

INTRODUCTION

The sounds of liberty

We're low – we're low – we're very very low,
And yet when the trumpets ring,
The thrust of a poor man's arm will go
Through the heart of the proudest king!
We're low, we're low – our place we know,
We're only the rank and the file,
We're not too low – to kill the foe,
But too low to touch the spoil.

Ernest Jones, *Song of the 'Lower Classes'*, 1852.

Among the priceless and seemingly boundless collection in the British Library is a slightly careworn programme entitled *Festival of Music for the People*.¹ Published in 1939, the pamphlet anticipated a series of concerts to be held over three nights in April at the Albert Hall, located in London's leafy suburb of Kensington, at Conway Hall in Red Lion Square and in Queen's Hall in the West End. Although the events occurred more than two decades beyond the years covered in our study of music and music-making in radicalism and reform throughout the Anglophone world during the long nineteenth century (1790–1914), they are an ideal way to introduce it. The principal drawcard for the concerts was undoubtedly the bass-baritone, Paul Robeson, regarded as the most famous African American in the world and, according to Hazel Carby, the 'first internationally acclaimed Black icon', not only as a vocalist but also as an actor on stage and screen and as a political activist.² Robeson had resided in Britain since the late 1920s, having fled his native America in disgust at the racism he encountered during his rise to fame. In Britain, like many political émigrés before him, Robeson rubbed shoulders with the leading radicals, reformers and socialists of the day and his political instincts were increasingly channelled into a range of progressive causes, from opposition to imperialism in India to support for the Left Theatre Movement and

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the republican struggle against fascism in Spain. In 1937, with Spain at the forefront of his mind, Robeson made the pronouncement that would underpin the remainder of his career. 'There are no impartial observers,' he told an audience at a relief concert in aid of Spanish children. 'The artist must take sides. He must elect to fight for freedom or slavery. I have made my choice.'³ Robeson's place on stage during the Festival of Music for the People was justified, therefore, not only because of his prodigious talent and his mellifluous voice but also by his politics. Here was a man of the people.

Of course, Robeson was not the only person standing there. The tenor was a Welshman, Gwynn Parry Jones, highly regarded at that time. The narrators were Ronald Kelley and Wilfrid Walker, the latter a well-known Shakespearean actor who also dabbled in cinema. The People's Festival Wind Band and two dance troupes numbering 100 – the Woodcraft Folk group and the Unity Theatre Dance Group (probably the noted groups of that name from Aberdeen) – participated. Finally, Robeson and Jones were supported by 500 choristers. This mass chorus brought together members of discrete labour, co-operative and socialist organisations. The Bromley Labour Choir was there, as were the Labour Choirs from Ashford, Clapham, Eltham, Epsom and Ewell. Numerous co-operative choirs and choral societies were listed as participants: from Greenford, Laindon (Ladies'), West London, Bexley Heath, East Ham, Enfield Highway, Kentish Town, Redhill and Reigate, Surbiton, Tooting, Tottenham and Edmonton. The Edgware Co-operative Musical Society performed, as did the Hendon Left Singers and the New Progress Choir. Members of friendly societies also sang: the Unity Male Voice Choirs and the Rhondda Unity Male Voice Choir (presumably the well-known troupe from Wales). Alan Bush, a well-known pianist and composer and Communist Party activist would conduct.⁴ The event was billed as a pageant entitled *Music and The People in Ten Episodes* and followed a scenario developed by Randall Swingler, a well-known poet, literary critic and political activist who had been a member of the Communist Party since the early 1930s.⁵

The premise upon which the production was developed was summarised with eloquent simplicity in the programme notes:

After a flourish on brass and drums, the Speaker enters and introduces the theme of the Pageant. Music, he says, is not a drug or a world of fantasy to which men can escape from the real problems of their life. Rather it is part of the pattern of life they wish for, and a guide and inspiration to their efforts to attain it.

The flourish on bass and drums, as it was described, had been written for the occasion by Ralph Vaughan Williams and, indeed, every episode

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contained music penned by a cavalcade of well-known composers in the ranks of British modernism, from Elisabeth Lutyens to Bush himself,⁶ laced with numerous well-known political songs, old and new.

Episode One of the pageant was devoted to an idyllic depiction of a village green in fifteenth century: 'Feudal England'. The first note of conflict was in Episode Two, which included references to the peasant uprising of 1381 and Jack Cade's rebellion seventy years later. The title given to Episode Three continues the theme: 'Peasants in Revolt'. 'This time we see the Peasants massing for the long planned revolt', the programme notes continue, 'under the leadership of John Ball and Wat Tyler'. As the rebels march on London in 1381 they sing the *Cutty Wren*, 'one of the most interesting and powerful songs in English. The words are cryptic, as indeed they are meant to be,' we are told, 'for they hide a design and objective of a revolutionary character.' The subject of Episode Five requires a jump forward of more than 250 years to the 'Soldiers of Freedom' in 1649 with a particular focus on the Levellers and the Diggers. The former, we are told, were men who believed in 'greater democracy than Cromwell was able to establish'. The Diggers 'made an experiment in communal ownership and government' for which they were prosecuted. As they are led away under arrest they sing the 'most famous of the many of the songs of their leader, Gerald Winstanley, "Stand up now, Diggers All"'.⁷

Part Two of the pageant begins with an episode entitled 'Changing Europe' devoted to the French Revolution and built around the iconic songs the *Marseillaise* and the *Carmagnole*. 'We see here', the programme states, 'how the music which had been through centuries the secret bond of unity among the peasant people flowered into an open expression of their rights and demands at this historic moment.' Episode Seven follows directly on: as the last of the revolutionaries departs the stage, we are told, Beethoven ascends the rostrum and reads from 'his notebooks'. Beethoven's 'uncompromising statements' on the idea of freedom are answered by a chorus from *Fidelio*, sung by 'prisoners', which, linking past and present, is followed by a song composed and sung in a Nazi concentration camp. Episodes Eight and Nine promised the first appearance of Robeson in the evening's entertainment. Robeson was described 'one of the foremost champions of freedom and international brotherhood' and, supported by a 'Negro choir', he was slated to sing a 'Chain-gang song, then a Cotton-picking song, and some songs of freedom' drawn from the 'rich and vigorous musical culture' of the 'Negro people'. In a seamless transition from Robeson's rendition of *Kneelin' Low* was a massed rendition of a 'historic song of the British working-class', Ernest Jones's 'We're Low'.

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'Every union had its song, and singing was an integral part of every meeting,' the programme noted, and Jones's song stands as representative of this culture. This song was offered as a 'token of the widespread musical activity in the early days of the Trades Union movement.' Bookending Jones's emblematic song was a rendition of William Morris's tribute to Alfred Linnell, an anonymous protester killed 'as a result of injuries received from police brutality' at a rally in Trafalgar Square in 1887.

To summarise the Finale – 'For Peace and Liberty' – the author of the programme notes links past struggles to those continuing in Germany, Italy, China and Spain, drawing attention to the place of music and music-making: people 'sing their determination to resist and conquer oppression'. To emphasise the corporeal ties between present and past the actors were to be joined on stage by 'men who are playing representative parts in the life of our time' to 'say his word on our theme of MUSIC FOR THE PEOPLE': Fred Copeman, a veteran of the International Brigade, the Dean of Canterbury and a 'worker and workers' leader', Tom Mann (then in his eighty-third year). Paul Robeson and the entire chorus would close the show by singing *Land of Freedom* (the 'great song of liberated Soviet humanity') by the Russian film composer Isaak Dunayevsky and 'America's Song of Democracy', *Men, Awake!* from the politically charged Broadway show *Pins and Needles*, which premiered in 1937.

