

Gene A. Culwell

## The Ben Gray Lumpkin Collection of Colorado Folklore

Professor Ben Gray Lumpkin, who retired from the University of Colorado in June of 1969, spent more than twenty years of his academic career amassing a large collection of folksongs in the state of Colorado. At my request, Professor Lumpkin provided the following information concerning his life and career:

Son of John Moorman and Harriet Gray Lumpkin, I was born December 25, 1901, in Marshall County, Mississippi, on a farm about seven miles north of Holly Springs. Grandpa was a Methodist circuit rider, but had to farm to eke out a living because his hill-country churches were too poor to support his family.

Because we lived too far from the Hudsonville school for me to walk, I began schooling under my mother until I was old enough to ride a gentle mare and take care of her at school—at the age of 8. When my father bought a farm in Lowndes County, Mississippi, my brother Joe and sister Martha and I went to Penn Station and Crawford elementary schools. Having finished what was called the ninth grade, I went to live with my Aunt Olena Ford, and finished Tupelo High School in 1921, then BA, University of Mississippi, 1925. I worked as the secretary and clerk in the Mississippi State Department of Archives and History (September 1925 to March 1929) and in the Mississippi Division office of Southern Bell Telephone Company (March 1929 to August 1930). I taught English and other subjects in Vina, Alabama, High School (August 1930 through January 1932). I took graduate work and taught part time in the University of Mississippi (January 1932 to June 1935), where I received my MA in June 1935. I taught English at the Uni-

versity of Mississippi, 1935–1937. I was a graduate student and did part-time teaching at the University of North Carolina, 1937–1944, where I finished my PhD in 1944. During World War II, I wrote technical manuals for the U.S. Quartermaster General's Office at Camp Lee, Virginia, 1944–1948 [*sic*]. I then taught English and folksong classes at the University of Colorado, 1946, until I retired in June, 1969.

I first learned folksongs sung by Fletcher Simms, a Negro wage hand on our Lowndes County farm, while he worked in the corn and hay fields. One of his songs reflected the length of our work days. Papa insisted that all of us work from sun up to sun down. So, on long, hot summer days, just as the sun began to set, Fletcher would sing loud enough for Papa to hear him—even half a mile away:

Captain, Captain, look where dat morning sun done gone—  
Way below that western horizon.

He would draw out the second line to make it match in time the first. Fletcher also sang many stanzas from the traditional blues songs that were popular between 1910 and 1920. One goes something like this:

I'm gonna buy me a pistol,  
As long as I'm tall;  
I'm gonna shoot fo Delta,  
Just to see her fall.

Another:

I'm gonna a buy me a pistol,  
And a box of balls;  
I'm gonna shoot Jimmy John,  
Just to hear him squall.

I first heard folksongs called folksongs in 1922, when my English teacher at Ole Miss (Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson) invited us to hear John A. Lomax sing Western cowboy songs in the Old Chapel. He made the rafters ring with “I'm Wild and Wooley, and Full of Fleas,” “Whoopee, Ti, Yi, Yo, Git Along Little Dogie,” and others—such fascinating songs that I took \$1.25 of my board-bill refund that spring and ordered his book from MacMillan. I treasured that book, but it got away while I was teaching at the University of Colorado. Though I heard the school children of Vina,



**Figure 1.** Ben Gray Lumpkin teaching at the University of Colorado. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

Alabama, school singing folksongs, I was not alert enough to record them. During my first summer at the University of North Carolina, I elected to take Professor Arthur Palmer Hudson's course in American folksongs.

At the University of Colorado my interest naturally led me to establish a folksong course in the English Department during the spring of 1947—a course that I continued to teach both on the Boulder campus and frequently at the Denver Extension until my retirement in 1969. At first, the only examples I could play for my students were old 78s and Library of Congress recordings; but my students soon began bringing me leads and a few songs. After I began contributing articles to scholarly journals, I sent reprints to newspapers and radio stations. They mentioned our interest in collecting. Pete Smythe, of [radio station] KOA, was especially helpful. Then people from various parts of Colorado began telling me of songs they knew or knew about.

My wife (Helen Patricia, "Pat") and I spent a few weeks almost every summer on the trail of folksongs that we had heard of or that we hoped to find as we enjoyed our trips in our old 1937 Chevy—all across and up and down Colorado. Some trips yielded very few or no recordings; others yielded many valuable songs, as indicated on the tape recordings that I presented to the College of Music. Pat usually watched the tape recorder, adjusted the vol-

ume, and helped me to ask questions that turned the informant's attention away from the recording machine. Some questions were to jog the singer's memory; others were to give the singer a rest. The genuine traditional singers did not have to be urged; they loved to sing and prized the opportunities to get their old songs recorded. For example, one grand old lady (at least 75 years old) had just finished recording from memory a number of songs that she had written into a notebook while she was 15 or 16. While Mark Gelber (one of my students) and I were packing up our recording equipment and mikes, she held up the faded, frayed old notebook and said:

I told my daughter to put this old ballad book with me in my coffin because nobody cared for these old songs now; but, lo, and behold, here are two young men who have come all the way from Boulder to record my dear old songs. You don't know how happy you have made me this afternoon!

Of course I was flattered by her calling me a young man, for I was then nearly sixty, but I suppose I seemed young to her.<sup>1</sup>

The Ben Gray Lumpkin Collection of Colorado Folklore consists of nearly 150 magnetic tapes of varying sizes and a letter file containing information on the more than 200 informants who contributed to the collection; the files contain letters, manuscript items, transcriptions of songs, and other memorabilia. The recordings were made by Professor Lumpkin, his students, professional associates, and other collectors in the area. The time span covered by this material is a twenty-year period from 1950 to 1970.<sup>2</sup>

Although it is called a "folklore" collection, basically it consists of songs, and by far the largest percentage of these are in English. There are apparently 700 English language songs (not including the variants) in the collection.<sup>3</sup> It is typical of other major regions collections in that it contains British ballads and folksongs, popular songs, play-party songs, and religious songs. Much of the material in the collection is a result of Professor Lumpkin's attempt to be inclusive rather than exclusive; he simply asked the informant if he knew of any "old songs" and recorded them all.

In addition to the English language songs, the collection contains some instrumental music—fiddle tunes, banjo music—and some recordings of small bands playing folk music (some of the instrumental music has been catalogued). Besides the English language songs, there are some songs in German, Italian, Welsh, Russian, and Swedish, and a few Spanish songs.<sup>4</sup> The collection also contains a limited number of folk-stories.

The recordings in the Lumpkin collection were by various collectors besides Professor Lumpkin (although he recorded a majority of them), and the recording methods varied somewhat. Documentary information is included in only two-thirds of the tapes, and nearly all of this documentation is by Professor Lumpkin. A few of the tapes are anonymous, having been given to the collection by some unknown persons. Nearly all of the recordings were made in non-professional surroundings, such as homes, offices, or classrooms. With very few exceptions, the recordings were made on reel-to-reel tape recorders, using external microphones.

The Lumpkin collection has served as the basis for a Master of Arts thesis by Mark Gelber ("Traditional Ballads of Colorado," 1963) and also an audio-series of sixteen thirty-minute programs, *Folk Music of Colorado*, produced by William Kearns for the Division of Continuing Education at the University of Colorado. In addition, all of the material which was published [in Boulder and edited by Ben Gray Lumpkin, 1962–64] in the *Colorado Folksong Bulletin* came from the collection.

Professor Lumpkin's collecting efforts between 1950 and 1970 were definitely in the Lomax tradition of gathering everything . . . possible. Thus the Lumpkin collection contains all of the songs which the informants cared to record for him. When Professor Lumpkin began editing and producing the *Colorado Folksong Bulletin*, he started the process of categorization and analysis of the material in his collection. The three volumes and five issues of the *Bulletin* contain a total of 174 songs and 145 tunes;<sup>5</sup> the scholarship is generally excellent, although the transcribing and editing of the tunes is of uneven quality. One of the misfortunes of folksong scholarship is that rarely are collectors equally qualified in the areas of text scholarship and tune scholarship.<sup>6</sup>

There are 192 informants for the English language songs of the Lumpkin collection; they form a diverse group of various ages and occupations from many geographical areas of the State of Colorado. . . . Figure 1 lists the informants by Colorado city [in alphabetical order]; 11 informants gave out-of-state addresses, and for 87 informants, no address is known.<sup>7</sup> The greatest concentration of informants is in the metropolitan areas of Boulder, Denver, and Colorado Springs, the others being spread fairly evenly through the state.

A year of birth is known for only 30 of the 192 informants, and if those 30 are representative, it is worthwhile to know that 16 of them (slightly over half) were born between 1879 and 1899. The oldest informant was Samuel Lincoln Craig (1864–1955), of Boulder County; the youngest was Ronald Lupton (born 1945), of Denver.

