne in 1862 less than a year after its world premiere, this production involved most of the available local vocal and instrumental resources, including a 50-voice chorus. Six months in preparation and at a cost £1,200 above normal outlay, *Les Huguenots* was hailed by the newspapers as being on a scale never attempted south of the equator. Remarkably this was achieved in a year when some 140 performances were given, 111 in Melbourne alone.¹⁷³

The departure of Lyster's company from Melbourne in 1868 for what was eventually to be an unsuccessful tour of the United States, left a void in Melbourne's opera scene.¹⁷⁴ However he returned to Melbourne in 1870 accompanied by four Italian principals¹⁷⁵ to present a season of Verdi, Puccini and Mozart¹⁷⁶, using additional colonial singers¹⁷⁷. In May 1871 under Lyster's entrepreneurship¹⁷⁸ Melbourne hosted the Cagli & Pompei's Royal Italian Opera Company under the baton of

¹⁷¹ Gyger, "Opera." p. 469

¹⁷² It was Lyster's custom to present stock standard operas that were popular with the audiences such as *La Sonnambula*, *Maritana*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *The Bohemian Girl* and at the end of the season to present a new opera on a grand scale such as *Les Huguenots*, *L'Africain*, *Masaniello*, *Semiramide*, *Roberto il Diavolo* and *William Tell*. (Harold Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera: W. S. Lyster and His Companies 1861-1880* (Sydney: Currency Press, 1981).p. 79).

¹⁷³ Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". p. 63.

¹⁷⁴ Gyger, "Opera." p. 470.

¹⁷⁵ Lucia Barratti (soprano); Masiaco Neri (tenor); Enrico Mari-cornia (baritone); Enrico Dondi (bass). (Ibid. p. 470)

¹⁷⁶ The tour included Saffo (Puccini); *Un Ballo in Maschera*, *I Due Foscari* (Verdi); *Don Giovanni* (Mozart);

Il Matrimonio Segreto (Cimarosa). (Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". p. 68).

¹⁷⁷ Armes Beaumont (tenor), Fanny Simonsen (soprano), and Lucinda Chambers (contralto), the latter already having made her debut at Teatro alla Scala, Milan.

¹⁷⁸ A troupe combining the company of Augusto Cagli from Culcutta and that of Giovanni Pompei from Batavia (Java). In Melbourne it traded as Lyster and Cagli's Royal Italian Opera Company. (Gyger, "Opera." p. 470).

Alberto Zelman Snr., a name that was to become synonymous with music in Melbourne. In 1876 Ilma de Murska appeared in operas such as *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Faust*¹⁷⁹, and in 1879 Melbourne audiences heard Austrian soprano Antoinetta Link in the Australian premiere of a successful production of *Lohengrin* (1850) just two years after the first performance in London, and accompanied by an orchestrated version of the piano score transcribed by Zelman. This was followed by the premiere productions of Verdi's *Aida* (1871) (one year after its Covent Garden premiere) and *Carmen* (1875). This established the beginnings of a departure from the ever-popular Italian bel-canto school and highlights Melburnians' willing acceptance of anything new.¹⁸⁰ In 1880 Lyster died at the age of 55, thus bringing to an end managerial continuity in Australian-based opera production, never to be matched until the establishment of the Elizabethan Theatre Trust in 1956. Even in those early times imported artists were always part of Melbourne's music scene, and it is remarkable that prominent European performers were enticed to travel to what to them would seem to be the end of the world. It certainly shows the standard of performance presented in Melbourne as well as the expectations of the audiences. From Lyster's death until the 1900s opera was provided mostly by visiting Italian companies, but never on the scale of his productions. At the local level opera production continued haphazardly, and was reliant mostly on the whims and fortunes of entrepreneurs such as Montague, Turner and Simonsen.

However Lyster's contribution to the wider appreciation and exposure of opera was not just about lavish productions and star singers. His provision of season

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 470.

¹⁸⁰ Less than a year after the first London performance, at Her Majesty's Theatre and the first Covent Garden performance in 1882 and some months before the first New York performance. (Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". p. 71).

subscription tickets and cheap admission prices enabled people from a wide socio-economic spectrum to delight in this theatrical experience¹⁸¹. With the exception of *Les Huguenots*, Lyster's single admission charges for the October to December 1862 season remained at: dress circle 5/-; stalls 4/-; upper circle 3/-; pit 2/-; gallery 1/-.¹⁸² Even for *Les Huguenots*, the most lavish and the costliest of productions, admission charges were 7/6, 5/-, 3/-, 2/-, and 1/-. In this case increases were made only in the top two price brackets thus allowing those with lesser incomes but a love for opera to attend. Lyster's introduction of a low-cost ticketing structure (the lowest in the world) further ensured that attendees at opera were representative of society at large.

Love observes that the audiences of the European opera houses in the mid-19th century were characterised by formally dressed men and their jewel-bedecked women.¹⁸³ This however was not the picture of Melbourne opera-goers in the mid-19th century. Unlike European society Victoria had no hereditary landowning class or long-standing families with inherited wealth, for whether directly or indirectly, the wealth of many of Melbourne's families was provided by the proceeds of the gold diggings. Unlike the specially built opera houses of the continent, Melbourne's colonial theatres were large with liberal provision for low-priced seating; by necessity they also served as venues for all varieties of entertainment. Theatre in general was attended by 'the respectable ...slightly under protest, partly because of the popular associations of their London original, and partly because of the disreputable

¹⁸¹ His 1862 season advertised 25 tickets for £5. (*Argus* 21 October 1862, p. 8) The 1864 Melbourne season advertised special prices for students: 2 subscription tickets (not transferable) were available at 6 guineas for the 48 nights. Transferable tickets were 10 guineas. In packages of 48 the latter could be used in any number on any night during the season. (Carr-Boyd, p. 64). In the 1865 Adelaide season tickets were the same as in Sydney and Melbourne: dress circle, 7/6; stalls, 5/-; pit, 3/-; gallery, 2/-. Subscription tickets for the 24 nights were 7 guineas. (Carr-Boyd, p. 66)

¹⁸² *Argus* 21 October 1862, p. 8.

¹⁸³ Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera*, p. 123.

atmosphere which surrounded the [burgeoning] colonial stage'.¹⁸⁴ The ultra-pious would not enter a theatre at all, while many middle-class theatregoers would only attend opera. As in Europe, theatre seating also reflected the social standing of attendees. The dress circle was occupied by well-to-do tradesmen and professionals who in Europe would have been seen in the stalls or upper circle. As formal dress was a prerequisite for admission to the dress circle, this provided opportunity for Melbourne's *nouveau riche* to parade the latest in fashion. Boxes were available to anyone who could pay the price (including the Vice-regal box when not in use) and were usually occupied by professional men.¹⁸⁵ The lower part of the theatre was divided into two sections, the stalls at the front 'the ambience of which was flash rather than respectable'¹⁸⁶, and the pit at the rear. The gallery was the preserve of the enthusiastic vocal young, as it required athleticism to scale the stairs to secure a good seat, while the older working-class theatregoers occupied the pit. Seating in the pit and gallery was on undivided benches, with seating capacity being dependent on how many could be squeezed on the benches. By the late 1800s theatre design usually omitted the gallery, and the removal of the benched pit area allowed the stalls to extend to the rear wall. As theatres were increasingly becoming the domain of the bourgeoisie, the loss of the pit acted as a ploy to exclude the riffraff of the lower classes. In all sections of the theatre, there were those who came to the opera for various reasons. The regular members of the drama audiences were attracted to the parallel plots and there were those who took delight in the music such as amateur musicians. There were also those who had no interest in music but came to be

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 125-6.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 126.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 133.

sociable and observe the audience, and those that came to negotiate business.¹⁸⁷

Unlike the situation in Britain and the Continent the low cost of tickets assured the opera experience to be one of truly egalitarian entertainment. Furthermore the experience of a listening audience drawn from a broad-based demographic also ensured the continued inclusion of operatic music in public concerts.

Operetta

From the early 1870s there was a move away from a solid diet of Italian, French and German grand opera to the light comic relief of *opera bouffe* and operetta. This was the preference of theatrical producers J. C. Williamson and George Garner who, save for an occasional prestige opera season, preferred instead to present seasons of operetta and melodramas such as the proven ‘money spinner’ *Struck Oil*. Lyster had also ventured in this new territory and alongside grand opera presented the first of his operettas, Offenbach’s *Grand Duchess of Gerolstein*. In collaboration with John Smith the Lyster-Smith Company opened on 27 February 1871 with an initial 15 performances, continuing uninterrupted until 15 March with 23 performances, and equalling the run of *Les Huguenots*. Such acceptance was surprising as Melbourne viewed Offenbach and his librettists ‘with fairly profound moral suspicion’, and as the *Argus* critic wrote ‘have been the subject of much discussion upon various grounds in the older countries where they have been represented’.¹⁸⁸ It was evident that some did take the moral high ground, for the review recorded that the theatre was well filled in all parts but the dress circle. However the attendance and the visible enjoyment of the governor Viscount Canterbury and his lady on the second night provided

¹⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 134-37.

¹⁸⁸ cited in Ibid. p. 200.

credibility, thus ending any possibility of moral denunciation. For this performance a can-can was replaced with 'an elegant *pas-de-deux*'.¹⁸⁹ This operetta was followed in April 1872 by Offenbach's *Orphee aux enfers* and *Barbe Bleue*, and in February 1875¹⁹⁰ Lyster, in association with Simonsen, presented Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*.

Commenting on a performance at the Opera House, *The Advocate* July 1874 observed the changing tastes of Melbourne music theatregoers and the continuing popularity of operetta:

Grand opera did not pay, but comic opera does. Small houses for "Norma" and "La Juive", large ones for "The Princess of Trebizonde". What a satire on the cultivated musical taste of the people of Melbourne! However, the fact is that the musical burlesque now on at this house is a great hit—so palpably a hit that it is to be continued another week. Saying nothing of the production itself, the style in which it is represented deserves all the success it meets with.¹⁹¹

By the 1880s the popularity of comic opera equalled that of grand opera¹⁹², having proved to be the main crowd puller for Lyster throughout the preceding decade. Even as late as 1894, and in a growing climate of acceptance, operetta still continued to receive criticism from some sections of the community for its questionable moral content. However when Williamson's and Musgrove's production of Florimond Ronger Hervé's *Mam'zelle Nitouche* was companioned with *Tableaux Vivants*, even the operetta paled into insignificance. Presented during the Melbourne Cup season (late October early November) with the expectation that demand for seats would ease once Cup festivities ceased, it nevertheless continued nightly into the early weeks of

¹⁸⁹ Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera*. pp. 200-201.

¹⁹⁰ Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". p. 72.

¹⁹¹ "The Opera House," *The Advocate*, July 18 1874. p. 9.

¹⁹² ———, "Music in Australia 1788-1888". p. 72.

December proving to be a management *tour de force*. The Melbourne *Punch* reported that:

It is difficult to say which is primarily responsible for the pleasant state of affairs—the opera or the living pictures. Probably it is the case of “honours divided”, that some are attracted by the opera and stay to enjoy the pictures, and that others go to see the *tableaux* and are surprised to find that “Mam’zelle Nitouche” is just as much a living picture in a framework of brilliant light and merry noise.¹⁹³

Mam’zelle Nitouche tells the story of an organist of a quiet convent who is the composer of an *opera bouffe*, and a demure young convent girl who ‘has learnt the music of the haughty torty heroine’. When the heroine drops out of the production the girl, ‘who is out upon a mild razzle-dazzle with the composer’, takes on the part with brilliant success and ‘enjoys a military supper, flirtation, disguises and other adventures too numerous to mention’.¹⁹⁴ That in itself would seem enough to give rise to remonstrance by members of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), now the moral watchdogs of Melbourne. However it seems that the companion piece *Tableaux Vivants* with its debasing tendency and ‘living presentment of well-known statuary and popular classical pictures’ was the target of the protests of WCTU. Regardless, the ‘sinful playgoers refused to see immorality where none was intended’ and enjoyed the show with their families. Their answer to protestations was the recasting of an old adage: ‘To the self-styled pure all things are impure’. The closing of *Mam’zelle Nitouche* did not end the run of *Tableaux Vivants* for a second edition was presented with ‘some of the more popular “works” of the present gallery’ alongside Lacome and Caryll’s *Ma Mie Rosette*¹⁹⁵. Such a marriage gave further comparison to zealous members of the WCTU. However in not desiring

¹⁹³ "Playgoer," *Punch*, November 15 1894. *Melbourne Punch*, November 15, 1894. p. 311.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.* p. 311.

¹⁹⁵ The Australian premiere of this operetta was given at the Princess’s Theatre Melbourne 16.6.1894, with 36 initial performances.

to anticipate the verdict of the ‘Virtuous Brigade’ the *Punch* correspondent was personally inclined to add that ‘if anything the pictures are more moral in their tendency than “Ma Mie Rosette”’.¹⁹⁶



Figure 6 Cartoon from *Punch* magazine depicting objections to *Tableaux Vivants*

The popularity of opera and widespread familiarity with its stories also saw its presentation in burlesque or parody form. Included among the vocal items at A “Grand Concert” held at the Theatre Comique 3 June 1870 was ‘a wild and

¹⁹⁶ "Playgoer." *Punch*, December 6, 1894. p. 359.

Improbable version of “Faust,” with maniacal and demoniacal variations, written for this theatre by Mr. Frank Edwards, entitled *MEPH-FAUST-O-P HELES; Or, A MATCH FOR LUCIFER*’.¹⁹⁷ This was followed by on 28 June 1870 by a pot pourri burlesque of *Il Trovatore*.¹⁹⁸ By the 1880s musical burlesque had become an entertainment in its own right. A performance of the ‘legitimate’ opera *Maritana* at the Opera House on 23 April 1880 was followed the next evening at the People’s Theatre by the premier performance of a burlesque of the opera *Maritana*. In 1881 George Musgrove presented Offenbach’s burlesque adaptation of *The Daughter of the Regiment—La Fille du Tambour-Major*. With a cast headed by the popular Nellie Stewart, a record-breaking 101 performances were given between January and April, with 200 performances by the years’ end.¹⁹⁹ The *Argus* review of the first night recorded it as ‘a great advance...in drill, in discipline, in dress, and in many minor points, which all add to the completeness of stage illusion’²⁰⁰. Regardless of such a glowing review, concern was shown in the press for the moral and physical health of children employed in the production. With the headline ‘Juvenile Precocity’ the *Age* described the actions of the management of the Bijou Theatre as presenting the public with another exhibition of juvenile precocity in the shape of a travesty describing it in the following terms:

Nothing could be more contemptible than the pitiable failures of the little mites to realise the meaning of the dialogue put into their mouths, though for the matter of that it is just as well they cannot comprehend a good deal of it. Then, to give even an idea of the music that must strain and force their little voices out of all tune, beyond all natural limit, with no knowledge or power of vocal control, trying to sing most of them at an age when it is important the voice should be left entirely at rest, and screaming it away probably beyond all chance of restoration.

¹⁹⁷ *Argus* 3 June 1870. p. 8.

¹⁹⁸ *Argus* 28 June 1870. p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ Carr-Boyd, “Music in Australia 1788-1888”. p. 72.

²⁰⁰ Cited in Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera*. p 259.

The affair altogether is a miserable piece of business, discreditable alike to the Government who are permitting it, to that section of the press which is encouraging it, and to those parents who for the sake of a few shillings weekly are content to risk the ruin of their children's health, both mental and bodily.²⁰¹

This satirical vein was continued with the productions of the British duo W. S. Gilbert (1836-1911), and Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900). Like the music of operetta, Sullivan's music contained flowing melodies and popular dance rhythms. Reporting on the 1885 premiere of *Iolanthe* at the Theatre Royal the *Argus* said 'that the announcement of a new opera by Gilbert and Sullivan...was sufficient to attract such crowds of spectators that all parts of the house were filled to overflowing long before the hour for the commencement had arrived'.²⁰² In the vein of Mozart's operas the duo lampooned the antics of members of society, in particular the government and the judiciary. Gilbert's use of satire and wit in his libretti coupled with the popularity of burlesque no doubt contributed to the shaping of the Australian comic psyche.

While social status and occupation provided no bounds to musical preferences, it has been shown that accessibility of the working class to the appreciation of music of high art was primarily a monetary one. While the working class was excluded from such entertainments there were also those who because of strong religious beliefs were excluded from particular musical experiences enjoyed by the working and middle classes. This was particularly true of the stricter Protestant denomination whose adherents in general shunned theatrical entertainments. The one event in Melbourne

²⁰¹ "Juvenile Precocity," *The Age*, Oct 1 1881.

²⁰² *Argus*, May 11 1885.

that united the public from all walks of life was the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition.

1888 Centennial International Exhibition

Held in celebration of the centenary of Australian European colonisation the Exhibition attracted an attendance of nearly two million people.²⁰³ The sheer numbers suggest that those who visited were from all walks of life, ethnic background and religion. It was here that country people rubbed shoulders with those from the city, and businessmen, merchants, and professionals with the working class.



Figure 7 A parade indicative of the Opening of 1888 International Exhibition.

(Melbourne Library Services)

The Exhibition was opened on 1st August 1888 by the Governor Sir Henry Brougham Loch, and with the exception of Sundays remained open for 160 days, closing formally on 31st January 1889. While this landmark event was established to display the industry of all nations it was not however merely an exhibition of industrial prowess as it also included exhibits and performances of significant cultural focus;

²⁰³ Environment Australia, *Royal Exhibition Building and Carlton Gardens, Melbourne* (Melbourne: Environment Australia, 2002). p. 38.

particularly in the areas of visual art and music²⁰⁴ Furthermore this was the first international exhibition totally lit (by electricity) at night thus enabling exhibits and entertainments to be viewed in a variety of settings. This innovation also extended the viewing time of the art galleries to 10 pm (Figure 8), resulting in working-class families no longer being limited to daylight weekend attendance.²⁰⁵

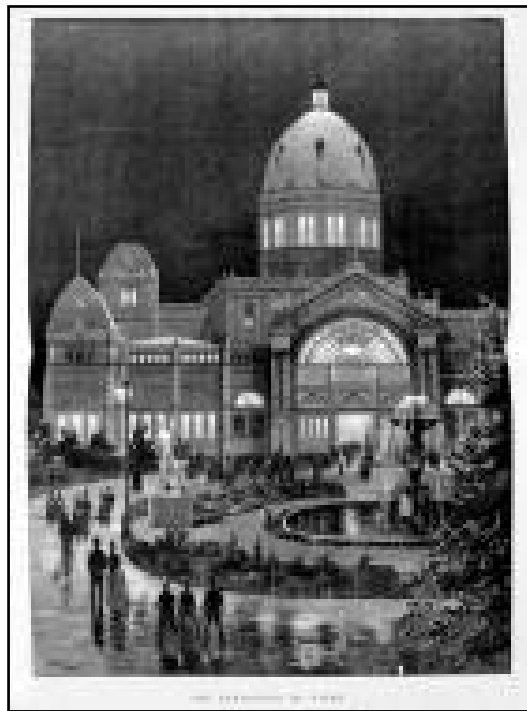


Figure 8 The Exhibition by night (*State Library of Victoria*)

Music of the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition

Apart from exposure to high culture in the form of art collections, the 1888 Centennial International Exhibition provided the access and opportunity to listen to high quality musical entertainment. In his history of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society, W. A. Carne asserts that ‘the orchestral and choral activities transcended all

²⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 38.

²⁰⁵ Environment Ibid. p. 42.

other musical festivals ever given in Victoria'.²⁰⁶ Some £28,000 was expended on musical activities.²⁰⁷ The 73-strong 'Exhibition Orchestra' comprising 15 imported instrumentalist and locally recruited musicians was under the direction of the eminent English conductor Mr Frederic H. Cowen. During the six months of the exhibition the orchestra presented or was involved in 244²⁰⁸ official concerts. Overall, audiences experienced the complete cycle of Beethoven symphonies as well as never-heard contemporary compositions by Brahms, Schumann and Liszt. The concerts also set new standards in orchestral performance and public taste. Alongside the establishment of the Exhibition Orchestra, the eventual 708-voice²⁰⁹ 'Exhibition Choir' was formed and trained by Mr Alberto Zelman Snr and Mr George Peake (Organist, Melbourne Philharmonic Society). The enduring popularity of choral singing aided by the teaching of singing and sight-reading in schools ensured a viable core of chorister and resulted in average daily attendances of 2201 at the choral concerts throughout the duration of the exhibition. In the majority of cases there was a charge of 1/- for seating in the body of the hall. Importantly there was no charge was made to the galleries or under-galleries thus allowing visitors from all social backgrounds to attend concerts.

²⁰⁶ Carne, *A Century of Harmony*. p 109.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.* p. 110.

²⁰⁸ 191 orchestral concerts (91 overtures, 35 symphonies, 14 concertos, 17 selections, 95 miscellaneous); Choral and other concerts (21 popular, 32 choral).

²⁰⁹ 223 sopranos, 192, contraltos, 146 tenors, and 147 basses

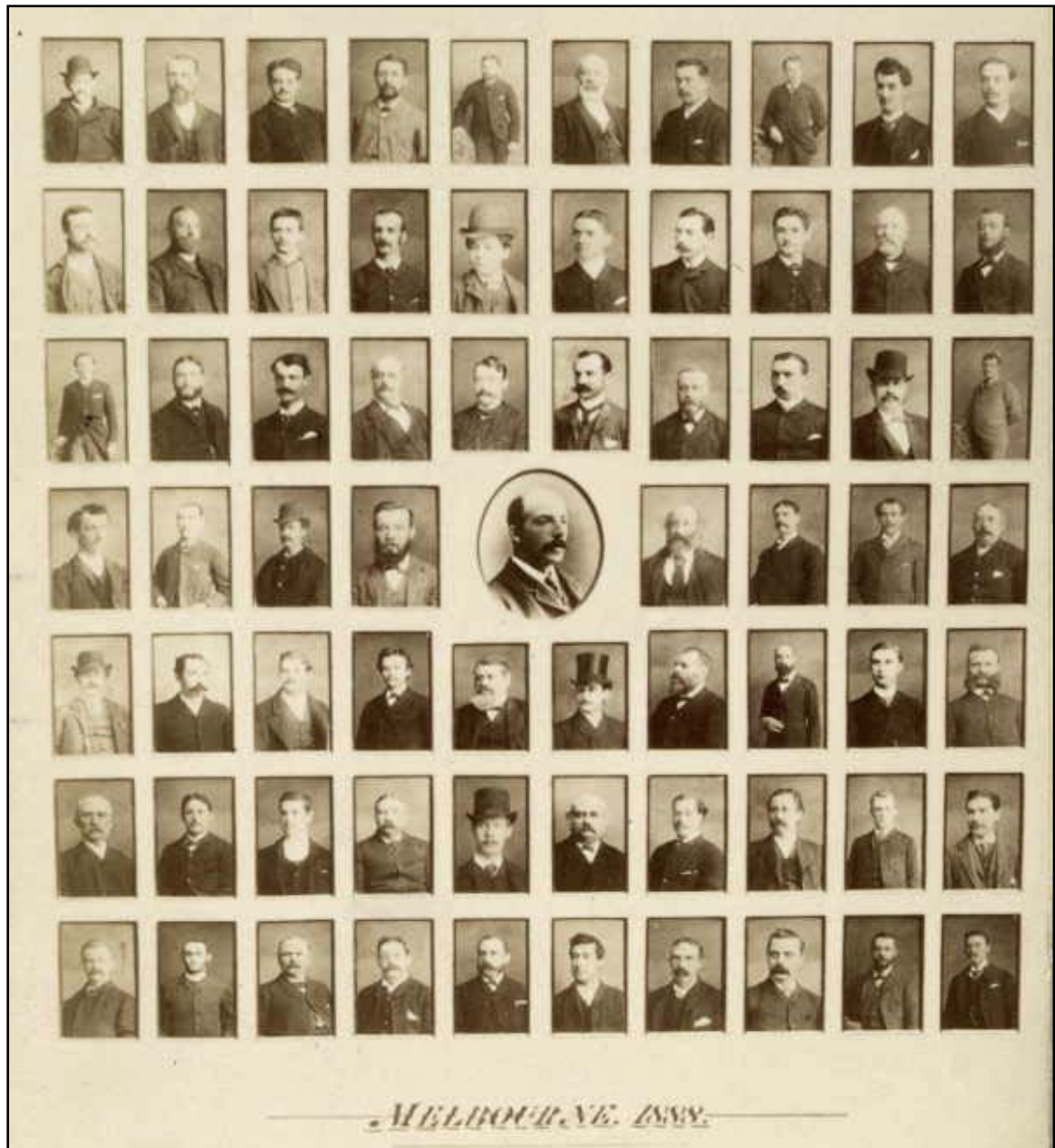


Figure 9 Members of the International Exhibition Orchestra (*State Library of Victoria*)

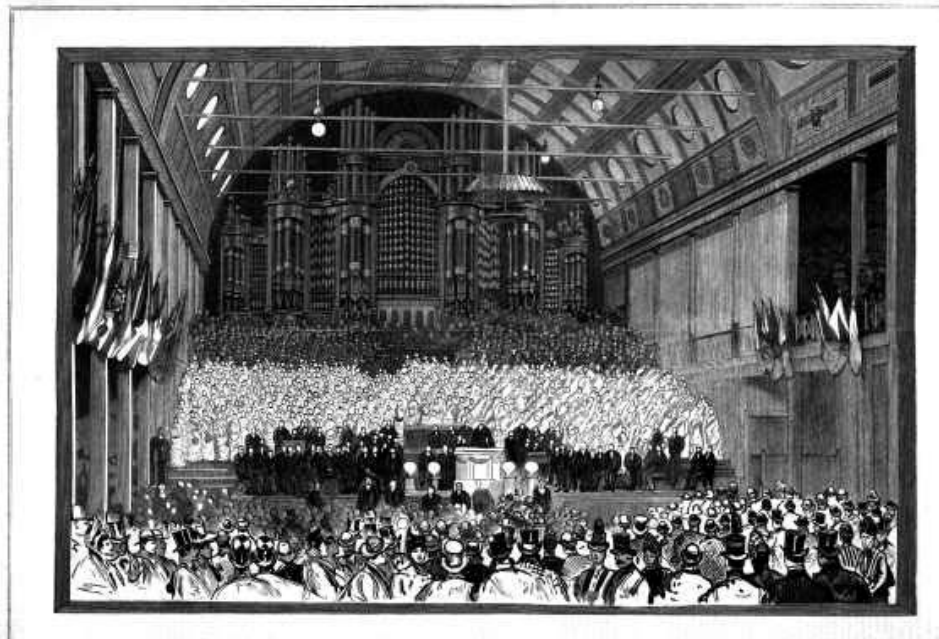


Figure 10 The Centennial Exhibition Choir at the opening (*The State Library of Victoria*)

However by as early as November 1888 much concern was expressed by the commissioners that attendances were declining and costs were blossoming, and it was discovered that orchestral and choral concerts and lifeless exhibits were not sufficient to attract a wider public. Reflecting on the exhibition, the *Argus* remarked that:

The thousands of people who went there every day wandered around in small groups, and as they were never brought together by any entertainment out of the concert-room, they felt themselves to be lost in a labyrinth of passages and inanimate cases.²¹⁰

As a solution to the dwindling numbers, the commissioners sought to introduce more popular entertainments. It was established that as the only ‘amusement’, the switch-back railway had thus far attracted an average 2,500 people a day, so to this was added acrobats, conjuring, and exhibitions of bicycle riding. The established

²¹⁰ David Dunstan, "Doing It All over Again," in *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne*, ed. David Dunstan (Kew: The Exhibition Trustees, Australian Scholarly Press, 1996). p. 205.

orchestral and oratorio concert programme was also augmented with popular music in the form of organ recitals, popular orchestral music, military demonstrations, humorous musical sketches, ballad concerts as well as a demonstration of Tyrolese yodelling. The favourable reception by attendees of such additional and popular entertainment found the Commissioners on the one hand obliged to issue an apology for the 'trivial nature' of some of the additional entertainments, as these did not reflect the vision for the event, while on the other hand leaving them no doubt relieved by the increased attendances and revenue generated.²¹¹ Nevertheless in such a truly egalitarian atmosphere it was also possible that the draw-card of these 'trivial' entertainments also brought within earshot music and entertainment of a 'higher' nature that hitherto had not been experienced by some members of the public.

This increased diversity also extended to the musical programme and the musical activities. Friday 28th December, offered:

12 noon Organ recital by Frank H. Bradley. Grand Sonata in (Guilmont) [sic], March 'Riccardo (*Handel*), Andante con moto in E (*Guilmont*), Prelude and Fugue in A major (*Bach*).

3.30 pm Popular Entertainment: 'The Siege of Paris' (Fantasia on 30 drums) accompanied by the Carlton District Band conductor: G. F. Twentyman.

7-8 pm Band of the Battalion Victoria Rifles

8-8.30 pm Concert of Drawing Room music

8-10 pm Grand Illumination of the Lake. Mr Twentyman the marvellous drum soloist accompanied by the 2nd Battalion Victoria Rifles.

The orchestral concerts were also popularized with the introduction of a series of three Grand Plebiscite Concerts, programmed with a selection of the public's favourite music previously presented at the Exhibition. The following list of

²¹¹Ibid. p. 205.

preferences from 1,066 contributions tells much about the musical taste of those who responded. Indeed their selections were similar to those popular in Europe, indicative of a rapidly developing musical taste in Australia.²¹² Among those also chosen were Cowen's own works, which obviously had found favour with audiences.

Symphonies

- 'Pastoral' Symphony (*Beethoven*) 228
- 'Scandinavian' Symphony (*Cowan*) 146
- Symphony in C (*Beethoven*) 49
- Symphony in C (*Schubert*) 43
- 'Scotch' Symphony (*Mendelssohn*) 50

Other

- 'Largo for Organ, Harp and Strings' (*Handel*) 137
- 'Hungarian Rhapsody No 1' (*Liszt*) 121
- 'Language of Flowers' (*Cowan*) 119

Overtures

- 'Tannhauser' (*Wagner*) 312
- 'Rienzi' (*Wagner*) 124
- 'William Tell' (*Rossini*) 108
- 'Oberon' (*Weber*)

From the above submissions the following Plebiscite Concert was constructed:

<p style="text-align: center;">CENTENNIAL EXHIBITION GRAND PLEBISCITE CONCERT Centennial Orchestra Mr. Frederick Cowen Leader: Mr Geo. Weston Saturday Afternoon December 1 at 3.30 pm. Hungarian Rhapsody no 1 (<i>Liszt</i>) Symphony in F (Pastoral) <i>Beethoven</i> Overture to 'Tannhauser' (<i>Wagner</i>) Largo for String, Organ and Harp (<i>Handel</i>)</p>

²¹² Mimi Colligan, "More Musical Entertainments," in *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Building Melbourne*, ed. David Dunstan (Kew: Exhibition Trustees, Australian Scholarly Press, 1996). p. 217

Organist: Mr. Geo Peake, Harpist: Mr F. C. Barker
Overture to 'Rienzi' (*Wagner*)

Figure 11 Programme for Exhibition Plebiscite Concert December 1 1888

It seems that for some these concerts were an illuminating experience. This was true in the case of Australian novelist and serial Exhibition concert-goer Ada Cambridge²¹³. Taken particularly by the selections of Richard Wagner she admitted that lost in the music she 'discovered the secret'. She 'learned to be a Wagnerite after several unsuccessful attempts...now there is no other luxury in life like a Wagner concert' and further described the music of the Exhibition as 'the best music of all countries'.²¹⁴ With 16,000 collectively attending the last four concerts, it puts an end to the belief that the public only enjoyed ballads, and tunes from opera bouffe.²¹⁵ Thus to Australia, the Exhibition was not only one of great industrial significance but also arguably the greatest cultural event of the century.

Such exhilaration clearly left an enduring impression. Enthusiasm for a prolongation of that experience led to the creation in 1889 of the Victorian Orchestra. Aided by a Government subsidy for one year, it was directed by James Hamilton Clarke on the

²¹³ Ada Cambridge was born in St Germans, Norfolk, England in 1844. In 1870 she married George Frederick Cross, a curate committed to colonial service, and in the same year they arrived in Melbourne to take up pastoral duties in Wangaratta. With the exception of Williamstown (1893) their pastorates were centred in country Victoria. She and her husband returned to England in 1913 and following his death in 1917, she returned to Victoria where she died in 1926. Altogether she produced twenty-one novels, three volumes of poetry, two autobiographies and contributed to such journals as the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Australian Ladies' Annual*. On the whole Ada Cambridge wrote about the section of colonial society most closely associated with England and its styles and standards. (J. I. Roe, 'Cambridge, Ada (1844-1926)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, Volume 3, Melbourne University Press, 1969, pp 334-335.)