The festival provoked a shrill reaction from the gatekeepers of the music establishment. On the one hand, they doggedly promulgated the long-standing trope that music was intrinsically apolitical. Music, insisted one churlish correspondent to the leading trade journal, the *Musical Times*, 'is the one art that can define nothing'.⁸ Admittedly, conceded another commentator in retrospect, 'music can heighten the effect of words'; nevertheless, 'it can have no political meaning in itself'. For example, he continued, the 'tune of the most ferocious song of the French Revolution, "Ça ira", is a prattling country dance which is as genial as the words are bloody-minded'. *The Red Flag*, he insisted, has a tune 'that is not even palely pink'.⁹

Many sensed that there was grave danger in political association. 'We believe that we express the views of most musicians', fumed the editor of the *Musical Times*, 'when we say that art will lose much and gain little or nothing by being associated with politics.' 'Party politics is a dirty game,' another correspondent argued, 'let's keep music out of it.' Indeed, 'we don't want composers to attempt tonal tub-thumping, with diatribes and philippics in symphonic form.'¹⁰ 'What is to become of the significance of vocal music', commented a contributor, 'if politicians are to adapt the texts they sing to their particular brand of party

politics? The practice is to be condemned, whether indulged in by the Labour Party, the British Union of Fascists, or the Primrose League.¹¹ For others, such as Richard Capell, music critic for the conservative *Daily Telegraph*, what rankled was the festival's 'naïve Jacobinism'.¹² *The Times* extended the argument by suggesting that the quality of the performance was diminished by an echo of ideology: the 'artistic results of burning zeal may be no more than tepid if artistic principles are abandoned for the sake of pointing a moral, rewriting history, or making political gestures. And this is what happened.' The 'procession of the years', he continued, 'passed too slowly before our ears and eyes.'¹³

This response takes its place in what is effectively the long-standing debate between art for art's sake and utilitarian art with a social, moral or political purpose. *The Times's* editor was in eminent company; German philosopher and sociologist Theodor Adorno later took up the cudgels again in important ways. The leading figure of the Frankfurt School, Adorno had also studied composition with one of the twentieth century's most important and iconoclastic composers, Arnold Schoenberg, and his aesthetic and philosophical ideas about music were profoundly shaped by this relationship. In his significant body of writings on music, Adorno espoused a high modernist musical philosophy, articulating complex connections between modernist art music and society while decrying popular music and jazz, both of which he saw as irrevocably tainted by the demands of capitalism.

Despite or even because of Adorno's contemptuous dismissal of twentieth-century protest music as *Unterhaltungsmusik* (entertainment music) that was 'nicht zu ertragen (unbearable)',¹⁴ a vast body of scholarship has emerged in recent decades exploring the diverse genres that constitute popular music. Of course, this is central to our purpose in this book but it is important to note (and it will quickly become clear) that none among our cast of music creators is waiting to be elevated to the century's musical pantheon. The reader will encounter no virtuosos. Except in cases where it mattered to the social actors themselves, questions of aesthetics and abstract elegance are not discussed in the pages to follow. In other words, our case about the importance of music and music-making has nothing to do with the question of whether it was art – however defined – or not. In fact, in aesthetic terms – and this is the last of our aesthetic judgements – much of the music we recover was thoroughly pedestrian; some of it twee, some simply awful. The sounds of liberty were typically to be heard in the faint strains of 'rough music' played on the streets of Toronto – increasingly regarded as what we would today call noise pollution – and the wonderfully 'middle-brow' performances within the walls of a

secularist coven in Christchurch; in cacophonous election songs swirling around the hustings in Glasgow and Sunday afternoon chamber music concerts in the heart of radical Holborn; in the defiant anthems blaring slightly out of tune on picket lines in Broken Hill and in the hymns warbled by choirs in Winnipeg. Nicholas Mathew has recently, and revealingly, rescued the 'political Beethoven', reintegrating him into the broiling social and political world in which he lived. The reader will find no Beethovens here.¹⁵

Among scholars of popular music are many who have explored its myriad intersections with various forms of oppositional politics and resistance both within and outside the political nation. The literature is too extensive to explore here in any detail; suffice to say that the last several decades have seen not only a plethora of articles and monographs but also the appearance of a dedicated journal and book series devoted to the broad subject of music *and* politics (we will return to the significance for us of the conjunction). A couple of points are relevant here, however. First, the extensive reference list in John Street, Seth Hague and Heather Savigny's 'Playing to the Crowd: The Role of Music and Musicians in Political Participation' clearly demonstrates that the overwhelming preponderance of this work has been devoted to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.¹⁶ Having said that, several important studies focusing on the long nineteenth century deserve notice. In addition to the ground-breaking study of nineteenth-century working-class British musical culture by Dave Russell there is important work by leading socio-cultural historians such as Michael Pickering, Vic Gammon and Peter Bailey to name just a few.¹⁷ Although politics is not their primary focus, it is never far from their gaze. There are also many valuable studies of British radicalism by historians such as Chris Waters, Eileen Yeo and more recently Michael Davis which consider song as part of their subject.¹⁸ Waters's excellent account of socialist politics provides a detailed account of late nineteenth-century socialist song culture.¹⁹ In terms of chronology Duncan Hall's account of the musical culture of interwar British socialism follows on from our research.²⁰ Given the close relationship between poetry and song, studies of British demotic literature and poetry within the broader context of radical British culture by literary scholars such as Michael Sanders, Anne Janowitz, Ulrike Schwab and Solveig Robinson have offered important analytical frameworks for considering the relationship between words and music.²¹ Beyond Britain, Laura Mason and Ralph P. Locke have made important contributions to the study of French revolutionary song.²²

What these studies have in common is that they are almost entirely bounded by the borders of the nation state. This is also true of the

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essentially curatorial work that started in earnest in the late eighteenth century. Notwithstanding the highly charged political edge to cultural nationalism, preservation has been at the heart of the drive to collect ballads and folk music down to the present day. Some of those hard at work both in the archives and in the field were antiquarians interested in music and history for its own sake. In some cases, however, there was a distinct political agenda. Despite this, the overt political commitments of those involved were often subsumed by the impulse to record the past as if a repository had political purchase in and of itself. Roy Palmer in Britain, Rona Bailey and Herbert Roth in New Zealand, Joe Glazer and Edith Fowke in Canada, Philip Foner and Vera Brodsky Laurence in the United States and John Meredith and Hugh Anderson in Australia are just a few of the many individuals who have produced compilations of national song, the contents of which have been inspired and shaped by questions and anxieties around national identity.²³ In this way, even collections of political music have become separated from their own history. As Ron Eyermann and Andrew Jamison have pointed out, one consequence of the antiquarian impulse is that the 'empirical material is separated out from broader patterns and conceptions of social change, and, indeed, separated from the other domains of social life, becoming part of a sociological subfield, the sociology of music, art, or culture.'²⁴ In terms of the vast archive they have created, the labours of the dedicated and tenacious collectors are invaluable and we draw upon them throughout our book.

Most of these collections include political songs. In addition, there have been explicit attempts to gather and publish the music of the people specifically in the area of labour history. However, for many researching in the area of labour or working-class song culture the interface between 'folk' and labour and 'folk' and left-wing politics is often blurred. In *Song and Democratic Culture*, Ian Watson acknowledges and draws heavily upon the work of earlier collectors, particularly A. L. Lloyd, the renowned folk song collector and communist. In so doing he attempts to reconcile the anti-industrial, anti-commercial sensibility of folk music with the music made by the industrial working class and offers the somewhat convoluted categories of 'industrial folk song' and 'labour anthem'.²⁵ Clark D. Halker's study, *For Democracy, Workers and God: Labor Song-Poems and Labour Protest 1865-95*, in some ways stands as an American counterpart to Watson's study.²⁶ Halker uses 'song-poetry' as a 'lens onto the larger world of Gilded-Age workers and labor protest'.²⁷ His largely undefined term 'song-poem' nevertheless is a reminder of the close relationship between music and words; orality, aurality and print, or what has usefully been called 'transmediality', whereby cultural production is typically and often

simultaneously available across multiple platforms.²⁸ The contents of songsters, for example, frequently appeared as slip ballads or in the columns of the popular press (or both) and were subsequently republished in cheap compendiums. At each point they were sung or played or hummed, copied, taught or committed to memory. We will return to this point often in the pages to follow.