Alamosa	Fort Morgan	Longmont (5)
Black Forest	Fowler	Loveland
Boulder (21)	Grand Junction	Niwot (2)
Canon City (2)	Greeley	Pueblo
Cedaredge (2)	Grenada (3)	Rocky Ford
Colorado Springs (7)	Gunnison	Salida
Craig	Hayden	Steamboat Springs
Denver (18)	La Junta	Walden
Durango (2)	Lafayette (3)	Wiggins
Estes Park	Lamar (4)	Windsor
Fort Collins	Lewis	Yellow Jacket

**Figure 2.** The location of Lumpkin's 94 informants in the state of Colorado.

*[Fifty of the Colorado informants, whose background could be traced hailed from other states, mostly from mid-western, eastern and southern parts of the United States. Only ten grew up in Colorado. Their families, similarly, migrated to Colorado from the same regions. One family came from England; one from Russia. Ed.]*

The number of songs contributed by informants varies from 1 to 138 songs; there are twelve informants who had vast repertoires and whose songs comprise more than one-third of the entire collection of English language songs.<sup>8</sup> [Figure 2, below] lists the twelve principal informants giving name, birth-date, residence, occupation and number of songs.

The information in the above table helps to illustrate the type of traditional folksinger in the Lumpkin collection. There are no discernible patterns of social status or economic-educational levels among the informants of English language songs other than those mentioned above.

<b>Name</b>	<b>Birthdate</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Songs</b>
Addison, Wilbur	N.A.	Denver	Teacher	40
Alexander, John T.	1874	Lamar	Cowboy	42
Bryce, Jannie H.	1879	Denver	Housewife	43
Greer, Beulah	1899	Boulder	Housewife	46
Hugley, Ernest	1917	Denver	Farmer	33
Hutchins, Emma	1893	Boulder	Housewife	71
Martin, Martha	N.A.	Grenada	Housewife	70
Peyton, James B.	1908	Denver	U.S. Govt.	46
Rothrock, Ada	1889	N.A.	N.A.	27
Skinner, Ellis K.	1917	Denver	Teacher	77
Vila, Emma L.	N.A.	Boulder	N.A.	29
Waller, Maurine	1886	Denver	Teacher	138

**Figure 3.** The twelve principal informants for the Ben Gray Lumpkin Collection.

The singing style of the informants in the collection varies considerably. Some of the informants sang unaccompanied while others used a guitar or, occasionally, other instruments such as a piano or banjo. Several informants sang with relatives (mothers, sisters, or children) and some of these performances involved two- or three-part harmony, although most were in unison.

Individual voice characteristics range all the way from the simple unselfconscious singing of Mrs. Greer or Mrs. Martin to the semi-professional, accompanied style of Mr. Skinner or Mr. Addison. Some informants tended to sing almost without any ornamentation, but others—among them Mrs. Martin—used a considerable amount of ornamentation. In fact, Mrs. Martin's singing style is distinctive basically because of her ornamentation.

The informants of the English language songs in the Lumpkin collection are thus a group of people from many different backgrounds; they all share at least one common characteristic, however, and that is their knowledge of folksongs in an oral tradition.

There are two principal differences between the Lumpkin collection and most of the other regional collections. First, the Colorado collection was obtained much later than most others; the dates of collection were 1950–1970, whereas the Belden, Missouri, collection was nearly complete by 1917, the Randolph Ozark Collection 1950, the Brown North Carolina collection (which was begun in 1912) by 1951, the Cox West Virginia collection (*Folksongs of the South*) by 1924, and the Brewster, Indiana, collection by 1939. Second, the Colorado collections contains a large number (approximately 175) of folksongs originally derived from popular music around the turn of the century; this type (*Cheyenne* is one example) does appear in the other collections but to a more limited degree. The inclusion of these songs as a significant part of the Lumpkin collection reflects a more contemporary approach to collecting that that held by some earlier scholars who, in some cases, were quite selective about materials in their collections.

As a result of the research involved in this study, it has become apparent that the collecting of folksongs need not be regarded as an activity that is nearly complete (some older scholars have felt that there are few songs left which are worth collecting); although some of the older folksongs and ballads are no longer commonly found, there are others, perhaps newer, which are alive in an oral tradition. The impact of the various mass media (records, radio, and television) has not stopped the passage of songs through oral tradition, although it would be difficult to assess their various effects.

Fort Collins, Colorado  
[December 1977]

**Editor's postscript:**

Ben Gray Lumpkin (1901–82) was a folklorist and professor of English at the University of Colorado from 1946 to 1969. Lumpkin's notes and papers related to his career in the CU English department are housed separately in the University Archives, as are the notes and dissertation of Gene A. Culwell. When the process of digitizing Lumpkin's field recordings began in the 1990s, these additional materials were consulted in order to flesh out the details in Culwell's article. The AMRC inventory of original papers and field recordings of Ben Gray Lumpkin indicate *many missing folders*, which seem to have contained either notes or biographical information about several of the informants to whom Culwell refers. It appears that these missing items would likely account for the discrepancies regarding the performer names and number of songs that crop up when comparing Culwell's article with the current Ben Gray Lumpkin Digital Folk Music Collection. The latter is searchable through many different pathways provided online and gives a lively sense of its diverse contents.

With its singular focus on Colorado songs, Ben Gray Lumpkin's collecting efforts represent a useful addition to the comprehensive *Check-list of Recorded Songs in the English Language in the Archive of American Folk Song to July 1940*, prepared by John and Alan Lomax and published by the Library of Congress in 1942. This checklist contains some 10,000 separate recordings, organized by song title followed, in each instance, by the performers' names, instruments played (if any), the place (city, state) and maker of the recording, date of recording, and catalogue number. Some of the most familiar old-time ballads were recorded in dozens of versions. For example, the Lomaxes found fifty different recordings of the perennially popular "John Henry." "Soldier's Joy," among the most familiar of old Scots-Irish fiddle tunes, dating back more than two hundred years in written sources, appears on the checklist twenty-two times in nearly as many contrasting versions: for harmonica solo; harmonica, with piano, guitar, accordion, and double bass accompaniment; fiddle solo; fiddle and banjo; home-made fiddle and guitar; and, guitar and fiddle with a voice speaking the dance calls.

John and Alan Lomax were assisted by some fifty other local scholars or collectors to compile this awe-inspiring list along with its useful geographical index. Yet only *three* titles, all labeled "locations unknown," appear to have come from the state of Colorado (versus some 130 songs from Vermont, 500 from Alabama, 850 from Mississippi, and nearly 1000 songs from Kentucky).

As Culwell explains, the Ben Gray Lumpkin Collection includes a number of commercially recorded songs that might not seem to fit strictly within the





**Figure 4.** Alan Lomax.  
Photo from Library of Congress.

realm of folk music as that category is generally understood today. Nevertheless the vast majority of Lumpkin's songs certainly qualify as a living part of the oral tradition that John and Alan Lomax were seeking to preserve, and so deserve to be acknowledged along side it. With the handful of other major folk song collections that have come down to us in the twenty-first century, the Lumpkin songs can still be examined from many perspectives and heard online as a way to understand and interpret the musical meanings that they had and still have for their performers and listeners.

As part of his preface to the *Checklist*, a volume weighing in at 594 pages (!), the twenty-seven year-old Alan Lomax, gives a short "History of the Collection" opening with the following eloquent paragraph suggesting that this young man had found a vocation and uncovered a vast amount of inspiring music, which we can still enjoy and contemplate. One suspects Ben Gray Lumpkin would agree with the spirit of Lomax's conclusion and be pleased to know that his contribution to the big picture was still valued today.

These records were made in the field, that is, where the singers lived or worked. Fiddlers, evangelists, cotton pickers, housewives, convicts, school children, miners, hoboes, lumber jacks, old-timers,—a cross-section of America sang into our field microphones and were recorded on our aluminum or acetate disks. They told us stories, gave whatever songs they knew or could remember,—songs that in many cases came out of the past 50,

100 years, even 300 years ago,—songs that were made up yesterday or others which may be the folk stuff of the future. One old Irishman sang 200 Come-All-Ye ballads. One country fiddler played 100 tunes. Collectively we found that the American people have a repertory of thousands of songs and that America is a singing country.<sup>9</sup>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpt from letter: Ben Gray Lumpkin, Clarksville, Tennessee, to Gene A. Culwell, August 24, 1975.

<sup>2</sup> Lumpkin's tape collection is currently housed in the American Music Research Center room in the Norlin Library. Early in the 2000s the tapes were digitally converted and made available on line as part of the Colorado Libraries Digitization Project; they can be accessed on the University of Colorado website under "Ben Gray Lumpkin Digital Folk Music Collection."

<sup>3</sup> Counting all the variants and fragments, however, the number of recorded performances in the collection comes to about 2000. Most, but not all of these, are available for listening online (see note 2 above).