²¹⁴ Colligan, "More Musical Entertainments." p. 215.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.* p. 218-9.

recommendation by Fredric Cowan.²¹⁶ The formation of the orchestra and its performances were a great success and this was substantiated the following year by a further Government grant of £3000. However a combination of factors, including the onset of economic depression, a disagreement with the Philharmonic Society²¹⁷ and the players' lack-lustre rapport with conductor James Hamilton Clarke resulted in the disbandment of the orchestra in 1891. Some players returned to England while others found continued employment in the theatres.²¹⁸

This rather abrupt demise of the Victorian Orchestra once again left Melbourne's music lovers with only one means of accessing serious music, the Melbourne Philharmonic Society. However the 1888 Exhibition had set the scene and provided the foundation of a growing public awareness of music that was to prevail throughout the 1890s. The continuing use of the Exhibition Buildings as a place of musical entertainment came with the emergence in 1891 of the Saturday evening Exhibition Promenade Concert series organised by organist Walter James Turner. This provided an ongoing relationship between the Exhibition Buildings and the concert-going public and were modelled on the informal promenade concerts given in the pleasure gardens of London from the 18th century, and the more formal Philippe Musard's series "Promenade Concerts à la Musard" held in London in 1838. Later in the 19th century promenade concerts were held in London's Crystal Palace, which was similar

²¹⁶ Alessandro Servadei, "Orchestras," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Music*, ed. Warren Bebbington (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997).

²¹⁷ The Victorian Orchestra Committee's proposal to form its own choir to present large-scale choral works not only soured its relationship with the Philharmonic but also presented a real threat to the Philharmonic and other choral bodies. This threat was ultimately defused by representation of the choral bodies to the Government where it was declared that the subsidy was given to assist orchestral music and as such, the orchestra should confine itself to such activities. The Government concurred with the choral societies. However as one of the guarantors of the orchestra the Philharmonic sought to come to some agreement with the orchestra committee, but to no avail. (Carne, *A Century of Harmony*, p. 116).

²¹⁸ Servadei, "Orchestras."

in design to Melbourne's Exhibition Building. So popular were the concerts that they continued under the title 'Exhibition Promenade Concerts' from the conclusion of the event until 1907. Two features that distinguished these concerts from previous entertainments such as those presented by Melbourne Philharmonic Society were their appeal to a very wide audience and most importantly the affordable price.

CONCLUSIONS

During the forty years preceding the emergence of Sunday concerts in Melbourne the city saw a massive development of a wide range of musical entertainment, ranging from grand opera to burlesque and variety shows and taking in the plethora of musical entertainments staged at the Centennial Exhibition in 1888. This chapter has traced something of this diversity, and in doing so has highlighted entertainment preferences demonstrated by various social groups.

The chapter has shown that concerts were a popular entertainment in Melbourne and took various forms: variety, orchestral and choral performances and solo recitals. Also highlighted is the variety of venues in which they were held and the social standing and religious bent of those who attended. It has been shown that large-scale choral music and singing in smaller groups was a popular entertainment for Melburnians whether it was performed by the Royal Philharmonic Society or in small groups in hotels. The Royal Melbourne Philharmonic Society had the ability to attract international soloists and provided Melbourne audiences over the decades with frequent performances of oratorios old and new, along with varied programmes of madrigals, glees, choruses and instrumental items.

The importance of opera as a genre has been emphasised along with its attractiveness to all classes by way of varied transcriptions. Also noted was the impact of the wealth created by the gold rushes on its development. Such a climate encouraged entrepreneurs such as William Lyster to mount lavish productions starring singers of international renown. It has been shown that Melbourne audiences developed considerable discernment of taste as a result of a rich exposure to recently composed operas, quality productions and fine singers. The distinctive character of Melbourne 19th-century audiences was also portrayed with acknowledgement of the wide social strata represented, particularly at the operas staged by Lyster. It has also been shown that attendance at opera was more egalitarian than in other countries due to Lyster's subscription schemes. The popularity of operatic music and its performers ensured its place on any concert programme presented during this period and in the future. The chapter has also highlighted the wide appeal of comic and light opera from the 1870s, despite criticism from conservative groups at the questionable moral tone of certain of these. The genre was enormously popular to the extent of providing a serious challenge to more serious opera. It was also found that during the years immediately prior to the advent of Sunday concerts the operettas of Gilbert and Sullivan took Melbourne by storm, establishing a performance tradition that continues to this day. It has been seen that various types of musical entertainment attracted different groups from the community.

We have seen that the most popular entertainment was the variety concert, known in polite circles as the miscellaneous concert. With the exception of large-scale choral and orchestral works, the variety concert drew on all the above genres. On the whole

variety concerts included vocal and instrumental items, reflecting the preferences of audiences and comprising anything from excerpts from oratorio and opera to popular ballads of the time.

All of the above musical entertainments influenced in varying ways the development of Sunday concerts during the 1890s. The rise of this new phenomenon forms the discussion of the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORIGINS OF SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT

*The Presbytery of Melbourne North leads the battle on for an attack on the Sunday shows...We have a unique experience in having visited all the Melbourne City Sunday shows. Obviously Wesley Church started them off. We only demand that they shall be kept within the sober and admirable lines of Wesley Church*²¹⁹.

Penned in the column ‘Choir and Organ’ by a Punch reporter in 1909 the above sentiments refer to a tradition of Sunday entertainments which were evidently well established by that time. Such a development was rather surprising given the strong Sabbatarian presence in Melbourne and the current Sunday legislation as discussed in Chapter 1. Interestingly it followed the 1891 depression that threatened the well-being of all—from the working-class to the professional—putting an end to the halcyon days of Melbourne’s entertainment that were recounted in Chapter 2. Regardless, it did not dampen enthusiasm for entertainment, and enterprising musicians presented affordable concerts with high-class artists, thus continuing the tradition of the exhibition concerts. Orchestras were established in 1892 to present Saturday evening Exhibition Promenade Concerts, which were followed by popular concerts in the Melbourne Town Hall and the Rotunda Hall in Bourke Street. On the other hand and not surprisingly, Sunday entertainments caused a considerable amount of controversy involving Sabbatarians, entrepreneurs, progressive church leaders and eventually

²¹⁹ *Melbourne Punch* November 11. p. 729.

trade unionists. Initially taking the form of concerts (generally in the guise of lectures or religious meetings), but later embracing magic lantern shows and moving pictures, the new entertainment opportunities engendered strong support from large audiences. This chapter will chart the origins and early developments of Sunday concerts and seeks to demonstrate that their beginnings were the result of an overwhelming public response to the concerts of the 1888 Centennial Exhibition and its derivatives, and not as a commentator for *Punch* stated retrospectively in 1909: ‘Obviously Wesley Church started them off’. The research questions are:

1. What circumstances stimulated the emergence of Sunday entertainment in Melbourne?
2. What were the characteristics of the entertainments?
How were the entertainments received?

Exhibition Promenade Concerts

Perhaps the most important catalyst to the development of Sunday entertainments in Melbourne was Exhibition Promenade Concert series held following the 1888 Exhibition. So popular were the concerts that they continued under this title from the conclusion of the event until 1907. Beginning in October 1891, the Exhibition Promenade Concerts pre-dated the famous Sir Henry Wood promenade concerts in Queen’s Hall London by four years. Reporting on the first of a series of these Saturday evening summer concerts, *The Age* described it as ‘an excellent programme, bearing the names of popular musicians...and the effort to place superior entertainment within the reach of the public at a nominal figure was recognised by the

attendance of about 3000 people'.²²⁰ Attendance at the second promenade concert was even larger. Those attending no doubt experienced feelings of nostalgia for the heady days of the Centennial Exhibition. But the degree of interest was also due to the extent and popular nature of the repertoire, reflecting the most admired of that heard at the Centennial Exhibition: These concerts featured popular ballads, orchestral music, excerpts from opera, and entire productions of comic opera as indicated below.

Popular prices—2s., 1s., sixpence.

EXHIBITION BUILDING.

TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.

64th PEOPLE'S PROMENADE CONCERT.
64th PEOPLE'S PROMENADE CONCERT.

A STUPENDOUS PROGRAMME.

COMIC OPERA.
BALLAD CONCERTS.
ORCHESTRAL CONCERT.

Re-appearance of
Miss ADA CROSSLEY.
Miss LALLA MIRANDA.
Mr. W. H. WOODFIELD.
Mr. EDWIN KELLY.

Mr. G. H. SCHAUCHT, Soloist Viola Alta.

GRAND POPULAR BALLAD CONCERT

By
Miss Lalla Miranda **Miss Ada Crossley**
Miss Ida Osborne **Miss Jeanne Hamsey**
Mr. W. H. Woodfield **Mr. Shamrock Arthurs**
And Mr. Gladstone Wright.

Full Orchestra of 25 picked performers.
Leader—Mr. G. A. BUTCH.
Musical Director—Mr. W. J. TURNER.

Revival of
The Popular Comic Opera.
MR. SHREWSBURY AT HOME.
MR. SHREWSBURY AT HOME.
Characters by
Miss Lalla Miranda, Ida Osborne,
Edwin Kelly, W. H. Woodfield, Stanley Lucas
And Gladstone Wright.

ADMISSION—ONE SHILLING.
ADMISSION—ONE SHILLING.

Tickets at Glen's Music Warehouse.
 Gates open at 7. Concert at 7.45.
W. J. TURNER,
 Musical Director.

EXHIBITION.—Madame Melba To-night.

TO-NIGHT.—Signor Foli at the Exhibition.

EXHIBITION.—Mr. Orlando Harley To-night.

TO-NIGHT.—Mr. Shrewsbury at Home.

MIRTH, Music and Enjoyment To-night.

All the Best Artists To-night.

EXHIBITION Concerts.—The best Entertainment in
Meth.

EXHIBITION, To night.—Admission, One Shilling.

EXHIBITION Concerts.—Rehearsal for Orchestra
This Morning, 10.30. W. J. Turner.

WAXWORKS and MUSEUM.
General Manager Philip Street.

Figure 12 Advertisement for the Exhibition Promenade Concerts (*Age Feb. 4 1892*)

²²⁰ *Age*, October 12 1891, p. 6.

On September 8 1892 the concerts were moved from the western annexe of the Exhibition Building to the main hall, the performance taking place on a specially constructed stage under the dome. As an added entertainment a military band played in the grand promenade outside in the grounds. The charge of 1/- under the dome and free access to the outside areas where the brass band was playing made these concerts accessible to all.²²¹ While the repertoire was primarily of a popular nature, the concerts did however launch the international operatic careers of regular concert performers Lalla Miranda and Ada Crossley. Other performers included tenor Armes Beaumont, flautist John Lammone, Rosina Carandini, Snr Buzzi, Henry Stockwell and members of the now ill-fated Simonsen Opera Company. The October 1894 concerts featured the early public performances of Percy Grainger.²²²

By May 1893 the Promenade Concerts had developed from a presentation of vocal and instrumental music into an evening incorporating the latest of entertainments. The following advertisement highlights the varied programme of music and entertainment presented and further exhibits the purpose of the management to provide entertainment for all tastes. One such attraction was the incorporation in the programme of a segment titled 'Music, Song, and Story' devised by popular opera and musical comedy star Mr George Snazelle whose contribution to Sunday entertainment will be discussed in the following chapter. His part consisted of popular ballads and readings from eminent poets such as Burns and Longfellow, which were accompanied by appropriate illustrations projected on a screen by a magic lantern. Also included were scenes of European and British cities and countryside as

²²¹ *Age*, September 8 1892.

²²² Mimi Colligan, "Not an Ideal Concert Hall," in *Victorian Icon: The Royal Exhibition Buildings* ed. David Dunstan (Kew: The Exhibition Trustees, Australian Scholarly Press, 1996). p. 229

well as items of a patriotic nature. It was noted that 'the enormous size of the exhibition enables these grand scenes to be given on a scale of splendour never before attempted in Australia'.²²³

TO-NIGHT.	The PEOPLE'S PROMENADE CONCERTS.	TO-NIGHT.
EXHIBITION BUILDING.		
GREAT DOUBLE ATTRACTION. All the PEOPLE'S FAVORITE ARTISTS		
and Mr. SNAZELLE In his Famous Entertainment, PROGRAMME.		
Mr. W. J. TURNER will play— Organ solo, "Sonata No. 5," Mendelssohn.		
Mr. GLADSTONE WRIGHT will sing— "Jack's Yarn." Vieni la Mia Vendetta.		
Miss JEANNE RAMSAY will sing— "Good Bye."		
Miss LALLA MIRANDA and Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL will sing— Grand duo, "Tutti in Maschera."		
Madame CHRISTIAN will sing— "Dear Heart."		
Mr. T. M. JACKSON will sing— "The Angel at the Window."		
Miss LALLA MIRANDA, Miss JEANNE RAMSAY and Miss CLARA MONGREDIEN will sing— The famous Quarrel Scene, "The Secret Marriage," Cimarosa.		
Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL will sing— "My Pretty Jane."		
Madame CHRISTIAN will sing— "The Lost Chord," Sullivan		
(With organ accompaniment by Mr. W. J. Turner.)		
Miss JEANNE RAMSAY will sing Scotch air— "Down the Burn, Davie Laid."		
Mr. T. M. JACKSON will sing— "My Queen."		
Miss LALLA MIRANDA will sing— "The Carnival de Venice," Benedict.		
Miss LALLA MIRANDA, Miss CLARA MONGREDIEN, Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL and Mr. GLADSTONE WRIGHT will sing famous quartet— "Rigoletto."		
Mr. SNAZELLE'S ENTERTAINMENT.		
MUSIC, SONG and STORY (Pictorially Illustrated).		
1. Interesting places in Europe		
2. Song, "The Village Blacksmith" (by desire) (Weiss) Mr. Snazelle		
With scenes, chimes, organ and chorus.		
3. Recital, "The Old Clock on the Stairs" Mr. Snazelle (Longfellow)		
4. Song, "Little Maid of Arcadee" Miss Snazelle (Sullivan)		
5. Scenes, Professor Liszt, Von Bulow, Rubinstein, De Beaupuis, Pianoforte "bustle"		
6. Song, "The Old Land and the New" Mr. SNAZELLE and CHORUS		
Showing scenes of the old country and the colonies.		
7. Song, "Rock'd in the Cradle of the Deep" Miss CLARA MONGREDIEN		
8. Sea Song, "The Brave Old Temeraire" (Hobbs) Mr. SNAZELLE		
With scene of the old ship being towed to its last birth, from Turner's celebrated picture in the National Gallery.		
9. Concluding as a tribute of respect to the late Admiral Tyron and his seamen, who so bravely met their deaths in the Great Naval Disaster, by the showing of scenes illustrative of the VICTORIA and CAMPELDOWN in COLESTON, and the PORTRAIT of ADMIRAL TRYON. During the scenes "The Dead March in Saul" will be played on the organ, and the company will sing "Rule Britannia," in which the audience is requested to join.		
GOD SAVE OUR QUEEN. ADMISSION, ONE SHILLING. ADMISSION, ONE SHILLING.		
Tickets at Glen's Music Warehouse.		
Gates open at 7. Concert at 7.45.		
W. J. TURNER, Musical Director.		

Figure 13 Advertisement for a People's Promenade Concert
(Age July 1 1893)

The popularity of the Exhibition Promenade Concerts gave encouragement to others to speculate with the promenade mode. In September 1892, 12 months after the beginning of the Exhibition concerts, *The Age* reported the 'inauguration of a new enterprise in connection with orchestral music in Melbourne' to be held at the

²²³ *Age*, July 22 1893 p. 12

Melbourne Town Hall. On the instigation of Mr. Julian Herz, the ex-manager of the now defunct Victorian Orchestra, and Mr George Weston, its former leader, an orchestra was formed 'embracing the principal members of the musical profession...with the object of giving popular promenade concerts, consisting mainly of instrumental music, interspersed with vocal selections'.²²⁴ It was intended that the orchestra would be placed on a platform extending from the eastern balcony to the centre of the room surrounded by a triple semi-circular row of chairs, the remainder of the ground floor to be utilised for promenading. The reality was that the promenade area was only 'sparsely patronised while seats in the south gallery and organ gallery and floor were well filled'. However as time passed the number of promenaders increased and 'with the exception of the balcony—for which an aristocratic and unpopular charge was made—...[all] augurs well for the success of the new venture'.²²⁵ By 1892 the veracity of the depression had hit and the charge for the balcony area was obviously too high, for it was reported in *The Age* that all parts of the hall including the balcony was now 1/-, equalling that of the Exhibition concerts.²²⁶ Although popular, the venture was abandoned in June 1893 owing to the excessive rent demanded for the use of the Town Hall.²²⁷

Regardless of the lack of major concerts the majority of Melburnians continued to enjoy a wide range of popular entertainment six days a week, and were well-served with theatre and such other entertainments as burlesque, music hall and operetta. What was also missing was the opera. Like the grand orchestral concerts it was expensive to stage, and like the economy it was in a depressed state for it had

²²⁴ *Age*, September 10 1892.

²²⁵ *Age*, September 19 1892. p.6.

²²⁶ *Age*, September 22 1892.

²²⁷ *Age*, June 24 1893. p. 8.

regressed to the pre-Lyster days of occasional performances by not so well-resourced companies. Nevertheless the public's demand for opera was satisfied to some extent by the Exhibition Promenade concerts the programmes of which included operatic excerpts such as the quartet from *Rigoletto*, and 'Casta Diva' from *Norma*. It was obvious from the sustained attendance at the Exhibition concerts that this was the style of programmes that the public enjoyed.

The Rotunda Hall Concerts

In May 1892 Julius Herz extended the already popular promenade concert concept by announcing that from Saturday 21st May 1892 and under his direction the newly-formed Rotunda Promenade Concerts Company would be presenting concerts every evening and a noon concert every Saturday at the Rotunda Hall Bourke Street.²²⁸ Not only was the promenade concept extended beyond the bounds of the Exhibition precinct but an advertisement in *The Argus* on 20th May by Julius Herz announced another mode of progressiveness in seeking those interested in joining a ladies' orchestra for the Rotunda Hall concerts.²²⁹ *The Leader* 11th June reported that 'the experiment of introducing ladies' orchestra [has] proved somewhat of a "draw" '.²³⁰

However, not satisfied with the presentation of concerts on weeknights and at noon on Saturdays, the management further proposed a bold and forward-looking move for Melbourne: a public concert on Sunday. Given the puritanical nature of Melbourne, not to mention the legislative restrictions, such a possibility of a public concert on a Sunday would be considered sheer fancy. Yet fanciful as it may be, Mr George

²²⁸ *Argus*, May 21 1892. p. 8.

²²⁹ *Argus*, May 20 1892.

²³⁰ *The Leader* June 11 1892. p. 23.

Tutton announced that the first Sunday evening concert would take place on May 29, 1892. Judging by the response of the Melbourne public, fancy became a reality that was 'beyond the most sanguine dreams of the promoters'. Furthermore this reality bears witness to the fact that the 'ultra-Sabbatarianism of the powers that be' found little or no reflection in the changing attitudes of the general public.²³¹ *The Leader* reported that:

The provision of rational entertainment for the public on the first day of the week deserves every encouragement, and a man must be either a bigot or a fool who can see any harm in giving people an opportunity of listening to airs from oratorios as a relief from the dismal monotony of a Melbourne Sunday.²³²

At this first concert every seat was taken and many were compelled to stand. The programme consisted of mainly sacred music embracing excerpts from *The Creation*, *Elijah*, *The Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeus* and *The Woman of Samaria*, together with a carefully considered programme of 'miscellaneous songs of a standard character'. In this and subsequent concerts professional artists such as Misses Esdaile, Mongredien and Corcoran, and Messrs Stockwell and Moulton were featured. The professional standing of the performers enhanced the programmes and attracted larger audiences. Nevertheless this posed a dilemma for management, for engaging professional artists was costly and 'Sabbath' legislation forbade charging for admission on Sunday. However to overcome this predicament those attending were invited to contribute a donation, thus circumventing the current legislation²³³ an issue that will be discussed in Chapter 5. This seems to have been a satisfactory arrangement as the number of artists employed for the second concert was increased, enabling Mr. P. C. Joseph to render *Nazareth* with chorus, piano and organ accompaniment with violin and cornet

²³¹ *Age*, May 30 1892. p. 6

²³² *The Leader* June 4 1892. p. 23

²³³ *Age*, May 20 1892. p. 6.

obbligato. Once again the house was full.²³⁴ Further success was measured not only by the size of the house but also by the employment of an orchestra for the third concert. In the short period of five weeks the calibre of the performers increased as had the audience that they entertained. The *Age* observed that ‘these concerts seem now to have firmly established themselves in popular favor [sic], and as they undoubtedly offer a satisfactory means of passing the dullest evening in the week, their probable continuance may be expected’.²³⁵ The programme was broadened to include solo instrumental music featuring cornet, zither, flute and violin. The most notable of the solo instrumentalists was John Lemmone who later became Dame Nellie Melba’s manager as well as playing her flute obligatos. These modifications were further supplemented with the addition of an elocution recital of Longfellow’s *King Robert of Sicily*.²³⁶ This morally uplifting poem recounts the story of King Robert who during Vespers hears the Magnificat chanted, and on enquiring as to the translation of a section of the canticle is told: ‘He has put down the mighty from their seat, and has exalted them of low degree’. These words may well have had particular meaning to the audience, for in this time of economic depression the mighty of the colony had fallen and were suffering the same conditions as the working class. Furthermore the mighty of the colony were among the staunchest supporters of Sabatarianism, and the holding of such entertainments on Sunday challenged their very beliefs. By the fourth and fifth concerts, performers included members of a visiting opera company (Signor Buzzi and Signorina Rebottaro) who were also performing at the Saturday Rotunda Promenade Concert.²³⁷

²³⁴ *Age*, June 6 1892. p. 6.

²³⁵ *Age*, July 2 1892. p. 10.

²³⁶ *Age*, June 13 1892. p. 6.

²³⁷ *Age*, June 20 1892. p. 9.

SUNDAY NIGHT.	
	TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING, 26th JUNE.
	TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING, 26th JUNE.
	ROTUNDA CONCERT HALL, BOURKE-STREET.
	ROTUNDA CONCERT HALL, BOURKE-STREET.
	FIFTH SUNDAY CONCERT.
	FIFTH SUNDAY CONCERT.
	FIFTH SUNDAY CONCERT.
	FIFTH SUNDAY CONCERT.
	PROGRAMME:—
	1. Vocal Trio, "We Pray Thee, Father" .. Curschman
	Signorina REBOTTARO, Miss MONGREDIEN and
	Mr. HARRY CADDEN.
	2. Song, "Angels, Listen When She Speaks" .. Heine
	Mr. HARRY CADDEN.
	3. Song, "O, Rest in the Lord" (Elijah) .. Mendelssohn
	Miss CLARA MONGREDIEN.
	4. Flute Solo, "Light and Shade" .. Terschak
	Mr. J. LEMMONE.
	5. Song, "The Shadow of the Cross" .. Barri
	Signor BUZZI.
	6. Aria, "Rejoice Greatly" (Messiah) .. Handel
	Signorina REBOTTARO.
	7. Song, "The Pilgrims" .. Adams
	Mr. HARRY CADDEN.
	8. Cornet Solo, "The Better Land" .. Cowen
	Mr. EDWIN RAWLINS.
	9. Song, "There is a Green Hill Far Away" Gounod
	Miss CLARA MONGREDIEN.
	10. Vocal Duet, "Qui Sedes" .. Giorza
	Signorina REBOTTARO and Signor BUZZI.
	11. Flute Solo, "The Angels' Flight" .. Reichert
	Mr. J. LEMMONE.
	12. Song, "Berceuse" .. Gounod
	(With flute obligato by Mr. J. Lemmone)
	Signorina REBOTTARO.
	13. Song, "Her Name" .. Elmenthal
	Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL.
	14. Song, "Pro Peccatis" (Stabat Mater) .. Rossini
	Signor BUZZI.
	15. Cornet Solo, "Cujus Animam" (Stabat Mater) Rossini
	Mr. EDWIN RAWLINS.
	Accompanists:
	Messrs. CARL RINDLE and G. A. SHERWIN.
	Conductor:
	J. C. O'BRIEN.
	Doors open 7 p.m.
	Concert at 7.40 p.m.
	Extra seating accommodation provided.
	Business Manager, Mr. W. J. O. ELLIOTT.

Figure 14 Programme of the Rotunda Sunday evening concerts demonstrating the calibre of the artists (Age June 25 1892)

By July 1892 it was evident that there had been some criticism of the style of repertoire presented. In defence of the Rotunda Hall venture the *Age* reported that on a Sunday evening you 'would in general find a large audience listening intently to songs taken mostly from the favourite oratorios'. Indeed the concerts were reported

as ‘excellent entertainments thoroughly deserving of success and...seem to be a fair way of becoming a permanent institution in Melbourne’. The article further questioned the process of logical argument that critics would have needed to ‘indulge in to persuade themselves that the patrons of the concerts were violating any reasonable rule of conduct’, and stated that in no way could these concerts be regarded as immoral or wicked, or that attendees should be labelled as ‘shameful’.²³⁸

As if to placate the voice of criticism the advertised concert for the 24th July was primarily of a sacred nature and included ‘He Shall Feed His Flock’, ‘Love Divine’, ‘We Pray Thee Father’ and ‘God is a Spirit’, a programme of similar nature was advertised for the following week. The favourable reviews and support given by the press afforded the Rotunda Hall management every opportunity to attract audiences, and this they did. Emblazoned on their advertisement for the twelfth concert were the words: ‘Sunday Concerts Highly Commended by the Melbourne Press’. To the sacred programme were added further items of a secular nature. As if to test the water, a programme presented on the 14th August was advertised by management as a ‘Special Programme’, and featured songs such as ‘Fickle Annette’ and ‘A Night in Venice’ (possibly from Johann Strauss II’s operetta of the same name). The following week two operatic arias ‘Scenes that are brightest’ (from William Vincent Wallace’s *Maritana*), and ‘The Tempest of the Heart’ (from Giuseppe Verdi’s *Il Trovatore*) were presented. While both arias were of sober tempo, the *Il Trovatore* aria (sung by Snr Buzzi) with its undertones of love, betrayal, seduction and theatricality would no doubt appear to those in the audience of conservative

²³⁸ *Age* July 18 1892. p. 12.

persuasion to be inappropriate for a Sunday performance. By now the programme was beginning to resemble that of the popular Exhibition Concerts.

TWELFTH SUNDAY CONCERT.			2
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Rotunda Hall	CONCERT.	3
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Bourke-street.	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	To-morrow Evening	CONCERT.	4
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Grand Programme	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Of Vocal and	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Instrumental	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Numbers.	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	14th August, Special	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Programme.	CONCERT.	5
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Sunday Concerts	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Highly Commended	CONCERT.	6
TWELFTH SUNDAY	By the Melbourne	CONCERT.	
TWELFTH SUNDAY	Press.	CONCERT.	7
PROGRAMME :			8
Miss MAGGIE STIRLING	Will sing—	{ " Sunshine and Rain." } { " There is a Green Hill." }	
Miss ALICE SIMMONDS	Will sing—	{ " Dear Bird of Winter." } { " Waiting." }	
Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL	Will sing—	{ " Fickle Annette." } { " The White Squall." }	3
Signor BUZZI	Will sing—	{ " The Heart Bowed } { Down." } { " I Never Can Forget." }	
Mr. W. BOYLE	will sing..	" Thy Sentinel Am I."	
Miss MAGGIE STIRLING	And	} " A Night in Venice." }	
Signor BUZZI	will sing—		
Miss ALICE SIMMONDS	And	} " One Word. }	
Mr. HENRY STOCKWELL	Will sing—		
Mr. JOHN LEMMOSE	Will play—	{ " Polish Serenade." } { " Melody." } { " Chant Gracieuse." }	
Miss MAUER	Will play	} " Rhapsodie de Concert." }	
On the Zither—			
Mr. EDWARD CRIS	Will recite	" King Robert of Sicily."	
Accompanist, Mr. OWEN CONDUIT.			
Conductor, Mr. J. C. O'BRIEN.			
Doors open at 7 p.m. Concert at 7.40 p.m.			
Business Manager, W. J. C. ELLIOTT.			

Once more, as if to respond to criticism, the Rotunda management advertised a series of Sunday matinee biblical recitals, thus expanding further the possibilities of Sunday entertainment. Beginning on 3rd September the first of these was presented by elocutionist Edward Cris who 'impressively rendered' Ezekiel's vision of the valley

of dry bones. In addition he delivered the first part of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ and the ‘Last Hymn’, ably assisted by a vocal and instrumental accompaniment.²³⁹

For some the newly established Sunday concerts provided temporary relief from the despair of a growing economic depression, and on Sunday evening this distraction undoubtedly aided in soothing anguish over their personal economic state of affairs. However there were those of the community who had cause to ponder the morality of the circumstances surrounding the depression, giving rise to a new form of Sunday entertainment.

Pleasant Sunday Afternoon

Prahran Congregational Church

Another somewhat different form of Sunday entertainment to emerge was under the auspices of the ‘Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Association’ (PSAA). The first meeting of which took place on April 9 1893 in the Independent Church (Congregational), Malvern Road Prahran. Such meetings were established ‘to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of the community’.²⁴⁰ Its precursor in England was established in the spring of 1875 by Congregational deacon John Blackham at the Ebenezer Congregational Church, West Bromwich and gained popularity, spreading throughout Britain with meetings held in churches and halls in places such as Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester and Liverpool. This culminated in the establishment of the Brotherhood Movement.²⁴¹ Following the ideals of its English counterpart the first Melbourne PSAA meeting was instigated by the Rev. W. Morley. The *Age* described

²³⁹ *The Argus* September 5 1892.

²⁴⁰ *The Age* April 10 1893. p. 6.

²⁴¹ <http://www.blackcountrysociety.co.uk/articles/sundayafternoon.htm> accessed 8/1/2008.

the Association's activities as 'a new departure in Sunday services'.²⁴² The meeting sported the motto 'Brief, Bright and Brotherly' and was undenominational in character, democratic in spirit, with the main aim 'to promote the moral and spiritual welfare of the community'. Following the first meeting *The Age* reported that the motto well expressed the character of the event.²⁴³ However the democratic spirit of the meeting did not extend to females, for like its English counterpart, its constitution limited the 'association to the sterner sex'.²⁴⁴ As to the undemonational character of the Association *The Age* reported that Mr Justice Hodges had intimated in the inaugural address of the Association that the meetings were:

not to be a religious meeting in the sense of any sectarian worship; nor is the "pleasant Sunday afternoon" to be spent in goody-goody sermonising. Denominationalism is to be strictly tabooed, so that, whether the associates meet in a church or hall, they are to be free and unrestrained as they would be at a concert or a public meeting. In fact, the members of the organisation are to have the opportunity of shaping their own entertainment.²⁴⁵

Before an 'exceedingly large attendance' proceedings began at 3 pm with 'a selection of sacred music played on the organ followed by vocal and instrumental selections of similar character'.²⁴⁶ As there seemed to be a desire from the audience to acknowledge the items, the Rev. W. Morley intimated that appreciation could be rendered in a 'subdued tone' at the conclusion of the programme. Considering the undenominational character of the association, it was only fitting that the chairman should be selected from another church and as chairman, Mr Justice Hodges gave the inaugural address on the apt subject of Commercial Morality. He stated that:

In considering why this movement is necessary, and why one may expect and hope a great deal from it in the future, I look back and consider the lives led by

²⁴² *Age* April 10 1893. p. 6

²⁴³ *Ibid* p. 6.

²⁴⁴ *Ibid* p. 6

²⁴⁵ *Age*, April 11 1893. p. 4

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*. p. 4.

the people surrounding one...if we look at the lives of the bulk of the people of Victoria we shall find they are substantially spent in the pursuit of two objects, namely, gain and wild and exciting pleasures (Applause)...Unfortunately the desire for gain is not to make money by ordinary hard work, but arises out of a desire to make it by a single stroke of the pen or by a single act. (Applause)²⁴⁷

In its assessment of this meeting *Melbourne Punch* reported that the PSAA ‘with the assistance of sacred selections on the bassoon and the cornet, and solos on the kettle-drum (*sic*), and short addresses, [would] teach the wisdom of refraining from growing beastly rich all of a sudden’. It was further suggested that the only means of overcoming this ‘unrighteous [yearning?] for instantaneous riches’ was by ‘devoting our Sunday afternoons to the intoxicating influence of the grand piano and the ravishing tootling of the flute interspersed with slabs of oratory from the lips of prominent men in politics, art, science and law’.²⁴⁸ The meeting concluded with a hymn. Enthusiasm for either the entertainment or the address solicited a large number to enrol in the Association on leaving. The second meeting, held at the same venue on April 17 1893 attracted a gathering of about 500. Rev W. Morley opened the proceedings by responding to comments in the press following the previous meeting, and went to lengths to distinguish between that which was ‘essentially a religious platform’ from that which no doubt the press had perceived as entertainment. He explained ‘that the meetings of the association were not to supply entertainments, but religious services...that would be pleasing and refreshing to [attendees] as any entertainment could possibly be’. Morley’s emphasis on the religious context of the meeting begs the question as to whether the attendees were there to listen to the music or the address. The August 1895 edition of *The Prahran Independent* described the

²⁴⁷ "Mr Snazelle," *North Otago Times*, 12 April 1893.6

²⁴⁸ *Melbourne Punch*, Apr 13 1893. p. 229.