Again, however, it is important to emphasise that the concept of the nation hangs over collecting like an intellectual pall. Although Halker acknowledges the different countries that many song-poets came from he is only interested in them in so far as they are American immigrants. In identifying the range of sources that fed the musical culture, he recognises the presence of Scottish and Irish songs, hymns, broadsides, ballads and minstrel songs, and also takes account of the importance of British and German poetry but he does not draw any conclusions about the transnational networks this repertoire reveals. Rather, this eclectic collection of music is of interest only in so far as it contributed to what he has called the US 'labor song-poem', a genre he calls 'indigenous' to the United States.²⁹ In so doing, he produces a form of uncritical American exceptionalism. A glance at the contents pages of the plethora of songbooks produced in North America during the long nineteenth century highlights many familiar English, Scottish and Irish melodies, either with the original lyrics or as the basis of contrafacta. However, running an eye down the lists also shows a growing corpus of songs generated in America (particularly during the Civil War) which quickly became staples in the performance of radicalism and reform in the 'old world' and in the wider Anglophone world. *John Brown's Body*, *Tramp! Tramp! Tramp!* and *Marching Through Georgia*, to take three of the most obvious examples, provide eloquent testimony to the existence of a shared cultural pool and a shared process of cultural production that defies fragmentation. Michael Pickering, working in the same area at the same time as Watson and Halker, offered an important interpretative framework addressing the 'lived realities of popular song' and 'understanding its meaning, significances and gratifications in the social and cultural contexts to which it belongs'.³⁰ In so doing Pickering problematised the categories of 'folk song' and 'folk culture', noting that they were 'often empirically at variance with the range of content, modes and procedures of everyday culture', but his focus is firmly fixed on the 'rhythms of labour' in Britain.³¹

Where scholars have looked beyond national borders they have done so often in a comparative rather than transnational or inter-colonial sense. Thomas Turino, for example, offers a fascinating comparison of the uses of popular song in the American Civil Rights movement and

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Nazi Germany;³² William Weber explores middle-class musical taste in the important metropolitan centres of Europe and America; and Derek B. Scott also looks to New York as well as to Paris and Vienna in his consideration of important types of nineteenth-century popular music in *Sounds of the Metropolis*.³³ Ian Peddie's *The Resisting Music: Music and Protest* looks at popular music from different parts of the world but not with any overarching sense of the transnational.³⁴ Likewise, Annie J. Randall's edited collection *Music, Power and Politics* has a wide geographical sweep from Mexico to Serbia to Barbados to China to Iran. But, again, these stand as discrete studies.³⁵ On the basis of the tantalising title alone special mention needs to be made of Jeffrey Richards's *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953*. Perhaps surprisingly, his is not an inter-colonial study, nor is it actually intended to be: it is about 'the expression in music of the ideology of the British Empire'.³⁶ Richards investigates music written for the Empire but not across the Empire.³⁷

In 2002 Eric Hobsbawm combined nostalgia with prescience to offer a sweeping synopsis of historical approaches past and present. Of particular relevance for the present study, he identified history's 'failure ... to emancipate itself from the framework of the nation-state' as 'probably the major weakness of the subject' in his lifetime.³⁸ In an important sense Richards embraces Hobsbawm's admission of a lifetime of failure. Our book is an attempt to grapple with his frustrated apophthegm. To do so we are driven beyond the horizons of distance (and calendrical measurement) into the realm of the inter-colonial, trans-oceanic and transnational. Notwithstanding the fact that music is sinuous and polysemous (and, as we have seen, for some churlish naysayers, ontologically apolitical), meeting Hobsbawm's challenge involves listening for stable, didactic signifiers of a shared radical and reformist culture, which were not out of earshot across space or time. We join Hobsbawm in chafing against the bonds of the nation.

Over the past two decades much has been written and said to help us in this. A crucial point of entry was a conference convened in 1998 to explore a new paradigm – the British world – within a broader impulse towards transnational history. As Kent Fedorowich and Andrew Thompson, themselves progenitors, have written, the stated goal of the inaugural 'British World' conference was to 'escape from the static confines and parochial constraints of "national" historiographies in order to provide a more integrated and comparative approach to the British world'.³⁹ What distinguished the idea of a British world from the traditional idea of imperial history conceived in the rarefied air of metropolitan certainty was twofold: an understanding that the imperium was characterised by perpetual circulation and

roundaboutness; it was not only or even principally a rusty hub and spokes. Indeed, as Alan Lester and David Lambert argued, it is important to see the British world as 'networked or webbed', 'an interconnected space' at the intersection of a 'new' imperial and postcolonial history.⁴⁰ Secondly, it highlighted the importance of what one of the present authors has called 'globalisation from below'.⁴¹ The agents of the British Empire were not only those in receipt of imperial honours or the troops dispatched to protect them. On the contrary, the participants in the official Empire comprised a tiny proportion of the 13.5 million Britons who departed the United Kingdom for extra-European ports as migrants in the second half of the nineteenth century or the millions of expatriate Britons waiting for them at their point of disembarkation or, indeed, passing on their way elsewhere in the British world like proverbial ships in the night. Before he took his seat on the platform at the Festival of Music for the People, to take one extraordinary example, Tom Mann had plied his trade as a political and trade union activist in (in order) Birmingham, London, Battersea, Newcastle, Lanark, London, Wellington (New Zealand), Melbourne (Victoria), Broken Hill (New South Wales), Liverpool, Cape Town and Durban in Southern Africa before living out the remainder of his active public life in Britain. He also travelled widely to conferences and symposia. Mann was accompanied every step of the way by his equally pugnacious and committed partner, Elsie Harker. Admittedly, Harker and Mann were outliers in any index of peripatetic radicals but they were not exceptions that prove the rule.

As is well known, even when the peregrinations were between metropole and periphery it is important to note that the flow was not always or even predominately in one direction and was often repeated many times over. For example, Scottish-born John Dunmore Lang, Australia's first republican and the most prominent radical activist of his generation under southern skies, undertook nine return passages between Scotland, England and the Australian colonies between 1824 and 1874.⁴² Starting his journey – physical and political – at the opposite end of the axis, however, was Harry Atkinson, a trade unionist and Fabian socialist born in Urenui on the North Island of New Zealand in 1867. Having established a reputation as a trade union organiser in Wellington, Atkinson travelled to Manchester in 1890 where he became a stalwart of the Labour Church and helped to establish the local branch of the Independent Labour Party before returning to New Zealand in 1893 to resume his role as a Labour and socialist activist the minute he disembarked.⁴³ Dora Montefiore, one of the most prominent radical suffragettes in the British world, was London-born but first came to prominence when the Women's Suffrage League was formed in

her home in the Sydney suburb of Paddington in 1891. Having returned to London, in 1898 she became an executive member of a number of women's suffrage organisations and was imprisoned for her activities. Upon her release Montefiore joined the Social Democratic Federation and, later, the British Socialist Party. She went back to Sydney and became editor of the *International Socialist* before again returning to London where she was elected to the council of the United Communist Party of Great Britain.⁴⁴ Vida Goldstein, on the other hand, was born in Portland, Victoria. Of all the prominent Australian campaigners for women's rights, notes her biographer, Goldstein was the one who gained a truly international reputation. On tours of both the United States and Britain her public speeches drew massive crowds.⁴⁵

With these kinds of people and a cast of many others like them in mind, this project was conceived within a 'British world' paradigm, a choice that quickly proved problematic, however. Simply following in the footsteps of relentlessly travelling activists took us beyond the borders of the Empire on which the sun never set, especially into the north-east of the United States (and French Canada). Not only did they insist we follow wherever they went, but in these places we met citizens (many of them first- and second-generation migrants) who, in turn, insisted that they take their place in the pages to follow.

There were places, however, where we could not go, notably Ireland but also the Cape Colony and Britain's many Crown colonies. This decision was essentially forced upon us for two reasons: practical and historical. The scope of the project was already ambitious, chronically and geographically, and to extend it would have required more time and words than we were able to give it. Many of our radicals visited the Cape – some settled there and participated in domestic struggles for reform across a broad front – but southern Africa remains, relatively, a shadow in the work of historians of nineteenth-century radicalism and thus there are few guides into the continent to help ward off egregious error and to allow us to make a meaningful contribution. The same is true of Britain's Crown colonies where the so-called 'subject' peoples vastly outnumbered their British governors. There were radicals there, to be sure, but it was beyond our capacity to find them.