<sup>4</sup> Professor Lumpkin did not attempt to collect Spanish folksongs, even though there are several tapes of Spanish songs in the collection. He felt that, since Professor Arthur L. Campa of Denver was actively collecting Spanish folksongs, he would concentrate on other areas. However, Professor Campa told me that he had at the time encouraged Professor Lumpkin to collect Spanish folksongs. Thus, approximately 85% of the Lumpkin collection is English language folksongs, while the remaining 15% is fairly evenly divided among the various foreign language songs and instrumental items.

<sup>5</sup> In October of 1963, the American Association for State and Local History presented Professor Lumpkin with a commendation award for his work with the *Colorado Folksong Bulletin*.

<sup>6</sup> Professor Lumpkin found it necessary to rely upon a number of people, some of whom were very good at transcribing tunes while others were less experienced. Many of the great collectors (mostly English teachers) collected texts only or felt unqualified to edit and publish the tunes they did collect or published the tunes they were able to salvage in an appendix. D. K. Wilgus (*Anglo-American Folksong Scholarship*, [New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1959], p. 194) suggests that music critics must answer the question about the whereabouts of musicologists during the time these collections were being made. It must also be remembered that prior to magnetic tape recorders, obtaining any music was difficult at best!

<sup>7</sup> At the present time, much of the information regarding the informants is incomplete, and some of it may never be complete because of the time lapse since the

recordings were made a number of years ago. Apparently there was never a consistent attempt to obtain complete biographical information from all of the informants. [Extra material that has been uncovered since 1977 is included in the *Ben Gray Lumpkin Digital Folk Music Collection*. Ed.]

<sup>8</sup> My dissertation, "The English Language Songs in the Ben Gray Lumpkin Collection of Colorado Folklore" (University of Colorado, 1976), contains a separate list of the song titles of these 12 informants as well as a complete title listing of all the English language songs in the collection. Each title in this second listing is followed by the informant's name and the location of the song on the [original] magnetic tapes.

<sup>9</sup> *Check-list of Recorded Songs in the English Language in the Archive of American Folk Song to July, 1940*. Washington, DC: The Library of Congress Music Division, 1942, 2.



Thomas Riis

## Music at the University of Colorado: The Early Years, *Part 2*

Frank Wilbur Chace began his work as acting professor of music and director of the music department of the University of Colorado in the autumn of 1919, following on the dismissal of George Chadwick [see this *Journal*, vol. 23, 49–63]. At approximately the same moment, the Regents of the University accepted the resignation of President Livingston Farrand, who had spent the previous semester on leave. After receiving a unanimous petition from the faculty, the Regents rapidly installed acting president George Norlin, a respected professor of Greek, as President in his own right.”<sup>1</sup> The near simultaneous arrival of Chace and Norlin was purely coincidental but both proved to have a beneficent impact on the growth of musical studies and programs at the University.

As Grant James Klausman reports in his dissertation devoted to the history of the College of Music:

The zeal with which Chace began his work in the fall of 1919 provided sharp contrast to the indifference which had prevailed in the music department during the years immediately preceding. He held auditions for the glee club and by the end of October had chosen sixteen men for the group from the fifty-one who had tried out. There had been no men’s glee club the previous year. . . . A Women’s Glee Club of thirty-four was established that same month and began having regular rehearsals in the chapel of Old Main in November. In addition to the organization of the glee clubs, Chace sought to establish a Choral Union of townspeople and students for the performance of major choral works.

Chace himself performed frequent organ recitals in local churches during his first year and made a sufficiently strong impression in his various roles to be appointed Professor of Music (no longer “acting”) on April 13, 1920.<sup>2</sup> Klausman again observes:

Certainly the most important musical event in Chace’s first year at the University was the concert of the Choral Union held at Macky Auditorium in May. The chorus consisted of eighty-six singers and a featured tenor soloist, V. S. Keiser, from Denver. The orchestra was composed of twenty-six members, eleven of whom were also brought from Denver. A matinee performance was given for Boulder school children on Wednesday, May 26, followed by the evening concert for the adults. The entire program was under Chace’s direction.<sup>3</sup>

Including a *Slavonic Dance* by Dvořák and the first movement of Schubert’s Unfinished Symphony by the orchestra alone, a handful of shorter choral selections, and the cantata *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast* (1898) by the then fashionable British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Chace had produced an ambitious and apparently successful event, perhaps recalling for some listeners similar programs mounted by Charles Farnsworth in the 1890s.



**Figure 1.** Frank Chace at the Macky Auditorium organ. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

It is evident in this period that the university was beginning to gain a stronger sense of itself as a multi-pronged institution serving a wide variety of needs and constituencies. About 1920, the College of Liberal Arts was renamed the College of Arts and Sciences. Between 1919 and 1927, a number of quasi-independent branches were formally recognized, including the College of Education, the School of Business Administration, and the College of Music, as well as the new departments of Journalism, Fine Arts, and Physical Education.<sup>4</sup>

The first report of a “College of Music” in the official record appears in Dean Fred Hellems’ biennial report of 1918–1920, couched in what can only be termed qualified (though optimistic) language, a style characteristic of this long-term university administrator. With the permanent appointment of Chace a done deal, he declared, “There could seem to be no doubt that the success of the College is assured from the time of its opening, but it is too early to speak of actual results.” The new college was nominally launched as an independent entity; the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences would continue to serve *ex officio* as “a voting member of the College of Music” for some years to come, although there seems to be no evidence of extensive involvement by the larger unit in the new college’s day-to-day affairs.<sup>5</sup>

The new designation for the department, now College of Music, was approved by the Board of Regents in July, 1921, and with it the presumption that a full four-year curriculum leading to a Bachelor of Music degree was on offer, the details of which had been announced without fanfare the previous summer. The goal of the program was clear; classes aimed to prepare musicians for professional careers—as teachers, composers, or those who wished to “devote themselves to musical criticism and literature.” Although the statements provide a rationale for teaching musical knowledge as an important aspect of the students’ general culture, this thrust is neither emphasized in print nor reflected in the practical curriculum.

Prescribed courses for applied music, music theory, counterpoint, composition, “music appreciation,” and history of music were spelled out in the regents’ minutes; these were to be supplemented by liberal arts classes in English language and literature, foreign languages, and psychology. All music majors were required to sing in the Choral Union or play in the orchestra. Performers could concentrate in piano, violin, voice, or organ. Chace was authorized to hire seven additional instructors to cover these applied areas and promptly did so. The new teachers all lived in Boulder or Denver, and were either related by marriage to faculty in other departments or held simultaneous jobs in other fields. All were compensated solely for the private lessons they taught; no one in the college, except Chace, was paid a salary.<sup>6</sup> Aurelia Ferris

Chace, wife of the director, was appointed as an “Assistant in Voice” within the next year and also assumed the duties and title, “Assistant to the Director and College of Music Secretary.”<sup>7</sup>

The College of Music had a single classroom, known as the Senate Room, located on the second floor of the west wing of the Macky Auditorium Building [currently a conference room adjacent to the Center for the American West]. In that room all the advanced music classes were taught by Chace, while his wife taught some of the Freshman and Sophomore courses. In addition to being the classroom, the Senate Room was also the scene of all recitals, except those for organ, which were held in local churches until the installation of the organ in Macky Auditorium. Macky also contained a few practice rooms. Private lessons were usually conducted in the homes of the teachers.<sup>8</sup>

The curriculum as it was established in 1919–20 went essentially unchanged until 1927, although a Special Music Certificate for supervisors of music in public schools was added in 1924, and summer courses unrelated to the Bachelor of Music degree for the benefit of public school teachers were regularly offered during the summer quarter in this same period. Summer courses were frequently taught by experienced visiting instructors.<sup>9</sup>

After years of discussion and delay, the decision to acquire a large pipe organ for the Macky Auditorium finally moved forward, urged on by Chace. The selection, financing, and purchase were accomplished between April, 1921 and February, 1922. The instrument consisted of four manuals plus pedalboard, used seven thousand pipes, organized in seven divisions, with 115 stops; it was constructed and installed by the Austin Organ Company of Hartford, Connecticut, over the following fifteen months, “until at last on Saturday evening, May 19, 1923, Dr. Chace played the Inaugural Organ Recital in Macky.”<sup>10</sup>

The program was chosen carefully to demonstrate the instrument’s range and versatility and, as was customary at the time, included orchestral transcriptions (preludes to the first and third acts of Wagner’s *Lohengrin*, *Finlandia* of Sibelius, and Liszt’s *Les Preludes*), arrangements of popular folk songs (“Londonderry Air,” “Annie Laurie,” and “Old Folks at Home” [listed as “Suwanee River”] by Stephen Foster), and impressive show pieces originally written for organ, the Toccata and Fugue in D Minor of J. S. Bach, and Charles Marie Widor’s Toccata from his Fifth Symphony.