‘services as bright, practical and helpful as ever’. The meetings continued in similar vein until 1902.

Wesley Methodist Church

On 4th June 1893, two months after the first meeting at the Prahran Congregational Church, the Wesley Central Mission began a series of Sunday Conferences at Melbourne’s Wesley Church under the leadership of the charismatic Rev A. R. Edgar. Initially a forum to confront social issues, and as a response to urban industrial change in the state, by June 25th it was organised as another Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Association, with a view to giving the discussions permanency.²⁴⁹ These meetings were along the lines of those held in the Prahran Congregational Church with the exception that women were welcome. A correspondent in *The Spectator* described the Sunday Conferences (as they were termed before the inauguration of the PSA) at Wesley Church as ‘never a grander function’ and the music as ‘None of your “Lo! from the tombs” business but solos fit for the Town-hall [sic], and an instrumental trio that was worth going five miles to hear’.²⁵⁰ The first official Pleasant Sunday Afternoon meeting at Wesley Church was held before an assemblage of 1200 people at which ‘Mr Lambie and the family of Mr Henry Barry rendered valuable assistance singing the Gospel in a style which melted the hearts of the audience’.²⁵¹ At this inaugural meeting Dr Springthorpe delivered an address on the subject given him by Mr Edgar titled “Some of the Advantageous of a Pleasant Sunday Association” He argued that gone were the days when ‘the pleasant was held to be suspiciously akin to the wicked’. The association ‘offered a pleasant place to meet at, good music, temperate discussion by well-informed men upon topics of general interest.’ While

²⁴⁹ *The Spectator*, June 30 1893. p. 485.

²⁵⁰ *The Spectator*, June 23 1893. p. 467.

²⁵¹ *The Spectator*, June 30 1893. p. 485.

viewing Sunday as a day of rest that should be honoured, Springthorpe suggested that it was not to be spent in idleness. He acknowledged the importance of social meetings and outdoor exercise but also acknowledged the value of cultivation and exercise of the moral sense. He pointed out that not everyone accepted the ceremonies, creeds, restrictions and observances imposed by Church denominations, for such people the association may provide relevance and place 'before those who desired to contemplate these matters elevating and moral, without infringing upon domains already in the hands of the Church'.²⁵²

The Wesley PSA was attended by ever-growing audiences assembled to either listen to the musical programme or to be inspired by the address which encompassed such subjects such as sweating, gambling, recreation, true socialism, Christianity and social reform. The spirit of the PSA was encapsulated by a correspondent of *The Spectator* who noted that attendees at Wesley church:

would have had a practical illustration of what the initials PSA mean, for they would have had a "pleasant Sunday afternoon". The very sight of the congregation was inspiring, especially the working men, of whom there were a great number, and the mothers with little children on their laps, who had come to hear the message of God's love to men, and men's duty to God and to one another, told by earnest word and melodious song, aye, and by good instrumental music too, for that message was the theme of the organ, and the stringed instruments as well as the singers and the preacher.²⁵³

By August the popularity of these Sunday gatherings (both Wesley and Prahran) had gained impetus for at the meeting of The Methodist Council on Pleasant Afternoons that month it was reported that another association had now been formed in South Melbourne.²⁵⁴ Inaugurated under the auspices of the South Melbourne Ministers' Association it followed the lines of the Prahran Association, its meetings being non-

²⁵² *The Spectator*, June 30 1893. p. 485.

²⁵³ *The Spectator*, July 7 1893. p. 505.

²⁵⁴ *The Spectator*, August 11 1893. p. 586.

denominational and for men only.²⁵⁵ Regardless of the growth in the PSA movement the danger of the Wesley PSA becoming a Sunday entertainment was not too far from the thoughts of some. Speaking at the August meeting of the Methodist Council Rev. Thomas Adamson cautioned that the movement needed to be guarded ‘lest the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon should degenerate into mere amusement’, noting Englishman Hugh Price Hughes who stated that such had already taken place in England.²⁵⁶ While the possible future of the movement was being considered in these terms by members of the Council Rev. Henry Bath agreed with the philosophy forwarded by Springthorpe in the inaugural address of the Pleasant Sunday Association in Wesley Church. While believing in the sanctity of the Sabbath and the necessity to preserve this, Bath also reminded members to bear in mind ‘the nature and the intent of the Sabbath’; he believed that while it was a day of rest it did not mean, as it was usually understood, a day taken up by worship. Modern day ‘feverish craving for excitement’ left men in danger of losing their capacity for rest, and the only cure for this was the right employment of the Sabbath, that is the application of the Sabbath to the ‘earthy’ part of man’s nature as well as to the spiritual part of it.²⁵⁷ However, the Methodist Church publication, *The Spectator* did not help the cause with its continual reference to attendees as an audience. Even in its defence of the status of the PSA *The Spectator* demonstrated its own ambiguous understanding of the nature of the PSA. It reported on the one hand that ‘the **audience**²⁵⁸ consisted almost entirely of men, and no congregation in any church in the land could have been more orderly and attentive’. Yet on the other hand, the correspondent made the status of the PSA quite clear stating that: ‘the musical part of the service—for it was

²⁵⁵ *The Spectator*, August 25 1893. p. 6.

²⁵⁶ *The Spectator*, August 11 1893. p. 586.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.* p. 586.

²⁵⁸ Author’s emphasis

distinctly *a religious service*: we use the term advisedly—was simply exquisite...never was the Gospel more effectively presented'.²⁵⁹

The answer to the question of whether PSAs were attended for the dynamic and timely addresses or just for the music is still outstanding. However *The Spectator* report of June 16 1893 on the previous Sunday's meeting goes somewhere close to answering this question. It noted that Mr Edgar opened the proceedings before a 'thoroughly respectable audience' of mostly working men 'enlivened with a large sprinkling of the fair sex'. As the subject was on gambling he began with the singing of an appropriately titled song 'Rescue the Perishing' in which he was joined heartily by the 1500 strong **audience**,²⁶⁰ followed by prayer.²⁶¹ The concert-like behaviour of the assembled was evidenced in the continual applause that both 'performers' and speakers received, and as in any concert favourable performances elicited encores.²⁶² The calibre of music presented at the Wesley PSA was sentimentally religious in nature, (e.g. 'Sweet Sabbath Eve') and was described as 'the kind of music to draw the people—something that gets right hold of their hearts at once—and the more we get of it in our services the better'. It was further reported that 'deep down in our hearts most of us "common people" enjoy such a thing, as the Jubilee Singers gave us infinitely more than the grand productions of the Cowan concerts that so many sat out and "endured" '.²⁶³ , The above comments make it obvious that the aim of the musical portion of the programme, unlike the addresses, was not didactic and was deliberately aimed at a musically undiscerning public. With that in mind and coupled

²⁵⁹ *The Spectator*, August 11 1893. p. 585.

²⁶⁰ Author's emphasis.

²⁶¹ *The Spectator*, June 16 1893. p. 4.

²⁶² *The Spectator*, December 8 1893. p. 856; December 15 1893. p. 8; Jan 19 1894. p. 42.

²⁶³ *The Spectator*, June 16 1893. p. 4.

with artists of professional standard and the toleration of applause and encores, one may ask whether the Wesley PSA trod close to the line of an entertainment?

The meetings in Wesley Church were short-lived. Due to building works the association needed to vacate the church leaving it with the task of finding a building large enough to accommodate the now 1800 attendees. The only available buildings (with the exception of the Town Hall and the Exhibition Building) were the theatres. Undoubtedly those involved in the exercise would have felt some trepidation about moving to a theatre, knowing the churches' attitude to theatre as a mode of entertainment. In these circumstances and with the religious standing of the PSA being questioned within Methodist ranks, the need to guard its integrity as a religious meeting was never more urgent. Nevertheless an initial meeting was held at the Alexandra Theatre (now Her Majesty's) on the 16th July 1893 where an 'orchestra under the direction of Mr E. Rawlins, did excellent service, and solos (beautifully sung by ladies and gentlemen, who kindly gave their services) presented the Gospel in a most attractive form'.²⁶⁴ Regardless of the wider churches' perceived immoral influence of the theatre, the Central Mission's presence at the Alexandra Theatre no doubt gave the public the impression that the PSA was an entertainment. Whether intentional or not this view was acknowledged by *The Spectator* correspondent who recalled with an evangelical bent: 'I thank God when I called to mind how easy it had been that very morning to invite many a loiterer at the street corners to come to the theatre that afternoon'.²⁶⁵ His ease of invitation was no doubt assisted by the likelihood of the passer-by's expectation of some entertainment in a theatre to be far greater possibility than that in a church. While some may have seen the relocation of

²⁶⁴ *The Spectator*, July 21 1893, p. 537.

²⁶⁵ *The Spectator*, July 21 1893, p. 537.

the PSA in negative terms there were others who were able to see the sacred in the secular and acknowledge that even a building such as a theatre could be a place of worship. On departing from what was a ‘happy meeting’ in the Alexandra Theatre *The Spectator* correspondent was asked “What about the sunshine here?” Ruminating over the question, the reply was:

Well, certainly there is no sunlight to be seen in the dimly-lighted building, and one missed beautiful Wesley Church, with its arching rood, and stately white pillars and stained glass windows. And oh! I am glad that Wesley Church is such a real church, and not an everyday square-built hall with a flat roof, and nothing about it to help to lift your heart towards heaven...as I stood in the theatre yesterday afternoon, with its gilded roof, decorated walls, and dimly burning lights, I for one could rejoice in the change for a few weeks at any rate, and oh! how earnestly could I ask that this gilded cage (for it looked to me like that) that had caught many a bird, and kept it from soaring upwards to purity and heart-rest in God, might now be made each Sunday a place where the heavenly music of pardon and peace should enter the hearts of those who had been fast bound by the so-called pleasures of this passing world!²⁶⁶

This first meeting at the Alexandra Theatre attracted a gathering of 1800 not only to hear Rev A. R. Edgar espouse the dangers of gambling and its introduction ‘into the healthy recreations of youth in the present day’, but also to hear the orchestra and the beautiful trios sung by Mrs Mullen, with the Misses Palmer and Lyne.²⁶⁷

No possible greater evidence of the PSA as an entertainment was the appearance of the internationally acclaimed contralto Madame Antoinette Sterling on 13th August 1893. Although the subject of the forum for that Sunday was not advertised, word obviously spread, and the Alexandra Theatre was crowded beyond its seating capacity with a reported attendance of 3000.²⁶⁸ Madame Sterling was born in Sterlingville, Jefferson County, NY and left America for Europe to study with Manuel Garcia, the teacher of Jenny Lind and Marchesi. A renowned exponent of Bach and German

²⁶⁶ *The Spectator*, July 21 1893. p. 537.

²⁶⁷ *The Spectator*, August 11 1893. p. 585.

²⁶⁸ *The Spectator*, August 18 1893. p. 602.

lieder, it was however her singing of ballads that won her greatest acclaim. Her obituary recorded that she ‘was able to express with infinite tenderness the meaning of the poet in the language of music and by her power she charmed many thousands of people’, and further affirmed that ‘upon hearing her sing Cowen's “Better Land,” [which he composed for her] Gounod said, I have heard all the voices in the world but yours is unique’.²⁶⁹ At this PSA and no doubt in her honour ‘The Better Land’ was played by cornet duettists Messrs Rawlins and Morris, followed by vocal solos by Misses Bath and Bessie Jukes. Madame Sterling’s presence however was not as a performer, but as a speaker in her capacity as Vice-President of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union. In association with the White Ribbon Association and the Vigilance Society the forum addressed a proposed amendment to the Crimes Act by Captain Taylor (Member for Hawthorn). His proposed ‘Reasonable Clause’ read ‘that if a girl looks more than sixteen years of age and witnesses assert that she does, her seducer is acquitted’. Such was Madame Sterling’s resolve she denounced such a provision as monstrous, declaring ‘she would give up her singing and go over the world preaching about the necessity for personal purity and for righteous laws’²⁷⁰. A resolution put to those present reproving any interference with the Crimes Act received hearty support in the form of raised hands and a deafening cheer. Sporting a beaming smile Madame Sterling rose to sing ‘O Rest in the Lord’ and ‘The Lord is my Shepherd’ (a composition of her daughter).²⁷¹ By 17th September the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons were back at Wesley Church, continuing the tradition of an afternoon of morally uplifting addresses and spiritually inspiring music.

²⁶⁹ G. S. Edwards, *Snazelleparilla* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1898).

²⁷⁰ *The Spectator*, August 18 1893. p. 602.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.* p. 602.



Figure 15 Madame Antoinette Sterling

(State Library of Victoria)

A recurring refrain throughout the first year of the PSA was the continual defence of the meetings as a religious forum, presumably in response to criticism of its presentation of entertainment. However it was noted that in the hands of the Rev Edgar there was no danger of the PSA becoming secularized. Commenting on Edgar's level-headedness and resolve to maintain the integrity of the PSA visiting Sydney clergyman, the Rev M. Maddern said that Edgar's 'Irish fervour is balanced by a Scotch clearness of intellect, [and] he would be a bold man who would attempt to run a tilt against the canons of good Christian taste'.²⁷² In his review of 1893 Edgar emphasized that the list of subjects discussed at these meetings such as 'Sweating Evil', 'the Drink Curse', 'Out of Work and Why',²⁷³ were hardly of the class that men chose by way of entertainment. He was not there to entertain. He stated that his

²⁷² *The Spectator*, September 22 1893. p. 681.

²⁷³ The complete list of topics reads: Sweating Evil, The Drink Curse, Out of Work and Why, the Opium Evil, The Gambling Evil, Christian Socialism, Democracy of Christ, Gambling and Industry, A Plea for the Asiatics? Is Life Worth Living? Faith in Humanity, The Unemployed Difficulty and Land Settlements, the Cabinet-makers in Evidence, Christian Moral Reform, Gambling and Field Sports, Social Purity, Drink Traffic and its consequences, Healthy Environments, social Responsibility, The Model Man, Philanthropy, The Opium Bill, The Racing Evil, Our Navy, Womanhood Suffrage, Rational Recreation, Young Australia, National Righteousness. (*The Spectator*, January 5 1894. p 11)

calling was to 'Awaken public interest in questions of supreme moment to thousands in this city who are groaning under heavy burdens imposed on them by their own flesh and blood, and having begun, I am bound to go on till more is done, and the slaves of Melbourne are set free'. However those assembled laughed heartily when Edgar acknowledged that he had been a theatre lessee for some months.²⁷⁴

The success of the Wesley PSA in that first year was certainly evidenced by the large numbers of regular attendees; however its success as an evangelical exercise it was less so. Of the regular 1500 or so attendees, the total membership of the Association was no more than 300²⁷⁵ compared to the 500 or so members at the smaller gatherings at Prahran Congregational Church. Nevertheless it was the most enduring of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, continuing until the 1960s.

Conclusions

It has been established that Sunday entertainments in Melbourne emerged as a result of economic depression which had profoundly detrimental effects on large theatrical productions that had been so much a part of Melbourne cultural life. The depression also caused financial hardship for all walks of the population from the working class to the highest income range. Additionally it stimulated a strong degree of social concern among certain churchmen, who had strong views about the social evils such as wild financial speculation by the wealthy, gambling and exploitation of workers.

²⁷⁴ *The Spectator*, January 5 1894. p. 11.

²⁷⁵ *The Spectator*, August 1894. p. 537.

In the social environment it is not surprising that the post-Exhibition promenade concerts continued to flourish. The very modest admission charge together with the size of the venue allowed a large audiences (including those who would be able to afford other like entertainments) to experience quality popular entertainment. The varied offerings (musical, dramatic, and literary) were designed to please a wide range of tastes as had been the case during the Exhibition itself. It has been shown that the Rotunda concerts took over the same concept from 1892 with similar success, so much so that management extended performance to Sundays during May of that year. It was found that a loophole in the Sabbath legislation allowing for Sunday entertainment so long as an admission charge was not made was exploited by the Rotunda management, the cost being defrayed by the request of a donation. Although of secular origin, these concerts were in keeping with the mores of Sunday. The programme gave legitimacy to the presentation of such activities on Sunday and included sacred repertoire, instrumental and secular vocal music of a moderate nature, and the reading of biblical passages and morally uplifting poetry. Such a programme was not only entertaining but also educational by way of exposing audiences not only to 'wholesome' music performed by competent musicians but also to literature that reflected the current social and political situation.

Although the religious activity titled Pleasant Sunday Afternoon was not seen by religious denominations as entertainment it has been established however that the press and society viewed them otherwise, particularly that presented by Wesley Mission. Established some 12 months after the Rotunda concerts by the Congregational and Methodist churches, the purpose of the Pleasant Sunday

Afternoon was first to provide a forum that confronted social issues and in so doing to espouse a Christian socialism stimulated by the depression and industrial change in the State, and secondly as an evangelical outreach. However a programme of quality music performed by competent musicians and singers also complemented these forums.

It can be concluded that in parallel, both the secular and religious programmes differed little. Both presented repertoire of a sacred nature, and while the secular presentation lacked a formal social forum or lecture, it did however present readings that reflected the social issues of the time. It must be noted that Wesley Mission's decision to relocate from a church to a secular venue for its Pleasant Sunday Afternoons may well have formed a precedent for non-religious initiatives of a similar kind. For many there was already a fine line between what was seen as church service and a sacred concert and this was exemplified by applause at the Pleasant Sunday Afternoons. In the case of the Wesley Mission a musical programme presented in a theatre with an orchestra and 'top class' artists would have differed little to that presented on Saturday evening by the Exhibition Promenade Concert, or the oratorio concerts presented by the Melbourne Philharmonic Society. The presence of Wesley Mission's services in a theatre had legitimized the opening of a theatre on Sunday for these purposes.

Whatever the venue, secular or church-based, the new Sunday entertainments were received enthusiastically by large audiences. Moreover commentaries and reviews provided in the press were unqualified in their support of what was viewed as a worthwhile and rational Sunday activity. The following chapter will consider the

continued use of theatres by secular identities as a place of entertainment on the Sabbath in light of their use by Wesley Mission.

CHAPTER 4

A RATIONAL SUNDAY

Any door, all doors, indeed, which lead men to a deeper and broader understanding of the story of the world are suitable doors to open on Sunday, for within them is to be found that which furnishes the nobler and the worthier education of men, and lead to the higher education of all, which is his spiritual education.

Bishop Potter²⁷⁶

The previous chapter discussed the emergence of Sunday entertainment in the light of a retrospective quotation from Melbourne *Punch* November 11 1909 which attributed the genesis of Sunday entertainments to Wesley Church. However and as previously discussed in Chapter 1, the holding of commercial concerts or any entertainment in a theatre on Sunday was a different matter. It not only offended the sensibilities of some religious communities, it was also prohibited by law. It should be noted that some religious denominations held services in halls rather than in the formal setting of a church building. These halls however were utilitarian in purpose, unlike theatre buildings which were purpose built. Regardless, it was into this theatre setting that Wesley Church chose to present its Pleasant Sunday Afternoon for a period of three

²⁷⁶ Cited in *Age* 29 July 1893. p. 12.

‘Henry Codman Potter (1835 -1908), Episcopal Bishop of the Diocese of New York, and a prominent advocate of the Social Gospel. Using his powerful position, Potter criticized the injustices of capitalism, and argued, from a theological standpoint, that the laborer was not a commodity to be bought and sold, employed or dismissed. He was one of the leaders of the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor (CAIL). Organized in 1887 , it was the first influential Protestant group to stand for the right of workers to organize, and joined forces with labor in its battle for the establishment of shorter work hours and a weekly day of rest, and against the ills of slums and sweatshops. Before entering the seminary, he had been a professional actor, an avocation he gave up for his religious calling, but one he always cherished. His love of the theater propelled him to make it his lifelong mission to bring together clergy and actors in an attempt to bridge the historic rift between church and stage.’ (Edna Nashon, "The Pulpit and the Stage: Rabbi Joseph Silverman and the Actors' Church Alliance " *American Jewish History* 91, no. 1 (2003). pp. 5-27)

months. The combination of a theatrical venue, a programme of music and an informative but not necessarily religious address formed Wesley's Pleasant Sunday Afternoon programmes. As pointed out in Chapter 3, other Pleasant Sunday Associations had excluded applause but Wesley continued to allow public acclamation, giving further support to the notion of entertainment. (see page 93)

The following discussion will delineate the rise of Sunday rational entertainment, following its genesis as a musical entertainment at the Rotunda Hall, to a sensory performance involving music, verse and visual spectacle in a theatrical setting.

The central research questions of the chapter are:

1. What constituted rational Sunday entertainment?
2. By whom was it promoted?
3. Where and for how long did it operate?
4. On what entertainment traditions did it build?
5. How was Sunday rational entertainment funded and received?

Like all other areas of the economy theatres too felt the pressure of the economic depression of 1891, and from 1892 saw a decline in patrons. The Melbourne Philharmonic Society also fell victim to the onset of the financial depression and was forced to reduce its lowest priced admission from 2/- to 1/-.²⁷⁷ However the Promenade Concerts (discussed in Chapter 3) enjoyed continued popularity. (see page 76) This was demonstrated by the large attendance at the Saturday evening

²⁷⁷ Carne, *A Century of Harmony*. p. 117

Promenade Concert at the Exhibition Building on 12 July 1892 where for 1/- attendees could listen to members of the visiting Grand Italian Opera Company. The *Argus* reported that:

The attendance at the Promenade Concert given at the Exhibition building on Saturday evening was unprecedentedly large. All the available space within the concert hall was occupied, the audience taking possession of even the organ gallery. The attraction was the appearance of the Italian artists who have recently been performing at the Princess's Theatre. While appearing at the Princess's the company were indifferently successful from a financial point of view, and the fact that several thousands of people assembled to hear them when they could do so at small expense may be taken as a sign of the times. The mass of the people are apparently disinclined or unable at the present period to pay the regular theatre rates for their amusement.²⁷⁸

By the end of 1892 this monetary state of affairs had a perceptible impact on theatre managements, and with the exception of occasional performances, the Theatre Royal was forced to close from August to the end of October, the Alexandra between June and September and the Opera House during September. By December the Theatres and Entertainment column in the *Argus* reported that:

The current season at the Princess's Theatre will terminate this week, and that at the Bijou Theatre next week, and after that there will be no theatre open in Melbourne until the Christmas holidays. This will be a position of affairs almost unprecedented in the history of the stage in Melbourne, certainly for a great many years past. It is easy to recall to memory instances in which there have at this time of the year been five theatres open, together with two or three music halls, a concert company at the Town-hall, fireworks displays, a circus, as well as numerous and diverse minor entertainments.²⁷⁹

By the end of April 1893 the Theatre Royal and the Princess's Theatres were the only two theatres operating, a situation that continued for some three years.

In 1893 Wesley Church's ease of obtaining occupation of the Alexandra Theatre further revealed the plight of Melbourne's theatre managements. As previously

²⁷⁸ *Argus*, July 14 1892.

²⁷⁹ *Argus*, December 5 1892.

mentioned in Chapter 3 (page 92), renovations to the church building made it an opportune time for Wesley Mission to avail itself of the use of the Alexandra Theatre, and between 16th July and 10th September 1893 successfully provided its Pleasant Sunday Afternoon programmes in this setting.

However Wesley Mission was not the first to present Sunday entertainment in a theatre. Two weeks earlier on the 30th April 1893, Mr George H. Snazelle presented the first of his Sunday evening performances at the Opera House in Bourke Street. His autobiography *Snazelleparilla*²⁸⁰ tells much of his character and his intrepid adventures as a travelling showman and relates that as a former member of nine-years standing of the Carl Rosa Opera Company he appeared in more than fifty operas, including Boite's *Mefistofele*, Bizet's *Carmen*, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, Wagner's *Lohengrin* and *Flying Dutchman*, as well as lighter operas such as *Bohemian Girl* and *Maritana*. Following his departure from the Carl Rosa Company Snazelle appeared in four summer seasons for the Italian Opera at Her Majesty's London (later Covent Garden).²⁸¹

Yet despite his established operatic reputation he embarked on a career that was seen by many as an 'entirely different line'. Nevertheless Snazelle did not see it as a change of profession. His decision to leave the opera company came from his observation that generally musicians (singers included) are cognizant only of 'their own music and not of literature, poetry, painting and politics, therefore making life in a touring opera company very dull to a man or woman who has some idea of the

²⁸⁰ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. Written either by a ghost writer or under the *nom de plume* of G. S. Edwards

²⁸¹ *Ibid.* p.13.

world outside'.²⁸² His experiences outside the world of opera demonstrated that he possessed the ability to hold his own against great actors, reciters, and raconteurs. In particular he prepared a *mélange* titled 'Music, Song, and Story' pictorially illustrated and comprising ballads, operatic arias, instrumental music and the reading of poetry of the likes of Burns and Tennyson, the majority illustrated with appropriate descriptive scenes projected on a screen by the use of a magic lantern. Beginning his new venture in Liverpool in 1885²⁸³ and armed with the 'finest dissolving view apparatus in the world', a collection of slides, and an eclectic bag of scripts, Snazelle very soon successfully won the admiration of audiences in provincial English towns and at London's Crystal Palace. It was his desire to place this entertainment before a public 'who never by any chance would go into a theatre to enjoy them' and in so doing he said that he would 'secure the attendance of theatre-goers and non-theatre-goers at a stroke, pleasing both, I trust, and offending neither'.²⁸⁴

In setting these ideals Snazelle recounts that he was enacting 'the great Victorian principle that social improvement would be achieved largely by the advancement of learning and the dissemination of knowledge among the masses'; the format of his performances therefore embraced the concept of rational recreation, where instruction and entertainment combined to impart the painless acquisition of useful knowledge. This too was the ethos of the Royal Polytechnic Institution London which, with the use of working models, both instructed and entertained. Among those displays of

²⁸² Ibid. p. 18.

²⁸³ James Duff Brown, Stratton, Stephen Samuel "George H. Snazelle," in *British musical biography: a dictionary of musical artists, authors and composers, born in Britain and its colonies* (Birmingham: S. S. Stratton, 1897). p. 383

²⁸⁴ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. p. 18.

modern whirring technology was the magic lantern.²⁸⁵ Writing in the *Age* in July 1879 Melbourne writer Marcus Clarke recalled his childhood wanderings in the Polytechnic in the 1840s as one where 'gorgeous pictures became an historical lesson, and the benevolent voices out of the darkness instructed as well as entertained...Priceless was the discipline of the eye, invaluable the knowledge acquired so easily and so pleasantly'²⁸⁶.

The magic lantern possessed not only the capacity to educate but also to entertain and this was certainly so in the hands of George Snazelle. Apart from slides presenting views of a static nature, Snazelle had among his stock many that were mechanically constructed to facilitate movement in the projected pictures.²⁸⁷ This enabled the replication of rolling seas, windmills, fountains and waterfalls; all were prominent in Snazelle's presentations. However foremost in his shows was the popular and extensively used dissolving view. Its technique enabled a fading out and in from one scene to another. In addition to its use as transition between unrelated scenes, it was most impressive when used as an amusement. An example was the transition of a scene from dawn to darkness achieved with the use of a 'dissolve set', consisting of 'a set of two or more slides on which there is a similar picture on each slide but with a change of state as achieved by time lapse photography.'²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ *Age* July 24 1879. cited in Elizabeth Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions: The Magic Lantern in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand 1850-1910." (PhD, The University of Melbourne, 2003).p. 46

²⁸⁶ cited in Ibid, ———, "Consuming Illusions" (The University of Melbourne, 2003). p. 46

²⁸⁷ An example of this kind of slide can be found at:
www.exeter.ac.uk/bdc/young_bdc/lanterns/lantern5.htm

²⁸⁸ The Magic Lantern Society. A working example of a dissolving set can be found at
www.magiclantern.org.uk/alphabet/alphabetc.html,
www.poppyland.co.uk/index.php?s=LANTEIGHTH

Greatly encouraged by the reception he received in England, Snazelle accepted an invitation from Melbourne entrepreneur Mr Hiscocks to visit the principal cities of Australia.²⁸⁹ *The Musical Times* of 1 June 1887 adds that Snazelle's appointment was in place of explorer Mr. H. M. Stanley who had to decline on account of the Emin Pacha expedition.²⁹⁰ Like Stanley, Snazelle too was journeying into the unknown, for Australia was a country where from the early days of settlement the popularity of the magic lantern show was not as prevalent as in England. While the gold rush in 1851 had created a rapid growth in population, the widespread sites of discovery resulted in a sparsely spread population and an inability of local communities to support magic lantern shows, leaving for many only memories of the shows of London.²⁹¹ Even in Melbourne the magic lantern still was not as popular as expected. In 1855 all that could be mustered was a series of short shows that held attraction to a limited number of people. They consisted of travelogues and presentations that emulated the social graces of the middle class. The shows of respected journalist, art critic and patron James Smith (1820-1870) in June 1855 ended after six weeks despite the Melbourne *Age* newspaper (of which Smith had been a journalist), extolling the aesthetic and affective qualities of the opening night.²⁹² Smith's presentations are described by Elisabeth Hartrick as 'an idealised upper middle-class social ritual, cast in the mould of a 'salon', and a model of refined social interaction and cultural exchange for the edification of a community which located itself on the margins of imperial civilisation.'²⁹³ Hartrick concludes that:

Smith's self-conscious attempt to raise the cultural and intellectual tone of the community through this genteel and rather self-important entertainment had

²⁸⁹ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. p. 17-18

²⁹⁰"Miscellaneous Concerts, Intellegence, Etc. ," *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular* 28, no. 533 (1887).

²⁹¹ Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions". p. 46

²⁹² *Ibid.* p. 56-7.

²⁹³ *Ibid.* pp. 58-62

little impact on the majority of Melburnians in 1855 who preferred to lose themselves in 'laughing idleness' at the vaudeville.²⁹⁴

In the winter of 1855 Melbourne's residents could lose themselves in the variety of entertainments that would satisfy their populist taste. They had the choice of magician and ventriloquist Monsieur Jacob, horse-riders and gymnasts, tight rope walker Mde. Della Casa as well as Pablo Fanque's 'Flower Girl of Paris' and the 'Wild Indian of the Far West',²⁹⁵ and in October and November that year the popular Irish soprano Catherine Hayes appeared in *La Sonnambula*, *Lucia*, *Norma* and *The Bohemian Girl*, the opera alternating with performances by dancer Lola Montez.²⁹⁶

Throughout the 1860s and 70s the format of magic lantern shows changed little, but were often combined with vaudevillian-style shows. By the 1870s the novelty and experience of the lantern shows began to wane.²⁹⁷ However by Snazelle's arrival in Melbourne in 1891 the magic lantern had not only progressed mechanically but was also utilized in ways other than entertainment. The innovation of photographically produced slides had all but replaced hand-painted slides. This innovation provided immediate and real images, and audiences could be transported to foreign countries to view and then wonder at their art and architecture. Apart from the entertainment value, photographically produced slides also supplied important and current global intelligence to the colonies. The Salvation Army too had recognized the educational qualities of the magic lantern, so much so that in Melbourne in 1892 Joe Perry established the Limelight Department to produce lantern slides pertinent to

²⁹⁴ Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions". p. 64.

²⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 63

²⁹⁶ Love, *The Golden Age of Australian Opera*. p. 26.

²⁹⁷ Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions". p. 91

evangelism, fund raising and social advocacy.²⁹⁸ Between 1892 and 1896 Perry's magic lantern show travelled extensively throughout the colonies of Australasia giving both week-day and weekend presentations (Sunday included).²⁹⁹

Snazelle's was an entertainment that enveloped the best of the lantern shows of the last 40 years. It encompassed the arm-chair travelogue, but without the innuendoes of pretention and class distinction. He considered his entertainment 'unique in its way, and one that would please all tastes, except the vulgar'. His melding of literature, poetry, painting and politics, to produce entertainments left him with no regret, and artistically he considered that he stood on a much higher pedestal than he 'ever did as a mere opera singer'.³⁰⁰ He also recognised that he would be exhibiting not only to those born in Great Britain but also to the baby boomers of the gold rush, many of whom had never been to Britain but nevertheless had heard tales of the homeland. Snazelle was fully convinced that:

Deep down in the hearts of the Australians, rich and poor, high and low, there is love for the land to which they owe allegiance, and in which many of them drew the breath of life, I was prepared not only to amuse them in humorous songs and recitals but to show them bits of the old world that would delight their eyes and store their hearts, and in many instances call up remembrances of the long ago.³⁰¹

However he was not coming to Melbourne as a stranger. Prior to the debut of his Sunday performances in 1893 he had already endeared himself to Melbourne audiences where he was sought after as a theatrical performer, appearing in stage plays, opera, operetta and musical comedy.³⁰² During 1891 Melbourne was awash

²⁹⁸ www.abc.net.au/limelight/docs/lime/default.htm (accessed October 8 2008)

²⁹⁹ www.abc.net.au/limelight/docs/tours/6_1_1.htm (accessed October 8 2008)

³⁰⁰ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. p.