Ireland presented a particular problem in terms of scope. The nexus between music and politics in Ireland has generated important scholarship (and is worthy of more study). From this it is abundantly clear that the context in which music was composed, shared and performed across St George's Channel was fundamentally cross-cut by issues of religion and nationalism, which demand comprehensive attention within a differently calibrated framework. And it is a vast canvas. Of course, many thousands of radicals and reformers from Ireland or of

Irish descent settled in Greater Britain and beyond where they became embroiled in the struggles of their adopted home(s). They were musical in every sense and a rich musical culture travelled among their meagre possessions and in their hearts and minds. They neither could nor should be excluded from the ink spilled below.

Notwithstanding the pragmatic reasons underpinning some of our decisions in respect of scope, their historiographical implications seemed to be manifold as we put them into effect. On the one hand, our research suggests that a rethink of what has been accepted as American exceptionalism, particularly as it applies to the nineteenth century, is overdue. A fellow Australian, Ian Tyrrell, has been making this point in a string of important publications.⁴⁶ Our work lends support to this view: many American radicals were self-consciously and determinedly part of a transatlantic political world; many radicals in the Empire wandered in and out of the United States without bumping into anything alien or experiencing a cultural epiphany. The same is true of Australia. J. G. A. Pocock, an eminent New Zealand historian nestled among the turrets in Cambridge, has long since advocated the inclusion of the antipodes in conceptions of a 'new' British history. Over the last decade many Australianists have begun to listen. Without drowning Australian history in an ocean of overseas influence (to borrow the words of Ann Curthoys and Marilyn Lake) much outstanding work has now been completed, particularly using the lens of transnational and inter-colonial and trans-oceanic biography (individual and collective).⁴⁷ Among 'labour' historians, however, this shift continues to be robustly contested in some places: we believe our study provides a wealth of evidence to suggest that the edifice of what one of the present authors has called 'Australian exceptionalism' as it applies to radicals and reformers is crumbling.⁴⁸ Moreover, the extent to which the historical actors insouciantly ignored the bounds of the Empire (physically, culturally and intellectually) may well suggest that the term 'British world' itself is tottering on the brink of becoming an oxymoron. Indeed, mindful of the possibility that 'British world' has outlived its usefulness as a reference, we have opted instead for 'Anglophone world'. Admittedly, this term is capacious and extends beyond the geographical limitations we have imposed, but it is at least an unambiguous descriptor of our vast *dramatis personae*. Here, we pick up the point made by Fedorowich and Thompson who noted that the contours of the Empire (and beyond) were 'strikingly illustrated through the dissemination of the English language'.⁴⁹ As such, we have resisted the call for a global framework for this project, not because we do not see merit in this approach but because our subjects and their culture, and the concep-

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tual language we use to discuss them are not only Eurocentric, they are Anglocentric.⁵⁰

It almost goes without saying, therefore, that by definition those who fall under our gaze were overwhelmingly white Anglophones. Our book is thus written within an understanding of a British imperium defined by 'whiteness' or what Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds have called the 'global colour line'. In their influential book of the same title Lake and Reynolds trace the 'transnational circulation of emotions and ideas, people and publications, racial knowledge and technologies that animated white men's countries'. They do not mention music but they easily might have. The fact that we have limited our focus to the colonies of settlement further homogenises this transnational and inter-colonial 'imagined community of white men'. Lake and Reynolds go on to make the point that the potency of transnational whiteness provided a template for some of those on the 'other side of the colour line' to establish forms of resistance.⁵¹ We offer a few – all too few – glimpses of indigenous agency, appropriation, adaptation and resistance by those who used the musical culture of the white colonisers. Our actors – women and men – are therefore overwhelmingly white, and spoke (and sang in) English.

We have added to 'Anglophone World' the words 'reform' and 'radicalism' as part of our title and the framework within which the book is written. Joanna Innes and Arthur Burns have led an extended and revealing attempt to define 'reform' in numerous contexts and as it evolved and mutated. Their edited volume of essays offers a wide range of areas from medicine, slavery and domesticity to the law, the theatre and, notably, opera and 'high culture', which together highlight the innate complexity of the term the instant it passed the lips of those using it.⁵² Innes's chapter tells us much about the 'lexical field' of 'reform', by which she means the extensive 'range of ways in which the word "reform" was used'. By the late eighteenth century, she tells us, the word and related vocabulary was 'increasingly bandied about, and put to new uses'. The noun form, she notes, led to 'snappy coinages' attached to an ever-increasing and complex raft of causes – institutional, political, religious, social, moral.⁵³

The noun form 'radical' and related words used here are deserving of a similar forensic analysis. Although it was not included in Charles Pigott's notorious *Political Dictionary* published in 1795, by the early nineteenth century 'radical' had become widely used both as a 'term of very bad odour' – denoting a 'set of blackguards' – and, at the opposite end of the spectrum, for a class of political activist 'who glory in their designation'.⁵⁴ Our canvas is equally broad but here we have used 'reformers' and 'radicals' and related vocabulary as plural nouns

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of convenience. In our pages 'reform' and 'radical' are also employed as roomy adjectives and, in the case of 'reform', also as a verb. Our dramatis personae we denote as 'radicals' and 'reformers'; their creeds, causes and activities we crudely refer to as 'reform' and 'radicalism' and variations thereof. We do so in the full knowledge that while all radicals were reformers in an abstract sense, and many embraced the term 'radical-reformer', some radicals regarded reformers as milk-and-water dissemblers to be treated with suspicion or contempt.⁵⁵ Similarly, many reformers would have bitterly resisted the appellation 'radical' as an indelible mark of extremism. Their repertoires of action overlapped substantially and diverged dramatically. Some radicals and reformers collected petitions or campaigned for political office (together and against one another). For some radicals and reformers, with dog-eared songbooks stuffed in one pocket and careworn bibles in the other, their *raison d'être* was the pursuit of moral uplift; for others the quest for a new moral world was underpinned by a shared doubt or disbelief. Some threw bombs, others campaigned for access to the land; some smashed machines or hatched plans to wrest control of the means of production from the bourgeoisie while others were self-consciously bourgeois. Some had 'horny hands and unshorn chins', others wore delicate gloves or dog collars. We will argue that many of those who engaged with indigenous peoples – even patronisingly – are equally entitled to be called reformers or radicals as those who embraced these designations proudly despite their virulent racism. Some radicals and reformers erected picket lines during bitter strikes and lockouts; others rioted, marched, starved themselves or cached arms. Indeed, there is room in our usage of the words for George Orwell's cocksure Marx-quoting types, book-trained socialists, Labour Party backstairs crawlers, fruit-juice drinkers, nudists, sandal-wearers, sex-maniacs, Quakers, 'Nature Cure' quacks, pacifists and feminists.⁵⁶

Of course, we might have almost endlessly added nouns – trade unionists, suffragists, Chartists, communists, teetotallers, repealers, democrats, secularists and so on – and we do use these terms throughout. Our title, however, promises encounters with those we have simply called reformers and radicals. Our justification for herding one and all under this rubric will please few but for us the defining characteristic of the multifarious women and men we have featured was a dissatisfaction with the world as they lived in it and a commitment to forging a better one. There was no unifying vision of the future – not only were radicals and reformers often divided against one another but the ranks of reform and radicalism were themselves routinely factionalised and fissiparous. But they all had a vision. And they all made music.

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If we have eschewed the British world as a framework, the idea of 'Britishness' remains, particularly during the long nineteenth century, salient conceptually and as a heuristic. At one level we simply endorse Lester and Lambert's distinction between physical relocation and an enduring 'affective personal and emotional affiliation with a British "home"'.⁵⁷ Overwhelmingly, the radicals and reformers who migrated permanently – including those with their teeth clenched in fury that they had been forced to give up the struggle for change at home, as well as those fervently hoping to find a better Britain – still regarded themselves as British. And so did their progeny, well beyond the chronology of this book. We are looking then at a species of Britishness and its transmission throughout an Anglophone world without feeling that we are contradicting ourselves.