Chace expressed his complete satisfaction with the new instrument to the *Colorado Alumnus* just prior to his public recital:



I consider the organ installed in Macky Auditorium as the finest instrument I have ever heard in this country, Canada or abroad. Its beauty of tone is unsurpassed and we have every tone color, ranging from the softest to the most powerful. . . . The instrument is a joy to play upon, as it responds instantaneously to whatever is required. . . .<sup>11</sup>

Chace had been urging the authorities to build up the college's stock of instruments since the start of his tenure. He felt a "grand piano . . . of the best make, which is undoubtedly a Steinway," should be purchased as soon as possible, foreseeing that such would be required for both student and guest recitals, as well as several practice pianos, "which can be rented to students for practice."<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately, it seems that his recommendations went mostly unheeded. Although he had managed to bring about the acquisition of a keyboard for use in the Senate Room, in his last report to the regents, submitted after his departure in 1926, he declared that "there is [still] no piano in Macky fit for any pianist to play on."<sup>13</sup>

The College's enrollment statistics were finally broken out from those of the College of Arts and Sciences in 1923, so it is possible to better track the details surrounding the growth of music programs by mid-decade; the number of enrolled students rose from about three dozen to four dozen between 1923 and 1926, and "[in] 1924 Miss Hazel Bennett received the Bachelor of Music degree, the first awarded by the University."<sup>14</sup>

Adequate space in which to teach the increasing number of music students was also addressed by the university leaders as were requests for more funds. College budgets (whose lines included salaries, books, equipment, and supplies) increased gradually and were reported on a two-year cycle. "[B]iennial reports indicated a continual rise in expenses [from] \$3,409.53 [in 1918–20] . . . to \$7,940.35 in the two-year period ending September 30, 1926."<sup>15</sup>

Chace's request for improved housing met with favorable response from the Regents, as they announced in 1924 that the building vacated by the Medical School would be remodeled and turned over to the College of Music. The building that was to house the College . . . for the next thirty years, from 1925 to 1955, had already served the University for forty years.<sup>16</sup>

Fortunately, the building intended as music's new home was subjected to a complete renovation (at a cost of \$11,000) which, when finished, provided space for "five teaching studios, two offices, a large classroom on the second floor . . . a recital hall capable of seating 120," and a broadcasting studio for the university radio station KFAJ. This "new" building was formally opened on

April 25, 1925.<sup>17</sup> Large Choral Union and orchestra performances continued to take place in the Macky Auditorium or in local churches, as is still often the case nowadays. Chace seems to have understood how to attract an audience for these performances; the *Silver and Gold* reviews note several large houses to hear such works as Handel's *Messiah*, Gounod's *St. Cecilia Mass*, Rossini's *Stabat Mater*, and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, all repertoire staples, under Chace's leadership.<sup>18</sup>

The growth enjoyed by the College of Music was not an isolated phenomenon but was shared by many other university divisions and departments. The Twenties, filled with post-war optimism and prosperity, but also saddled with the national prohibition of the sale and distribution of alcoholic beverages (the Volstead Act came into effect on January 17, 1920), achieved a well earned reputation for its "roaring" good times; Coloradans, most especially university students, would not be left out of the rambunctious doings.<sup>19</sup> And music played a big part in this revelry, although generally not under university auspices.

All sorts of musical entertainments, including many legitimate and sober ones, took place with students eager to be involved. Professor Francis Wolle, of the English Literature department, nurtured students interested in operettas as well as serious drama.<sup>20</sup> Under Wolle's direction and sponsored by the Boost-



**Figure 2.** Originally built in 1884 as the first home of CU's Medical School (designed according to standard U.S. army hospital plans), this structure was remodeled in 1925 to become the first campus building dedicated solely to the College of Music. It was razed in 1955. Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

ers Club, university students mounted an original musical comedy entitled “Now and Then,” and performed it for their fellow students in Boulder and subsequently for the combined graduating classes of Denver high schools at the Denver Municipal Auditorium in May, 1920.<sup>21</sup> The provision of music for any number of other extracurricular activities has gone unrecorded, but one impressive example related to the Denver staging of “Now and Then” can perhaps stand in for many others. Bud Davis’s history again supplies the details.

Some 4,000 people attended the function. The high school students and their parents composed the bulk of the crowd, but students of the University and alumni attended in large numbers. Two special trains were run from Boulder, each crowded to capacity. After the play the crowd adjourned to the dance floor at the other end of the building, where aided by the Municipal Organ and Ralph Wray’s orchestra, they danced the rest of the evening. The dance closed at 12 o’clock, and the Boulderites returned on the special trains.

Ralph Wray, whose orchestra played at this function, was to receive numerous awards and recognition for his musical compositions while in the University. . . .<sup>22</sup>

The bespectacled swing band leader who would go on to become an international musical sensation in the 1940s—an icon for the Jazz Age gone to war—Alton Glenn Miller (1904–44), was certainly the most famous popular musician to have come through the University of Colorado during the decade. In 1923 young Glenn graduated from high school in the small town of Fort Morgan, Colorado, just as his passion for playing the trombone grew to overrule all others. His decision to move to Boulder, only twenty miles to the west of Denver, with both towns providing a plethora of musical opportunities, must have seemed like a natural next step. For about two years (1924–26), Miller lived near the campus, joined a fraternity, spent time in a few classes, and took advantage of frequent social occasions to develop his musical skills playing in dance bands. His experiences in the College of Music were apparently unmemorable—hardly a surprising turn of events given the college’s dedication to high-minded genres and to teacher preparation. Although not graduating himself, Miller found his future wife in Boulder native Helen Burger, who earned her bachelor’s degree in 1927 and married Glenn in 1928.

Another musical organization, not connected directly to the university but benefitting students with offers of discounted tickets to its programs, was the Artist Series, initiated for the 1921–22 academic year. Among the luminaries who performed in the first season were pianist Arthur Rubinstein and violinist

Fritz Kreisler. Although the Artist Series frequently faced financial difficulties and undersubscribed concerts, it managed to present an impressive array of national and international talent to the campus for nearly a decade; after a brief hiatus in the early thirties, it has continued to the present.<sup>23</sup>

One of the larger ongoing musical organization on campus during the 1920s was the University Band, with membership numbers running as high as sixty in 1924, the year perhaps not incidentally coinciding with the building of the football stadium. A few sporadic attempts to organize bands on campus around the turn of the century had met with mixed success. But in 1909 a more or less permanent group of about two dozen players came together. Comprised of both teachers and students, sustained by a succession of directors, it represented the university in holiday parades and civic celebrations along the Front Range, served to enhance the community's esprit de corps and, in the words of Bud Davis, "added splendor and gaiety to any occasion."<sup>24</sup> Its visibility in the early decades was more tied to such activities, as well as autumn bonfires and football games than to the College of Music directly. But in the 1929–30 academic year, Horace Jones, professor of violin and conductor of the orchestra, assumed the directorship of the band from its previous conductor, A.T. Henry, Jr. Jones promptly expanded the band's rehearsal schedule into the spring term, and added what was to become a popular annual series of programs.<sup>25</sup> By 1930, the band had grown to nearly 80 instrumentalists.<sup>26</sup> In 1933 the *Silver and Gold* announced the formation of



**Figure 3.** The University band in 1927. Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

an Intercollegiate Band, an aggregation of the dozen or so strongest players from five other colleges along the Front Range. Combined with CU's best bandsmen, this group performed annually over several seasons.<sup>27</sup> It would remain for Hugh McMillen, who joined the faculty in 1936, to bring the University's marching band to national attention.<sup>28</sup>

The students and the faculty of the College of Music in the 1920s were a small but sociable cohort. Frank and Amelia Chace frequently hosted informal gatherings in their home and "arranged dinner parties and receptions in Boulder and Denver for the . . . students. The director and his wife went out of their way to promote camaraderie and a spirit of cooperation among the young musicians."<sup>29</sup> In the autumn of 1926, however, for reasons that remain unclear but were most likely related to strains on his health and his marriage, Frank Chace abruptly submitted his resignation and departed from Boulder forthwith. "With classes to begin in a matter of days, the search for Chace's successor was conducted rapidly. Within weeks Horace Whitehouse was appointed Director of the College of Music at a salary of \$2500 and took up his duties that same month."<sup>30</sup>

Whitehouse was a graduate of the New England Conservatory, an associate in the American Guild of Organists, and had already served as dean or director in three college music programs in Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. In short, he was exceptionally qualified to assume the headship at the University of Colorado. But his tenure in Boulder amounted to only a one-year interim, when he was offered the position of Assistant to the Dean of the College of Music at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Illinois, in the spring of 1927. A search for his replacement once again commenced without delay; twenty-five applications were received by mid-June, testifying to the growing reputation of the College under Chace's guidance. The chosen candidate, Rowland W. Dunham, was hired with Whitehouse's enthusiastic endorsement. His statement, reported to the *Silver and Gold*, was wholly supportive:

Mr. Dunham is one of the leading organists in the profession, and is well and favorably known throughout the country. From my personal acquaintance with him I am certain he will be a distinct addition to the musical forces of the state, and Boulder especially. He is a splendid man and will be well liked as he has been liked at places where he has held positions. Colorado and Boulder are fortunate to have him.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, Whitehouse and Dunham had known each from their days together as students in Boston. Whitehouse encouraged his classmate to apply for the position and assured him that there was indeed a future at the post, explaining

that he, Whitehouse, was only vacating it because of Northwestern's irresistible offer. Prior to his arrival in Boulder, Dunham had taught at Hope College, outside of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and at Ohio Wesleyan University.<sup>32</sup>

Dunham's appointment, following his nomination, was not a foregone conclusion, but it struck no one as being out of the ordinary. His qualifications closely align with those of his immediate predecessors in Boulder as well as peers at other institutions similar to the University of Colorado. The times called for musical leaders in American higher education who embodied a distinct set of qualifications, values, and personal attributes, all of which Dunham possessed to the highest degree.