³⁰¹ Hartrick, "Consuming Illusions". p. 19.

³⁰² In February 1891 he appeared in George Sims' light musical comedy '*Skipped by the Light of the Moon*', described on the poster advertising a Theatre Royal Hobart performance in 1897 as 'a Boom of

with entertainment with five theatres open the entire year. In June the visiting American actress Sarah Bernhardt played to a packed appreciative audience at the Princess's Theatre, and from August to mid-November Fanny Simonson's Italian Company presented a season³⁰³ at the Alexandra Theatre as well as other productions of plays, operetta and musical comedy.

As previously discussed, blissful days were coming to an end both for performers and audience. (see page 104) In 1892 a noticeable decline in theatre attendance saw theatres close and performers leave Melbourne for greener pastures in New Zealand, Snazelle among them. The *Argus* in December that year reported that:

Just at present New Zealand appears to be the favourite field for dramatic, musical, and 'variety' companies, there being no fewer than a dozen organisations 'on tour' in that colony, including Mr. J. C. Williamson's strong Comic Opera Company, Mr. Walter Bentley with a dramatic company, Mr. Alfred Dampier, the Montague-Turner Opera Company, Mr. G.H. Snazelle, Mr. Grattan Riggs, the Jubilee Singers and sundry minor combinations formed for public entertainment.³⁰⁴

One such recollection detailed in the book *Snazelleparilla* was of his journey to New Zealand. In mid-October, following a two week engagement with Maggie Moore in *Our Flat*, he and a group of fellow entertainers embarked on the steamship *Wairarapa* for the first leg of the journey to Hobart, where a recreational stop was planned. His anticipation of seeing much of the country-side from the east to the west coast of Tasmania was thwarted by requests for shows at Strahan where the little hall was

Fun and Laughter! A Terrific Tornado of Merriment!' (<http://images.statelibrary.tas.gov.au/>) In March he appeared with Maggie Moore in William Manning's musical comedy *Kindred Souls* at the Opera House and again in September at the Princess's Theatre. As the highest paid performer in the Marivale Company he received £30 a performance for his role in the June 1891 production of Carl Millocker's *Poor Jonathan*. However the Company was declared insolvent shortly after beginning its season. (*Table Talk* 28 August 1891)

³⁰³ *Martha, Un Ballo in Maschera, Lucia di Lammermoor, Les Huguenots, Il Trovatore, Rigoletto, Norma, Ernani, The Barber of Seville, Faust.*

³⁰⁴ *Argus*, December 5 1892.

filled to overflowing.³⁰⁵ On arriving in Zeehan another 30 miles further he discovered that his popularity and renown had reached even this remote spot. He found in Father O'Callaghan a stalwart supporter, who knowing that he was in town said from the altar 'I advise all my flock to follow me to hear Mr. Snazelle render and illustrate this divine song.' The result was that O'Callaghan 'led 700 miners through the street to Mr. Snazelle's Sunday entertainment'.³⁰⁶ On return to Strahan, Snazelle's party found that in their absence another entertainment had been organised, this time in the presence of the Archdeacon of Hobart. If that was not enough, they found on their return to Hobart that yet another two shows had been planned in their absence: one in the presence of the Governor, the other in New Norfolk.³⁰⁷

Finally they embarked on the steamship *Flinders* for the journey across the Tasman disembarking at the Bluff, which is situated at the southernmost tip of the South Island and one of the most desolate places in New Zealand. Travelling northward, Snazelle presented his pictorially illustrated entertainment in cities such as Nelson, Wellington and Auckland. At Hawke's Bay (Napier) he lost no time in setting up his 'apparatus' and while singing *Nazareth* proceeded to show the assembled Maoris views of ironclads and English stately homes. Judging by the following account it was a successful tour. The Otago Times described his entertainment as:

very novel in construction, varied in its features, and the scenical [sic.] illustrations are of so charming a character, song being succeeded by picture, picture by story, story by instrumental music, and these repeated and varied so frequently, and with such excellent judgement that every taste is pleased.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁵ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. p. 107

³⁰⁶ *Age* July 15 1893. p. 12.

³⁰⁷ Edwards, *Snazelleparilla*. p. 132.

³⁰⁸ "Mr Snazelle." p. 3.

His five-month sojourn took him the length and breadth of New Zealand. The return trip to Melbourne was via the Pacific Islands of Fiji and Tonga, where Snazelle no doubt dazzled his audiences with his magic lantern show as they ‘sat amazed and evidently impressed’ while scenes of the ‘stately homes of England, magnificent cities and buildings and streets of Europe etc.,’ appeared and disappeared before their eyes, undoubtedly eagerly anticipating the next scene while they listened to the singing of *Nazareth* and other beautiful songs’.³⁰⁹ Performances were given in the most unlikely of places, ‘on board ship, on the seashore, on the mountain top, in the lonely forest’.³¹⁰ His show had touched the hearts of many and was receptive to all classes of people from the Governor of Tasmania to the natives of New Zealand and Fiji.

Music, Song, and Story

Snazelle returned to Melbourne in 1893 where he was confronted with an even more theatrically impoverished city than the one he left. Nevertheless his entrepreneurial astuteness picked up on the popularity of the already-established Sunday entertainments of the Rotunda Hall and the PSAs. On Sunday evening 29th April 1893 Snazelle presented the first of his *Music, Song and Story, Pictorially Illustrated* at the Opera House in Bourke Street Melbourne. Subtitled ‘A Rational Sunday Evening’, it attracted a large audience with many people turned away. Such was the popularity of this entertainment that he was engaged to present it on 20th May 1893 as part of the popular Saturday evening People’s Promenade Concerts at the Exhibition Building.

³⁰⁹ _____, *Snazelleparilla*. p. 152

³¹⁰ *Ibid.* p. 154

The introduction of the magic lantern to these pastimes offered a further dimension to what had already become a popular Sunday activity, although its inclusion may have given offence to the more conservative members of the public. Regardless, the use of the magic lantern was no novelty to the church and its organisations. The YMCA had used it for benefit purposes as early as 1876, and throughout the 1890s church newspapers advertised the hire of lanterns and slides for pictorial teaching at churches and Sunday schools.³¹¹ In the 1880s the North Melbourne Methodist Church Hall provided a respectable venue for an audience to view pictures of great cities projected onto a screen, while the local minister imparted a commentary.³¹² Snazelle too offered similar screenings. Although presented on the Sabbath in a theatre well known for its trivial entertainments, Snazelle's programme was described by the *Age* as one that was 'Absolutely Consistent with the Day, and yet Interesting, Educational, Beautiful, and Unique' and 'to which no objection could be taken on religious grounds'.³¹³ Like that of the North Melbourne Methodist Church, Snazelle's programmes displayed views of an educative nature.

With the intent in mind for his programme of *Music, Song, and Story* to be both edifying and entertaining Snazelle screened a series of English pastoral views. This no doubt imbued for some thoughts of the 'homeland', and for the younger generation a glance of the land of their parents. Also included in this programme was a recitation of Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* and a rendition of Gounod's *Nazareth* accompanied by chorus and organ, the visual senses heightened by the use of a magic lantern. The evening's proceedings concluded with the audience singing *Rock of Ages*, the words

³¹¹ Ellen Warne, "Prowlers in the Darkened Cinema: Australian Church Women's Associations and the Arrival of the Motion Picture in Australia," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Gender Studies* 5, no. 1 (2000). p. 80.

³¹² *Ibid.* p 80.

³¹³ *Argus* May 6 1893, p. 16

projected on the screen and illustrated by a ‘well-known series of pictures’ that captured the imagery of the hymn, establishing it as the item that concluded each subsequent performance³¹⁴ The show was greeted with overwhelming reception, the *Argus* reporting that the programme was ‘received with breathless attention’ and that ‘thousands of people were unable to obtain admission’.³¹⁵

While Snazelle was the primary performer, the programmes also featured his daughter. The *Argus* noted that as a pupil of the great operatic baritone Charles Santley she possessed a ‘pleasing voice’, and favoured audiences with the singing of such songs as *Angel’s Ever Bright and Fair* (Handel), *Light in Darkness* (Cowan) and *The Storm* (Hullah).³¹⁶ As with his shows in England, Snazelle’s invitation went out to working men, wives and families (but not children in arms) adding that ‘in these times of depression and sorrow you will find some solid comfort in listening to and seeing this sacred and philosophical entertainment’.³¹⁷ Such was the popularity of his concerts that doors were opened at 6.30 pm with the ‘house full’ sign being exhibited 30 minutes before the 8 pm start.³¹⁸

Apart from being entertaining Snazelle’s presentations added much to the edification of attendees, especially those whose ownership of books was limited and, as previously noted in Chapter 1, without access to the public library and art gallery on Sundays; the doors of those facilities were still firmly locked due to the ultra-Sabbatarianism of members of the legislature. In his selection of appropriate music, and in particular the reading of the works of such poets and writers as Burns,

³¹⁴ *Argus*, May 8 1893. p. 3.

³¹⁵ *Argus*, May 4 1893. p. 8.

³¹⁶ *Argus*, May 8 1893. p. 3.

³¹⁷ *Argus*, May 27 1893. p. 16.

³¹⁸ *Argus*, May 27 1893. p. 16.

Tennyson, Pope and Dickens, with views of paintings and sculptures from some of the world's foremost collections, Snazelle made what had hitherto been restricted possible. His utilization of the magic lantern with its projected scenes heightened his audience's senses. As his programmes indicate many in the audience were transported to other places and cultures and experienced for the first time views of famous buildings, artwork and sculpture from European cities, as well as scenes from Snazelle's recent adventures in the Fiji Islands. Importantly however, his show always included a religious component and comprised renditions of religious ballads and selections from oratorio and, of course what had become familiar in Snazelle's shows, the corporate singing of the hymn *Rock of Ages*. Like other sections of his entertainment these were illustrated with appropriate images such as Holman Hunt's *Behold I stand at the door and knock*³¹⁹, and scenes from the Ober-Ammergau Passion Play³²⁰.

In consideration of the ongoing economic crisis within Victoria there were also inclusions of items of a moral and political nature. Of importance in Snazelle's presentations was an illustrated recital of Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*, which according to Dean Stanley³²¹ was 'the most powerful charity sermon ever preached'³²². Published in 1843 it was written to draw attention to the plight of those displaced by and driven into poverty as a result of the Industrial Revolution, and society's lack of obligation to provide for them. This was also true of Victoria of the 1890s when wealth and greed resulted in a major depression for the State brought about by bank and building society foreclosures. Among the owners of the failed

³¹⁹ *Argus*, May 6 1893.p. 16, 29 May 1893. p.7.

³²⁰ *Argus*, June 10 1893 p. 16, *Argus* 17 June 1893 p. 16, *Age* 15 July 1893. p. 12.

³²¹ Presumably the Dean of St. Paul's, London.

³²² *Argus*, May 20 1893. p. 16.

institutions was the then Victorian Premier James Munro, who apart from introducing the Bankruptcy Act in Parliament, was also an elder of Toorak Presbyterian Church and a leading Sabbatarian and temperance stalwart. There was also Congregational minister and Sabbatarian James Mirams who declared bankruptcy and was jailed for one year. With strong opinions and inflexible views, he was less fortunate than other leading boomers during Victoria's economic débâcle of the early 1890s.³²³ R. Douglas Fairhurst has noted that 'For Dickens, money meant far more than power to buy and sell...it turned ordinary people into models of generosity or monsters of greed'³²⁴. In *A Christmas Carol* Scrooge, a financier who has devoted his life to the accumulation of wealth and holds anything other than money in contempt (including friendship, love, and the Christmas season), is finally moved by the sight of the Cratchits eating their scanty Christmas meal together. Scrooge learns that money means nothing when compared to the love of a family; such love cannot be bought in a shop.³²⁵ Considering the financial situation of the colony of Victoria, Snazelle's use of Dickens was timely. For the educated of the State it could be seen as a slight on their own character and unethical dealings. This position was taken also by Justice Hodges in his address on Commercial Morality at the first meeting of the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Association at the Independent Church, Prahran. He argued that 'Wealth brings to its possessor tremendous responsibilities, as well as tremendous temptation. It also brings tremendous power. A wealthy man can use his money to alleviate suffering in many forms, and at the same time he can remove from those

³²³S. M. Ingham, "Mirams, James (1839-1916)," Australian National University, <http://www.adb.online.anu.edu.au/biogs/A050295b.htm>

³²⁴Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, "How to Triumph in the Crisis - Take a Leaf out of Dickens," *The Age*, November 1 2008. p. 9.

³²⁵Ibid. p. 9.

who do not possess money the grudge they hold against those who do'.³²⁶ (see page 88)

O P E R A H O U S E

TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING
TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING

|-----|
Mr. SNAZELLE
|-----|

Will Render
CHARLES DICKENS'S
"CHRISTMAS CAROL."

"The most powerful charity sermon ever preached."
—DEAN STANLEY.

Illustrated by Thirty Grand Scenes from Life
Models.

Overture, "Russian Airs"
IVAN TRUEGOLD.

Scenes, "Interesting Places of the World
Described by Mr. SNAZELLE.

Song, "Light in Darkness" .. -- Cowen
Miss SNAZELLE.

A Carol, "Oh, Christmas Night" Adams
Mr. SNAZELLE and CHORUS.

A magnificent scene is shown of an old English
village street in a snow storm. The carol
singers appear, sing, and vanish.

This Carol Leads into the Recital of
CHARLES DICKENS'S
"CHRISTMAS CAROL,"
With its Splendid Teaching and Life-like
Illustrations.

The Evening will Conclude by
The **SHOWING of SACRED PICTURES,**
And the
SINGING of GOUNOD'S
"NAZARETH,"

Which made such a sensation on Mr. Snazelle's first
Sunday evening.

To commence at 8 p.m.
COLLECTION.
CHILDREN in ARMS POSITIVELY NOT
ADMITTED.

³²⁶ The Age, April 10 1893. p. 6.

Furthermore Snazelle utilized Dickens's 'The Death of Jo' from *Bleak House*, which lays blame not only on the wealthy for Jo's death, but also on the clergy for their un-Christian indifference to the suffering of the poor.

Dead, your Majesty. Dead, my lords and gentlemen. Dead, Right Reverends and Wrong Reverends of every order. Dead, men and women, born with Heavenly compassion in your hearts. And dying thus around us, every day.³²⁷

Its use no doubt drew comparison with such persons referred to in Judge Hodges' lecture on commercial morality at the Prahran PSA, and as a result possibly further distanced some members of the population from the established churches. The *Village Blacksmith* as sung by Snazelle bore witness to the drudgery of the working man. Written to draw attention to the iniquitous 'sweating' system in England, Tom Hood's poem 'The Song of the Shirt' echoed what too was fast becoming part of Melbourne's working life.

The Song of the Shirt

With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread.
Stitch, stitch, stitch, in poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the 'Song of the Shirt',³²⁸

³²⁷ Charles Dickens, *Bleak House* (London: Penguin, 1995; reprint, 1995). p. 734.

³²⁸ *Argus*, May 27 1893. p. 16.



Figure 16 A sweaters' workroom in Melbourne

(The Illustrated Australian News 1 July 1890)

The sweating system was also the subject of the Wesley Sunday Conference. Reading a report by the Sweating Committee, Mr Wade spoke of the deplorable conditions in

clothing factories where women were expected to work for up to 114 hours a week for a few miserable shillings. He continued:

Then there is the matter of rest. What condition of mind or body do you think a woman is in at night when it is time to retire, after driving a needle all those weary hours? No wonder their brains are palsied as well as their hands. And as to recreation or change, “going to the seaside” [sic] is a heavenly enjoyment they can never know.³²⁹

In conclusion Mr Wade called for the appointment of women to the Parliamentary Commission, and also as inspectors under the Act.³³⁰

A prevalent theme featuring in Snazelle’s presentations was the subject of the sea presented in a most dramatic way. Such topics were not only common in Snazelle’s presentations but were also audience favourites. One can only imagine the amazement and the reaction of the audience to a ‘Scene of Sailing Vessel at Sea’ weathering a storm and projected on a 30 ft screen inclusive of wave effects, lightning and thunder, with a full chorus (of an unknown number) singing the hymn *For those in Peril on the Sea*.³³¹ This was first experienced by the audience on 4 June 1893, and such was their enthrallment the showing was repeated the following Sunday.³³² If that was not spectacular enough, his performances occasionally verged on the overtly theatrical. In a 1 July *Argus* advertisement, a themed programme titled *For those in Peril on the Sea* Snazelle was bold enough to advertise that Tennyson’s epic poem *Enoch Arden* would be ‘Illustrated by 30 Beautiful Tableaux from Life Models’.³³³ To the unaware and those who did not attend Snazelle’s entertainments this could be construed as blatant (and possibly unseemly) theatricality; however it referred to slides produced by photographing models against a background (as opposed to

³²⁹ *The Spectator* June 23 1893. p. 467.

³³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 467.

³³¹ *Argus* June 3 1893. p. 16.

³³² *Argus* June 10 1893. p. 16.

³³³ *Age* July 1 1893. p. 12.

illustrations), thus giving realism to the projection. Many of the audience would have identified personally with what the poetry and magic lantern slides had to impart, and no doubt recalled their own threat of shipwreck on the long treacherous journey from Europe to begin a new life in a new land.

O P E R A - H O U S E

TO-MORROW, the SIXTH SUNDAY,
The Seventh Beautiful, Unique, and Educational Programme will be Given by

Mr. SNAZELLE,

And in Addition the Whole of the Views of the **PASSION PLAY** At Oberammergau will be Shown. Appropriate Music Sung and Played, and a Description given by Mr. Snaazelle.

PROGRAMME.

At 8 o'clock precisely will be thrown on the screen, 30ft. in diameter, **SCENE of SAILING VESSEL at SEA,** with wave effects, depicting a storm, with lightning and thunder, and a full chorus will sing the old hymn,

"For those in Peril on the Sea."
Old song, "The Last Man" -- Calcott
Mr. SNAZELLE.

"All worldly shapes shall melt in gloom,
The Sun himself must die,
Before this mortal shall assume
His immortality."
Song, "The Storm" -- Hullah
Miss SNAZELLE.

With Concealed Chorus, "Ora Pro Nobis."
Recital, "Baby Bell" (with music by Mendelssohn) -- Aldrich
Mr. SNAZELLE.

"Ah, never in our hearts before
Was love so lovely born.
We felt we had a link between
This real world and that unseen—
The land beyond the morn."
Scenes, Ten Minutes in Gloucester Cathedral.
Recital, "The Dream of Eugene Aram" Hood
Mr. SNAZELLE
(With incidental music, written for Mr. Snaazelle by Dr. Mackenzie).
"Thou shalt do no murder,
Woe, woe, unutterable woe,
Who spill lives sacred stream."
Scenes—TEN MINUTES in PARIS and the PARIS EXHIBITION.
EXPLAINED by Mr. SNAZELLE,
Song, "The Brook" Tennyson and Pope
Miss SNAZELLE.

"For men may come, and men may go,
But I go on for ever."
Illustrated by scenes of a river from its source to its mouth,
Song, "There is a Green Hill Far Away" Gounod
Mr. SNAZELLE.
(Illustrated by a scene of the Hill of Calvary, with Crucifixion by Reubens, from Antwerp Cathedral).
Scenes, to be selected, Sacred.
Song, "The Light of Life" -- Veaco
Miss SNAZELLE and Chorus.
"No longer with doubt to battle,
The victory's won at last."
Concluding with the old hymn, "Abide with Me."
Illustrated by appropriate scenes. The audience is requested to join in the singing as usual.
Note.—The interesting "Passion Play" views are simply given as an extra item.
Commence at 8. **COLLECTION.**

Nevertheless behind the seeming secular sensation of these shipwreck scenes there was religious and moral significance. Scenes depicting social problems such as gambling or drowning in the sin of alcoholism could also be construed metaphorically with rescue portrayed as survival of the stormy waters of such indulgences leading to the beginnings of a new life. Such an interpretation featured also as part of the Salvation Army's evangelism work, and the following lantern slide from the Army's Limelight Department magazine (*Full Salvation*) depicts a victim reaching for and eventually clinging to the security of the cross.³³⁴ . Likewise *The Spectator* correspondent (LM) used similar images to Snazelle's when reporting on the power of music and text presented at the Wesley PSA:

the instrumental music and sacred solos gave much pleasure and profit. I wonder how many will be hearing to-day, as I am hearing, over and over in their hearts the echo of one sweet line that was beautifully sung—

Life for evermore,
Life for evermore;

And as I wonder, I pray and believe that one line shall be made as a "life-line" flung out to more than one sinking, shipwrecked soul in that great assembly, drawing it in to the haven of rest...³³⁵

The relationship between religious and moral teaching to the predicaments of society was the chief aim of the lectures and also the evangelical outreach of the PSAs. This further strengthens the argument that what was being shown at Snazelle's entertainments paralleled the themes of the religiously-based PSA.

³³⁴, *Full Salvation* 1 September 1894.

³³⁵ *The Spectator* July 21 893. p. 53



Figure 17 A lantern slide of Rock of Ages

(Full Salvation 1 September 1894)

The breadth of subjects and musical programmes presented by Snazelle brought him such popularity that even in the third week his audiences increased to the extent that accommodation had to be found behind the scenes while many were turned away.³³⁶ For those unable to travel to the city venues week-day showings were provided at the Prahran and Brighton town halls.³³⁷

Snazelle continued his popular shows, presenting familiar repertoire until theatre management announced in the press on 22 July that ‘Mr Snazelle regrets that as his

³³⁶ *Argus* May 15 1893. p. 7.

³³⁷ *Argus* May 29 1893. p. 7.

entertainment will be given for some weeks to come too far away from Melbourne to enable him to reach here on Sundays, this will be his last appearance. A special and beautiful programme will be rendered and all the grand scenes shown which have just been specially prepared for him.’³³⁸ It appears from this announcement that this was to be preview for a new series of shows. His popularity never waned and even after his eleventh Sunday (9 July) management was receiving requests on how it was possible ‘to gain admission and avoid the rush’³³⁹. This was resolved by the issue of a voucher for a pre-assigned ‘pew’.³⁴⁰ While his last show in the theatre was to be 22 July, his last appearance in Melbourne was at the Exhibition Promenade concert the following Saturday. On Friday 12 August a ‘Grand Complimentary Performance’ was given at the Town Hall to farewell Snazelle before his leaving the next day for South Africa. The following advertisement highlights the esteem with which he was held in society. Among those in attendance were the Governor and his wife, members of the legislature and judiciary, civil dignitaries, members of art and music associations and other prominent clubs and associations (Fig. 3).³⁴¹

³³⁸ *Age* 22 July 1893. p. 12.

³³⁹ *Age* 29 July 1892. p. 12.

³⁴⁰ *Age* 8 July 1893. p.12

³⁴¹ *Age* 29 July 1893. p. 12.

T O W N H A L L
TO-MORROW (FRIDAY) EVENING, 11th AUGUST.

GRAND COMPLIMENTARY PERFORMANCE
 Given by his numerous friends and admirers to
Mr. G. E.
S N A Z E L L E,
S N A Z E L L E,
S N A Z E L L E,

In testimony of their estimation of him as a
PRIVATE GENTLEMAN,
 At which he will positively take his
FAREWELL of AUSTRALIA
 And its many pleasant associations before his sailing next
 day for South Africa.

Under the Distinguished Patronage of
 His **EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR the EARL of**
HOPETOUN,
 And the **COUNTESS of HOPETOUN,**
 Sir John and Lady Madden,
 The Hon. J. B. Patterson (Premier), the Hon. W. A.
 Zeal (President of the Legislative Council) and Mem-
 bers of the Legislative Council;
 The Hon. T. Bent (Speaker of the Legislative Assembly)
 and Members of the Legislative Assembly,
 The Bankers' Institute, The Austral Salon,
 The Stock Exchange Club,
 The Victorian Artists' Society, the Yerick Club,
 The Commercial Travellers' Club,
 The President and Members of the Victorian Naval and
 Military Club, &c.

A MAGNIFICENT PROGRAMME
 Will be presented on the occasion, in which the follow-
 ing eminent artists (who have generously volunteered
 their services) will appear:—Miss Ada Crossley, Miss
 Armaida Corcoran, Miss Ida Osborne, Mr. T. M. Jack-
 son, Madame Johanna Koenig (the eminent violinist),
 Signor de Beaupuis, Mr. Phil. Langdale, Mr. Harcourt,
 Lee, Mr. Ivan Truegold, Miss Snazelle

For full programme see to-morrow's papers.

Plan of Reserved Seats Now Open at Alison's.
 Admission Tariff, 5s., 2s., 2s., 1s. Day tickets at Bent-
 witch's.

ROBERT GOURLAY, Secretary.
PHILIP STUART, Manager.

Figure 18 List of dignitaries and programme for George Snazelle's farewell concert

The popularity of Snazelle's Sunday ventures also provided inspiration to others. Drawing on the success and wide acceptance of these musical and pictorial programmes, other theatre managements saw the advantages of his venture.

The Theatre Royal

As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, (see p. 50) the Theatre Royal was Melbourne's largest theatre and as part of its programming had featured English soprano Anna Bishop in both concert and opera. It had contributed to the golden age of Australian opera in hosting the Lyster Opera Company, and had premiered the ever-popular Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. It was also the venue for the J. C. Williamson's smash hit *Struck Oil* and productions of Shakespearean and other plays. In short it was a theatre that appealed to the requirements of all of moderate tastes. Considering its theatrical reputation it is no surprise that the Theatre Royal hailed the first of its Sunday presentations on 4th June 1892 with a pictorial presentation of the Ober-Ammagau Passion Play.³⁴² Billed as 'The story that has transformed the world' it comprised the entire programme. With expectation of a large audience, the management opened the doors at 6.30 pm for an 8 pm start.³⁴³ This was the first instance of any opposition to the widely-accepted presentations of Snazelle. However not to be outshone by the Theatre Royal, Snazelle also presented views of the Passion Play the following week. But unlike the cohesiveness of the content of the Theatre Royal presentation, Snazelle offered his rendition of the Passion Play as an addition to his now-established eclectic show with a series of 50 dissolving views. Appended to his advertisement of 3rd June was: 'Note—The interesting "Passion Play" views are simply given as an extra item'.³⁴⁴

In contrast, the Theatre Royal offered what could only be described as a theatrical spectacular. Presented in the form of a lecture given by Mr B. A. Reeve it was

³⁴² *Argus* 5 June 1893. p. 7.

³⁴³ *Argus* 3 June 1893. p. 16.

³⁴⁴ *Argus* 3 June 1893. p. 16.

accompanied by a pictorial rendition of the Ober-Ammagau Passion Play taken from photographs by Carl Stockman and projected by a 'large powerful machine' operated by Mr Alex Gunn, J.P. The musical portion of the evening comprised a programme of sacred music under the direction of prominent Melbourne musician Dr Joseph Summers and rendered by eight soloists, a 'complete' choir of 25 voices, a full opera orchestra, a peal of bells, piano and organ.³⁴⁵ Such was the popularity of the Theatre Royal programme that it was repeated the following week (11 June) although with different musical content. While the first performance was highly acclaimed, it was noted that the quality of the audience was somewhat unacceptable to the promoters:

The artistic triumph and complete success of the extraordinary and unique entertainment last Sunday evening has decided the promoters upon repeating it To-morrow Evening [sic] with an entirely new musical setting, and they trust their efforts will meet with the appreciation and support of the more sensible classes of the community.³⁴⁶

As the following programmes attest (figs 4 and 5) the music presented on both occasions was decidedly suitable to the subject and of a calibre reminiscent of the concerts of the Melbourne Philharmonic Society. This however is not surprising as the conductor was Dr Joseph Summers, a past conductor of the Society (1872-74). Apart from being Organist for the Society (1869) he held posts as organist at St Peter's, Eastern Hill (1868-79) and at All Saints, East St Kilda until 1896. His involvement with these two Sunday presentations at the Theatre Royal reflected the programming during his term with the Society and the musical and liturgical practice of the Anglo-Catholic congregation of All Saints, East St. Kilda.

³⁴⁵ *Argus* 3 June 1893. p. 16.

³⁴⁶ *Argus* 10 June 1893. p.16.

MUSIC—

Overture.—Full orchestra.
 Song.—“The Holy City.”
 Song.—“The Shadow of the Cross.”
 Double Quartette.—“For He shall give His Angels.”
 Aria.—“Jerusalem” (St. Paul).
 English Anthem.—“Who is this that Cometh.”
 English Anthem.—“It was the Third Hour.”
 Aria.—“Pro Pecattis.”
 Aria and Chorus.—“Inflammatu.”
 Trio.—“Lift Thine Eyes.”
 Aria.—“I know that my Redeemer.”
 English Anthem.—“King All Glorious.”
 Finale.—“Gloria in Excelsis.”

Figure 19 Musical programme for Theatre Royal "Passion Play" 4 June 1893

(Argus 3 June 1893. p. 16)

STILLBOS.

Cologne Cathedral and the Rhine—Ober-Ammergau—The Tour of the Plague-stricken Villagers—The Disciples—The Sanhedrim—The Priests—Entry into Jerusalem—Purifying the Temple—The Passover—Gethsemane—The Betrayal—The Trial—Jesus or Barabbas?—Via Dolorosa—The Crucifixion—The Resurrection—The Ascension.

The MUSIC.

Two double quartets for antiphonal purposes have been retained to interpret the grand old Gregorian music, chorales, &c., incidental to the Passion Play, and which will be supplemented by music specially arranged for the occasion from ancient and modern sources.

PROGRAMME.

Overture, “March of the Prophets”
 Full Opera Orchestra
 Chorale, “Fierce Raged the Tempest”
 Song, “The Holy City” Mr. J. M’Lean
 German Chorale, (“Nun danket”) Chorus
 “Nearer My God to Thee” Full Choir
 Song, “Jerusalem” Miss A. Banks
 English Anthem, “Who is This That Cometh”
 Double Quartet, “For He Shall Give His Angels”
 “When our Heads are Bowed with Woe” Chorus
 “He was Despised” Mrs. Huyler

INFLAMMATUS.

Full chorus Solo by Miss Simmons
 “Calvary” Miss A. Wooldridge
 “Lift Thine Eyes” (trio), Miss A. Banks, Miss A. Wooldridge, and Mrs. Huyler.
 English Anthem—“King all Glorious.”
 Full chorus Solo, Mr. Cornelius Osmond

Figure 20 Musical programme for Theatre Royal "Passion Play"

(Argus 10 June 1893. p. 16)

The programmes were introduced with an overture, which in the second programme featured the ‘March of the Prophets’ from Meyerbeer’s opera *Le Prophète*, presumably

chosen because of the opera's historical religious content. The variety of music programmed is considerable: hymns, religious songs, anthems and excerpts from oratorio and masses, as well as Gregorian chant sung antiphonally by two double quartets. Such an eclectic range of religious music would cause no offence to any denomination and would satisfy the most discerning of musical tastes. With Summers' ideals of musical art predominating, the experience of those attending the Theatre Royal would have differed considerably to that at Snazelle's Opera House. While the music presented at the Opera House was of a high standard it was not generally 'high art' music. Yet it was recorded that Snazelle's less than comprehensive presentation of the Passion Play was overwhelmingly attended. So much so that extra chairs were placed on the stage to accommodate those unable to gain admission on previous Sundays.³⁴⁷ It seems that the Theatre Royal's diet of high art was not the preferred musical sustenance for Sunday concert attendees. In all probability those turned away from the Opera House merely crossed the road to the Theatre Royal, thus prompting the reference to the class of audience assembled there. (see p. 126) However for those with a preference for more rarefied musical tastes there was no lack of opportunity, for on week nights and Saturdays during the month of July there was the prospect of attending Herr Benno Scherek's concerts at the Athenæum, Professor Marshall-Hall's orchestral concerts at the Melbourne Town Hall, as well as the combined forces of The Melbourne Philharmonic Society and The Melbourne Liedertafel presenting the Australian premiere performance of Gounod's *Mors et Vita*.³⁴⁸

³⁴⁷ *Argus* 10 June 1893. p. 16.

³⁴⁸ Carne, *A Century of Harmony*. p. 119.