Beyond Lambert and Lester's emotional register, the tug of the heartstrings, we have examined Britishness as a cultural formation and explored the culturally informed and interconnected means of its transmission: an indexical baseline for culture and a shared repertoire of political action and cultural practices. Having said that, a consensus about what constitutes Britishness has proven elusive and illusive. There have been many attempts to define it. As Ian Donaldson has noted, the OED's etymology suggests that the word was first coined in the seventeenth century with a meaning akin to 'Brutishness': a way to describe those with a proclivity for getting about without the 'habiliment of a Shirt'.⁵⁸ Notably, for our purposes, some attempts to define the term have used the lens of shared political culture: from the declaration by Britain's former prime minister Gordon Brown that the 'golden thread' running through the history of the Sceptred Isle is a 'passion for liberty anchored in a sense of duty and an intrinsic commitment to tolerance and fair play' to his successor David Cameron's remarkably similar 'muscular' defence of 'British values' such as 'freedom, tolerance of others, accepting of personal and social responsibility, and respecting and upholding the rule of law'. When pressed, Cameron insisted that, 'Our freedom doesn't come from thin air. It is rooted in our parliamentary democracy and free press.'⁵⁹ For the student of radicalism and reform in the Anglophone world this early twenty-first century bipartisan construction can be seen as part of a continuum that is very helpful when seeking to understand the ground rules of British politics during the long nineteenth century. The overwhelming majority of the radicals and reformers we will meet in the pages to follow would have agreed that 'thin air' had little to do with their cherished discourse about their rights. Indeed, for most the so-called 'Rights of the Freeborn Briton' were sanctioned by a shared understanding of a distant past and they travelled with Britons over

time and distance. As we shall see, this trope was imprinted on much of their music.

But Britishness for our subjects was inherently more than a cluster of political ideas. On the contrary, it was cultural in a broader sense. We can glimpse evidence of this at every turn: in the Protestantism and enmity to the French identified by Linda Colley; in George Orwell's ritualised instructions for making a 'nice cup of tea' ('one should take the teapot to the kettle and not the other way about'); and in T. S. Eliot's extended litany of 'all the characteristic activities and interests of the people': 'Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a Cup Final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beet-root in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar'.⁶⁰ Eliot went on to invite the reader to 'make his own list' but there is little to be gained here by continuing a quest for iconic qualities identifiable with Britons. On the contrary, the fact that Eliot tacked Edward Elgar onto the end of his inventory is a useful place for us to stop doing so. The first of Elgar's 'Pomp and Circumstance Marches' (a title drawn from *Othello*) was premiered in 1901. As is well known, it included the melody used for *Land of Hope and Glory*, a song pressed into service for the coronation ode for Edward VII the following year. By any measure this bombastic anthem – soon to be a staple of populist promenade concerts down to our own day – deserves a more prominent place as a signifier of British culture than boiled cabbage. But Eliot's facile treatment of music as an afterthought is not uncommon in studies of Britishness as something that is graspable – 'experience-near' in the anthropological sense – and thus both transmittable and a transmitter. From the exhaustive literature review offered by Fedorowich and Thompson, for example, it is clear that the role of music and music-making in the circulation and preservation of Britishness has not been explored in any depth and is often overlooked. Lambert and Lester, for example, point to the importance of '[f]ormal and informal communicative networks' facilitated by the development of the postal service, imperial news services and the 'circulation of newspapers, publications and correspondence' as key drivers of 'knowledge exchange' in the British world but do not mention the significance of music (or the creative arts in general).⁶¹

Students of radicalism and reform have not treated music and music-making well either. As we have noted elsewhere in relation to Chartism, references to the presence of music in the social culture of the movement – when they are present at all – are almost invariably offered in passing. Too often music and music-making have been by implication treated as marginal, decorative, frivolous even. A glance

at extant anthologies of Chartist literature (and reformist, radical and popular literature more generally) include many *songs* that are treated as poetry.⁶² Even when Chartist verses have been recognised as songs and contextualised, as Timothy Randall did some years ago, it is the lyrics that attract interest.⁶³ The 'songs of democracy', Watson tells us, were primarily 'ideology expressed in aesthetic terms'. The historian, he continued, should focus on 'what songs *say*'.⁶⁴ Pouring over contrafacta – forensically dissecting, historicising and contextualising – is central to our task and occupies many of the pages to follow but it is only part of our purpose. We will argue that melody was not only mnemonic in a general sense but also that melodic choices were often taken with great deliberation to evoke particular pasts; to connect the causes of the present to the struggles of the past.

As we will show, tunes offered layers of associative meanings which were utilised to great effect to reinforce a current political message by a process of accretion. A glance at the genealogy of a recent song, well beyond the chronology of our study, provides an illustration of the approach we take. The lyrics to *English Civil War*, a song by British punk band The Clash, were self-evidently a contribution to the bitter campaign against racism underway at the end of the 1970s. As the title suggests, the song contained several references linking the fascistic National Front to Cromwell's New Model Army; it also referenced the spectre of a police state in Orwell's *Animal Farm*. But some listeners would have recognised the significance of the fact that the song's composer, Joe Strummer, had appropriated the melody from a famous American Civil War song, *When Johnny Comes Marching Home*, which in turn was a contrafactum of an Irish anti-war song from the 1790s. 'War is just round the corner,' Strummer told the *Record Mirror*, 'Johnny hasn't got far to march'.⁶⁵ Thus, not only do we interrogate the words chosen by radicals and reformers during the long nineteenth century, we also ask what radicalism and reform sounded like. What were the sounds of liberty?⁶⁶ To borrow the wonderfully mixed metaphor penned by musicologist John Caldwell, our aim always is to ensure that the 'soundscape' is 'painted in'.⁶⁷ Moreover, as noted above, the choices that informed music and music-making carry the student of radicalism and reform beyond the horizon of the nation to the ends of an Anglophone world where the sounds of liberty – similar, different, hybrid, syncretic and identical – can be heard loud and clear. It is thus unsurprising that The Clash's *English Civil War* could be found on the shelves of record stores in Australia, New Zealand and Canada (and elsewhere): it travelled a well-worn route.⁶⁸

By taking this approach we are, in part, responding to Leon Botstein's call in 2005 to draw 'music out of the margins' and position it as a

'central component to life'.⁶⁹ Arguing for the quintessential importance of music is, of course, not new. Thumbing through a desktop calendar one will almost inevitably find among the daily quotations Longfellow's trite homogenising aphorism, penned in the 1830s, that music is a universal language. In the 1880s Friedrich Nietzsche, to take an example unlikely to appear in a calendar, observed famously in his philosophical manifesto, *Twilight of the Idols*, that 'Without music life would be a mistake'. 'Music as we understand it today', he continued, 'is also a total area – excitation and – discharge (*Gesamt-Erregung – und – Entladung*) of the emotions'. Nietzsche's text continues 'but...'. Without pursuing the implications of the qualification – as Gary Tomlinson has done – it is safe to conclude that his overall point stands: for Nietzsche music mattered at a visceral level.⁷⁰

Paradoxically, however, for all that the Victorian world was (to borrow Ruth Solie's words) saturated with music, traces of its significance are comparatively few. As the eminent musicologist Leo Treitler has put it, music's 'very centrality is marked by its absence'.⁷¹ In Clifford Geertz's terms, music and musical behaviour were 'experience-near' – spontaneous, un-self-conscious and colloquial.⁷² Elsewhere Geertz observed that the creative arts, such as jazz and painting, are profoundly difficult to talk about, possibly even 'beyond the reach of discourse'; but he insisted that '[s]omething that meaningful to us cannot be left just to sit there bathed in pure significance': 'The surface bootlessness of talking about art seems matched by a depth of necessity to talk about it endlessly.'⁷³ Similarly, not only did Botstein insist that music be 'treated as a species of fundamental social action', ignoring the challenges and the silences, he demanded that it be used as a 'primary source' to 'test and perhaps even profoundly revise our sense of the past'.⁷⁴