This general profile, although never stated baldly as a checklist of requirements, consisted of several self-evident elements: (1) early training as an organist and church musician—which presupposed a candidate's socialization within a genteel Protestant context accomplished in the course of acquiring fundamental musical skills, both vocal and instrumental; (2) an earned degree at a reputable eastern conservatory or college—the indispensable qualification if one were to lead an institution granting similar degrees; (3) a period of study abroad, preferably in Leipzig, Paris, or London, to help polish one's training through exposure to the highest contemporary standards of Western culture; and (4) a reputation as performer (and sometimes composer) es-



**Figure 4.** Rowland W. Dunham.  
Courtesy of University of  
Colorado.

tablished along with teaching credentials achieved prior to arrival at a major post—to ensure that the talented young musician had achieved a degree of maturity, poise in public settings, and institutional leadership experience.<sup>33</sup> That the director should be man rather than a woman was also taken for granted despite a preponderance of women actually enrolled in music programs generally and at Colorado's College of Music in particular.

Dunham's early schooling at Boston University and New England Conservatory, his post-graduate Parisian training with the renowned Charles-Marie Widor (on organ)<sup>34</sup> and André Bloch (in composition), his status within the American Guild of Organists—he was serving as associate editor of its institutional journal at the time of his appointment—and his earlier college teaching experience guaranteed that he would be a contender for the job at Colorado.

Dunham also brought a keen administrative eye and an optimistic spirit to his new job. He would have observed first hand the many new buildings going up on campus, the first fruits of the famous plan offered by architect Charles Klauder in 1920, and he could dream of greater things to come. Unfortunately, the year of his arrival, which marked the fiftieth anniversary of the university's opening in 1877, also saw the suspension of a state sponsored mill-levy that had underwritten the cost for much campus construction up to that time.<sup>35</sup> Henceforth, building expenses had to be raised by means of separate bond issues, loans from the university's general fund, private donations (as had happened with the Macky Auditorium), and increases in student tuition.<sup>36</sup>

Prior to Dunham's arrival, the business practices and financial organization of the College of Music had become distinctly antiquated, resembling the independent loose-limbed style of traditional conservatories. At the beginning of term, students signed up for private lessons, paid their tuition directly to the college, rather than the university. The director gathered the money in one place, then divided it among the unsalaried instructors according to their respective teaching loads with everyone receiving his or her stipend once a quarter, that is, every three months. Dunham moved to reform this system by cooperating with the central university financial office, which would receive all student fees, distribute a fair allotment to the College of Music, and with which Dunham could pay the faculty on a monthly basis as well as meet other costs incidental to running the school.

Given the financial stringencies and the temper of the times, it is hardly surprising that few innovations in curriculum were introduced during the 1930s, although a gradual expansion of degree programs also took place and served to increase enrollment. Dunham aimed to stabilize the operation of his college

by instituting prudent budgetary ideas and assembling a group of department heads with whom he could work closely. Although the task of long-range planning was not yet considered a standard requirement for deans, Dunham pushed steadily to make the College of Music both more efficient and more productive—and of course more visible on the campus as a whole. Several gains were achieved, especially with respect to classroom equipment, the acquisition of a dozen practice room pianos, a classroom phonograph, and modern sound recordings to go with it. Palpable pride is evident in the dean's 1930 report to the Board of Regents about these technological additions.

A modern Victrola serves a useful purpose in the classroom. Many of the old worn-out records have been replaced, more than two hundred dollars having been spent for this purpose recently. Our record library includes most of the classical and modern masterpieces. The recital hall is equipped with a radio-phonograph in one fine cabinet, the gift of the Majestic Radio Company.<sup>37</sup>

Musical students, whether majors or not, continued to contribute substantially to the campus scene. After a hiatus in the glee clubs' touring schedule in the mid-1920s, choral music found new support among Greek letter organizations and clubs at the end of the decade. The University Songfest was started by Alexander Grant in 1929, which came to involve dozens of avid singers



**Figure 5.** Alexander Grant.  
Courtesy of University of  
Colorado.



every spring.<sup>38</sup> Also in that year, Professor of English Francis Wolle, a long time supporter of student theatricals, organized a club to produce original operettas, with Wolle as the principal author. Dean Dunham himself composed the music for Wolle's 1932 effort "Being Bold-er," thus initiating what would become a tradition of inter-departmental collaboration among creative arts faculty members in Boulder that would later include Cecil Effinger, Jean Berger, and Robert Fink on the musical side of things.<sup>39</sup>

Dunham's salaried faculty hires included George Williston, Dunham's former student at Ohio Wesleyan, charged to lead the piano department, and Horace Jones, a prize-winning violinist trained at London's Royal Academy of Music, who came to Colorado from a position at Texas State College for Women to supervise the strings. Alexander Grant, who was originally appointed at the behest of President Norlin (impressed as he was by Grant's singing at a Denver concert in 1926), was promoted to lead the glee clubs and supervise voice instruction. Dunham himself headed up the department of organ and music theory. This team of four leaders would remain in place until Williston's resignation in 1933, when Mark Wessel was hired as his replacement. The four salaried employees taught classes as well as private lessons. "Jones taught orchestration, Grant music history, Dunham theory, Williston and later Wessel taught composition. Classes in public school music were taught by Mrs.

The image shows a handwritten musical manuscript for the song "CoEducation" by Francis Wolle and Rowland W. Dunham. The page is numbered "5" in the top left corner. The title "CoEducation" is written in the center, with "R W D" in the top right. The music is written on a grand staff with a treble clef and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes, with some parts in parentheses indicating different vocal parts. The lyrics include: "(Men) O come let us murder a", "co-ed! (Girls) O may let us murder a non!", and "(Men) Tho cute, absolutely they've no head. (Girls) You had".

**Figure 6.** Manuscript cover page for the song "CoEducation," by Francis Wolle and Rowland W. Dunham for their collegiate musical revue "Being Bold-er" in 1932.

Peterson, Ms. [Carmel] La Torra and Ms. [Mary Frances] Gregg.<sup>40</sup> Dunham also served as organist at the Boulder Baptist Church until 1930, by which time administrative duties at the College of Music demanded his full attention.

If Glenn Miller was the most famous University of Colorado student of the 1920s in the realm of popular music, then without a doubt, the most successful classical artist to have been trained in Boulder during that decade was coloratura soprano Josephine Louise Antoine (1908–71). Raised in Boulder, she studied with Alexander Grant and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1929. The same year, she won the Atwater Kent prize, which enabled her to continue vocal training at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia and then, from 1931 to 1934, at the Juilliard School of Music with Marcella Sembrich. In 1935 she was signed with the Metropolitan Opera; the University of Colorado awarded Antoine its first honorary Master of Music degree at spring commencement that same year.<sup>41</sup> Her Met debut on January 4, 1936, in the role of Philine in *Mignon* by Ambroise Thomas was received warmly.<sup>42</sup>

ALEXANDER GRANT  
Presents His Pupil  
**Josephine Louise Antoine**  
SOPRANO  
In Her First Recital

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MACKY AUDITORIUM  
FRIDAY EVENING, MAY 31, 1929  
8:15 o'Clock

---

PROF. GEORGE B. WILLISTON  
Accompanist

---

PROGRAM

1—Aria, Caro Nome, from *Rigoletto*.....Verdi

2—(a) Charmant Oiseau,  
from *La Perle du Brésil*.....David  
(b) Je suis Titania, from *Mignon*.....Thomas  
(c) Ouvrez.....Dessauer

3—(a) Bist du bei mir.....Bach  
(b) Du bist wie eine Blume.....Rubinstein  
(c) Du bist die Ruh'.....Schubert

4—Aria, Una voce poco fa,  
from *The Barber of Seville*...Rossini

5—(a) Alleluja.....Mozart  
(b) The Cloths of Heaven.....Dunhill  
(c) Lo! here the gentle lark.....Bishop

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Baldwin Piano Used

**Figure 7.** Program from Josephine Antoine's first recital. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

During her twelve seasons with the Metropolitan Opera (1936–48), Antoine also appeared frequently on recital, on radio programs, and in other opera companies across the country. In 1947, she turned to teaching at a series of American universities and conservatories, including a year as “guest artist” at Colorado, finally ending up at the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York (1957–59, 1966–71). She died of heart failure in Jamestown, New York, October 30, 1971.