While the *Argus* described attendance at the Theatre Royal as large and the venture as a success³⁴⁹ the theatre's display of religiosity and high art made way for the more familiar. On 17 June 1893, after two showings of the Passion Play, the Theatre Royal reverted to the more popular and proven entertainments established by Snazelle and the Rotunda concerts. In its effort to provide what it referred to as a 'Reasonable Sunday' the Theatre Royal presented the first of its Snazelle-like entertainments under the title *The Mirror of England: Its Ancestral Homes*. Commencing at 7.45 pm (15 minutes before the Opera House) it was billed as a 'Unique and Fascinating Illustrated Entertainment'. Included was a pictorial presentation of 'The Thames from Oxford to London', plus what was described as 'A RED LETTER NIGHT IN MELBOURNE'S HISTORY', scenes of London the 'MIGHTY MODERN BABYLON'. Music for the entire programme was provided by the Rotunda Vocal and Instrumental Concert Company.³⁵⁰

The following week saw a similar programme titled *Mirror of Scotland* which consisted of scenes encompassing the stately homes and castles of England and Scotland. Once again the music was provided by members of the Rotunda Vocal and Instrumental Concert Company. Proceedings opened with the *Poet and Peasant Overture* played on the harp and piano by Walter Barker and E. R. G. Andrews. Further items comprised flute and harp solos and duets, ballads such as *The Lost Chord* and *Death of Nelson*, a recitation and songs including *Daddy*, *The Jolly Young Waterman* and *In Sheltered Vale*.

³⁴⁹ *Argus* 5 June 1893. p. 7; *Argus* 12 June 1893. p. 3.

³⁵⁰ *Argus* 16 June 1893. p. 16.

On 2 July the Theatre Royal concluded its pictorial tour of the British Isles with *Mirror of Ireland*, a programme highlighting ‘the romantic scenery and beauty spots of the Emerald Isle presented with a commentary by Mr B. A. Reeve’. Unlike the previous programmes featuring Scotland and England, the musical portion was identifiably Irish and included such favourites as *Killarney*, *Kathleen Mavourneen*, *The Harp that Once* and *The Wearing of the Green*.³⁵¹ However the following week the *Age* carried no notice for the Theatre Royal’s Sunday programme save for a small enigmatic advertisement with the words ‘Monster Popular Concert’³⁵² which contrasted with the still blazon newspaper publicity of Snazelle’s Opera House concerts. Maybe this was a sign of the lack of money for advertising on the Theatre Royal’s part. Regardless the *status quo* was restored the following week when an advertisement extolled the virtues of the Theatre Royal programme and advised that the audience would be taken on a tour of the world by Mr Howlett Ross (1857-1953). The reader was further informed that Ross would ‘exemplify the wonder and ineffable charm of the trip, the costly and superb dioramic of which are shown on the largest and most artistic scale ever attempted in Melbourne’.³⁵³ Ross was a Melbourne journalist, poet, elocutionist and temperance advocate whose performances were ‘marked by manliness, sincerity and literary feeling’. Additionally he cut a flamboyant figure about town ‘sporting a waxed and pointed moustache with silver hair and beard, black sombrero, monocle and black Inverness cape’.³⁵⁴ Such flair marked him as a possible contender to Snazelle. His other contribution to the programme was a recitation of *The Newsboy’s Debt* (Beautifully illustrated from life models). Incidental music comprised a rendition of a movement of Haydn’s String

³⁵¹ *Age* 1 July, 1893. p. 12.

³⁵² *Age* 15 July, 1893. p. 12.

³⁵³ *The Age* 12 July 1893. p. 12.

³⁵⁴ Tony Marshall, "Ross, John Howlett (1857 - 1953)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1988). p. 457

Quartet in C (The Emperor) played by ‘the Seraphina Quartet, (members of the Seraphina Ladies’ Orchestra), and ‘Rhapsodie Americane’ played by Mr. David Cope the Seraphina Orchestra’s director. In addition there were songs such as *The Star of Bethlehem, Thoughts of Home, The Chorister* and *I Seek for Thee*.³⁵⁵



Figure 21 John Howlett Ross (1857-1953)

(State Library of South Australia)

The travel theme of the Theatre Royal presentations was perpetuated the following week by *A Night in Rome*. Once again members of the Seraphina orchestra performed, however this time as an octet presenting *Teufel's March*. Under the direction of R. V. D'arcy Irvine the musical programme bore no relationship to the theme of the evening, as seemed to be common at these Sunday concerts. The music included *Come Back to Erin* and *The Last Rose of Summer* played by Miss Mollie Brusnan ‘the youngest lady seraphinist in the world. Mr Howlett Ross recited Tennyson’s beautiful idyll *Dora* magnificently illustrated with magic lantern slides.³⁵⁶ The Theatre Royal presented similar programmatic content under the musical

³⁵⁵ *Age* 22 July 1893, p. 12.

³⁵⁶

direction of R. W. D'Arcy Irvine until its last Sunday concert on 1 October 1893. Its demise was the result of J. Parker Hall taking over as new lessee and manager.³⁵⁷

While the Theatre Royal presented a programme similar to that of Snazelle, it lacked the panache that was his. These programmes resembled that of the staid armchair travelogues presented by Smith earlier in the century, although with the addition of popular musical items. Regardless, the popularity of the Sunday Concert concept heartened other theatre managements.

While the programme formats of the Sunday concerts thus far had received general acceptance by audiences, this format was challenged when the Gaiety Theatre advertised a 'Grand Sacred Concert' that was truly unique in its musical content.

The Gaiety Theatre

Formally the Bijou Theatre destroyed by fire in 1889, it was rebuilt and renamed the Gaiety Theatre.³⁵⁸ A true variety theatre, its weekday advertisement for 24 June 1893 proudly acclaimed it as 'The largest company of Variety Artists ever placed on this or any other stage in Australia'. Of the management and the theatre it was confidently stated that:

No hard times with the Gaiety Theatre. Well constructed, no reconstruction needed. Banks fail, but we never fail. And why? Because we place goods in large quantities to our numerous customers.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ *Age* 30 September 1893. p. 12.

³⁵⁸ Ann Atkinson, Lindsay Knight, and Margaret McPhee, "Academy of Music, Melbourne," in *The Dictionary of Performing Arts in Australia* (Allen & Unwin, 1996).

³⁵⁹ *Argus* 24 June 1893. p. 16.

These week-day shows consisted of a large cast of 40 that performed nightly under the direction of W. H. Speed and presented as well as the current London craze of the ta-ra-ra-boom-der-ay (billed as the 'ta-ra-ra-lament' and performed by 12 'beautiful and graceful ladies'), a conjuring act presented by Professor Hoffman and his daughter Ada, as well as a minstrel show. Unlike the Opera House and the Theatre Royal, both of which featured plays, opera, burlesque and musical comedy as their week-day and Saturday evening diet, the Gaiety presented a true variety show.

Likewise the Gaiety's Sunday shows differed in content to other Sunday entertainment. Instead of adopting the proven popular vocal, instrumental and magic lantern format for its first Sunday concert on June 24, the Gaiety Theatre management chose instead to present a concert described in its advertising as 'both weird and quaint, as sang [sic.] by the slaves in America before the war as gathered in a camp meeting on Sunday morning'.³⁶⁰ Advertised as a 'Grand Sacred Concert', further emphasis on the religiosity of the programme was gained by presenting it in lecture form given by Mr W. (Billy) H. Speed, informing of '...the manner in which the happy and gifted people conducted their religious services'.³⁶¹ In addition the programme was augmented by sacred songs sung by lady vocalists from the Gaiety cast.

A surprising feature of this first performance was the inclusion of Professor Hoffman and his daughter Ada assisted by G. W. Fowler, whose task it was to 'entertain with the powers of spiritualism'. It was noted in Chapter 1 that regardless of disapproval from most of the traditional clergy as to its religious validity, (see page 32)

³⁶⁰ *Age* 24 June 1893. p. 16.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.* p. 16.

spiritualism had attracted a growing interest from all classes of society (see page 29). Apart from the spiritualist content and the questionable standing of spiritualism as a religion, the programme appeared to be a truly religious format. Despite no detailed programme of the first night being published, the advertised format of jubilee songs and spiritualism would have had appeal to all classes, thus ensuring a large audience.

REPORTING FROM THE GAIETY THEATRE
GAIETY THEATRE.
 Sole Lessee and Manager... Mr. W. H. Speed.
 The FASHIONABLE FAMILY RESORT.
 W. H. SPEED'S
 WORLD'S GAIETY COMPANY.
 The largest company of Variety Artists ever placed on this or any other stage in Australia. No hard times with the Gaiety Theatre. We constructed, no reconstruction needed. Banks fail, but we never fail. And why? Because we place good goods in large quantities to our numerous customers.
 First appearance of
 James—Hamilton and Hazelwood—Florence, Mr. John Matlock, Johnny Collins, Miss Ida Clarkson, Little Elsie Birt, Horace Copeland.
 10 END MEN. 10
 Bovis Bros., Stevens, Harvey, Connors, Stapleton, Gleeson, Taylor, Copeland, and Keenan.
 VOCAL STAFF. { Misses Rowe, Octavius, Clarkson, Warren, Golding, and Bird, Messrs. Matlock, Wyatt, Santley, Shaw, Herbert, and Speed. } VOCAL STAFF.
 The TA-RA-RA LAMENT, by
 12 Beautiful and Graceful Ladies, 12
 Misses Tudor, Richardson, Olive, Clark, Marshall, Hatley, Norman, Albert, Davenport, Wilmet, Victory, and Murray.
 40 Artists who will Positively Appear 40.
 Prof. — The HOFFMANS—Ada.
 Last But Not Least, G.E.O. ELLIS.
 Orchestra stalls, 2s.; stalls, 1s.; family circle, 6d.
 TO-MORROW NIGHT (SUNDAY), JUNE 25.
GRAND SACRED CONCERT
 By the coloured Jubilee Singers, a concert both weird and quaint, as sung by the slaves in America before the war as gathered in a camp meeting on Sunday morning. The programme will be conducted and lectured by Mr. W. H. Speed, showing the manner in which the happy and gifted people conducted their religious services. The coloured people will be assisted by a few of our talented lady vocalists, who will discourse a few sacred songs, and also Professor Hoffman and Ada Hoffman, assisted by G. W. Fowler, will entertain with the powers of spiritualism. The management reserve the right to refuse admittance of boys or any objectionable characters.
 Doors open 6.30. Concert 7.30. COLLECTION.

Figure 22 Programme for the week-day and Sunday concerts presented at the Gaiety Theatre. (*Argus* 24 June 1893)

However subsequent Gaiety entertainments dispensed with spiritualism, choosing instead to present traditional ballads interspersed with jubilee and plantation songs and the songs of Stephen Foster.

As noted in Chapter 3 (see page 94) *The Spectator* commented that the “common people” were more comfortable listening to the likes of the Fisk Jubilee Singers than any of the higher forms of musical entertainment. The fore-runner to gospel singing, Jubilee singing comprised spirituals and plantation songs. Such songs were also included in slave scenes of such plays as *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*. Between 1886 and 1889 a ten-member black choir called the Fisk Jubilee Singers³⁶² toured Australia under the direction of Fredrick J. Loudin, one of the original Fisk Jubilee Singers.³⁶³ They toured extensively throughout Europe and Australia and their appearances in Melbourne in October 1887 left a lasting impression. This gospel-type singing was perpetuated by the visit of evangelists (such as the Moody/Sankey, and the Chapman missions) in the late 19th and early 20th century.³⁶⁴ But what is of interest to this study is the proximity to the date of the observations of the *Spectator* correspondent regarding the preference of attendees at Wesley’s PSA for music of the type presented by the Fisk Jubilee Singers. (see page 94) Reading between the lines it appears opportunistic on the part of the Gaiety management to feature jubilee songs as part of its first Sunday concert on 25 June, the week following such comment. In addition to solos, jubilee songs sung in duet and quartet were also included. As the Gaiety had among its week-day cast black singers familiar with jubilee songs, it was easily able

³⁶² Originally the Fisk Jubilee Singers were established to raise funds for Fisk University which was founded in 1866 at Nashville (Tennessee) for the education of freed black slaves after the American Civil War. Aptly named the Fisk Jubilee Singers, the name reflected the Old Testament custom of the freeing of slaves in a jubilee year. Abandoning their classical and popular repertoire for spirituals and slave songs they established the black spiritual in the history of American music and introduced and popularized these songs among white audiences. (Kay Beasley, "Fisk Jubilee Singers (1871-)," www.tnstate.edu/library/digital/FISK.HTM.)

³⁶³ John Whiteoak suggests that it may have been a private entrepreneurial enterprise and not related to Fisk University. (John Whiteoak, "Jubilee Singers," in *Currency Companion to Music & Dance in Australia* ed. Aline Scott-Maxwell John Whiteoak (Sydney: Currency House Inc., 2003).)

³⁶⁴ Geoffrey M. Troughton "Moody and Sankey Down Under: A Case Study In "Trans-Atlantic" Revivalism in Nineteenth-Century New Zealand," *Journal of Religious History* 29, no. 2 (2005).

to present an authentic rendition of this repertoire. These were members of the earlier minstrelsy troupes who remained in Melbourne to establish a theatrical career.³⁶⁵

Among those identifiable are Charles Pope, Irving Sayles and Billy Speed of the Hicks-Sawyer Minstrels (1888-90), and Sam Keenan of Hicks's Georgia Minstrels.³⁶⁶

G A I E T Y T H E A T R E.	
To-morrow Night. To-morrow Night.	
SUNDAY. 15th JULY.	
SACRED and CLASSICAL CONCERT.	
Orchestra under the direction of H. V. Ingham.	
PROGRAMME.	
Selection	H. V. Ingham, Orchestra
"Oh, Mighty King" (by Davis)	Mr. Geo. Shaw
Selection	Little Elsie Birt
Jubilee	Mr. Irving Sayles
"Oh, Song Divine" (by Thurber)	Miss Amy Rowe
Jubilee	Chas. Pope
"Fond Dove"	Mr. Ted Herbert
Jubilee	Mr. Sam Keenan
Selection	H. V. Ingham, Orchestra
"He's There, I Know"	Mr. Will Stevens
Selection	Miss Lillie Octavia
Jubilee Duet	Messrs. Pope and Sayles
"Lost Chord"	Miss Amy Rowe
Selection, "The Broken Pathway"	Mr. W. H. Speed
"Tis Thine Alone"	Little Elsie Birt
Solo	Mr. R. Thorne
"Our Vessel Lost" (duet)	Bovis Bros.
"Rest in Peace"	Mr. Geo. Shaw
The management reserve the right to refuse admission to any objectionable persons. To defray expenses the audience will be EXPECTED to place a silver coin in the plate when passed around.	
Doors open 7 15. Commence 8.	

Figure 23 Gaiety Theatre programme
(Age 14 July 1893. p. 12)

It may be noted that minstrel shows were not unfamiliar with audiences, being widespread in the colonies as early as the 1830s. Initially they featured the blackened faces of local white actors of the likes of George Coppin and John Hydes as well as those from visiting overseas companies. By the mid-1850s minstrel performances had progressed from an entr'acte to a performance capable of a whole night's

³⁶⁵ Gary LaGallant, "Minstrelsy in Australia: A Brief Overview," www.warrenfahey.com/Sydney-Folklore/SECTION-19/sfp-minstrelsy-1.html.

³⁶⁶ John Whiteoak, "Minstrel Shows," in *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, ed. John Whiteoak Aline Scott-Maxwell (Sydney: Currency House Inc., 2003). p. 417.

entertainment presented by local and visiting troupes such as Howard's Ethiopian Serenaders and the Empire Minstrels. By the 1870s the first African American minstrel troupes began arriving in Australia, giving authenticity to performance.³⁶⁷

Apart from the entertainment value provided by the minstrel shows, their message was also close to the hearts of the people of Melbourne, and particularly in this time of repression of Sunday entertainments. In his article 'The Minstrel Show and Australian Popular Culture' Richard Waterhouse states that:

In the minstrel show, too, was to be found a defiance of those politicians, churchmen and (often female) reformers who were seeking to repress or "improve" the leisure activities of the working class. Drinking, gambling, smoking and male sexual promiscuity were all targets of a reform crusade which gathered momentum as the century progressed. In their stump speeches and sketches, in particular, the minstrels provided a defence, albeit one which was both inchoate and somewhat inarticulate, of the leisure habits of the working class section of the audience.³⁶⁸

Waterhouse also notes that the appeal of the minstrel shows extended beyond the working class.

The secret of the minstrels' success in Australia lay in the fact that their appeal crossed class: their sentimental songs struck a chord with a middle class caught up in a rapidly changing world and alienated from and antipathetic to the cultural values of the modern city. Social fluidity characterized the nineteenth century Australian city and the middle class here, as in Britain and the United States, adopted a sentimental culture, which it applied to fashion, etiquette and the ritual of mourning, as a means of defining itself as a class.³⁶⁹

In times of mourning such songs like *Ring the Bell Softly* gave support to those left behind, and in an educative manner addressed itself specifically to the rites of mourning.

Someone has gone from this strange world of ours.

³⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 417.

³⁶⁸ Richard Waterhouse, "The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture," *Journal of Popular Culture* 24, no. 3 (1990). p. 5.

³⁶⁹ Ibid. p. 151

No more to gather its thorns and its flowers.
No more to linger where sunbeams must fade.
Where, on all beauty death's fingers are laid.
Weary with mingling life's bitter and sweet.
Weary with parting and never to meet.
Someone has gone to the bright golden shore,
Ring the bell softly, there's crape on the door.³⁷⁰

Middle class values were also evident in these songs. Love, loyalty and morality were rewarded by a benevolent God and such songs reflected the tenor of Snazelle's presentations. The chorus from the following song is reminiscent of the death of Little Jo:

When Mother Puts the Little Ones to Bed
And listens till each lisping prayer is said.
How tenderly she kisses every smiling face.
And listens, as they call out from their bed—
Chorus:
Good night mama. Good night papa;
Angels bright watch o'er us all.³⁷¹

Just as the scenes of the mother country projected by Snazelle and other lanternists had provided nostalgia for distant home, so did such songs as Stephen Foster's *Old Folks at Home* (although of American origin). However by 16th June 1894 any sacred or moral rationality that may have existed in the previous Gaiety programmes had declined to a token presence as indicated in Fig. 9. Fig 10 shows that the move to the secular was even more prevalent in an undated programme (possibly late July) that billed Jas. Harvey in his imitation of celebrated actors. Judging by its title it was a comedy routine very reminiscent of the theatre's week-day performances. However this type of presentation was not evident in subsequent programmes.

³⁷⁰ "Ring the Bell Softly," songsheet in the possession of R. I. Jack cited in *ibid* p. 5.

³⁷¹ M.L., *Cogill Brothers Songbook*. cited in Waterhouse, "The Minstrel Show and Australian Culture." p 5.

G A I E T Y T H E A T R E .

TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING,
OUR USUAL GREAT RATIONAL CONCERT.
SPECIAL and MONSTER BILL.
READ THIS MAGNIFICENT PROGRAMME:

1. Overture, "The Golden Wedding"	C. B. Orchestra
2. "Divorced"	Amy Rowe
3. "Darkies' Jubilee"	Chas. Pope
4. "Wintry Winds"	Ettie Williams
5. Mandolin and Guitar Selections	Eva and Phoebe Levy
6. "Love's Old Sweet Song"	Nita Clarke
7. "Norah, My Village Queen"	Gray Sisters
8. "Gentle Daisy Bell"	Chas. Norwood
9. "The Cantineer"	Lorrie St. George
10. "Bunk-a-Doodle-I-Do"	Geo. Jones
11. "Bury Me Near the Old Home"	John Matlock
12. "The Gay Coquette"	Evelyn Harte
13. Imitations	Jas. Harvey
14. "The Road to Ruin"	Harry P. Cogill
15. "Absent Minded"	Chas. W. Cogill
16. "The Idol of Melbourne Town"	Florrie Forde
17. "Climb, ye Children, Climb"	Irving Sayles
18. "SHAMUS O'BRIEN (specially engaged)"	ALBERT LUCAS
19. Duet—"Life's Dream is O'er"	Lorrie St. George and Amy Rowe
20. March and Finale	C. B. Orchestra

Visitors to the front seats are expected to contribute not less than one shilling each, and to the back seats and family circle not less than sixpence each.

Figure 24 Programme for the Gaiety Theatre Sunday concert 17 June 1894

(The Age 16 June 1894)

GAIETY THEATRE.

GRAND RATIONAL CONCERT.

To-Night's (Sunday) Programme.

Special attention is drawn to the fact that every Week Night this Company presents a Minstrel and Speciality Programme of unexampled excellence.

Special Programme.

Overture—"Esmeralda" ...	COGILL BROS ORCHESTRA
"Glory or the Grave" ...	JOHN MATLOCK
"Espanita" ...	LORRIE ST. GEORGE
Mandolin Solo—"Schubert's Serenade" ...	EUNICE FERNANDEZ
"The Three-leaved Shamrock" ...	NITA CLARK
"Still There" ...	CHAS. POPE
"Whisper, and I Shall Hear" ...	AMY ROWE
"Highly Colored Tie" ...	GRAY SISTERS
"The Fisherman's Widow" ...	CHAS. NORWOOD
"Ethiopian Jubilee" ...	IRVING SAYLES
"For a Girl" ...	STELLA ESDAILE
"That is Love" (by general desire) ...	HARRY P. COGILL
"Another Color Now" ...	CHAS. W. COGILL

WALTER HOLT,
In a few Musical Numbers.

JAS. HARVEY,
In his Imitations of celebrated Actors (specially engaged).

Duetts ... "Home to our Mountains"

AMY ROWE & LORRIE ST. GEORGE

Minstrel Ensemble—"Les Brillants" ORCHESTRA

Figure 25 Programme for the Gaiety Theatre Sunday concert

In August 1894, the Gaiety Theatre became the Oxford Theatre.³⁷² While still under the directorship of the Cogill brothers, the tenor of the Oxford's Sunday rational concert changed, presenting no more than a series of popular songs, including such trivial items as *Don't Count Your Chickens* and *Pop Goes the Weasel* as seen in Fig. 11. The Cogill Bros. Minstrel and Burlesque Co. continued in similar vein at the Oxford until 19 May, 1895 when the Cogill Brothers relinquished their management.³⁷³

³⁷² Age 25 August 1894. p. 6.

³⁷³ Age 18 May 1895. p. 6.

COGILL

To-Night, Sunday, 5th Aug.

Read our Monster Programme,

Programme.

1. Overture	...	C. B. ORCHESTRA
2. "Whisper and I Shall Hear"	...	AMY ROWE
3. "Don't Count Your Chickens,"	...	ETTIE WILLIAMS
4. "Playfellows,"	...	CHAS. NORWOOD
5. "We'll have a Jolly Time,"	...	CHAS. POPE
6. "Such a Nice Young Man,"	Misses	D'ELROY & GLYNN
7. "Three Leaves of Shamrock,"	...	NITA CLARKE
8. "Topicalities,"	...	GEO. ELLIS
9. "Kissing,"	...	GRAY SISTERS
10. "When the Violets Bloom Again,"	...	LORRIE ST. GEORGE
11. "Pop goes the Weasel,"	...	GEO. JONES

ADMISSION is by Collection, but Visitors to the Stalls & Dress Circle are expected to contribute not less than ONE SHILLING each, and those to the Family Circle not less than SIXPENCE each.

COGILL BROS.

Our Special Sunday Concert.

Commencing at 7.50 p.m.

Programme.

12. "Only a Bluebell,"	...	EMMIE MORRISON
13. "The Earl's Daughter"	...	ALBERT LUGAS
14. "A Tale of the Sea,"	...	HARRY P. COGILL
15. "Feathers in his hat"	...	DELOHERY, CRAYDON and HOLLAND
16. "The Beating of My Own Heart"	...	ISABEL WEBSTER
17. "Faces I Have Met"	...	TEDDY FORDE
18. "Say Au Revoir, but not Good-bye"	...	STELLA ESDAILE
19. "Happy Time,"	...	IRVING SAYLES
20. "Duet—"Reign of the Roses"	...	LORRIE ST. GEORGE and AMY ROWE
21. Cornet Solo	...	G. OPPENHEIM and ORCHESTRA

The Management reserve the right to expel objectionable persons.

Figure 26 Oxford Theatre Programme of the Cogill Bros.

The Oxford Theatre nevertheless continued Sunday shows, now under the direction of Frank M. Clark. However there was no detailed advertised programme for its Sunday concert; instead the advertising merely indicated that 'the Full Strength of the EMPIRE Co., Including the Empire Singing Party' would perform. On weekdays the Oxford Theatre presented a show that was vaudevillian in context and performed by the Empire Company. Judging from the programme replicated in Fig. 12 such items presented in the weekday show would not be seen as suitable for Sunday presentation.

OXFORD THEATRE
 Under the Direction of Mr. Frank M. Clark.
 Transformation Change of Programme To-night.
FRANK M. CLARK'S MAGNIFICENT and REFINED

EMPIRE COMPANY. EMPIRE COMPANY.
 More Big Cards, New Faces and Evergreen Favorites.
TO-NIGHT, SATURDAY, 20th JULY.

The management has great pleasure in announcing the first appearance (by arrangement with Bland Holt, Esq.) of the celebrated "Span of Life" troupe of acrobats.

The Living Bridge. **{ THE LEONARD FAMILY }** Living Bridge.
 Also the Young and Captivating Serio-Comic Artists, Miss ADA LEMPRIERE.

Triumphant success of the Phenomenal Vocalist, Miss ADA COLLEY.

HARRY SHINE. The BOVIS BROS.
HARRY SHINE. The BOVIS BROS.
WILL WHITBURN, WALLACE KING,
EUNICE FERNANDEZ, DORA BUSCH,
THE EMPIRE SINGING PARTY.

Read this Immensely Attractive Programme.
The EMPIRE PAVILION of FLOWERS.
 A Revelation of Beauty, Music, Mirth and Revelry.

Prompt Side.	Chairman.	Op. Side.
Will Whitburn.	Billy Akarman.	Chas. Bovis.
Overture, "Marriage Belis"	Empire Orchestra	
"Queen of the Earth"	Horace St. George	
Serio-comic medley	Ada Lempriere	
Comic, "Telephone on High"	Will Bovis	
Ballad, "Embarrassment"	Lilian Lynton	
Mandoline Solo by the Spanish student	Eunice Fernandez	
Ballad, "Sally Horner"	Wallace King	
Comic Medley	Chas. Bovis	
"True Till Death"	Dora Busch	

Mr. Will Whitburn in his new specialty, "At the Registrar's Office I Met My Doom," and Other Parodies.

Miss Ada Colley will sing—
 "Sing, Sweet Bird," and "Bid Me Good Bye."

Grand Finale by Will Whitburn, Billy Akarman, Will Bovis and Co.

THE MESMERIST.
 Part II.
 Miss ADA LEMPRIERE.
 In her Serio-comic and Dance Specialties.
 The Eccentric and Versatile Comedians,
CHAS.—The BOVIS BROS.—WILL.
 In their original act, "Revenge" (composed by Fred Ireland). First appearance of the famous Acrobats, the **4—LEONARD FAMILY—4**
 Who created such a sensation as the Living Bridge in the recent production of "The Span of Life." To be followed by the immensely popular favorite, **HARRY SHINE**, in a fresh budget of diverting comicalities. Concluding with Will Whitburn's up-to-date eccentricity, "The Dentist." Prices—2s, 1s, and sixpence.
JOSEPH BROWN, Acting Manager.

OXFORD THEATRE.
TO-MORROW (Sunday) Open 7. Commence 8.
RATIONAL SUNDAY CONCERT) A
RATIONAL SUNDAY CONCERT) Superb
RATIONAL SUNDAY CONCERT) Programms.
 Miss Colley, Miss Busch, Lilian Lynton, Eunice Fernandez, Ada Lempriere.
 Wallace King, Harry Shine, the Bovis Bros., Horace St. George and the Full Strength of
The EMPIRE Co.,
 Including the Empire Singing Party.
 Collection.

Figure 27 Weekday Oxford Theatre Programme

Prior to Clark's management of the Oxford Theatre he was manager of the Bijou Theatre. Some indication of his Sunday programme preferences can therefore be gleaned from the Bijou's advertised programme. As can be seen from the programme in Fig. 13, it comprised secular songs and the addition of a humorous recitation. Of note is the inclusion of juvenile singer, Little May Victoria in a rendition of *Little too Young*.³⁷⁴ (Fig. 13) However, point was made as to the possible

³⁷⁴ Age 18 May 1895. p. 10.

JOSEPH BROWN, ACTING MANAGER.

B I J O U T H E A T R E.
TO-MORROW (SUNDAY).

Doors open at 7. Commence at 8. Grand RATIONAL
CONCERT, by FRANK M. CLARK'S EMPIRE
COMPANY.

Programme.

Overture	Bijou Orchestra
Song—"The Miner"	Harold Kingstone
Song—"Nonsense" (up to date)	Beatrice Laumont
Ballad—selected	Clara Merivale
Song—"Little too Young"	Little May Victoria
Recitation—Humorous	Geo. Dean
Song—"Greatest Self"	Florence Schiller
Collection.	
Duet—"Oh, Dearest One"	Miss Merivale and Miss Webster
Song—"The Bells"	Mr. Dare Warne
Song—"Her Eyes Don't Shine"	Katie Towers
Song—"Since the Baby Came"	Wilfred S. Shine
Song—"Hush Thee, My Baby"	Isabel Webster
Song—"Poetical Fellow"	Frank M. Clark
Song—"While the Dance Goes On"	Florrie Forde
Song—"Student's Serenade"	Henri Clark
Recitation—"Nothing to Wear"	Adelaide Hope
Collection.	

Figure 28 Bijou Theatre programme 19 May 1895

(Age 18 May 1895. p. 10).

non-vaudevillian character of the Sunday concert (albeit still secular) by the inclusion in an advertisement of 10 June 1895 stating that the 'Grand Rational Sunday Entertainment' was 'A specially prepared programme altogether different from week days'.³⁷⁵

Sunday shows were not unknown at the Bijou Theatre during the previous year. Beginning on 14 October 1894, a summer season of 'Sacred and Classical Concerts' commenced. Under the management of Phillip Stuart the Bijou Burlesque and Variety Company presented a programme that was more secular than sacred. With the exception of the overture *Cheufleuri*, played by the company's orchestra and Arditi's coloratura aria 'Il Bacio' there appears to be nothing classical about the programme. Save for one jubilee song, there also seems to be a lack of the sacred.³⁷⁶

³⁷⁵ Age 10 June 1895. p. 10.

³⁷⁶ Age 13 October 1894. p. 10.

B I J O U T H E A T R E

Under the Management of Mr. Philip Stuart.
Inauguration of the Summer Season of
SACRED and CLASSIC CONCERTS.
Mr. PHIL. STUART'S
BIJOU BURLESQUE and VARIETY COMPANY.
TO-MORROW, SUNDAY EVENING, 14th OCT.

PROGRAMME.

Overture, "Cheufeuri" P. S. B. Orchestra
Mr. Harry Cowan Mixtures
The Sisters Gray Medley
Mr. Robert Hollyford "Before and After"
Miss Eva Howard "Riding in the Railway"
Mr. Harry Crawford "Jubilee"
Miss Isabel Stuart Arditi's Waltz Bravura,
"Il Bacio"
Mr. W. Horace Bent Paradoxical Parody,
"The Little Hero"
Mr. T. Leslie Middleton "My Sweetheart - Home - Bay"
Mr. Jas. Mooney "Hallelujah"
Mr. Claude Herman "Gertie, Say You Love Me, Do"
Miss LESLIE NORMAN "Because of Thee"
Mr. Geo. A. Jones In his latest London Songs
Mr. P. C. JOSEPHS "The Mighty Deep"
Messrs. Franks and Williams "The College Boys"
"God Save the Queen."

Doors open at 7.15. Commence at 8.

COLLECTION.
At which it is expected that not less than **ONE SHIL-
LING** each from visitors to the dress circle and stalls, and
Sixpence each from those to the family circle and gallery
will be contributed.

Figure 29 Bijou Theatre programme 14 October 1894
(Age 13 October 1894 p. 10)

A 'Special Programme' for 28 October had similar musical offerings, among them the token classical item, a parody of 'Home Sweet Home', and a Jubilee. In addition

B I J O U T H E A T R E

TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING, 28th OCT.
GRAND SACRED and CLASSICAL CONCERT.
SPECIAL PROGRAMME
Of NEW and ATTRACTIVE NUMBERS.

Overture, "Bijou Magma" P.S.'s E.B. Co.
"I'm Another" Mr. Harry Cowan
National Song Miss Edith Wilson
"Sail On" (Jubilee) Mr. Jas. Mooney
"They Don't Speak to One Another Now"
"The Midnight Mail" Miss Ettie Williams
"Tyrolean Maid" Mr. Robt. Hollyford
Miss Isabel Stuart

Mr. JOHN GOURLAY
In one of his Famous Effusions.