While bemoaning its neglect by historians of radicalism and reform, nowhere do we suggest that music was the most important method utilised by radicals and reformers for the expression, performance and transmission of their politics. Indeed, by centring music here our aim is, at one level, simply to understand better the part it played in the world as reformers and radicals lived it and thereby to learn about the culture within which it was composed, performed and consumed. Having said that, we demonstrate that from one end of the Anglophone world to the other, music and music-making were an essential element of the lived experience of nineteenth-century oppositional politics. As the American anarchist Emma Goldman once reputedly quipped, 'a revolution without dancing is a revolution not worth having'.⁷⁵ Although not seeking to hide behind his ample skirts, it is worth enlisting Edward Said on this point: 'To think of music and

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politics during the seventeenth and twentieth centuries (Monteverdi, Schoenberg, jazz, and rock culture)', he argued, is 'to map an ensemble of political and social involvements, affiliations, transgressions, none of which is easily reducible either to a simple apartness or to a reflection of coarse reality.'⁷⁶ Notably, Said left out the nineteenth century, characterising the relationship between music and society in the mid to late nineteenth century as 'cultural exoticism'. Here, we humbly demur. The sounds of liberty during the long nineteenth century offer much for the student of popular politics across an inter-colonial and transnational world.

Having said that, we will argue that music and music-making are undoubtedly a highly effective lens for investigating the inter-colonial and transnational history of radicalism and reform between 1790 and 1914, not only because of their consistency across Anglophone societies but also because of the differences they highlight. As noted, musical practices and repertoires were mutable, readily adapted to new environments, easily appropriated to new causes and, at the same time, they provided a connective tissue that crossed vast expanses of time and terrain, revealing the outlines of a culture that otherwise is at risk of being overlooked within constricting geographical and chronological parameters. Below we show inter alia that music and music-making offer an important way of calibrating culture; we show that music was dialogic – mediating the relationship between leader and led; we reveal the ways that song moved in and out of daily exchange with ease, at times spontaneously while at others with aforethought; we demonstrate the way it was often pressed into service as a highly efficient form of ideological precis and one that, in situations that frequently involved clashes with the full force of state power, was hard to police. We offer examples of the way it encouraged, unified, attacked, divided, consoled, reminded and constructed. We show that attention to music and music-making is particularly perspicacious when seeking to understand the affective register of political life. As we have observed elsewhere, listening to Engels sing the *Vicar of Bray* and watching Marx dance the mazurka provides a lens to fundamentally change the way we understand their political lives. A radical's hymnal or a reformer's songbook were not just words on printed pages, they were also something meant to be sung and heard. This fundamentally alters our sense of its significance as an object of paper and ink.⁷⁷

So, returning to Botstein's challenge, how do we use music to 'profoundly revise our sense of the past' or in our case to better understand radicalism and reform in the Anglophone world during the long nineteenth century? Our methodology is both inter- and multi-disciplinary. In 2005, in a book entitled *Music and History: Bridging the Disciplines*,

Jeffrey Jackson and Stanley Pelkey asked rhetorically, 'Why haven't historians and musicologists been talking to one another?'⁷⁸ Our book was conceived with such a conversation in mind. One of the present authors is a musicologist, the other a historian; our starting point is to draw upon the disciplines of musicology and history. Like our friends at the *Musical Times* in the 1930s, vigilantly policing the borders of ineffable 'music', until the 1980s many musicologists still clung to a focus on the 'work': for them the composer died before the author. Writing in 1991, Edward Said joined a rising chorus from within the ranks of musicology that fervently rejected this 'police regime': 'music can be more, and not less, interesting if we situate music as taking place, so to speak, in a social and cultural setting'. The 'role played by music in Western society', he continued, 'are extraordinarily varied, and far exceed the antiseptic, cloistered, academic, professional aloofness it seems to have been accorded.'⁷⁹ Said went on to lament the fact that musicologists had failed to develop a methodology for the task of situating music in the world.⁸⁰

Nearly three decades on this judgement is simply wrong. His comment was made in the midst of a transformative revolt against positivist musicology. In subsequent decades musicology burst its bounds in ways that are beyond Said's wildest expectations, engaging with and absorbing, inter alia, cultural studies, literature and literary theory, philosophy, sociology, feminist studies, film studies, anthropology, race, political studies and history. If the academic world for those in the humanities and the arts today comprises a series of 'turns' then musicologists have been around most of them, including most recently a turn to the archives. A glance at the programme of the 2015 American Musicological Conference, held in Louisville, Kentucky, gives some idea of the profusion of diverse offerings from musicology. Among the fifty or more papers given on the first full day of the conference were: "'Double Masked" Minstrelsy in the Metropolitan Opera's 1929 Production of Ernst Krenek's *Jonny spielt auf*'; 'Musical Encoding in Metadiegetic Space in Ingmar Bergman's *From the Life of the Marionettes*'; 'Gender, Nature, and Religiosity in Liszt's Musical Landscapes'; 'The Political Context of Schütz's *Saul, was verfolgst du mich*'; 'Richard Wagner as Ecocritic: Wagnerian Climate Theory and the Anthropocene'; 'Selling Difference: Sonic Hipness and Racial Tension in Contemporary Advertising'; and 'The "Social Mobility" of Johnny Rotten's T-Shirt: Countering Class Narratives of Punk'.⁸¹ Little wonder that two years earlier Phyllis Weliver and Katharine Ellis felt compelled to invoke Ruth Sollie's 1999 quip: 'at last report it seemed that there is not a living soul anywhere who claims to comprehend exactly what musicologists do'. 'Perhaps this is understand-

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able', Solie continued, 'given our nature as a yeasty and sometimes indigestible mix of historian, critic, paleographer, and musician'.⁸² Has the demise of the composer presaged the death of the musicologist? Notwithstanding their long demise, our composers, appropriators, performers, peddlers and listeners are all alive.

To the extent that we can legitimately regard the Louisville conference as a barometer of the state of the discipline, two points are important here. First, notwithstanding Johnny's t-shirt, the papers overwhelmingly dealt with so-called art music. As indicated, except in cases when it mattered to those composing, playing or singing, we are more interested in the music of the people not destined for the canon. Second, notwithstanding the diversity, the overwhelming preponderance of the Louisville papers focussed on the composer, artist, the musical work, genre or the instrument as the unit of analysis. The first section of our book also uses music as its core focus. We have chosen to examine three songs in considerable detail: the *Marseillaise*, *John Anderson my Jo* and *Song of the 'Lower Classes'*. Obviously, these are but three of many hundreds of songs that might have been preferred. Many of the other candidates are discussed in this section and elsewhere in the book. Some aren't.

Undoubtedly, many readers will find reason to question our choices. Our justification for the selection comes in two parts. On the one hand, we feel that these songs are representative of important genres. The *Marseillaise* is arguably the most iconic song in the repertoire of radicalism and reform. Composed during the French Revolution, the French quickly lost control of it; indeed, it soon became a song that belonged to the world. *John Anderson my Jo* is a traditional folk song that was co-opted into political discourse in complex ways. *Song of the 'Lower Classes'* will be unfamiliar today to virtually everyone save specialists and aficionados of radicalism and reform, but during the long nineteenth century it travelled far and wide and is an ideal song for us to follow. Moreover, its status as an 'original' composition was complex and multifaceted and provides an important opportunity to explore questions of class and cultural self-reliance. For these songs we believe that we can make a case for typicality or at least we suggest that substituting other songs might simply have provided another way to make the same points. In addition to the songs chosen as representative, hymns appear often. Hymn-singing was an intrinsic part of life in Victorian Britain and her colonies and, as Sanders has shown, those hymns are often associated with conservatism, if not reaction. Here, we join him in highlighting the genre of radical and reform hymns.⁸³ These hymns resonated in radical chapels, connecting the faithful with what we would nowadays call liberation theology, as well as secularist

gatherings where social justice was demanded without any reference to higher powers.