Distinguished national and international artists regularly appeared on the campus as the stringencies of the Great Depression ebbed somewhat in the mid-1930s: pianist Josef Lhevinne performed on campus in 1935, returned in 1936, and again in 1940 to receive an honorary doctorate, at which he played selections from Chopin and Debussy in lieu of making the customary acceptance speech. Tenor Roland Hayes was hosted in 1936 by the Associated Students of the University of Colorado as part of an attempt to revive the Artist Series. Colorado-, New York-, and Berlin-trained violinist and pianist, Louis Persinger was featured in 1937 as was the prominent Australian pianist-composer Percy Grainger. Others who graced the Macky Auditorium stage before the war included Serge Prokofiev, the Trapp Family Singers, and violinist Ruggiero Ricci.

Dunham’s conscientious stewardship led to steady growth as he entered his second decade of service. Graduate level courses and masters degree programs were added in 1933–34. Student enrollments increased. In 1937 the Bachelor of Music degree program with an emphasis in public school music—one of the three concentrations allowed at the time (the others being performance and composition)—was placed on a formal separate track, so that students who were preparing to teach could earn a Bachelor of Music Education degree, an emphasis which for several years attracted more students than the performing option. A Master of Music Education degree was being offered through the Graduate School by 1940. When the number of music majors approached 100, Dunham was granted the title of “dean,” in keeping with a long-standing agreement he had made with President Norlin that his title would be upgraded in parallel with increased numbers.<sup>43</sup>

Public music celebrations such as Band Day, which was instituted as an annual autumn celebration by director Hugh McMillen, brought heightened awareness of the faculty’s ability to attract avid student musicians and alums to campus. In 1938, it was reported that “nearly a thousand ‘enthusiastic’ bandsmen attended” this event.<sup>44</sup>

With more students came the need for the hiring of more affiliated faculty who continued to be paid on a commision basis. By 1940, the college’s teaching

roster consisted of fifteen members, nine full-time and six adjuncts. The same year Dean Dunham submitted a new plan for faculty compensation that more closely resembled the scheme in use across the wider campus, in which salaries were paid to all full-time employees (an effort spurred in other departments by the new president, Robert L. Stearns). Dunham also attempted to balance faculty teaching loads more fairly among the staff, and regularized (and lowered) the hourly rates charged separately for private lessons. As part of the dean's overall scheme for raising standards and visibility, in 1941 he formally petitioned the National Association of Schools of Music for admission to this national accrediting body. NASM examiners visited the campus in November, and the College of Music was duly admitted to the organization in early 1942.<sup>45</sup>

Well before the end of the decade, Dunham had anticipated the need for more space to adequately serve his growing college, noting its "future . . . inevitable needs." In 1936 he reported to the Board of Regents:

At present this College is confronted with a condition which will soon find us in need of either an addition to our present quarters or another building. Practice rooms are occupied constantly from 7 A.M. until 8 P.M. The classroom is inadequate for some classes, necessitating the use of the Recital Hall. The faculty is carrying a maximum teaching load. Student recitals attract audiences which find from 40 to 60 standing in the corridor at each such occasion. . . .<sup>46</sup>

Yet owing to the usual budgetary constraints, little change ensued over the next four years, and Dunham's report for 1940 conveys a more urgent tone.

Our totally inadequate building presents an increasing difficulty. For 15 faculty members we have 6 studios which must be shared and scheduled carefully. . . . The one class room seats 25 comfortably but is obliged to take care of classes of 40 on many occasions. . . . Ten practice studios and two practice organs are going 14 hours each day. Obviously it is physically impossible to find hours for some 160 students taking Applied Music. By renting practice facilities in private homes and because many students reside in Boulder we are managing to secure makeshift arrangements.

In light of this space squeeze, the dean was more than happy to support a student petition on behalf of the College to the university administration that was circulated on campus in spring 1940.

Because of the impossible conditions in the present Music building, lacking as it does sufficient practice facilities, limiting our preparation to about one half; sound proofing, making efficient study impossible; class rooms large enough to accommodate the larger groups; studios to provide enough room for the Faculty;

We, the students of the College of Music and of the University, taking courses in music, request that serious consideration be given to some method of improving suitable quarters for this work either by adding to the present building or, preferably, providing an adequate sound-proofed new one.<sup>47</sup>

President Stearns agreed to meet with the students who presented the petition, assured them that action would be taken once funds became available, and forwarded their concerns on to the Board of Regents, urging the members to “give the needs of the Music School careful consideration when future building needs were being considered.”<sup>48</sup>

United States entry into the Second World War, unsurprisingly, saw decreased enrollment in the College of Music (from a high of 142 students in 1941–42 to 110 in 1942–43), but the dip proved temporary with the numbers returning to and quickly exceeding the pre-war high by 1946. From the mid-1920s to the present day, the number of music students enrolled in the College of Music has consistently come in at approximately two percent of the total undergraduate population on campus.<sup>49</sup>

In the late 1930s the College added several key faculty positions whose occupants would go on to shape the future curriculum and overall program much in the same manner that Grant, Williston, Jones, and Dunham himself had so strongly led the way in 1928. This new generation included two of Boulder High School’s music teachers, Hugh McMillen and Warner Imig. McMillen relieved Horace Jones as band director in 1936, and Imig was hired in the fall of 1937 at first as a part-time voice instructor; he later went on to build the choral program and succeed Dunham as dean. “Everett Jay Hilty was appointed Instructor in Organ and Theory in June, 1940. He was a graduate of the University of Michigan, having received the Bachelor of Music degree there in 1934, and was awarded the Master of Music degree from the University of Colorado in 1939. Hilty had been dean and head of the Organ Department at the Denver College of Music from 1935 to 1937 and directed the Hilty School of Organ until 1940.”<sup>50</sup> Howard Waltz, an Indiana native who had taken degrees at DePauw University (1937) and the University of Wisconsin (1939), studied piano with Robert Casadesus, and served in the United States Army, was appointed in 1943, the only wartime hire who would remain in Boulder for



**Figure 8.** Band director Hugh McMillen. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

a considerable period after 1945. Lawrence Hart, a graduate of the College of Music, was added to the piano faculty in 1938, although both he and pianist Sherman Storr departed the university to perform military service during the war. Storr would return but retired in 1947.<sup>51</sup>

As the war came to an end, the College and the University as a whole enjoyed another significant growth spurt, adding both students and faculty. But increased size, along with the gradual addition of new programs and courses, continued to place pressure on facilities and highlighted the need to raise scholarship money to assist talented but needy students. Some funds were forthcoming for this purpose, as well as for equipment and instruments, beginning in 1942. "By 1943 the women's band was an official musical organization of the University and was larger than the men's band."<sup>52</sup> In 1945–46, a two-year certificate program was added to the curriculum specifically to address the need for more trained music teachers in the public schools.<sup>53</sup>

The post-war concert schedule for the College community had become sufficiently robust that Dean Dunham began to publish an annual program booklet under one cover to preserve the history of the Artist Series together with major campus concerts by the resident faculty, ensemble performances, and student recitals of both seniors and graduate students of the college. The 1945–46 season of the Artist Series featured mezzo-soprano Blanche Thebom

in November, violinist Isaac Stern and pianist Robert Casadesus in March, and the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Dimitri Mitropoulos in April. The Roth String Quartet offered a three-concert series the following summer. The subsequent season included seven programs on the winter and spring schedule, including bass-baritone Paul Robeson, and again concluded with a visit from Mitropoulos and the MSO. This amount of Artist Series programming remained constant over the next several decades.