The Bedouin's Love Song Mr. H. Hunter
"A British Soldier's Wages" Mr. Claude Herman
Lecturette--à la Max O'Rell, "H.R.H."
"Woban" Mr. W. Horace Bent
"Like a Lady" Daisy Chard
"Once Again" (Sullivan) Mr. Leslie Middleton
Duet Miss Isabel Stuart and Mr. Gus Franks
Parody, "Home, Sweet Home" Mr. Harry Crawford
Recitation, "The Execution" Mr. Henry Esmond
Song, "Dear Heart" Miss Leslie Norman
"I've Changed My Mind" Mr. Geo. A. Jones
Pot Pourri, "The Neighbors" Franks and Williams
God Save the Queen.

COLLECTION,
At which it is expected that not less than **ONE SHIL-
LING** each from visitors to the dress circle and stalls, and
Sixpence each from those to the family circle and gallery
will be contributed.

Figure 30 Bijou Theatre Programme 14 October 1894
(Age 13 October 1894. p. 10)

‘Mr. John Gourlay presented one of his Famous Effusions’. Whether the famous effusion was a moral or a sentimental outpouring is not known, but certainly the programme was of a secular nature.³⁷⁷

Of special interest in this series is the programme of 15 December 1894 which in its entirety comprised Mr Shekleton Henry’s lecture on the practices and frauds perpetrated by Mrs Mellon and other mediums. Publicity indicated that in so doing he would demonstrate ‘HOW SPIRITS (or SPOOKS) ARE PRODUCED’. The advertisement announced the conducting of a séance, which under Henry’s guidance Dr. Davis would demonstrate how Mellon materialized her guides. ‘Mrs. J. B. Mellon (Annie Fairlamb) was exposed in Sydney by Henry, a young architect. Her ‘guides,’ ‘Cissie’ and ‘Geordie,’ were impersonated by the masked medium kneeling or standing’.³⁷⁸ (Fig 26). Apart from the possibility of attracting an eclectic audience his examination and debunking of the metaphysical doubtless found favour with like-minded members of the clergy. The following advertisement recounts his experiences and some of the methods used to expose what is described as one of ‘the most audacious, cruel and systematic courses of trickery that ever duped the unwary’.³⁷⁹

³⁷⁷ *Age* 27 October 1894. p. 10.

³⁷⁸ Harry Price, *Fifty Years of Psychical Research: A Critical Survey* reprint, illustrated ed. (Ayer Publishing, 1975). p. 195.

For a full details of the fraud see: T. Shekleton Henry, *Spookland! : A Record of Research and Experiment in a Much-Talked-of Realm of Mystery : With a Review and Criticism of the So-Called Spiritualistic Phenomena of Spirit Materialisation ...* / (Sydney W.M. MacLardy and Co, 1894).

³⁷⁹ *Age* 15 December 1894. p. 10



Figure 31 Mrs J. B. Mellon with her spirit guide
'Geordie', photographed at séance, 1894
(from *Fifty Years of Psychical Research*)

B I J O U T H E A T R E
Under the Management of Mr. Philip Stuart.
EXTRAORDINARY and UNIQUE ATTRACTION.
TO-MORROW (SUNDAY) NIGHT, 16th DEC., 1894. Mr. Philip Stuart has pleasure in announcing that he has made arrangements with
Mr. SHEKLETON HENRY, A.R.I.B.A., Mr. SHEKLETON HENRY, A.R.I.B.A., Mr. SHEKLETON HENRY, A.R.I.B.A., Of Sydney.
The Gentleman Who Has Laid Bare the Arrant Humbug of Materialisation as Practised by Mrs. MELLON.
To deliver a lecture on the whole series of frauds perpetrated by these mediums—how they have been bowled out, and, in short,
HOW SPIRITS (or SPOOKS) ARE PRODUCED. This interesting pronouncement, which cannot but be attractive, both to
BELIEVERS and NON-BELIEVERS In SPRITISM,
Will be illustrated by experiments in the supreme art of
GHOST-RAISING.
By Professor DAVIS, the eminent Psychologist and Thaumaturgist, who created such a profound sensation on Friday evening before a committee consisting of Professor Laurie, Drs. Felix Meyer, Peter Lynch and L. L. Smith, and other influential gentlemen.
Mr. HENRY
Has exposed one of the most audacious, cruel and systematic courses of trickery that have ever duped the unwary. Through his action alone the greatest spiritualistic medium of the day has been exposed, and a widespread sensation caused throughout Australasia.
Mr. HENRY
will recount his experiences in this field of mystery, will describe and explain the so-called tests, and, as illustrative of his lecture, will conclude with a seance. Under his direction, Prof. Davis will produce
GEORDIE! CISSIE!! and JOSEPHINE!!! GEORDIE! CISSIE!! and JOSEPHINE!!! GEORDIE! CISSIE!! and JOSEPHINE!!!
And also Perform
The Now-Famous Weighing Test.
The spirits and the medium will be weighed by members of the committee in full view of the audience.
Doors open at 7.
Commence at 8 o'clock.
Collection.

Figure 32 Programme of Mr Henry's debunking of spiritualism
(Age 15 December 1894. p. 10)

Like all other theatres the Bijou programmes comprised a wide variety of Sunday presentations that embraced in varying degrees and forms, light orchestral music and song, verse and a rational lecture. Even the Opera House that was the genesis of these entertainments with fine and instructive entertainment went the same way as other theatres. In 1894 the Opera House became known as The Alhambra (Palace of Varieties). Under the management of Frank M. Clark it presented on the 20 May and 5 August 1894 such songs as *Always Take Mother's Advice*, *Gilligan's on the Tare Again*, *Wives* and such juvenile attractions as Little Alma Gray singing *Daddy wouldn't buy me a Bow Wow*. These were interspersed with (judging by their titles) sentimental songs as *My Southern Home*, *A Letter to His Dad*, *The log Cabin* and religious songs such as *The Holy City*, *Sweet Spirit Hear My Prayer* and Will Speed singing the jubilee *Unfriendly World*. Also on the 5 August was a segment titled 'A Few Minutes with Harry Shine', the well-known vaudevillian humorist. To complete the show on 5 August was a 'Wonderous Display' by magic lanternists the Herz Brothers. On 26 August 1894 the show featured Harry Rickards³⁸⁰ well known for his vaudeville entertainments in Chas Godfrey's dramatic scene *The Road to Ruin* and included members of Clark's Alhambra cast and Mr. Val Vouden 'in his original creations "Mr. O'Rourke" and "Mrs. O'Rourke"'.³⁸¹ In 1895 Rickards leased and managed the Opera House. The programme for 24 February 1895 was headed:

A RATIONAL SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT
By Mr. RICKARDS
AND HIS NEW TIVOLI MINSTRALS
AND SPECIALITY COMPANY³⁸²

As the following programme details attest, this Sunday production appears to be

³⁸⁰ *Age* 23 February 1895. p. 10.

³⁸¹ *Age* 25 August 1894. p. 10.

³⁸² *Age* 23 February 1895. p. 10.

O P E R A H O U S E

Sole Lessee and Manager **Mr. Harry Richards**
TOMORROW (SUNDAY) EVENING
"A RATIONAL SUNDAY ENTERTAINMENT,"
 By **Mr. RICKARDS**
AND HIS NEW TIVOLI MINSTRELS
AND SPECIALTY COMPANY.
 When the following artists will positively appear
 in a monster programme, viz:—
Mr. G. O. H. WOOD,
 The Greatest of all American Comedians.
 Miss **TASMA SHEERWIN**
 Miss **Byria Lamonte** | Miss **Berth Fanning**
 Mr. **P. C. Josephs** | Mr. **Jules Imonsen**
 Miss **Evelyn Harte** | Miss **M. J. Inworth**
 Miss **MAY LOVINGTON**
 The **LESLIE BROTHERS**
 The Greatest of All Musical Comedians.
 Mr. **Jas. Harvey** | Mr. **Samy Parlatto**
 The **Sisters Anderson** | The **Bels Bros.**
 And the Eminent Actor Vocalist
COLLECTION ONLY
W. M. A. JINKINS, Acting Manager.

entirely of a variety nature, with an emphasis on comedy.³⁸³ Subsequent advertising for his Sunday shows simply stated:

TOMORROW EVENING
 A MAGNIFICENT
 PROGRAMME
 By the Whole of
 Mr. HARRY RICKARDS'S
 GREAT DOUBLE COMPANY³⁸⁴

By 10 August 1895 only the Oxford Theatre and the Opera House operated on Sunday. However on that day a small advertisement announced that the most enduring of the Sunday entertainment venues, the Oxford Theatre, was positively presenting its last Rational Sunday Concert the following day. A similar advertisement also appeared for the Opera House. These simple advertisements hailed the demise of what had continued in the face of both legal and religious opposition. The popularity of Sunday entertainments attracted many to the theatre precinct of Bourke Street attending what was termed (albeit loosely) rational entertainment. Such was its attractiveness that at the height of its popularity there was

³⁸³ Age 23 February 1895. p. 10.

³⁸⁴ Age 8 May 1895. p. 10; 25 May 1895. p. 10; 10 June 1895. p. 10.

the possibility of up to 9,000 people congregating in the streets of Melbourne on any one Sunday evening.

Conclusions

This chapter has confirmed that the short presence of the Wesley PSA in a theatre on a Sunday (as discussed in Chapter 3) led to the growth of the presentation of Sunday entertainment by secular identities in theatres, and furthermore that Wesley PSA presentations provided a legitimate format for the success and continuation of Sunday concerts in a theatre setting.

It has been shown that the depressive economic climate of the early 1890s led to the difficulties for theatre managements in keeping their businesses viable. Accordingly theatre managers and entrepreneurs took advantage of the general acceptance of the programme formats presented by the PSAs operating in Melbourne, in particular Wesley PSA with its unique siting in a commercial theatre from 16 July 1893 to 10 September 1893. More particularly it is thus likely the Wesley PSA's presence at the Alexandra Theatre encouraged Sunday openings at other places of secular entertainment, particularly the Opera House, the Theatre Royal and the Gaiety Theatre.

This chapter has shown that the popular model for Sunday concerts was rational entertainment, that is to say an entertainment that is both instructive and entertaining. This method of instruction was familiar to those who had previously engaged in the interactive displays and demonstrations of the London Polytechnic, in particular those provided by the magic lantern. One of the popular demonstrations at the polytechnic

was the magic lantern. Its capability to project a single picture on a screen for viewing by a large number of people made it ideal for instructional purposes. Its use in the rational Sunday concerts made it possible to engage attendees in images of far-off lands, cultural artefacts, art, and representational pictures of the themes and characters of literature. Coupled with a lecture, commentary, songs and/or other musical items, or the reading of literature pertaining to the images, magic lantern presentations offered both education and entertainment. Those in attendance had access to knowledge that expanded their concept of the world and literature as well as lectures of a noble kind that exhorted moral and spiritual ideals. These presentations were arguably the forerunner to modern documentaries. It has been shown that rational entertainments were unique to Sunday and provided all classes of society with cheap, or in accordance with the law, gratis access to further learning. The most influential figure in the development of the concept of rational entertainment presented in theatres on Sundays was George Snazelle. However apart from his personal popularity it was the emulation of the programming, repertoire and performing forces apparent at the Wesley PSA that aided in the continuation of his and other like rational Sunday concerts. As already discussed in Chapter 3 the only secular predecessor to Snazelle's Sunday concerts and the PSAs was the Rotunda Hall Concerts. Of entirely musical content it too was educational in that it presented 'high art' music to an egalitarian audience.

It was found that while lectures of a moral type had been presented at the denominationally supported pleasant Sunday afternoons the direct predecessor to rational Sunday concerts in theatres was the Wesley PSA. While the Wesley PSA may have influenced the blossoming of Sunday theatre entertainment it was however

the Christian church's contribution to the continuation of Sunday entertainment (albeit unwittingly) that was far greater than that of Wesley Church. Indeed its very order of service provided a paradigm that was astutely emulated by secular organizations thus enabling them to avoid undue criticism or indeed prosecution for providing 'entertainment' on Sunday. With the exception of Holy Communion, which in most Protestant churches was celebrated either monthly or quarterly, this framework comprised components that paralleled a Sunday religious service in the Protestant church.

Christian church service	Rational Entertainment/PSA
hymn/prayer/anthem	a vocal presentation of a sober type
collection	free admission with a voluntary contribution
sermon	an address of morally uplifting or illuminating character
organ voluntary	an instrumental presentation

Sacred oratorio was normally a paraphrased version or a direct quotation of biblical scripture (prayer/anthem), while the lyrics of sacred ballads provided human interpretation or emotion to the words of scripture (hymn/sermon). In terms of the above structure these two items satisfied the requirements of a vocal presentation of a sober kind, and an address of morally uplifting or illuminating character. Secondly, the inclusion of instrumental solos, whether they were religious or otherwise, paralleled the organ voluntary in a religious service. Indeed prior to the introduction of the harmonium in the early 1800s, instrumental ensembles (comprising strings, woodwinds, or brass, or any combination of these) and even brass bands were the norm for accompanying congregational singing and providing musical interludes; the

prohibitive cost of the pipe organ prevented its wide-spread installation in many churches. Thirdly the introduction of a recitation of uplifting character provides an analogy to the sermon or address. Fourthly, a collection offsetting the expenses of the performances would seem no different to attendees from pew rents charged for a 'reserved seat' at Sunday services. However a portion of the proceeds from church collections and pew rents went to support the charitable activities of the denomination; any profit from the secular concerts was presumably passed on to the management. With the exception of the ambiguity of the fourth point (which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5) this format provided credibility to the concerts presented at the Rotunda Hall and those presented by George Snazelle, thus providing a justifiable continuation of such entertainment. Furthermore Snazelle's acknowledgement of the delicate issue of applause at Sunday events further added to the integrity of his presentations. This could not be said of the Wesley PSA.

It has been revealed that following the discontinuation of Snazelle's presentations at the Opera House those at Theatre Royal fell short of the model established by Snazelle for an acceptable Sunday entertainment. It has further been shown that from the departure of Snazelle in mid-1893 until the demise of the concerts in August 1895 programme content had moved further away from the ideals of rational entertainment while still retaining its nomenclature. This was particularly true in the case of the Gaiety/Oxford Theatre and the later productions of the Opera House/Alhambra whose Sunday entertainment programmes were hardly less secular than the week-day productions.

The chapter has also highlighted the immense popularity of Sunday entertainments. The continual placing of the house full sign at venues some 60 minutes before commencement time and the attendance of some 9,000 patrons demonstrates the extent of thirst for Sunday entertainment. The number of attendees is of particular interest considering that some of these theatres were open during the week. However it does show that that these concerts were satisfying a void in Melbourne's puritanical Sunday environment. Further support came from press reports that favourably commended the programmes and called for the continuation of Sunday concerts, while support for true rational entertainment came from such influential members of society like those who attended Snazelle's farewell concert at the Town Hall.

However while such concerts had been popularised and enjoyed by many of Melbourne's residents there were also those who wished to see them end. The following chapter will discuss the opposition to the continuation of Sunday concerts in theatres.

CHAPTER 5

THE FINAL CURTAIN

The preceding chapters have charted the growing popularity of Sunday concerts in Melbourne from their first appearance at the Rotunda Hall in 1892 to their emergence in theatre buildings from 29th April 1893. It has been shown that during the theatre phase there was also a shift in programme style from the conservative (i.e. sacred and art music) to overtly popular music potentially less acceptable to polite society. Whatever the nature of the entertainment, the Sunday concerts nevertheless provided an inexpensive and accessible escape from the mundane realities of life. This was certainly evidenced by large attendances. However, and as noted in previous chapters, this mode of entertainment challenged current Sunday legislation. As detailed in Chapter 1 the legislation in force in Victoria from 1863 (George III, Cap. 49)³⁸⁵ was described ‘as expressing religious feelings, presumably common to all British subjects in 1828’ and ‘as protecting Sunday as a civil institution beneficial to the State’³⁸⁶. While articulating strong Sabbatarian sentiment, the Act however permitted entertainment and public amusement on Sunday, but only if payment was not made for admission. It stated that ‘...any house, room, or other place, which shall be opened or used for public entertainment or amusement, or for publicly debating on

³⁸⁵ *An Act Preventing Certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, Called Sunday*, 21 Geo. III., Cap. 49, (1781). Sec. 2. "Sunday," in *Victorian Statutes* (1890).

³⁸⁶ Fn. 1 *Ibid.* p. 980.

any subject whatsoever, upon any part of the Lord's day called Sunday, and to which persons shall be admitted by the payment of money, or by tickets sold for money, shall be deemed a disorderly house or place' and thus liable to a penalty of £200 per day.³⁸⁷ As a consequence, objection to Sunday entertainments or civil charge could not be made solely on the basis of their existence but on whether an admission charge was made.

Not surprisingly the rise of Sunday entertainment attracted opposition from Sabbatarian ranks, especially those with influence or even presence in Parliament. The aim of this chapter is to analyse the arguments made by these influential people in their impassioned efforts to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath which was perceived to be under threat by the presence of Sunday concerts. The chapter will also measure the degree and effectiveness of the response from the government. In pursuing these aims detailed reference will be made to the report 'Sunday Concerts: Deputation to the Premier', June 1893, relevant police files and contemporary press reports.

The central research questions of the chapter are:

1. What was the nature of the objections to Sunday entertainment?
2. From whom did these objections come?
3. What was the response of government and the theatres to the objections?

From the beginning of Sunday entertainment in theatres the Sabbatarian cause was outspoken. The first challenge to Sunday concerts was evidenced just prior to the

³⁸⁷ *An Act Preventing Certain Abuses and Profanations on the Lord's Day, Called Sunday.* "Sunday." p. 981

commencement of Snazelle's show on May 14 1893, when he gave a brief announcement alluding to a footnote in the advertised programme. He conveyed the request that, as a personal favour to himself, his assured supporters should refrain from applause (a behaviour previously requested by Morley of those attending the Prahran PSA). (see page 89) It was obvious from the request that applause was considered inappropriate behaviour for a Sunday event. However as mentioned in earlier chapters this was not the experience of the Wesley PSA where applause and encores were prevalent. Snazelle explained that members of the legislature and prominent citizens, while 'personally recognising the power for good exercised by these high-toned Sunday evenings'³⁸⁸, stated that their only objection was the applause. He assured his audience that while agreeing with such sentiments, he 'would not like to hurt the susceptibilities of even one of the thousands who throng the Opera-house on Sundays' so therefore 'would by no means attempt to dictate to his audience'.³⁸⁹ In his pre-show announcement he charmed his audience, maintaining that they 'were the best judges, and should certainly have the right of marking their approval or disapproval' and further considered 'that they should not bother their heads about bigots, but please themselves'.³⁹⁰ Yet despite Snazelle's tongue in cheek report to his audience on the displeasure expressed by 'prominent citizens' on the matter of applause, the Sabbatarian cause was far from satisfied.

Confronted by the growing number and popularity of these entertainments, a delegation of 40 men headed by Hon. J. Balfour (Presbyterian) conferred with the Premier (Mr Patterson) on 14 June 1893 with the intention of putting an end to

³⁸⁸ *Argus* 15 May 1893. p. 7.

³⁸⁹ *Argus* 13 May 1893. p. 16.

³⁹⁰ *Argus* 15 May 1893. p. 7.

them.³⁹¹ Representation came from the Lord's Day Observance Society (Bishop Goe), the Council of the Churches (Rev Dr. Campbell), the Young Men's Christian Association, the Presbyterian Church and its associated committees, and the Methodist Council (Rev. W. F. Wells). Balfour's opening words outlined the premise of the meeting stating that:

lately there had sprung up in Melbourne a system of Sunday concerts, admission to which was professedly free, the advertisements stating that a collection would be made, but from what appeared in the Press and from the statements of those who had attended the concerts, the promoters were making demands for payment according to the particular parts of the place to which entrance was desired.³⁹²

He added that those present wished to primarily 'preserve their British Sunday intact' and any charge for admission was an evasion of the Sunday observance law. He pointed out that British law on the subject had been tested in the colony and was ratified by a judgement given by Judge Williams and the Full Court. Indeed further attempts were made to hold similar entertainments during the period that Sir Graham Berry (3/1883-2/1886) and Mr. Deakin (2/1886-11/1890) held the office of Chief Secretary, but in response to objections they put a stop to them.³⁹³

Apart from the legal issue of demand for payment for entrance to Sunday entertainments presented by Balfour there were others in the delegation who, while in full agreement with Balfour's preamble, wished to vocalize individual opinions on the subject. Some members, informed by religious and denominational beliefs, argued that the spiritual values of Sunday were in danger of becoming diminished. Others expressed views relative to social concerns, fearing that Sunday would become just another working day for the working man. Mr. Mackenzie M.P. remarked that the

³⁹¹ PROV VPRS 1177/P0000/6 *Reports of Deputations 1891-1894*. pp. 436-41.

³⁹² *Ibid.* p. 436

³⁹³ *Ibid.* p. 436.

law was being broken and that ‘they [the delegation] regarded the holding of these concerts as the insertion of the thin end of the wedge’, ultimately leading to a Continental Sunday.³⁹⁴ The Bishop of Melbourne Dr. Goe forwarded similar views to Mackenzie adding that ‘if these entertainments were permitted to continue...there would be nothing to prevent the opening of theatres’.³⁹⁵ Forwarding a Presbyterian clergyman’s view on the subject Rev. A. Yule remarked that his denomination belonged to a Sabbath-keeping country and having seen and considered the manner in which the Sabbath was observed on the Continent of Europe and America, the denomination considered that Sabbath rest was the correct thing. Indeed if Sunday concerts were not discontinued and allowed to escalate, theatres would be opened on Sunday, therefore employing unwilling workers and denying them a day of rest.³⁹⁶ Balfour suggested that the failure of the government to enact the law would leave no argument as to why all theatres and even racecourses should not be opened on Sunday.

In reply, the Premier Mr Patterson allayed their fears of any escalation of Sunday entertainment to full theatrical productions by assuring them that their protest was proper and legitimate,³⁹⁷ and like them he believed that the Government would see that due respect would be paid to the Sabbath³⁹⁸. This assurance was valid as the Government had control over the licensing of theatres. It could at any time refuse renewal of licence if a theatre were conducted in an objectionable way.³⁹⁹ Consequently theatre owners ran the risk of not having their licences renewed. Such a

³⁹⁴ Ibid. p. 437.

³⁹⁵ Ibid. p. 437.

³⁹⁶ Ibid. p. 438.

³⁹⁷ Ibid. p. 439.

³⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 441.

³⁹⁹

threat was sufficient to ensure that activities in licensed theatres were conducted properly.⁴⁰⁰ Presumably in preparation for the delegation, inquiries were made to the police in relation to any breaches of the law by licensed theatres, however thus far there had been no complaints.⁴⁰¹ While the government had control of licensed theatres this was not the case with halls, thus the matter of Sunday concerts in unlicensed halls such as the Rotunda Hall was raised. To this end Rev. W. F. Wells relayed the unanimous wishes of the Methodist Council urging the Government ‘to take steps to prevent the use of the Rotunda Hall and other places for Sunday evening concerts’. As this venue and others like it were not licensed, Wells questioned Government’s proposed supervision of their Sunday activities. Assurance was given that, like the licensed theatres, ‘the Government would take this matter into consideration, and see that the law was carried out and order preserved’.⁴⁰²

Apart from concerns that Sunday concerts would result in the opening of theatres and other commercial activities on Sunday, some clergy were concerned that such leniency would lead to a drop in church attendance. This was a concern of Bishop Goe who conveyed his fear that the opening of theatres would provide ‘a powerful incentive to a very large number of people to desert the churches’.⁴⁰³ Patterson’s rational reply did little to allay Goe’s anxiety, and hit at the very core of the conservatism of the churches.

As reported in the *Argus*:

He was not sure, however, that if they drove the people out of the theatres they would drive them into the churches. Their object should be to entice the people—who were in hundreds and thousands, in numbers so great that if they all went to church they could not be

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 440.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid. p. 439.

⁴⁰² Ibid. p. 438.

⁴⁰³ Ibid. p. 437.

accommodated—by the beauty of their teaching and to draw them away from places that were objectionable. This could not be done by any rigid enforcement of the laws passed in the times of Charles or George. It could only be done by touching the intelligence of the people. The people would not go into these places if they did not like them.⁴⁰⁴

This concept was underlined by a report on the entertainment at the Theatre Royal the Sunday following the delegation. The *Argus* newspaper recorded that the delegation ‘was simply the result of envy, because their [the churches’] services were too dry and too monotonous to appeal to the intelligence of the people, and so threepenny bits did not come in fast enough’.⁴⁰⁵

Surprisingly there was no objection to the programme content of early Sunday concerts. It has been shown that prior to the delegation’s meeting on 16 June 1893 there was nothing presented in the Sunday concerts that would cause offense or defile the sacredness of the Sabbath. In support of the programme content of Sunday entertainments Premier Patterson pointed out that spiritual instruction having been removed from the State education curriculum, it was even more necessary ‘that all avenues that could possibly be opened should be opened in order to extend the teaching of religion, and the observance of Sunday should be all the more guarded and protected’. Moreover ‘he trusted they would all try to afford to the great mass of the population such entertainment—if he might so call it—as would build up a community that would respect the Day of Rest’.⁴⁰⁶

Having resolved and dispensed with related apprehensions of the Government’s action in regard to content and audience control the delegation addressed the primary

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 440.

⁴⁰⁵ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7.

⁴⁰⁶ PROV VPRS 1177/P0000/6 *Reports of Deputations*. p. 441.

concern, the fact that admission charges were being made in defiance of the current legislation. In relation to the viability of presenting a Sunday concert purely on a voluntary contribution basis, Rev. W. M. S. Rolland (Presbyterian) forwarded evidence of its impracticality: a proposed Sunday concert at the Prahran Town Hall, although sanctioned by the council on the condition that only a collection was made, was abandoned because the promoters believed that under the imposed condition it would not pay. It was Rolland's opinion that if a collection were the only request at Melbourne concerts they would not pay either. In his opening remarks Balfour suggested that it was common practice at these Sunday entertainments for a different donation to be required for admission to specific parts of the building, and if so it was in defiance of the current legislation. Indeed this was confirmed by an *Age* newspaper report which noted that 'The present practice of the promoters is to have an attendant with a collection plate at each entrance door, and visitors are informed by means of large placards of what they are expected to contribute at the respective entrances'.⁴⁰⁷ Assuring those present of the Government's support to put an end to this practice, the Premier replied that 'if the Government found that a charge was being made for admission they would stop them'. To this reply he received a unanimous 'that is what we ask'. He added that 'they [the government] would see the law respected...' While this reply constituted a tacit reminder to theatre managements as to the current legislation for Sunday concerts, the decisions of the Premier were further made clear in a letter to theatres via the police three days following the deputation:

Police Department, Inspector's Office, Russell-street, June 17, 1893

Sir,—With reference to your Sunday entertainment. I have the honour to inform you that the lessee or any person managing or controlling the theatre will not be allowed to have a plate at the door, nor to make charge as a condition of admission. There is no objection to making an

⁴⁰⁷ *Age* 16 June 1893. p. 4.

appeal when the people are seated. I have also to intimate that if this warning be not heeded you must be prepared to take the consequences.

I have the honour to be, sir, yours, &c.,

W. Thomas , Inspector of Police⁴⁰⁸

The result of the letter was that theatre managements acted swiftly to placate the wishes of the Government. At the Theatre Royal, an advertisement in the *Argus* 17 June 1893 for its programme the following day read:

COLLECTION.-In order to comply with a universally expressed desire the promoters make a COLLECTION ONLY.⁴⁰⁹

Yet to overcome any deficiencies in the plate created by the police directive, further loop-holes were sought after in the legislation. An advertisement in the *Argus* 17 June 1893 stated that Snazelle was intending to seek counsel as to the legality of renting pews in the dress circle. Like the management of Sunday concerts churches also relied on voluntary contributions. However unlike Sunday concert managements, churches were permitted to rent pews on a fee scale in relation to their positioning in the building, therefore providing a predictable income. There was no doubt that it was Snazelle's intention to emulate the system, but using it instead to pre-book theatre seats and therefore to overcome the unpredictability of the collection plate. This course of action was also the desire of the Theatre Royal but the *Argus* reported that it had been deferred pending legal advice.⁴¹⁰

Assessing the first of the Sunday concerts since the government's letter to theatres, the *Argus* of 19 June 1893 reported that the usual announcements outside the dress circle entrances notifying that 'visitors were "expected to contribute as least 2s." had

⁴⁰⁸ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7.

⁴⁰⁹ *Argus* 17 June 1893. p. 16.

⁴¹⁰ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7.

been replaced by bills “requesting that the contributions should amount to at least 2s.”⁴¹¹ thus confirming Balfour’s suspicions that such practices were happening. However the method applied by the Theatre Royal and the Opera House to achieve the Premier’s request was entirely different. Before a large audience at the Opera House Snazelle gave a pre-programme speech in which he intimated to the audience his desire that their contributions to the collection would be to the extent that would preserve the current average.⁴¹² However the presence in the collection of dubious tender in the form of buttons necessitated a second address in which he ‘inveighed against the meanness of persons who were capable of such an action’.⁴¹³ Furthermore it was Snazelle’s intention to give a substantial donation to the Children’s Hospital if the average of the takings was preserved. While such donations were promised from this and further collections⁴¹⁴ Melbourne *Punch* reported that to their knowledge no large donations had been forthcoming.⁴¹⁵ This was the first time that any money had been offered to charity from any of the Sunday entertainments and was no doubt to appease Rev. Gordon’s⁴¹⁶ reading at the deputation of the relevant paragraph of Act of Charles I. Gordon contended that the Act provided that ‘only works of necessity and charity should be permitted on the Sabbath’, holding that ‘these Sunday concerts came under neither of these heads and that there must therefore be a violation of the Act’.⁴¹⁷

While conformity to legislation by the theatres was satisfied with a directive that a collection should be taken when all were seated, further disapproval of Sunday

⁴¹¹ Ibid. p. 7.

⁴¹² *Argus* 26 June 1893 p.3.

⁴¹³ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7.

⁴¹⁴ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7; *Argus* 26 June 1893. p. 3.

⁴¹⁵ *Punch* 13 July 1893. p. 17.

⁴¹⁶ Representing the Presbyterian ‘State of Religion Committee’

⁴¹⁷ PROV VPRS 1177/P0000/6 *Reports of Deputations*. p.438.

legislation was expressed at Snazelle's entertainment on 18 June 1893. The *Argus* reported that 'During the evening a devise was adopted which might with advantage be followed in public meetings. A resolution to the effect that 3,000 citizens protested against the unwarrantable interference with their liberties by a small minority, was displayed upon the magic lantern screen'.⁴¹⁸ This was further strengthened by a promise from Snazelle that on his return from South Africa he intended to offer himself for election to Parliament, standing on the Sunday question alone.⁴¹⁹ On the 18 June 1893 a large audience assembled at the Theatre Royal, where unlike Snazelle at the Opera House the management took the risky decision to delay the collection to the conclusion of the programme.⁴²⁰ However such perceived folly was counteracted by a method of protest to the current Sunday legislation that was creative yet subtle in manner. This took the form of a lecture titled *The Thames from Oxford to London*. Although ostensibly a travelogue it also afforded the lecturer the opportunity to include a description of the curfew laws and to expand on the times 'when a small majority dictated to the mass of the people what to eat and drink and wear and think',⁴²¹. However it seems that the public were not enthused enough about the subject or the entertainment choosing instead to use the new government edict to their advantage. It was reported that like the Opera House the initial collection at the Theatre Royal '...was scarcely encouraging to the management'.⁴²²

Commenting on the lecture, the *Argus* reminded its readers that while liberty was enjoyed presently, it did however come slowly and not without a fight. Nevertheless
in Victoria

⁴¹⁸ *Argus* 19 June 1893. p. 7.

⁴¹⁹ *Ibid* p. 7.

⁴²⁰ *Argus* 26 June 1893. p. 3

⁴²¹ Cited in *Argus* 19 June 1893 p. 7.

⁴²² *Age* 19 June 1893. p. 6.

even now a small minority of a few ultra-Sabbatarians had power to attempt to prevent the law-abiding citizens from enjoying a reasonable Sunday evening after a week of wearing toil...these religious bigots were getting up deputations and demonstrations, and wasting their own time and those of members of Parliament who, when banks were suspending or reconstructing...had far better do something to save public credit. The police too, instead of being told to harass unoffending and respectable citizens, would be far more usefully employed in catching fraudulent bank directors—a sentiment which the audience received with the utmost enthusiasm.⁴²³

On the subject of liberty, an article examining the Sunday question in the Methodist newspaper *The Spectator* challenged any relaxation of Sunday laws by emphasising that while any such change might be seen by some as liberating, the introduction of a Continental Sunday in Victoria meant:

...Continental toil, oppression, and degradation. And they were no friends to their country or their kindred who under the hollow pretence of greater freedom, seek to break down the barriers which guard the rights and true liberties of the toiling masses.⁴²⁴

The following week the *Argus* carried an addition to the Opera House advertisement that stated ‘Note-The management reserves the right to refuse admission to any person. ROBERT GOURLEY, Secretary’. This had not appeared previously in any of the Opera House advertisements, and such a decision afforded management the ability to refuse anyone who was unruly or not willing to contribute to the collection. An *Argus* account of this concert 25 June 1893⁴²⁵ reported that Snazelle appeared at the beginning of the evening to announce that a collection would be taken before the commencement of the programme, and after the audience was seated, not at the doors. However before the collection was taken he gave a summary of the previous week’s takings, noting that ‘the dress-circle collection last week came within a very few shillings of the average’, and in other parts of the theatre, collections were

⁴²³ Ibid. p. 7.