In discussing music we have used the conventional musicological tools where necessary and we have drawn inspiration and insight from the proliferating musicological turns but our book is, first and foremost, offered as a work of history. For all the richness of their contributions we seek to do something intrinsically different from musicologists. Whereas ‘musicologists look at the past to better understand musical works or practices’, as Jackson and Pelkey have put it, historians look at music ‘to better understand the past’.⁸⁴ In short then, this is not a book about music, the social-historical context of music or the place of history in music; it is a book that examines the role of music *in* history. Thus, while the tools of musicology are often utilised, our methodology is grounded in the discipline of history. We take a granular approach in the belief that by telling small stories we can unpack broader narratives. In stories are arguments, which, in turn, contain explanations. We do this with respect for those whose stories we seek to tell. People do not speak (or sing) in parenthesis waiting to be quoted glibly or dragged into ‘apt anecdotal illustration’ (Eric Hobsbawm’s expression).⁸⁵ We surely need to listen to what the social actors had to say – or at least strive to find ways to listen as best we can – to what they said. And sang. And played. In taking a granular approach to storytelling we draw upon the methodological stricture advocated and pioneered in the teeth of a polemic within Marxist historiography by Edward Thompson. Fifty years on, Thompson’s injunction to get inside episodes in order to better understand history writ large still has much to offer.⁸⁶ Again, Geertz is helpful for us to elaborate this aspect of our project, describing his anthropological-cum-ethnographic methodology as ‘hopping back and forth between the whole conceived through the parts that actualise it and the parts conceived through the whole that motivates them’. This ‘intellectual perpetual motion’, as he puts it, seeks to turn whole and parts into ‘explications of one another’.⁸⁷

For the student of a cultural formation across significant expanses of space and time this approach is not simply about scalability – asserting that episodes can carry the burden of generalisation – it is also a claim for the importance of repetition. Greg Urban has argued that ‘what falls under the rubric of culture is touched by replication’.⁸⁸ Through a saturation of examples drawn from different settings and different times we have used music and music-making as way of illustrating a culture replicating itself. Like those on stage with Paul Robeson – singing, bowing and blowing – our historical actors constantly re-enacted their history and their aspirations. Having said that, as we

have noted, we do not use music and music-making to obfuscate difference and change. For all that we sketch the outline of what we postulate was effectively a shared radical and reformist culture throughout an essentially white Anglophone world, nowhere do we suggest that it was monolithic, canonical or fixed. On the contrary, it was mutable, organic and mutually constitutive. What it provided over time was the basis for a 'conversation-through-music' (to borrow Inga Clendinnen's words); a register that allowed people to recognise in the sound of each other's voices a common cause, be they in Sydney, Sheffield or Saskatchewan.⁸⁹ The musical conversations we listen to are similar – often significantly so – to those held in other places and at other times but never exactly the same. Our research suggests that Bernard Shaw was correct when he quipped that the so-called universal language of music was spoken with many accents – detectable even between London and Manchester.⁹⁰

Our approach is thus based on an understanding that history happens in real time. Here, again, we are returning to the work of Thompson and Geertz as our starting point. Although it is unwise to elide the contributions of a Marxist historian and a (non-Marxist) anthropologist-cum-ethnographer, both Thompson and Geertz were primarily interested in social action. To make a case for 'thick description' (an approach which continues to resonate throughout the humanities and social sciences) Geertz argued, 'Behaviours must be attended to, and with some exactness, because it is through the flow of behaviour – or, more precisely, social action – that cultural forms find articulation.'⁹¹ In the preface to his seminal *The Making of the English Working Class*, Thompson famously declared that class was 'something which in fact happens (and can be shown to have happened) in human relationships'.⁹² As one of the present authors has noted elsewhere,⁹³ this aspect of Thompson's praxis is under-theorised and while here is not the place to re-join that discussion it is important to ponder briefly the implications if we substitute 'music' for 'class'. If 'class happens' diachronically – in real time – then surely a song is only meaningful when it is sung and simultaneously heard. Of course, among radicals and reformers culture was embodied in a plethora of objects. Many of them, from battered euphoniums to tattered songbooks, were connected to music, but, as Geertz has noted, artefacts 'draw their meaning from the role they play ... in an ongoing pattern of life'.⁹⁴ This is a book about the dynamic operation of music as a form of cultural production. It matters if music is read, played, sung or passively listened to – it has a different affective register – but it is never inert. Songbooks feature extensively in the pages to follow but for us they are meaningless unless we catch them in the moment they are

printed, transported, advertised, sold, given away, read, sung, played, disavowed, lost, stolen or thrown away.

Pondering this intrinsic dynamism of music, Christopher Small revived an archaic verb-noun: 'musicking'. 'The act of musicking', he wrote in an influential book published in the late 1990s, 'establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships and it is in those relationships that the meaning of the act lies. They are to be found not only between those organised sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance'.⁹⁵ We have foresworn the grating word, opting instead for a clumsy conjunction of music (the object) and music-making (the activity). Songs should not be unsung; trumpets should not be silent.

It goes without saying that the essential precondition for a granular approach based on repetition is the availability of sources. Here, we are mindful of Greg Dening's stricture: before choosing which 'beach crossings' to interrogate it is necessary to read every document about crossing beaches.⁹⁶ We have not done so here but, as we hope we will more than adequately demonstrate, we have consulted many. Not only does the book draw upon extensive use of the increasingly rich digital archives for historians working on transnational projects, we also conducted extensive research across the terrain covered by the book and beyond: Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Brisbane, London, Manchester, Salford, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Los Angeles, San Marino, Chicago, New York, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Vancouver, Wellington, Dunedin and Amsterdam. We have, in R. H. Tawney's sense, got plenty of mud on stout boots.⁹⁷ Our sources are both musical and non-musical, public and private: slip ballads, song sheets, songbooks, songsters, hymnbooks, printed and manuscript scores, newspapers, pamphlets, handbills, programmes, posters, books, memoirs, diaries, letters. We use images but, despite the fact that the technology existed during the final decades of our period, recordings of radicalism and reform have evaded our grasp.

The basic structure of the book to follow is based on four units of analysis discussed across three sections. As noted, the first section examines songs; the second looks at the place of music in the public sphere wherein people (individually and collectively) made music as part of processing, electioneering and celebrating, as well as striking, rioting and rebelling. In the third section we examine the role of music and music-making within the walls of a range of associations and institutions. Moving from close scrutiny of two progressive religious organisations we look more generally at how music operated in reform and humanitarian movements, including an examination of the

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difficult and often destructive role music played in European interaction with indigenous people in the cross-cultural environment of the mission, a colonial context that is characterised, as Fiona Paisley and Kirsty Reid have reminded us, by 'asymmetries of power'.⁹⁸ We will see both a weapon of oppression and deculturation, as well as, crucially, the opportunities music and music-making provided for resistance. Of course, between the public and private spheres we see many synergies: defiance and solidarity are different sides of the same coin. Nevertheless, there is much to be learned by treating each separately.

Our fourth unit of analysis – to persist with the social science construction – is those women and men we have herded together under the rubric of reformers and radicals. They are the heroes and villains of the pages to follow. When focussing on the sounds of struggle, from moral reform to violent revolution, we never turn our gaze from the people striving to effect change in different places and at different times. We will repaint their portraits in the hope of seeing things for the first time the second time around. We will meet Jack Cade and Ernest Jones again; we will get to know Tom Mann and his equally important partner, Elsie Harker, among a *dramatis personae* of hundreds. We will again visit South Place along with dozens of other niches in a capacious inter-colonial, transnational, trans-historical world. We will sit on many platforms listening to stentorian oratory without ignoring the humble pianist to the side and march in numerous parades shoulder to shoulder with those pounding drums and sounding trumpets. We will sing arms locked with those on the picket line, as we contemplate revolution and sharpen pikes. We will tell old stories in music, we will celebrate those who suffer for the cause and we will mourn the dead. We will warble along with a plethora of hymns and popular songs – old and new. We will strive to decode songs like *Cutty Wren* and we will contemplate original words and music, such as Jones and Lowry's *Song of the 'Lower Classes'*, and many more besides. We will attempt to hear history as it happened.