The presence of so many stellar performers on campus and the increasingly impressive credentials of the resident faculty confirm what is evident from a close review of the curriculum at the time, namely that the performance orientation of the College of Music was strong and growing stronger—and that this emphasis was largely unquestioned. While the preparation of teachers for public schools was also deemed important, it was placed at a somewhat lower priority. The large ensembles—orchestra, concert band, and choirs—continued to play a major part in boosting student spirit and helping to ensure their engagement with major works of classical musical literature. What nowadays is known as the Holiday Festival, consisting of a series of four or five elaborate collage-format concerts in the Macky Auditorium and drawing thousands of enthusiastic listeners from Front Range communities each December, appears to have begun with Warner Imig's initial "Festival Christmas" concert in 1945. That same year Imig's enthusiasm for opera also led him



**Figure 9.** Hugh McMillen, Cecil Effinger, Josephine Antoine, Thor Johnson, and Warner Imig in Macky Auditorium c. 1950. Courtesy of University of Colorado.

to lay the foundations for the Colorado Opera Association, now become the Eklund Opera Program. Imig again broke new ground when in 1947 he organized the first Modern Choir,

an ensemble of thirty carefully selected singers capable of performing almost any choral literature with due regard to stylistic and historical considerations. The concept that a fairly small group could effectively perform a wide range of the repertoire was new at that time, suggesting the name “Modern” Choir.<sup>54</sup>

In 1950, after twenty-four years at the helm of the College of Music, Dean Rowland Dunham felt it timely to turn over the leadership, and in December of that year he submitted his resignation effective on 30 June 1951; he would continue to teach in the College until 1954. Within two months of Dunham's departure, following a search process begun the previous spring, Warner Imig was appointed as the Dean of the College of Music.<sup>55</sup> The new building that Dunham imagined and described in detail as suitable for the size and needs of his college in 1940 would finally be completed in 1955.

[*To be continued.*]

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Grant James Klausman, “A History of the University of Colorado College of Music, 1877–1951,” Ph.D. dissertation, University of Colorado, 1967, 118.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 124. Although Chace is consistently referred to as “Doctor,” and apparently took his terminal degree from the Grand Conservatory of Music, University of the State of New York in 1905, Klausman could find no extant record to substantiate this fact.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* An earlier Boulder Choral Union, consisting of singers from both town and university, had been formed by Charles Farnsworth in 1893, but ceased to function after Farnsworth's departure from Colorado in 1899.

<sup>4</sup> William E. “Bud” Davis, *Glory Colorado! A History of the University of Colorado*, Vol. I. (Boulder: William Davis, 1965), 288.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>6</sup> Klausman, 125–9.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 130. Klausman also cites an interview with Mrs. Rudolph Johnson, 13 March 1967, as his source for this information.

<sup>9</sup> In 1920 the University adopted an academic calendar based on quarters rather than semesters, a move that helped to facilitate the earning of summer credits carrying the same value as those earned during the other three seasonal terms.



<sup>10</sup> Klausman, 134.

<sup>11</sup> *The Colorado Alumnus* 13, no. 4 (April 1923): 11.

<sup>12</sup> 23<sup>th</sup> Biennial Report of the Regents of the University of Colorado (1922): 14–15.

<sup>13</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> Biennial Report of the Regents of the University of Colorado (1926): 17.

<sup>14</sup> University of Colorado Reports of Regents, vol. 2 (7 June 1924): n.p. The university yearbook also notes her membership in the sole professional honorary student music organization on campus, Asaph.

<sup>15</sup> Klausman, 139

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 141. Designated as the University Hospital Building in 1884, the structure was the fourth to be erected that year and was located near the corner of the campus formed by East Euclid and Broadway and faced north. Constructed of brick, the building consisted of a two-story main section with a ground floor wing extending from the east wall. When opened in 1885 the building provided accommodations for thirty patients and was the first home of the Medical School. Ownership changed hands several times in the interval between 1893 and 1924 before the “entire medical operation was moved to Denver” in that year.

<sup>17</sup> *Silver and Gold* 34, no. 46 (17 April 1925): 1; 34, no. 48 (24 April 1925): 1.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, vols. 29–33, *passim*.

<sup>19</sup> Davis, *Glory Colorado!* Vol. 1: 307–20.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 285–87.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 321. No script of “Now and Then” appears to have survived, but musical fragments and interpolated songs by Francis Wolle and Howard Beresford are preserved in the Francis Wolle Collection, Special Collections and Archives of the University.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 321. The term “orchestra” is probably best understood here as “dance band”; it likely numbered fewer than twenty people. Wray also figured prominently in his fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, and was appointed its first national “field secretary” in 1922. Details about his musical doings in Boulder are scarce. Delta Tau Delta has been inactive in Boulder since 1989.

<sup>23</sup> Klausman, 150.

<sup>24</sup> Davis, 199.

<sup>25</sup> Klausman, 182.

<sup>26</sup> Davis, 400.

<sup>27</sup> *Silver and Gold* 42, no. 31 (14 February 1933), 1.

<sup>28</sup> Davis, 403.

<sup>29</sup> Klausman, 150.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>31</sup> *Silver and Gold*, 36, no. 61 (22 June 1927), 1.

<sup>32</sup> Klausman, 156.

<sup>33</sup> Among the previous generation of American music administrators who fit this profile most closely were Fenelon B. Rice (1841–1901) at Oberlin Conservatory; Albert

Stanley (1851–1932) at the University of Michigan; and Horatio Parker (1863–1919) at Yale, to name just three highly important institution builders.

<sup>34</sup> Widor (1844–1937) was extremely influential, especially as an advocate of Bach's music; his other pupils over the years included leading lights such as Louis Vierne, Marcel Dupré, Arthur Honegger, Edgard Varèse, and Albert Schweitzer, among many others.

<sup>35</sup> Klausman, 157.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.* The regents raised resident tuition by roughly thirty-six per cent in the spring of 1929, a figure that would seem drastic were not the dollar amounts so small by current standards (an increase from \$16 to \$22 a quarter); yet increasing enrollments all through the next decade (1927–37) would also make tuition a crucially important revenue stream. By 1932, at the height of the Great Depression, the university's state budget had been cut by a quarter million dollars, including a ten per cent reduction in staff and faculty salaries, offered voluntarily.

<sup>37</sup> 27th Biennial Report of the Regents of the University of Colorado (1930): 24.

<sup>38</sup> Klausman, 184.

<sup>39</sup> *Silver and Gold* 41, no. 35 (19 February 1932), 1. The musical parts that would enable a reconstruction of this show can still be found in the Francis Wolle Collection, Special Collections and Archives of the University. The tunes and titles of many individual numbers in the musical were composed in a playful popular idiom characteristic of collegiate entertainments across the country at the time (e.g., "Colorado Eves," "Hello, Girls," "Co Education," "Activity Kitty," "The Clerk and the Bell Hops," and "With Tenderness Tenderly Tend Her"). Wolle's opening verse for "Co Education" is a typical comic dialogue: "[Boys] O, come let us murder a co-ed. [Girls] O nay, let us murder a man. [Boys] Tho cute absolutely, they've no head. [Girls] You had better head in where you can!"

<sup>40</sup> Klausman, 173.

<sup>41</sup> The College of Music awarded its first earned Master of Music degree in June, 1938. Davis, *Glory Colorado!*, 41.

<sup>42</sup> See [archives.metoperafamily.org/archives](http://archives.metoperafamily.org/archives). The *Herald Tribune* critic, Francis D. Perkins, quoted on this site, admired Antoine's controlled professionalism in the performance of an ungrateful role, which nevertheless "has its vocal opportunities. . . . Miss Antoine took advantage of these in a generally laudable manner. Her voice, while not one of exceptional size, carried well, and the tone quality, suggesting a well-schooled production, was usually clear, fluent, and unruffled." Lucrezia Bori sang the title role; she and Antoine were joined on stage by Richard Crooks and Ezio Pinza.

<sup>43</sup> Klausman, 199.

<sup>44</sup> Davis, 401.

<sup>45</sup> Klausman, 196.

<sup>46</sup> 30th Biennial Report of the Board of Regents of the University of Colorado, 1936: 115, quoted in Klausman, 190.

<sup>47</sup> *Silver and Gold* 49, no. 42 (29 March 1940), 1.

<sup>48</sup> Klausman, 211.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 194.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 214.

<sup>52</sup> *Silver and Gold* 53, no. 22 (28 September 1943), 1.

<sup>53</sup> *University of Colorado Bulletin* 45, no. 7 (March 1945), 26.

<sup>54</sup> G. J. Klausman interview with Warner Imig, 11 April 1967, cited in Klausman, 231.

<sup>55</sup> Klausman, 236.



Joshua S. Duchan

## From “New York State of Mind” to “No Man’s Land”: Billy Joel’s Songs about American Places

Billy Joel (b. 1949) is one of the best-selling popular musicians in the United States, whose accolades include six Grammy awards and 23 nominations, several honorary doctorates, induction into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and the 2014 Gershwin Award from the Library of Congress. Yet his work is rarely discussed in scholarship on American popular music.<sup>1</sup> As with many singer-songwriters, Joel’s music offers a commentary on American life and culture rooted in both his personal experience and the time during which it was composed.