⁴²⁴ *The Spectator* 16 June 1893. p. 451.

⁴²⁵ *Argus* 26 June 1893. p. 3.

considerably below the average. The audience was further reminded that such entertainment involved great expense, and that while he was aware that under regulation no specific amount can be given in relation to donations, he nevertheless relayed his expectation, emphasising that occupants of the circle contribute at least 2/-, those of the stalls 1/-, and the upper parts of the theatre 6d. The collection that followed was positive, and with some coercion gave credence to the popularity of Sunday entertainments and their continuation, as well as showing the preparedness of the audience to contribute even when it was purely on a voluntary basis. The success of this exercise put an end to Snazelle's legal pursuit for a pew rent.⁴²⁶ Similar collections were made at the Theatre Royal and the Gaiety and Victoria Pavilion music halls.⁴²⁷

The ingenuity of the management of the Theatre Royal to attract funds sufficient to cover costs once again came to the forefront. Its Saturday advertisement on 24 June 1893 promoted the following day's performance as free, with no indication of a collection. Such a method would hardly seem an adequate way of covering costs. However this risky invitation was offset by a paragraph inviting the public to reserve seats for the following day's entertainment on payment of a booking fee. At least the takings would be devoid of buttons!

IMPORTANT NOTICE

As the above magnificent programme will be given free the directors have, in response to a numerously-signed requisition, decided upon renting reserved sittings in the Dress Circle and Stalls, and which may be secured in the

⁴²⁶ *Argus* 26 June 1893. p. 3.

⁴²⁷ *Argus* 26 June 1893. p. 3.

entrance of the theatre till 10 o'clock this
evening [Saturday]
BOOKING FEE, ONE SHILLING.⁴²⁸

Whether or not this gamble paid off is not known, for the booking facility was not mentioned in subsequent advertisements.

The Gaiety Theatre launched the first of its Sunday entertainments following the deputation to the Premier; accordingly its initial advertisements were more compliant than those of the Opera House and the Theatre Royal. As the Gaiety was characteristically a variety theatre it attracted a patron different from that of the Opera House and the Theatre Royal, and as such its advertisement 24 June 1893 carried the caution that 'the management reserve the right to refuse admittance of boys or any objectionable characters'.⁴²⁹ The reference to boys was no doubt to quarantine the Sunday entertainment from the larrikin element that possibly frequented the Gaiety's weekday performances. This admonition was followed by the word COLLECTION. Unlike that of other theatres, it appears that the Gaiety Theatre management sought to conform to the Act, particularly in the requirements of an orderly house. Like other venues, it too was finding difficulty in meeting its revenue requirements. By 14 July admission by COLLECTION (which meant a voluntary donation) was now replaced by the management request that 'To defray expenses the audience will be EXPECTED to place a silver coin in the plate when passed around.'⁴³⁰ Subsequent advertisements carried the even more compliant condition that 'those occupying FRONT STALLS will be EXPECTED to place a shilling in the plate, second stalls a sixpence'. Those not compliant with these expectations were unashamedly told to

⁴²⁸ *Argus* 24 June 1893. p. 16.

⁴²⁹ *Argus* 24 June 1893. p. 16.

⁴³⁰ *Age* 14 July 1893. p. 12.

‘look further for a place to rest their weary bones.’ However regardless of those turned away for non-compliance to the request for a voluntary contribution, it was obvious that the popularity of Sunday entertainments was booming. Requests for money did not see audiences shy away. At the Gaiety, further parts of the theatre were opened to accommodate a growing patronage.⁴³¹ At the Opera House Snazelle invited those wishing ‘to gain admission and avoid the crush’ to make application to his secretary Mr Robert Gourlay for a voucher ‘entitling the owner to a numbered and reserved pew in the Dress Circle’. But this advantage did not come without charge. While there was a tacit understanding that those who occupied unreserved seats in the Dress Circle were expected to contribute 2/-, those who availed themselves of the privilege of reserved seats were under the expectation of a 5/-contribution to the collection when seated. Unlike the pre-paid booking fee of 1/- at the Theatre Royal this charge constituted a 3/- booking fee.⁴³²

In an article in *The Spectator* June 16, 1893 headed ‘Secular Sunday’, the question of charging admission for Sunday entertainment carried significant weight. Writing at the time of the delegation to the Premier it launched a vehement attack on Sunday entertainment recording that its continuation was seen as the ultimate issue at risk to the total abolition of the Sabbath. It stated that they ‘reckoned not with friends, who merely differ from us in points of detail, but with determined and unscrupulous foes’, and further that the mission of Sabbath breakers was to ‘How to evade the law so as to break it with impunity, a problem which thieves and Sabbath breakers alike set themselves to solve’.⁴³³ The newspaper identified two points of objection to entertainments held in theatres; first the taking of money for the sole object of making

⁴³¹ *Age* 29 July 1893. p. 12.

⁴³² *Age* 8 July 1893. p. 12.

⁴³³ *The Spectator* June 16 1893. p. 451.

money, and secondly the spurious use of sacred music. *The Spectator* informed its readers that:

the caterers for this class of amusement durst not trust to a “collection” such as the law allows, but resort to all sorts of dishonest expedients so as to put a restrictive charge upon seats. They then, with well-affected innocence, disclaim all mercenary motives; and after filling their coffers for the night in this clandestine way, have the audacity to sing “Rock of Ages, cleft for me”.⁴³⁴

The presentation of sacred music was seen as a ‘subterfuge verging on the profanity to cover the real design’ of making money, as well as the purpose to gradually replace ‘all sacred things with the opera and the play’.⁴³⁵ This may be particularly true in the case of Snazelle’s entertainments to which this article appears focussed, for he had gained fame throughout the empire solely for his opera, operetta, comedy and theatrical performances. The fear that he might move in that direction was real to the objectors. However *The Spectator* acknowledged that it was not the character of the concerts as a whole that caused particular concern, but the fact that attempts being made to edge in Sunday evening theatrical amusements under the guise of religion. It pointed out that ‘hypocrisy is supposed to cling like a parasite to the Church, but you must go to the theatre after all for the thoroughbred vermin’. *The Spectator* appealed to its readers not to be so naive as to be duped by the singing of *Rock of Ages* with due theatrical ingratiating charm.⁴³⁶

Let the simpletons who grudge a threepenny bit at a Church collection pay a charge of two shillings for the privilege of hearing a hymn sung in a theatre if they will, but let not the Christian public generally be deceived.⁴³⁷

⁴³⁴ Ibid. p. 451.

⁴³⁵ Ibid. p. 451.

⁴³⁶ Ibid. p. 451.

⁴³⁷ Ibid p. 451.

To this end supporters of the Sabbath saw themselves as ‘reckoning with vigilant and restless adversaries, who are seeking on every favourable occasion, and under every available pretext, to invade the sanctity of the Lord’s Day’.⁴³⁸ It is of interest to note that the above comments were made prior to Wesley’s occupation of the Alexandra Theatre, where it presented its PSA beginning on 16 July, returning to the sanctity of the church two months later. Their presence there had certainly shown the hypocrisy of the church and in doing so had also joined the thoroughbred vermin of the theatre for a short time.

Regardless of objection by *The Spectator* to the content of Sunday programmes, those who were received by the Premier were only seeking his assurance that the law be respected in relation to admission charges at Sunday entertainments. The Premier honoured their wishes replying that he would see that no charge was made. Perusal of the local press found no comment or correspondence in respect to the abuse of the law or lack of police vigilance in the matter. However some 12 months later in August and September 1894 police reports recorded abuses at the Alhambra (Opera house), and the Bijou and Gaiety theatres. A covert police operation revealed that at the Alhambra (Opera House) ‘there was a well filled house and at the Bijou Theatre every seat was occupied, and those present respectable and well conducted’.⁴³⁹ In his report of 5 August 1894 the attending police officer at the Bijou stated that while the collection was being made a disturbance erupted. Mr Luttgens, described as ‘quite sober and respectably dressed’, was expelled. On investigation the police constable found that Luttgens had been ejected by Mr Harry Cogill because he placed 6d in the plate rather than the expected amount of 1/- for those occupying the Stalls. Luttgens

⁴³⁸ Ibid. p. 451.

⁴³⁹ PROV 807/8/A4872

defended his placement of 6d by explaining that he was compelled to stand, and mentioned that this matter should be one that the police should address. On the other hand, Cogill stated that it was not for this reason he was ejected, but for his impertinence and insults after his attention was drawn to the sign that 1/- was expected in the stalls. Gogill further stated that there had been complaints that Luttgens had been interjecting continuously during the singing and it was for that reason he was expelled, not on account of his contribution. Luttgens denied the allegation of disruptive behaviour, but was unable to produce witnesses in his defence. Indeed the constable reported that:

From my own experience of the Sunday Concerts managed by the Cogill Brothers at this theatre I am certain that it is not the custom to expel everyone who does not give the amount expected, as I have seen many persons give 6d and 3d and some not give anything, but with Luttgens I think that was the principal if not the only reason for expelling him.⁴⁴⁰

While there was some conflicting evidence, the report of the Inspector Superintendent defended Luttgens, purely on principle. He wrote:

With regard to the Bijou Theatre I think the action of Mr Coghill [sic] in expelling a person who did not contribute a sufficient sum to satisfy the manager, was equivalent to a demand for money; and as open to objection as a demand made at the doors before admission, besides being [indecipherable] to cause disturbance.

In the note to the programme the right to expel objectionable person is claimed and the Management would no doubt object to the presence of patrons who contributed less than the tariff rate laid down.

In a report of 19 August 1894 Constable Norris stated that in the company of Constable Kerr he attended a Sunday entertainment at the Oxford Theatre (late Gaiety). It seems it was their intention to enter the theatre without paying the suggested entrance fees and therefore test the law. After being turned away at the

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid.

stalls entrance at 8 pm, with the excuse that the house was full, they returned again at 8.25 pm to find the door unattended, and on entry were challenged by Mr. Charles Cogill, who asked whether they had contributed to the collection. Both officers said they had not change and on an offer of Cogill to provide change both constables rejected his offer. It was reported that Cogill said 'surely you don't mean to come to such a show for nothing there is the door, you cannot stand here'. Both men were threatened with police action, and ignoring this threat made it quite plain that they intended to remain in the theatre and get a seat. However observing that the place was packed with patrons, they left. They observed however that there were placards hanging on the walls informing attendees that 'collections in stalls and family circle must not be less than one shilling'. This was strengthened further by the presence of a man at the stalls and family circle entrances calling out 'this way for the shilling seats'. Later both constables returned with a uniformed policeman (Constable Canty) to clarify the circumstances with Cogill. Canty's report 20 August 1894 stated that Cogill did deny them entry, but not for refusal to contribute to the collection but because the place was full, a fact confirmed by Canty. However in reply to a question from Canty, Cogill said that 'if they had paid he would not order them out, but would try to find a seat for them. Because of the ambiguity of the case the Inspector Superintendent saw no cause for conviction. In a memo to the Chief Commissioner 22 August 1894 recorded that:

It is pretty manifest I think that at the Oxford Theatre the management have departed from the understanding arrived at viz., that the payment by visitors should be quite voluntary. As the place was crowded on this occasion this circumstance may be used as a cloak for Coghill's [sic.] action towards the constables, and it might be well to test the matter again when there are unoccupied seats.

However Mr Frank Clark the manager of the Alhambra (Opera House) was not as fortunate as his colleagues. Both Constables Norris and Kerr attended the Alhambra on 2 September 1894 and seated themselves in different parts of the stalls. When the collection came around and the plate was put in front of Norris he did not contribute, to which Clark asked 'are you going to give any collection', Norris replied 'I have no change'. Within the hearing of some 50 people Clark countered with 'What do you want to come in here for without money, you had better go out and walk the streets, you are a Salvation Army cadger'. Kerr also received similar treatment when asked for his contribution. Both Kerr and Norris confronted Clark in the dress circle, identified themselves as police and disputed Clark's right to order them out of the theatre. Ready for the challenge Clark took hold of Norris's coat and cockily replied 'if you have a point against me you can have it'. Consequently Clark was charged on summons with 'using insulting words in a public place' under Section 7 subsection B of Act 1241, which was heard in the Melbourne District Court on 17 September 1894.

Regardless of Government action requests for less than voluntary contributions at Sunday concerts continued unabashed and within the premise of the law: it had been revealed that regardless of the Premier's promise to suspend or cancel the licence of any theatre, the government had no power to suspend a theatre licence for Sunday performances (as opposed to weekday events) under the current legislation. Consequently control over Sunday entertainment required further government action. In view of this situation the Legislative Council meet on 25 June 1895 to propose amendments to the Theatres Act 1890. On moving the second reading of the Bill the Hon. H. Cuthbert (Solicitor-General) stated that 'he considered it was desirable that

there should be some controlling power over these Sunday entertainments'.⁴⁴¹ In debating the amendments Cuthbert noted that:

Under the principal Act the control of houses for dramatic entertainments was vested in the Chief Secretary, and he had the power to issue licences for all such places of amusements. He had only the power, however to license them for entertainments during weekdays. There was a defect in the principal Act in not giving the Chief Secretary power to control such houses on Sundays.⁴⁴²

It was very clear that the Chief Secretary had no power to prevent Sunday entertainments with free admission, a fact of which theatre managements were no doubt aware. To overcome this anomaly, there was need for an amendment to the principal Act granting authority to the Chief Secretary to cancel or suspend for any time he saw fit the licence of any theatre, house, room, building, garden, or place that had been used on Sundays without a special permit 'for any entertainment of the stage whatsoever, or for any public concert, reading, lecture, recitation, or musical entertainment'.⁴⁴³ The passing of the amendment to the Bill would overcome the practice of promoters refusing admission to those who entered the building without paying, or who refused to pay the required amount for admission to discrete parts of the building.⁴⁴⁴ Balfour forwarded an example of abuse passed on to him by a friend who visited three of the Sunday entertainments in the city. Of the three visited he was 'absolutely prevented from entering, because a charge was for admission to a certain portion of the building'.⁴⁴⁵ In an able summation of the purpose of the Bill, Balfour claimed that it provided 'an easy method for the Chief Secretary to prevent the evasion of the law, by empowering him to tell the promoters of such entertainments that if they did not stop these practices (charging for admission to particular parts of

⁴⁴¹ Victoria, Legislative Council, *Parliamentary Debates*, 1895-6, 25 June 1895.

⁴⁴² *Ibid.* p. 464.

⁴⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 464.

⁴⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 465.

⁴⁴⁵ *Ibid.* p. 465.

the building or refusing entry to those that did not contribute) their licences would be cancelled'.⁴⁴⁶ It is surprising to note that the long-time Sabbatarian Balfour claimed that he was not opposed to Sunday entertainments as long as they were conducted in a proper way. When it came to charging for admission to any part of the building, the Hon. J. Bell observed that if entertainments and particularly those of a very questionable class were being given for monetary gain, management of venues should be treated like any other trader who is prosecuted for selling goods on Sunday.⁴⁴⁷

In considering the amendment Cuthbert considered it strange that the original Act did not provide for the Chief Secretary to prevent the use of buildings for entertainment on Sunday which had not been licensed by him with a special permit, and for which the public had paid admission.⁴⁴⁸ He further informed that those desiring to present a programme of a religious character in a theatre building need only apply to the Chief Secretary, but to continue as the Act now stands would be a mistake.⁴⁴⁹ While this appears to be a reasonable solution to the problem some objected to the Chief Secretary having the sole power to make such decisions, regardless of that being the *status quo* for the licensing of theatres the other six days of the week. There was fear that a Chief Secretary might be narrow-minded and therefore consider applications for Sunday entertainment from that standpoint. However only two members, Hon. A. Wynne and Dr W. H. Embling felt this way. Wynne felt that such power could lead to the unnecessary cancellation of licences.⁴⁵⁰ Agreeing with Wynne, Dr Embling added that the current legislation was sufficient, but even if the amendment was passed the Chief Secretary, while having the power to prevent secular entertainment

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 465.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid. p. 464.

⁴⁴⁸ *Parliamentary Debates*. p. 464.

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid. p. 464.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 464

on Sunday, also had the power to discriminate on denominational grounds. He remarked that 'a Salvation Army entertainment might be given some Sunday evening, and if the Chief Secretary were a strict Presbyterian he might say it was wrong, and close the theatre'.⁴⁵¹ Other members pondered the question of the sole power of the Chief Secretary to close Sunday entertainments, but saw little likelihood of its abuse. They reasoned that recent history had not seen abuse of power by the Chief Secretary and as a consequence were prepared to pass that clause of the Bill. The Hon. J. M. Davies noted, with agreement from Sir Frederick Sargood that the current Act had been in place since 1865 and '...there had been no narrow-minded Chief Secretary who had refused to license a theatre, or who had refused to allow a production of any play...'.⁴⁵² Hon. E. Miller advised that his reading of the amendment Bill presumably gave the Chief Secretary the authority 'to give permission to the proprietors of respectable theatres or places of amusement, while seeing that such entertainments as had been conducted at low music halls on Sundays in Melbourne for some time past were not continued on the Sabbath'.⁴⁵³ Having looked at arguments as to why the Chief Secretary should not have sole power there were certain processes that could be put in place should abuse occur. The amendment also provided for appeal to the suspension of theatre licences, thus providing further safeguard were the position taken by the Chief Secretary questioned. Furthermore it was pointed out that any cases of misuse of power could be duly dealt with in committee or in Parliament.

However in objection to the majority agreement Embling believed that the Council should consider a more logistical problem, one that would prove burdensome to those living in rural areas. He pointed out that those living in Melbourne could receive a

⁴⁵¹ Ibid. p. 468.

⁴⁵² Ibid. p. 467.

⁴⁵³ Ibid. p. 470.

prompt decision from the Chief Secretary in regard to Sunday entertainments, while those in country areas wishing to present a lecture in a theatre on Sunday would need to journey to Melbourne involving great expense and loss of time. A suggestion from that they could make the request in writing received a negative reply from Embling who answered that ‘the red tape of the department would come in’.⁴⁵⁴

Apart from the questions of monetary charges or donations at Sunday concerts and the powers of the Chief Secretary, there was discussion on the programmatic nature of the entertainment. The Hon. W. I. Winter-Irving agreed that there were certain inclusions, such as free-thought discussions or political lectures that were not suitable for Sunday. Nevertheless he conceded that ‘anything of an elevating character, which was calculated to take people off the streets, ought to be encouraged. It was much better for people to be attending rational and elevating lectures or amusements on Sunday afternoons than to be lying in bed’.⁴⁵⁵ He also found it ‘monstrous’ that the Public Library and Museums and National Gallery were closed on Sunday⁴⁵⁶ as did the Hon. N. Levi who noted that it was well known that the people of the community had frequently expressed a desire for them to be opened⁴⁵⁷. Levi spoke of his overseas experience, recalling that in his youth the Brougham Institute in Liverpool was attended on Sundays by those in search of intellectual entertainment.⁴⁵⁸ The Hon J. H. Abbott also agreed that it was good to provide wholesome entertainments and currently there were many halls in London where Sunday concerts were given.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid. p. 468.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid. p. 470.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid. p. 470.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid. p. 466.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid. p. 466.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 465.

One of the main areas of discussion, and important in the context of this thesis, was the increasingly secular nature of entertainments presented. All agreed that the style of entertainment should be suitable for Sunday. However when it came to discussing the nature of the entertainments presently offered in Melbourne, members were at a disadvantage. None of those involved in the amendment debate had visited any of the venues or witnessed first-hand the programmes presented! Balfour relayed observations of a friend who had visited the Sunday venues, describing at least one programme as ‘such that no honourable member would say it was a suitable entertainment for a Sunday and ‘was, in point of fact, a lot of comic songs’.⁴⁶⁰ The Hon. J. M. Davies also informed the Council that, while having no personal knowledge, he too had been informed of the presence of comic and secular concerts on Sunday evenings. The awareness of other members to programme content was either non-existent or gleaned from the press. Abbott said he did not want entertainments consisting of comic songs and believed that this was not the type of Sunday entertainment given in a well-conducted community like Melbourne.⁴⁶¹ Although not as narrow as other members in regard to the Sabbath, the Hon. D. E. McBryde nevertheless believed that the Sabbath should be kept. He thought that ‘there was far too much amusement going on on the Sabbath in this country’, but even so did not think that the entertainments were of the type referred to by Balfour and Davies.⁴⁶²

While there was some oscillation from ministers on the question of appropriate entertainment and the powers of the Chief Secretary the Hon D. Melville questioned the purpose of the amendment by asking what it was meant to achieve. He believed

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 465.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid. p. 466.

⁴⁶² Ibid. p. 468.

that this had not been clearly articulated by Cuthbert. Although having no knowledge of the attendance at theatres on Sundays he saw the introduction of the amendment as the Government putting a tighter rein on an already restrictive Sunday.⁴⁶³ What he desired was a Sunday free from labour while at the same time allowing the public free choice as to how they might spend their free day. He pointed out that except for a few trains to the suburbs all were stopped on Sunday, business was suspended, the Public library and museums were closed and ‘the people were handed over to the parson’, and yet the streets were crowded with people with nowhere to go. For those who did not attend church, Sunday provided no outlet. He said that ‘A great change had come over the opinions of the public as to what was sacred and what was not sacred since the days when he first came to the colony. Formerly such a thing as the Salvation Army band playing along the streets on Sunday would have been regarded as most irreverent, but now people did not think anything of it.’⁴⁶⁴ Having said this he admitted ‘he had no knowledge of people going to hear comic songs at theatres on Sunday in this colony’. His understanding of the provisions of the Bill was ‘that comic songs might be sung, but that a charge must not be made for singing them. If the religious people were to interfere at all, let them pass a law straight out declaring what was right and what was wrong’.⁴⁶⁵ It appears that he was having difficulty in ascertaining ‘what the exact grievance was which the Bill was to deal with’.⁴⁶⁶ This having been said he hoped that the Government would be more explicit when the house took an issue to committee. The second reading of the Bill was moved and committed.

⁴⁶³ Ibid. p. 468.

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid. p. 469.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid. p. 469.

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid. p. 469.

The House met in committee on 9 July 1895.⁴⁶⁷ Although the question of the powers of the Chief Secretary had been resolved there still appeared to be some suspicion that the granting of such authority to the Chief Secretary was initiated by the churches, and in particular the Presbyterian Church. In his opening remarks to the committee Balfour commented on sarcastic remarks made about Presbyterians when the Bill was being debated on the previous occasion. He assured those present that the contents of the Bill had not been discussed by a religious group until it was made public and therefore there were no grounds for supposition of covert action by the churches.⁴⁶⁸ To allay any further accusations of collusion the leading Baptist Hon. C. J. Ham stated that he ‘understood that this bill was brought in by the Government not at the request of the religious bodies, but at the wish of the police.’⁴⁶⁹

However it seems that this subject was still active as late as August 1895. In an article the *Age* suggested ‘that the real instigators [to putting a stop to the Sunday entertainments] are the churches, which have always looked with jealousy upon any interlopers that attempt to compete with them in the traffic of souls’, and contended ‘that this jealousy was the result of theatres being opened on Sunday.’⁴⁷⁰ The article stated that ‘For while the theatres are full, the churches are half empty. Whether closing the theatres will fill them remains to be seen’. The writer advised that ‘What they have to contend against seems to us to be their own unpopularity rather than the popularity of their rivals, who simply fill up the want that their remissness has created’.⁴⁷¹ The article offered some innovative and imaginative suggestions that might improve attendance at church services, some blatantly ludicrous. For example

⁴⁶⁷ Victoria, Legislative Council *Parliamentary Debates*, 1895-6. 9 July 1895. p. 801.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.* p. 801.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p. 803.

⁴⁷⁰ *Age* 24 August 1895. p. 6.

⁴⁷¹ Victoria, Legislative Council *Parliamentary Debates*, 1895-6.

it was reported that the Baptist Association of America claimed that a clergyman named Nancy Hanke drew in large crowd by his exhibition of the 'trot'.⁴⁷² But just as absurd was the instigation of a smoking service in a London East End church which advertised 'If you want a smoke free come next Sunday afternoon at 3, to Christ Church Hall, Hanbury-street. A free cup of tea and tobacco gratis'.⁴⁷³ It was greeted with great success. The newspaper was not advocating such innovations but merely pointed out that 'if they will consent to amuse their audiences as well as to edify them, they will have little of nothing to fear from the Theatre. This was precisely the role taken by the Pleasant Sunday Afternoon Associations.



Parson: "How is it, Dan, can you tell me, that you are able to fill your house overflowing six nights a week, while I can't get enough people in my church there on a Sunday to pay the gas bill?"

Dan: "Well, you see, sir, it's this way: you parsons speak the truth as though it were all fiction, while we actors speak fiction as though it were all truth."

Figure 33 12 April, 1894. (*Melbourne Punch*)

⁴⁷² *Age* 24 August 1895. p. 6.

⁴⁷³ *Ibid.* p. 6.

Any discussion on the effect on the churches aside, the purpose of the committee was to discuss amendments to the Theatres Act, the first of these being an addition to Clause 2. The opening part of this clause stated that no theatrical activity could take place without the licence being issued by the Chief Secretary. This included public concerts, readings, lectures, recitations and musical entertainments. The addition to this clause provided that while a permit may have been issued it did not provide authorization to charge for any of these activities. The amendment was crucial to what the Government wished to accomplish. It prevented any charge being made and also enabled the Chief Secretary to withdraw the permit.⁴⁷⁴ Balfour drew members' attention to the fact that 'If persons refused to put in the amount required, attention was called to the fact, and they were annoyed, hustled, and often finally ejected'.⁴⁷⁵ Ham intimated that he could provide an eye-witness account to the effect that 'strong hulking fellows forcibly removed boys and men who refused to contribute, and persons were told off with the specific object of bringing them into ridicule and contempt for refusing to contribute'.⁴⁷⁶ Throughout the previous debate Abbott had constantly requested proof of such harassment. To that end Balfour produced a copy of the *Herald* and read a report of a case before the District Court of a young man who was ejected from the theatre. Before the court were John Bride and Samuel Rose. It was reported that a young coloured youth named Harry Peters attended the Opera House and was sitting in the front row of the family circle. When the collection plate was handed around at interval Peters dropped in a penny, which was handed back by attendant John Bride. Bride indicated that it was not enough and asked him to leave the theatre, to which Peters refused. It was reported that Peters had made no disturbance yet a number of youths causing a fracas at the rear of the tier

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid. p. 802.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid. p. 802.

⁴⁷⁶ Ibid. p. 803.

were ignored. In an attempt to drag him from the seat Bride grabbed Peters by the shoulders, a move prevented when Peters clung to a pillar. He was subsequently grabbed around the throat by Bride, while Rose took hold of his hair. Together they flung him down the stairs, and with a parting kick threw him on the pavement.⁴⁷⁷ The presence of the police outside the theatre brought charges, resulting in Rose's dismissal and Bride ordered to pay 20/- with £3/3/- costs.⁴⁷⁸ It is of interest to note the response of the Hon. J. C. Campbell to this incident. He remarked that he sympathized with Bride about the penny in the collection plate, because he had seen a well-dressed gentleman resplendent with beautiful rings and gold chain contribute a three-penny bit in the plate at church.⁴⁷⁹ He did not object to a *bona fide* collection, and in fact supported any entertainment in theatres on Sunday 'that would not be prejudicial to the morals of the community'.⁴⁸⁰ Regardless of such sympathy the above examples and those provided at the beginning of this chapter provide solid evidence that such thuggery was present in the theatres, and indeed patrons were being ejected, sometimes in the most brutal way, for refusing to contribute the displayed amount to the plate. One of the most vocal members in this debate was the Hon. D. Melville. Despite evidence of admission charges and disturbances at Sunday entertainments and subsequent legal proceedings, Melville still required substantial proof of the unsuitable behaviour of patrons in the theatres on Sunday and evidence of the necessity of the Bill before it was passed.⁴⁸¹ His main objection was the tainting of the good name of the citizens of Melbourne and it was not his belief that 'the

⁴⁷⁷ Considering reported other commotions around Peters his treatment begs two questions of social importance. Was Peters ejected because he had refused to contribute more or because he was coloured?

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 802.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 803.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 803.

⁴⁸¹ Ibid. p. 804.

people of Melbourne went in crowds to hear comic songs sung on Sunday'.⁴⁸² He stated that '...they [the members] should not allow the impression to get abroad that the people of Melbourne were adopting continental habits and going in for ugly things on Sunday'.⁴⁸³

Intermingled with the discussion of contributions to the collection plate the subject of the content of Sunday entertainments resurfaced. Once again Melville came to the forefront and demanded evidence of any inappropriate content presented at these theatrical performances. To his knowledge, the law as it stood did not permit such entertainments such as burlesques, comedies etc. to be performed on Sunday and for that reason there was no need for amendment. Throughout the committee discussion Melville doggedly pursued the Solicitor-General (Cuthbert) to produce the police report promised from the previous debate that would provide evidence of any disorderly conduct at Sunday entertainments as well as any inappropriate programmatic content. It seemed to him that the furnishing of the report was the only method that would provide conclusive evidence. During debate he had concluded that no-one present had been in attendance in the theatres to comment on what was taking place, and as a consequence 'members were now asked to pass the Bill on hearsay evidence, given by men who are apt to go into extremes in relation to questions of this kind'.⁴⁸⁴ The fact that Cuthbert had forgotten to bring the report to the House on two occasions undoubtedly spurred his suspicion. For Melville the production of the report would provide 'some definite information before them as to what was done in those places'.⁴⁸⁵ Cuthbert relayed to Melville the general crux of the report stating

⁴⁸² Ibid. p. 805.

⁴⁸³ Ibid. p. 805.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid. p. 805.

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid. p. 803.

that 'for the most part, the entertainments at the theatres on Sunday were very much like the ordinary entertainments' and imparted the contents of a programme at the Opera House that was previously displayed, but not read by Ham. After reading out the names of some of the songs (Speak to me, Turn on old Time)⁴⁸⁶ Cuthbert enquired of Melville as to his knowledge of these songs to which he replied that he had never heard of them. However Balfour revealed to Melville that the Chief Secretary (McCulloch) himself had attended a Sunday entertainment to which Melville asked the question 'Why do not you go?'. With sheer sarcasm Balfour replied that 'He did not consider it necessary to go, because he accepted the testimony of his fellow men. The honorable [sic.] member did not believe in any man's testimony. If the honorable member would not walk the 3 or 4 miles from Brunswick in order to satisfy himself, and he would not take anybody's testimony, then he must go without testimony.'⁴⁸⁷ Following this exchange McCulloch offered to pass on the previously mentioned police report to Melville the following day. Not satisfied with the reply, Melville impetuously asked McCulloch to 'give us some idea of what it contains now'.⁴⁸⁸ It was reported that the only information conveyed was the issue of the work carried out on Sunday by theatre employees in order to provide entertainment for others. This matter had been mentioned by McCulloch in the previous reading of the Bill but had not gained much attention.⁴⁸⁹ While this is a separate concern to the current discussion it does have bearing on the whole issue of Sunday as a day of rest. Although initially against the Amendments Bill, McCulloch's change of opinion came about when the police report that he had called for revealed that Sunday entertainments involved young people who were not being paid because no allowance

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid. p. 804.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid. p. 806.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid. p. 806.

⁴⁸⁹ Victoria, *Parliamentary Debates*. 25 June 1895. p. 466.

was made in their wages for Sunday work.⁴⁹⁰ This point was also forwarded by Balfour who in the second debate drew notice to the fact that:

Many persons employed in the theatres felt that they were labouring under a great grievance in having to give their services seven days of the week for the wages they were formerly paid for six days' services. Some of them were paid as low as 15s. per week, and were in such poor circumstances that they dare not risk the loss of their billets, ill-paid as they were.⁴⁹¹

Furthermore it was revealed that some of those involved in Sunday performances had taken their plight to the Chief Secretary, but wished to remain anonymous for fear of losing their jobs.⁴⁹² However it was asked of Balfour by Hon. J. M. Pratt⁴⁹³ if his amendment would put an end to this practice, to which he received the answer 'It does not deal with that'.⁴⁹⁴ Having received this information Pratt challenged Balfour, suggesting that while people had complained to the Chief Secretary of having to work on Sunday for no pay, the passing of this Bill gave the authority to the Chief Secretary to approve this practice.⁴⁹⁵ This would give the Chief Secretary the authority to approve a Sunday entertainment for charitable reasons or for a donation, resulting in many entertainers working without payment. The plight of Melbourne's performers was voiced in *Melbourne Punch* as early as 1893.