Notes

- 1 *Festival of Music for the People* (London, n.p., 1939), p. 11.
- 2 Hazel V. Carby, *Race Men* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 3. See also Jordan Goodman, *Paul Robeson: A Watched Man* (London: Verso, 2013).
- 3 See *Manchester Guardian* (25 June 1937). This process culminated in 1938 when Robeson accepted an invitation from the well-known Marxist J. B. S. Haldane to visit Spain in support of the volunteers of the International Brigade laying down their lives there.
- 4 See Richard Stoker, 'Alan Bush (1900–1995)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, September 2013, available at www.oxforddnb.com.virtual.anu.edu.au/view/article/60406 (accessed 6 September 2016).
- 5 See Andy Croft, 'Randall Swingler (1909–1967)', *Oxford Dictionary of National*

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- Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), online edn, September 2013, available at www.oxforddnb.com.virtual.anu.edu.au/view/article/62375 (accessed 6 September 2016). It is not clear if Swingler wrote the programme notes.
- 6 Kate Bowan has work in progress on a collective study of these composers.
 - 7 An addendum notes that the tune to only one of the Levellers's songs was extant. See also: E. A. White, 'The Diggers' Song', *Journal of the English Folk Dance and Song Society*, 4:1 (1940), pp. 22–30.
 - 8 'Notes and News', *Musical Times*, 80:1155 (1939), p. 373.
 - 9 'Ad Libitum', *Musical Times*, 83:1195 (1942), p. 276.
 - 10 *Ibid.*, p. 277.
 - 11 'Notes and News', *Musical Times*, 80:1155 (1939), p. 373.
 - 12 Capell cited in 'Notes and News', *Musical Times*, 80:1155 (1939), p. 373.
 - 13 *The Times* (3 April 1939).
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 - 17 See, for example, Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England 1840–1914*, 2nd edn (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); Michael Pickering, 'The Study of Vernacular Song', *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung*, 33 (1988), pp. 95–104; Vic Gammon, 'Not appreciated in Worthington? Class Expression and Popular Song Texts in Mid-nineteenth-Century Britain', *Popular Music*, 4 (1981), pp. 5–24.
 - 18 Chris Waters, *British Socialists and the Politics of Popular Culture 1884–1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990); Eileen Yeo, 'Christianity in Chartist Struggle', *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), pp. 109–39; Michael Davis, "'An evening of pleasure rather than business": Songs, Subversion and Radical Sub-Culture in the 1790s', *Journal for the Study of British Culture*, 12:2 (2005), pp. 115–26.
 - 19 See Waters, 'Music and the Construction of Socialist Culture', chap. 4 in *British Socialists*, pp. 97–130. Similarly, Robert E. Weir's *Beyond Labor's Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor* dedicates a chapter to the importance of song in the working-class associational culture of the American labour organisation, the Knights of Labor. See 'Storm the Fort: The Knights of Labor in Song', chap. 3 in Robert E. Weir, *Beyond Labor's Veil: The Culture of the Knights of Labor* (Pennsylvania: Penn State Press, 1996), pp. 103–44.
 - 20 Duncan Hall, *'A Pleasant Change From Politics': Music and the British Labour Movement Between the Wars* (Cheltenham: New Clarion Press, 2001).
 - 21 Michael Sanders, *The Poetry of Chartism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Michael Sanders, 'Poetic Agency: Metonymy and Metaphor in Chartist Poetry 1838–1852', *Victorian Poetry*, 39:2 (2001), pp. 111–35; Anne Janowitz, *Lyric and Labour in the Romantic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Solveig Robinson, 'Of "Haymakers" and "City Artisans": The Chartist Poetics of Eliza Cook's Songs of Labor', *Victorian Poetry*, 39:2 (2001), pp. 229–53. See also Ruth Livesey, 'Socialism and Victorian Poetry', *Literature Compass*, 1:1 (2004), pp. 1–6; Matthew Rowlinson, 'Lyric', chap. 3 in Richard Cronin, Alison Chapman and Antony H. Harrison (eds), *A Companion to Victorian Poetry* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), pp. 59–80. The field of word-music studies is expanding rapidly.

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 - 25 Ian Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture in Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1983).
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 - 27 Halker, *Democracy, Workers and God*, p. 4.
 - 28 See, inter alia, Jens Eder, 'Transmediality and the Problems of Adaption: Concepts, Forms and Strategies', chap. 5 in Dan Hassler-Forest and Pascal Nicklas (eds), *The Politics of Adaption* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 66–81 and Maureen N. McLane, 'Mediating Antiquarians in Britain, 1760 – 1830: The Invention of Oral Tradition; Or, Close Reading Before Coleridge', in Clifford Siskin and William Warner (eds), *This is Enlightenment* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 247–64.
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 - 30 Pickering, 'Vernacular Song', p. 96.
 - 31 See Michael Pickering and Emma Robertson, *Rhythms of Labour: The History of Music at Work in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
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- 61 Lambert and Lester, 'Imperial Spaces, Imperial Subjects', p. 28.
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- 63 Timothy Randall, 'Chartist Poetry and Song' in Owen Ashton, Robert Fyson and Stephen Roberts (eds), *The Chartist Legacy* (London: Merlin, 1999), pp. 171–95. On the social role of poetry (songs) see Ian Haywood, *The Literature of Struggle: An Anthology of Chartist Fiction* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1995), p. 3. See also Frank O'Gorman, 'Campaign Rituals and Ceremonies: The Social Meaning of Elections in England 1780–1860', *Past and Present*, 135 (1992), pp. 79–115.
- 64 Watson, *Song and Democratic Culture*, p. 6 (original emphasis). Watson does recognise, however, that melody and performance were intermediate stages between text and song. Writing about Ireland in the same period Georges-Denis Zimmermann has argued that 'ballads are ... one of the few means at our disposal to know the popular mind'. See *Irish Political Street Ballads and Rebel Songs 1780–1900* (Genève: Imprimerie La Sirène, 1966), p. 10.
- 65 The Clash, 'English Civil War', CBS, 7082, released February 1979; available at www.songfacts.com/detail.php?id=30543 (accessed 9 September 2016).
- 66 An exception is the laudable attempt to recreate a Chartist choir. An eighty-strong Chartist choir was formed for a one-off performance in Yorkshire in 2006. Fortunately, an invaluable CD recording was made of the event: J. Russell, *Chartist*

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- Songs. As Sung by the Yorkshire Chartist Choir*, [privately produced], 2006. We are grateful to Malcolm Chase for providing us with a copy of this CD, the production of which undoubtedly benefitted from his unequalled knowledge of Chartism. In 1998 the English group Chumbawumba included the 'Chartist Anthem' in their collection, *English Rebel Songs 1381–1984*, EMI 8769, 1998, track 5.
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 - 77 See Kate Bowan and Paul Pickering, 'Bridging Music and Politics: Radicalism in Mid-Victorian London' (unpublished paper, Musicological Society of Australia Annual Conference, University of Newcastle, September 2009); 'Marx and the Mazurka: Music and Politics in Mid-Victorian London' (unpublished paper, St Andrews University, June 2010); 'Songs of the Millions: Chartist Music and Popular Aural Tradition', *Labour History Review*, 74:1 (2009), pp. 44–63.
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 - 80 *Ibid.*, pp. xvi–xvii. He does nominate a group of promising emergent studies.
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 - 83 Michael Sanders, "'God is our Guide! Our Cause is Just!": The National Chartist Hymn Book and Victorian Hymnody', *Victorian Studies*, 54:4 (2012), pp. 679–705.
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 - 87 Geertz, 'Nature of Anthropological Understanding', p. 69.
 - 88 Greg Urban, *Metaphysical Community: The Interplay of the Senses and the Intellect* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), pp. 241–2.
 - 89 Inga Clendinnen, *Dancing With Strangers* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2005), p. 10.
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