Many of those willing artists who give their services gratuitously in the cause of charity are, if the truth were known, rapidly approaching that condition that will make them fitting objects of charity. The position of a public entertainer is a curious one, and differs from that of the commercial trader. If a baker, say, gives away a hundred loaves in charity, his regular sale of bread is not thereby interfered with...but the

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid. p. 466.

⁴⁹¹ *Parliamentary Debates*. 9 July 1895. p. 801.

⁴⁹² Ibid p. 806.

⁴⁹³ Speaking to the reading of the Amendment Bill in the 25 June session of the Legislative Council it was recorded that he said that he did not consider the Bill necessary on the grounds that the Chief Secretary 'currently had the power of licensing theatres and buildings of entertainment', and if the police reported that on Sunday evenings proceedings were carried on which were not attended with due decorum, the chief Secretary had simply to hint that his licence was being imperilled to secure that such proceedings would be discontinued. (Victoria, *Parliamentary Debates* 25 June 1893. p. 470)

⁴⁹⁴ Victoria, *Parliamentary Debates*. 9 July 1895. p. 807.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid. 9 July 1895. p. 807.

demand for singers and musicians is at the present time strictly limited, and every charity concert takes away from the performers an opportunity of bread winning...it is not only unreasonable, but unjust, to ask performers to give their services for nothing...We trust the well meaning promoters of these charitable entertainments will acknowledge the justice of our contention and remunerate fairly.⁴⁹⁶

Although referring to performances that would have occurred on a weekday, it does highlight the vulnerability of performers at the time of Melbourne's depression who may have been called on frequently to perform gratis for a cause that was the result of the economic circumstances. This refers to those who may have had the right of refusal to perform in charitable performances if they had the chance of performing for payment elsewhere. However those in companies like those managed by Clark and the Cogill Brothers had no option. With the introduction of Sunday entertainments their weekly wage now included Sunday performances with no increase in remuneration, even though the profits of the entertainments were lining the pockets of the promoters. This was also true of railway workers. *The Spectator* reported in June 1893 that due to retrenchments in the Railway Department, workers were now expected to work seven days for six days' pay. Sunday was no longer paid as an extra day of the week. 'Six hundred men are robbed of their day of rest and worship—even theatre worship!—and now they are deprived of even the poor solace they once enjoyed—that of being paid for it!'⁴⁹⁷

While this exploitation was of great concern, it was not within the brief of the present sitting, as Parliamentarians were there to consider the Theatres Act Amendment Bill. Pratt considered the current legislation satisfactory, as was another member who stated that 'He was not aware, until the Solicitor-General mentioned it that evening

⁴⁹⁶ *Melbourne Punch*. 3 August 1893. p. 52

⁴⁹⁷ *The Spectator*. 16 June 1893. p. 451.

that the Chief Secretary had no power at present to deal with Sunday entertainments. Of course, it was the duty of the honourable members to give that power to the Chief Secretary'.⁴⁹⁸

The House met again on 23 July 1895 where the Hon. H. Cuthbert moved that the amendments made to this Bill in committee be adopted. The first to speak was Melville who having finally obtained the police report offered the following quotation for consideration:

The audience comprised a very respectable class of people, somewhat similar to what is generally seen at the theatre, with, perhaps less of the larrikin element in the cheaper part of the building than is generally found in the theatre. The audience was very well conducted, and merely applauded the songs which suited taste.⁴⁹⁹

Speaking to this he said that the audience was well behaved. While it was reported that the songs were pretty much the same as those sung on week nights and that he might think some objectionable, nevertheless it was not his right 'to assert his individual opinion against that of hundreds or thousands of people who enjoyed what they considered to be a proper entertainment'.⁵⁰⁰ He said that the police report had not disclosed anything objectionable, and if it did the Government could introduce a new law rather than the proposal to transfer all authority to the hands of an individual. He considered the closing of entertainments on a Sunday as curtailing the possibilities for leisure for the working classes. He claimed that they were unable to attend the library on Sundays and 'when all rational amusement was forbidden them on the Sabbath, what could be expected?'.⁵⁰¹ The Hon. J. H. Abbott agreed with Melville on this point, but before he spoke he made mention of the fact that he had not seen the

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid. p. 807.

⁴⁹⁹ Victoria, *Parliamentary Debates*. 23 July 1895. p. 1059.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 1059.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid. p. 1059.

police report. Cuthbert interjected saying ‘I have laid the papers on the Library table, and honorable members can read them’.⁵⁰² He like other members was not aware that they were there, and looked forward to reading it as a document containing reasons for the course pursued by the Solicitor-General. Like Melville, he too considered that the transfer of authority to the Chief Secretary was an intrusion on personal liberties. However he was quite specific in whose liberties were invaded for he said that it ‘seemed like an intrusion on the liberties of the lower classes’ with which honorable members had no right to interfere unduly. ‘The higher class of the community played tennis, football, and cricket on Sundays, because they had their own grounds to amuse themselves on, and why should honorable members go out of their way to enact that poor people should not have their amusements on Sundays?’⁵⁰³ As he was not present at the explanation of the police report he asked that consideration of the Bill be postponed for a week so that he and others may consult the police report. He was also uncertain how the Chief Secretary would manage such a task, and how it would be possible for him to oversee the programmes of performances. He found it difficult to understand that ‘If the Chief Secretary did not examine the programme or attend the rehearsal how could he know whether the performance which was to be given was a proper one or not?’⁵⁰⁴ However on the motion of the Hon. H. Cuthbert the Bill was passed and became law on the 2 March 1896.

The effect of the amendments on theatres and Sunday entertainment

The passing of amendments to the Theatres Act 1890 saw the end of Sunday entertainment in theatres. The amendments to the Act placed more stringent

⁵⁰² Ibid. p. 1059.

⁵⁰³ Ibid. p. 1060.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid. p. 1060.

requirements on those who presented entertainments on Sundays. While there is no reference to Sunday performances in Theatres Act 1890 (the principal Act) (Appendix A) nevertheless the Chief Secretary had authority to prohibit any performance in a licensed theatre that in his opinion did not meet the ‘standards of good manners decorum or of the public peace’.⁵⁰⁵ However the issued Theatre Licence (Appendix C) was issued for any performance ‘...to which admission shall or may be procured by payment of money, or by tickets or any other means, token, or consideration as the price, hire, or rent of admission under the provisions of the Statue aforesaid [Theatres Act 1890], on every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday’ for the designated period specified in the license, and that the theatre should close at 11.30 pm. The licence did not include ‘Good Friday, Christmas Day, or day appointed for a Public Fast or Thanksgiving. In regard to Sunday however it stated that ‘...in case the said building be used on any Sunday for any entertainment, amusement, debate, or lecture to which persons are admitted on payment of money, or by tickets sold for money, the Chief Secretary for the time being of the said Colony may if he think fit declare this Licence to be forfeited, and thereupon it shall become forfeited accordingly’.⁵⁰⁶ Thus the Chief Secretary was given authority to cancel licences when he saw fit. The amendment to the Act as passed had direct consequences for Sunday entertainment. The Chief Secretary had sole authority for the issue of a special permit⁵⁰⁷ (over and above that issued for Monday to Saturday) for any Sunday ‘...entertainment of the stage whatsoever or for any public concert reading lecture recitation or musical entertainment’.⁵⁰⁸ He also had sole authority for cancellation of licences but as a precaution this could not be imposed for seven days,

⁵⁰⁵ Clause 6 of the Act.

⁵⁰⁶ PROV VPRS0001676/00004. p. 62.

⁵⁰⁷ Excludes ‘any interlude tragedy opera comedy stage play farce burletta melodrama pantomime or any stage dancing tumbling or horsemanship. (clause 2 amendment to the *Theatres Act* 1890.

⁵⁰⁸ clause 2 amendment to the *Theatres Act* 1890.

and the recipient had right of reply. While the special issue of licences may have caused hardship to those who lived some distance from Melbourne, it would not have been restrictive to those wishing to continue Sunday entertainment in Melbourne. To overcome the matter of collections and the charging of specific amounts for discrete sections of the building the amendment prohibited ‘any charge for admission to or in respect of any public concert reading lecture recitation or musical entertainment on a Sunday nor the holding of any sacred concert on a Sunday where there is any charge for admission or any collection made’. It appears from this last amendment that Sabbatarian presence in Parliament once again succeeded. The decision to commit to law the banning of a collection put to an end once and for all the prospect of commercial enterprises and professional performances on Sunday.

CONCLUSIONS

The objections to Sunday entertainment (PSAs excluded) voiced in various forums between 1893 and 1895 were found to be diverse in nature. Within weeks of the opening of Snazelle’s entertainment there were complaints about the inappropriateness of applause from members of the legislature and prominent citizens. However this represents a case of double standards; the tolerance of applause at the Wesley Pleasant Sunday Afternoon is well documented; indeed it was reported that applause was very much part of its presentations. Moreover this objection was ridiculed by Snazelle and ignored by his audiences and it ceased to be mentioned shortly thereafter. Another objection involved the content of the programmes, which as Chapter 4 has shown, became increasingly secular in tone. This was highlighted during the Parliamentary debate in 1895 where accusations of inappropriate trivial songs were voiced. On the other hand it was seen that certain church leaders drew

exception to the sacred component of some concerts, especially those of Snazelle, on the grounds that sacred music was being used incorrectly in a secular context. Nevertheless it was recognized that those pressing the accusations were doing so by hearsay and the matter of definition of inappropriate content and matters of taste was found to be difficult to resolve. The theory that Sunday entertainments were the cause of diminished attendance at churches was present but not uppermost in the debates. Here was a difficult argument as it elicited comments to the effect that churches were themselves failing to attract and hold congregations with or without the presence of Sunday concerts (the times of which did not in any case conflict with church services). The 'thin edge of the wedge' objection reflects both nostalgia for the British Sabbatarian tradition coupled with a fear that the extension of Sunday activities to embrace regular commercial business, theatrical productions and horse racing, represents antipathy to what was understood as the 'continental Sunday'. In addition the fear of social degeneration or loss of civic dignity resulting from such sweeping changes to Sunday observance was seen to be very real to some, but not uppermost in the arguments against Sunday concerts. Surprisingly the matter of payment to theatre employees, who provided the entertainments to grateful audiences, received little comment, although this important industrial issue was seen to be (in general terms at least) a concern for Methodist leaders. The finding that actors and musicians performed on Sundays in addition to the other six nights of the week for no extra payments seems incredible to modern readers, yet this matter was passed over summarily by Parliamentary Committees in their deliberations of an amendment to the then Sunday legislation. By far the most important objection to Sunday concerts concerned the matter of the admission charge, thinly veiled by theatre managements as a donation or collection. It was this issue that involved potential contraventions of

the existing law, particularly when theatre managements insisted on specified amounts for seats in nominated parts of the auditorium and when patrons were evicted, sometimes quite physically, for refusing to pay the required amount.

Throughout the chapter the strong presence of Sabbatarians, particularly from the Presbyterian Church has been observed. These were people of great influence who held a comfortable majority in the Parliament. Despite the success of their advocacy in various debates, their contribution was limited by lack of first-hand knowledge of Sunday concerts; it was evidently beneath their dignity to actually experience a concert, yet they were by far the most vocal in their objection. Foremost among Sabbatarians was James Balfour. We may conclude that his action in leading the delegation to the Premier in 1893 and his presentation of the Bill to Parliament in 1895 reflected a strong personal interest in the Sunday question. While there were some in Parliament who for various well-argued reasons saw no necessity to modify the Theatres Act, Balfour pressed on tirelessly for change and with success.

Despite the strength of opposition to Sunday concerts there was evidence of opposing views in the community. It has been established that there was widespread support for the concept of rational entertainment, firstly among the thousands who attended, from the press and even from some of the most conservative critics. A number of Parliamentarians could see the value of the concerts in keeping people off the streets and occupied in a harmless manner; indeed, many of the concerts offered wholesome and informative entertainment. Others noted the particular benefits of these entertainments to the poor, who unlike the wealthy, did not have access to private book collections and sporting facilities nor even to the Public Library and Art Gallery

on their day free of work. An argument raised by Snazelle and reiterated in various press reports was that Victoria was a place where a powerful Sabbatarian minority had unreasonable control over the leisure choices of the majority; it was seen that he even indicated his willingness to stand for Parliament on the Sunday question.

Despite strong evidence of changing societal attitudes to the issue of Sunday observance and persuasive arguments in support of Sunday concerts, we have seen that the prevailing Sabbatarian influence in Parliament resulted in the 1890 Theatres Act Amendment becoming law in March 1896, giving the Chief Secretary the power to cancel the licence of a theatre seen to be contravening the principle of the voluntary donation. Various detractors who warned that expensive entertainments could not be properly funded by voluntary donations were evidently correct, because this change in legislation saw the end of Sunday entertainments in theatres.

CONCLUSIONS

The foregoing study has found that in the late 19th century Melbourne was a bustling city from Monday to Saturday, but that on Sundays all was quiet. With the exception of church halls and churches all public buildings and shops were closed, the silence broken only by the ringing of church bells and the presence of those on their way to or from worship services. Any form of amusement, especially of a public nature was legally disallowed, and even the simple pleasure of enjoying God's creation in the form of the Botanic Gardens was curtailed by the closure of the gardens during the principal church service times. Such a regime assumed that the population regularly attended church, but such was not the case in late 19th-century Melbourne. Furthermore many migrants of continental origin had settled in Victoria following the gold rush, and as a result of the prevailing legislation were required to submit to the stringent convention of the Melbourne Sunday rather than spend Sunday afternoon involved in sport, enjoying other entertainments or taking coffee at the cafes. It has been shown that an attempt in May 1883 to open the public library and art gallery on Sundays for a trial period received strong support from the public, with thousands taking the opportunity of visiting these venues on their one day free from work. Yet despite such an overwhelming response from the public, Sunday opening of the institutions was short lived. One of the major findings of this study is the strength and influence of Sabbatarianism in 19th-century Melbourne. Stemming from Protestantism and in particular the Presbyterian Church, Sabbatarian influence on Parliament was

found to be entirely responsible for the closure of the library and art gallery on Sundays.

It is clear that this state of affairs was largely the result of the transplantation of current British Sunday laws to the Australian colonies. Informed over centuries by strong puritanical opinion, Sunday legislation reflected the view that if God rested on the seventh day so should his creatures. It has been revealed that the legislation governing Sunday observance during and before the 1890s dated from laws that had endured from the 17th century and that were informed by the established church (Church of England) in order to gain social control and to prevent unruliness on the day of rest. The Sunday Act in place during the period of this study was the 1781 George III Act, replacing that of Charles II (1676) in 1863. Like its predecessors it stemmed from biblical literalism, highlighting the Christian Sabbath (Sunday) as a day of rest. It imposed restrictions on trade and commerce, employment, public sport and any public entertainment for which a charge was made. During the 19th century the Presbyterian presence in Melbourne was strong and well represented in Parliament. Thus any challenges to what was often termed the sanctity of the Sabbath were forcefully resisted.

It has been shown that the emergence of Sunday entertainments in theatres from 1892 owed much to the current state of economic depression, which had a serious impact not only on commerce but also on the viability of large-scale theatre production. The closure of some theatres and restricted operation of others is well documented. It was shown that concerts were also affected by economic considerations; even the usually well-subscribed Melbourne Philharmonic Society needed to re-appraise its entry

charges and yearly subscriptions. On the other hand however, it was revealed that the post-1888 Exhibition promenade concerts were enormously successful. With minimal entry charge they presented a widely accessible and 'wholesome' programme comprising sacred repertoire, instrumental items and secular vocal music of a moderate nature as well as uplifting poetry. It has also been shown that this programme format provided the catalyst for the first Sunday entertainment at the Rotunda Hall in 1892, when the management neatly circumvented the law pertaining to Sunday entertainment by requesting a donation in place of the usual admission charge. The entertainments presented at the Rotunda concerts were entertaining but educational, and the inclusion of sacred music made them especially suitable for Sundays. In so doing they planted the concept of rational entertainment. Assuming that the donations provided by the large audiences covered costs, it was found that herein lay a new and potentially valuable opportunity for concert promoters in difficult financial times. Not surprisingly the concept was taken up in other city venues notably the Opera House, Theatre Royal and Gaiety Theatre. The entertainment generally offered at Sunday concerts was especially attractive to the working-class population in these hard times. Not only was the donation requested moderate, but the concerts occurred on the one day when workers were free. Weeknight entertainment may have been limited for such people whose working hours were very long; the opportunity of experiencing accessible entertainment on Sundays must have been most welcome.

It was established that the first entertainment to take place in a theatre on Sundays was that presented at the Opera House by Mr George Snazelle, a well-known opera singer with abilities also in recitation and storytelling and possessing an impressive

magic lantern outfit. Snazelle's presentations met all the precepts of rational entertainment. It has been shown that rational entertainment was a concept that embodied the provision of pleasure, education and ethical comment in a varied programme of accessible vocal and instrumental music, poetic recitation and narration, with rich visual imagery provided through the technology of the magic lantern; it thus offered attendees of all classes cultural experiences otherwise beyond their reach. Rational entertainment stemmed from the 19th-century preoccupation of education for the masses as a means of self-improvement and well being and of maintaining social order. Rational entertainment may also be viewed as a forerunner of the documentary. It has further been revealed that Snazelle's entertainments comprised a close parallel to the programmes of church-sponsored Pleasant Sunday Afternoons, which ostensibly offered uplifting addresses and devotional music but with a strong emphasis on pure entertainment. It was further seen that the similarity was not only in the programme but also the venue. For running concurrently with the Opera House entertainments in mid 1893 was Wesley Church's Pleasant Sunday Afternoon at the Alexandra Theatre. The Wesleyan presence in a theatre no doubt imparted a degree of legitimacy to Snazelle's performances. Although his shows possibly had greatest appeal to working-class folk, Snazelle's contribution was seen to be recognised by influential citizens including the Governor, who attended his final performance at the Melbourne Town Hall. It has been established that drawing on the success and wide acceptance of Snazelle's Sunday entertainments, other managements, especially at the Theatre Royal and the Gaiety Theatre saw the advantages of the venture and continued the tradition of rational entertainment on Sundays and with similar success. Over time however the programme content

changed somewhat to include Jubilee songs and secular and trivial music at the Gaiety Theatre, which was known for its burlesque shows on weeknights.

There can be no doubt that Sunday concerts were controversial, stimulating much discussion and heated debate. On the one hand the Sabbatarian reaction was fiercely negative and for a number of reasons: The concerts were understood to constitute a dangerous challenge to the Sabbath and its long British tradition; they were also feared as the thin edge of a wedge that could potentially lead to unlimited commerce, entertainment and sport on Sundays; the use of sacred music in a secular context was questioned as well as the questionable custom of applause at a Sunday event. Some noted that the performers were in some cases required to work on Sundays for no extra payment. By far the most controversial aspect of Sunday entertainment was the matter of the donation or collection, which became highly regulated by theatre managements, requiring patrons to pay specific sums of money for designated parts of the theatre. Sabbatarian critics viewed this as an admission charge very thinly disguised, especially when patrons unable or unwilling to pay the requested amount were asked or forced to leave the premises. Moreover the practice was seen (correctly so) to be an infringement of the law. It was found that when managements were cautioned they found various alternative ways of obtaining sufficient funds from patrons. However ugly incidents involving abusive evictions and police intervention only served to firm the Sabbatarian resolve to put an end to Sunday concerts.

On the other hand there was strong support for Sunday concerts from people of a range of backgrounds: churchmen, parliamentarians, press reporters and the thousands who attended them. The truly rational concerts were acknowledged to be educational,

wholesome and thought provoking and at the very least harmless. It was frequently reported in the daily press that audiences were both attentive and well behaved. Supporters of the concerts also noted that the education and moral guidance offered at the Sunday concerts was much more appealing than that experienced in churches, and cautioned that their disappearance would scarcely result in increased attendances at church. The socially conscious drew attention to the fact that such entertainment was of particular value to workers who did not possess large book collections, who could not afford to go to the theatre and whose knowledge and appreciation of the arts was very limited. George Snazelle articulated a growing concern when he argued that ordinary people should have choice over how they spent their leisure, especially on Sundays, and that the control exerted by a small minority of Sabbatarian leaders over the majority of citizens represented nothing less than an assault on human liberty. It was seen that he even threatened to stand for Parliament on this issue.

The study has traced the demise of Sunday entertainment through the development of an amendment to the 1890 Theatre Act, which extended the Chief Secretary's control of theatre licences from weekdays to include Sundays as well. Given that a true audience donation was evidently insufficient to cover the costs of, let alone make a profit on Sunday entertainments of the scope that had been in place between 1892 and 1896 in Melbourne, it is not surprising the concerts all but disappeared. Such was the force of Sabbatarianism in Melbourne that the situation remained unchanged until the 1960s.

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An Act to amend the Theatres Act 1890. No. 1144.

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APPENDIX A

THEATRES ACT 1890.

54 VICTORIA, An Act to consolidate the Law relating to Licensed
No. 1144. Theatres.

[10th July, 1890.]

"Licensed
Theatres
Statute 1865."

BE it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows (that is to say):—

Short title and
commencement.

1. This Act may be cited as the *Theatres Act* 1890, and shall come into operation on the first day of August One thousand eight hundred and ninety.

Repeal.
Schedule.

2. The Act mentioned in the Schedule to this Act to the extent to which the same is thereby expressed to be repealed is hereby repealed. Provided that such repeal shall not affect any complaint made, or any prohibition issued, or any written authority given, or any licence or warrant granted, or any appeal pending under the said Act before the commencement of this Act.

Unlicensed stage
entertainment.
E. 4. 3.
6 & 7 Vict.
c. 68 ss. 2 & 23.

3. If any person shall act represent or perform or cause to be acted represented or performed for hire gain or reward any interlude tragedy opera comedy stage play farce burletta melodrama pantomime or any stage-dancing tumbling or horsemanship or any other entertainment of the stage whatsoever to which admission shall or may be procured by payment of money or by tickets or by any other means token or consideration as the price hire or rent of admission, or if any person shall take or receive or cause to be taken or received any money goods or valuable thing whatsoever by way of rent fee or reward for the use or hire of any house room building or place wherein any such entertainments of the stage as aforesaid shall be acted represented performed or exhibited or being the owner or occupier thereof shall knowingly permit or suffer the same to be so used and applied, every such person shall, in case the place wherein the same shall be acted represented performed or exhibited be without the written authority or licence of the Chief Secretary of Victoria, upon being lawfully convicted forfeit and pay for every such offence any sum not exceeding Fifty pounds.

4. Every house room building garden or place wherein any such entertainments of the stage as aforesaid shall be acted represented performed or exhibited, unless the same be authorized and licensed by the Chief Secretary as hereinbefore mentioned, shall be deemed a disorderly house room building or place; and it shall be lawful for any constable with such assistance as may be necessary being authorized by warrant under the hand of any justice (which warrant any such justice is hereby empowered to issue upon complaint being made to him on oath that there is reason to suspect that any house room building garden or place is used for the purpose aforesaid without being duly licensed) to enter into such house room building garden or place and to seize every person found therein; and every person so found shall be deemed to be a rogue and vagabond and shall be liable and subject to all such penalties and punishments as are inflicted on or are appointed for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds.

"Licensed Theatres Statute 1865"
s. 4.
Unlicensed places for such entertainments to be deemed disorderly houses &c.

Licensed

uly, 1890.]

by and with and the Legis-assembled and

90, and shall thousand eight

o the extent to reby repealed. ; made, or any any licence or Act before the

use to be acted terlude tragedy tomime or any entertainment be procured by ; token or conny person shall money goods or ard for the use any such enterented performed shall knowingly ery such person ted represented ority or licence vfully convicted exceeding Fifty

5. In any proceedings to be instituted against any person for having or keeping an unlicensed theatre or other house room building garden or place as aforesaid or for acting for hire in an unlicensed theatre or other house room building garden or place, if it shall be proved that such theatre or other house room building garden or place is used for the public performance of entertainments of the stage as hereinbefore described, the burden of proof that such theatre or other house room building garden or place is duly licensed or authorized shall lie on the party accused and until the contrary be proved such theatre or other house room building garden or place shall be taken to be unlicensed. Provided always that no person shall be liable to be prosecuted for any offence against this Act unless such prosecution shall be commenced within three months next after the offence committed.

Proof of being licensed.
Ib. s. 5.
6 & 7 Vict.
c. 68 ss. 17 & 22.

6. It shall be lawful for the Chief Secretary, whenever he shall be of opinion that it is fitting for the preservation of good manners decorum or of the public peace so to do, to forbid by writing under his hand the acting or presenting any stage play or any act scene or entertainment of the stage as hereinbefore mentioned or part thereof or any prologue or epilogue or any part thereof in such theatres or other places for which an authority or licence may have been granted by him in pursuance of the authority vested in him by this Act. And every person who shall for hire act or present or cause to be acted or presented any stage play or other entertainment as aforesaid or any act scene or part thereof or any prologue or epilogue or part thereof contrary to such prohibition as aforesaid shall for every such offence forfeit and pay any sum not exceeding Fifty pounds; and every authority or licence (in case there be any such) by or under which the theatre was opened in which such offence shall have been committed shall become absolutely void.

Chief Secretary may prohibit any performance in licensed theatre.
Ib. s. 6.
Ib. ss. 3 & 9.

7. All offences against this Act may be heard and determined and every forfeiture and penalty in respect thereof be awarded and imposed by or before any two justices in a summary way according to the law in force for the time being regulating summary proceedings before justices; and any person feeling aggrieved by any summary judgment or conviction under this Act may appeal therefrom in the manner provided by any law in force for the time being in that behalf.

Proceedings.
Ib. s. 7.
Ib. ss. 19 & 20.

"*Licensed
Theatres
Statute 1865*
s. 8.
Application
penalties.
6 & 7 Vict. c. 63
s. 21.
Limitation of
actions.
Ib. s. 9.

8. All fines forfeitures and penalties imposed by this Act shall be paid, one moiety to the consolidated revenue of Victoria and the other moiety to the use of the informer or party prosecuting.

9. No action at law shall lie against any constable or other peace officer for or on account of any matter or thing whatsoever done by him in the execution of his duty under this Act against any person offending or suspected to be offending against the provisions of this Act, unless there be direct proof of corruption or malice and unless such action be commenced within three months next after the cause of action or complaint shall have arisen.

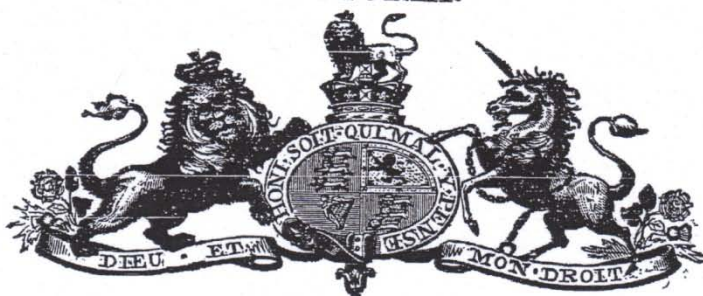
SCHEDULE.

Section 2.

Date of Act.	Title of Act.	Extent of Repeal.
28 Vict. No. 252 ...	" <i>Licensed Theatres Statute 1865</i> " ...	The whole.

APPENDIX B

VICTORIA.



ANNO QUINQUAGESIMO NONO

VICTORIÆ REGINÆ.

No. 1430.

An Act to amend the *Theatres Act* 1890.

[2nd March, 1896.]

BE it enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty by and with the advice and consent of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly of Victoria in this present Parliament assembled and by the authority of the same as follows (that is to say):—

1. This Act may be cited as the *Theatres Act* 1896, and shall be construed as one with the *Theatres Act* 1890.

2. Where pursuant to the provisions of the *Theatres Act* 1890 a written authority or licence has at any time either before or after the commencement of this Act been granted by the Chief Secretary in respect of any theatre house room building garden or place it shall be lawful for the Chief Secretary by order published in the *Government Gazette* to cancel or suspend for such period as he may think fit such authority or licence if it be proved to the satisfaction of the Chief Secretary that such theatre house room building garden or place has during the currency of such authority or licence and without a special permit in writing from the Chief Secretary been used on a Sunday for any entertainment of the stage whatsoever or for any public concert reading lecture recitation or musical entertainment but no such special permit shall authorize the use of any theatre house room building garden or place for any interlude tragedy opera comedy stage play farce burletta melodrama pantomime or any stage dancing tumbling or horsemanship

Short title and construction.
No. 1144.

Power to cancel or suspend theatre &c. licences where theatre &c. used on Sunday without permit.

horsemanship on a Sunday nor the making of any charge for admission to or in respect of any public concert reading lecture recitation or musical entertainment on a Sunday nor the holding of any sacred concert on a Sunday where there is any charge for admission or any collection made.

Inquiry and notice
to show cause.

3. (1) No such authority or licence held by any person shall be cancelled or suspended by an order of the Chief Secretary by reason of any contravention of this Act until after the expiration of seven days from the posting of a written notice from the Chief Secretary to him at the address specified in his authority or licence or at the theatre house room building garden or place to which such authority or licence relates.

(2) Such notice shall state shortly the contravention which is believed to have occurred, and also notify that at a time specified in such notice such person may show cause to the Chief Secretary why such authority or licence should not be cancelled or suspended. Before making any such order the Chief Secretary shall be satisfied that such notice was duly posted.

Publication.

4. (1) On and after the publication in the *Government Gazette* of any such order the authority or licence to which it refers shall be cancelled or suspended as directed in such order.

(2) The publication of any such order in the *Government Gazette* shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this Act precedent to any such cancellation or suspension have been duly complied with.

MELBOURNE:

By Authority: ROBT. S. BRAIN, Government Printer.

APPENDIX C

VICTORIA.

Whereas in pursuance of and by virtue of the Theatres Act 1890, _____ of _____ in the Colony of Victoria, hath made application to me for the written authority or Licence hereinafter contained: **Now therefore I,** _____ Chief Secretary of the Colony of Victoria, by virtue of the powers vested in me, Do hereby Authorize and License a certain Building, called _____ situate in _____ street,

in the _____ of _____ in the Colony of Victoria, as a place wherein may be acted, represented, performed, and exhibited for hire, gain, or reward, any Interlude, Tragedy, Opera, Comedy, Stage-play, Farce, Burletta, Melodrama, Pantomime, or any Stage Dancing, Tumbling, or Horsemanship, or any other entertainment of the Stage whatsoever to which admission shall or may be procured by payment of money, or by tickets, or by any other means, token, or consideration as the price, hire, or rent of admission under the provisions of the Statute aforesaid, on every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, during the space of twelve calendar months from the _____ Provided that no such Interlude, Tragedy, Opera, Comedy, Stage-play, Farce, Burletta, Melodrama, Pantomime, Stage Dancing, Tumbling, Horsemanship, or other entertainment of the Stage shall be acted, represented, performed, or exhibited for hire, gain, or reward on any Good Friday, Christmas Day, or day appointed for a Public Fast or Thanksgiving, and that such place shall be closed on Saturday night at the hour of half-past Eleven: Provided further that no acrobatic or gymnastic or sensational feat or exercise either wholly or partly to be performed or to take place at any height above ten feet measured from the lowest point on the main floor, or in case the same shall be appointed to be performed or to take place wholly on the stage at any height above ten feet from the lowest point on the floor of such stage, shall be allowed to take place in such place unless and until adequate measures have been taken to prevent injury to any performer or performers, or other person or persons, or to any of the spectators, by providing, fixing, and maintaining during the whole time any such feat or exercise is being performed or taking place a sufficient rope netting or other similar appliance in such a position and at such a height between the performer or performers or other person or persons and the spectators, or between the main floor or stage floor as the case may be, so that in the event of any accident or failure occurring every such performer or other person would, if he, she, or they, or any of them, at any time fell while going to perform or exercise, or while performing or exercising, or when coming from performing or exercising, fall or alight therein without injury to him, her, or themselves, or to any other person or persons whatsoever, spectators or otherwise: And provided further that in case of any breach or neglect of the above provisos, or any of them, or in case the said building be used on any Sunday for any entertainment, amusement, debate, or lecture, to which persons are admitted on payment of money, or by tickets sold for money, then the Chief Secretary for the time being of the said Colony may if he think fit declare this Licence to be forfeited, and thereupon it shall become forfeited accordingly.

GIVEN under my hand at Melbourne, in the said Colony,

this _____ day of _____ in the year of our Lord One thousand eight hundred and ninety.

ENTERED on record by me in Register No. 20, Page _____ this _____ day of _____ One thousand eight hundred and ninety.

Under-Secretary.