Among the topics Joel’s songs address, one of the most prominent is place. Throughout his oeuvre one finds songs about his environs, especially New York, California, and suburbia. These musical portraits typically reflect his impressions of and personal experience in each locale. Indeed, movement to and through various places has framed much of his career. After playing in a handful of Long Island (New York) bands, his first solo album, *Cold Spring Harbor* (1971) bears the title of a suburban New York town not far from where he grew up in Hicksville, in Nassau County. Following the work’s commercial failure, he moved to California in 1972. His return to New York in 1975 is celebrated in several numbers, including “Say Goodbye to Hollywood,” “New York State of Mind,” and “Summer, Highland Falls,” from *Turnstiles* (1976). Observations of and commentary on various places continue on his later albums, where he writes about locations both domestic (e.g., “52nd Street,” from *52nd Street* [1978], “Allentown,” from *The Nylon Curtain* [1982], and “Big Man on Mulberry Street,” from *The Bridge* [1986]) and foreign (e.g., “Vienna,”

from *The Stranger* [1977], “Goodnight Saigon,” from *The Nylon Curtain*, and “Leningrad,” from *Storm Front* [1989]). Moreover, his public persona is also defined by a sense of place, as he is regularly identified (and identifies) as a Long Islander, New Yorker, and as the New York analog of New Jersey’s Bruce Springsteen.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, music has been used to evoke a sense of place for centuries, and American music is no exception. For example, the 1894 Tin Pan Alley favorite, “The Sidewalks of New York,” by Charles B. Lawlor and James W. Blake, depicts the city and some of its landmarks while offering a sentimental, nostalgic look back on love. Of the same era, Charles Ives’s orchestral set, *Three Places in New England* (1908–14), evokes the fate of the first black American regiment during the Civil War (memorialized in Boston Common), a child’s musical encounters while picnicking at Putnam’s Camp (Redding, Connecticut), and the scenery along the Housatonic River (near Stockbridge, Massachusetts) using generous doses of musical quotation.<sup>3</sup>

Recent thinking about the relationship between music and place has highlighted the way the former invokes and evokes the latter while also anchoring social, cultural, and political beliefs, illustrating the bonds that bring people together as well as the differences that set them apart. Moreover, music is not only made in particular places or “social spaces,” it also transforms them.<sup>4</sup> For example, while listening to Joel’s “Say Goodbye to Hollywood,” listeners across the country could find their homes aurally reconstructed by the historical and sonic referents to Los Angeles purposefully deployed in the song’s musical fabric. In a sense, no matter where the actual act of listening happens, the sonic amalgam of that song recalls a famous rock ‘n’ roll sound particular to a distinct (and perhaps distant) time and place. Joel thereby continues this tradition of wedding music and place, conjuring geography and space, as well as delimiting boundaries, through both his lyrics and his musical choices. This article discusses two kinds of places found in Joel’s songs, geographical (specifically the American West and New York) and social or cultural (suburbia).

### **Songs about Geographical Places**

As a debut album, *Cold Spring Harbor* had good potential. Critic Stephen Erlewine called it “a minor gem of the sensitive singer/songwriter era.”<sup>5</sup> But it was plagued by a technical error in which Joel’s vocal track was mastered at the wrong speed, giving it a chipmunk-like quality.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Joel was expressing dissatisfaction with the terms of his record deal and the album’s promotional tour, for which he was not paid, and which was growing tiresome

despite some positive notices.<sup>7</sup> Still the album received neither airplay nor much space on record shelves. "I knew I'd got screwed in the deal with Family Records," he later recalled. "The people who did it were in L.A. I figured that was a good base of operation for me to try to get out of the [record] deal. And, that they weren't going to look for me right under their noses."<sup>8</sup> So Joel moved to Los Angeles and took a regular gig playing cocktail piano at the Executive Room, a local bar just south of Hollywood, under the pseudonym Bill Martin. His experiences there inspired his most famous song, "Piano Man," which earned him his nickname. Joel's next album, also titled *Piano Man*, was released in 1973 while he was in California and peaked at #27 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. In many ways, it captures the optimism Joel might have felt upon leaving the debacles of his solo debut behind.

Through both instrumentation and thematic content, the soundscape of several of *Piano Man*'s tracks suggests that it is an album about the American West. The opening number is called "Travelin' Prayer," which, although delivered in the form of a plea to the Lord to look after his "baby" amid her travels, carries an infectious rhythm and instruments drawn from the country-western genre.<sup>9</sup> The snare drum keeps up a busy pattern using brushes while each piano chord strikes quickly, sustains its notes, and then disappears with a rapid flurry. Later, the other instruments join in: a fast-picking banjo, a fiddle, and a jaw harp, adding a bounce to the song's instrumental fade-out. The song thus stands in sharp contrast, stylistically, with the title track and much of the composer's later, well-known numbers while trading on musical markers of a mythological West.

Inspired by, but not directly based on, the story of New Yorker William H. Bonney (a.k.a. Billy the Kid), Joel weaves a yarn of Wild West thievery and justice in "The Ballad of Billy the Kid."<sup>10</sup> To reinforce the western setting, strings play widely spaced chords, reminiscent of Copland.<sup>11</sup> Joel also adds a trotting left hand on the piano, the clapping of horse hooves, and the lonely whine of a harmonica. When the rest of the band enters, about fifty seconds into the piece, the dynamic and registral contrasts emphasize the expansiveness of the narrative and the landscape in an almost cinematic style. Later on the album "Stop In Nevada" tells the tale of a woman seeking escape from a failing marriage by making her way to California via the Silver State. The strings from "The Ballad of Billy the Kid" return here (though not in Coplandesque fashion), joined by the pedal steel guitar, again evoking the country-western genre. Thus, in several of the tracks on *Piano Man*, Joel uses both lyrical and musical devices to convey a sense of travel, escape, and optimism associated with the West as well as geographic distance, and rather different places and spaces, from New York.

But California never really agreed with Joel, as evinced by the biting criticism he levels against Los Angeles on his next album, *Streetlife Serenade* (1974), which, unlike *Piano Man*, was written while he actually lived there (it reached #35 on the *Billboard* 200 chart). He told Bill DeMain in 2001,

I didn't like living in Los Angeles. The first year I was there, I was kind of seduced by the nice weather, the palm trees, and the views from the Hollywood Hills, the Pacific Coast Highway, and all that stuff. That wore off after about a year. Then I realized there were a lot of phony people there. I didn't make many friends . . . I wanted to get back to New York.<sup>12</sup>

The album's second track, "Los Angelenos," captures Joel's early impressions of Los Angeles and the lifestyle there. This straight-ahead rock song features a strong backbeat, punchy electric bass, and distorted electric guitar supporting Joel's Fender Rhodes keyboard. During the verses, which alternate between D minor and C major chords, he recites a litany of L.A. personages: "Midwestern ladies," "New York cowboys," "electric babies," and "hot sweet schoolgirls." The refrain expands the song harmonically (descending to B-flat major as a plagal cadence in F major) as Joel describes the activities of the city's residents: retreating into nearby mountains and canyons, tanning on the beach, enjoying marijuana, and seemingly endless driving. "Los Angelenos all come from somewhere," he sings, yet their stay in the city amounts to a "funky exile." These opening lyrics clearly spell out the sense of distance he observes; he describes them and is among them, but is not of them. To all appearances, in his view, there is little binding them to each other or to the city itself. The song's concluding lines start with the same first phrase but end more pointedly: "it's so familiar, their foreign faces." Here, "foreign" need not refer to those from outside the United States—although he does make specific reference to Mexicans, as will be discussed below—but instead may point to anyone, like the "Midwestern ladies" he mentions, whose place of origin lies outside of Los Angeles (and who, as the song maintains, seems to be everyone).<sup>13</sup>

Both the melody of "Los Angelenos" and its delivery help to convey Joel's perspective of the city and its inhabitants. Each verse begins with an upward leap to the highest pitch of the song, an A (see example 1). Because this is near the top of Joel's vocal range, his strained voice screams whichever lyric falls on that note. Twice it is the first syllable of the word "Angelenos," giving it an emphasis that seems to convey a sense of frustration; the second time, toward the end of the track, he holds the note for three-and-a-half beats (instead of one, as he did earlier) as if to drive this point home. In other





**Example 1.** “Los Angelenos.” Words and music by Billy Joel. From *Streetlife Serenade* (1974). 0:29–0:31.

instances, the high A lands on adjectives describing, with an unmistakably mocking tone, what Joel sees around him: “sleek new sports cars” and “hot sweet schoolgirls.”

Joel’s vocal articulations also underline his perception of Los Angeles as rootless. Although he jabs at transplants from the Midwest, Joel most clearly points to the area’s large Latino (specifically Mexican) population and its influence—he even rolls his *r*’s while singing a certain lyrics as if effecting a Spanish accent.

Joel’s encounter with Latino culture made an impression on the young singer-songwriter, likely because he had not experienced it before (at least not in as concentrated a way). While Joel was living there, the Latino population of Los Angeles was experiencing a significant growth spurt, more than doubling from 1960 to 1970 and nearly doubling again by 1980. Moreover, as a percentage of the total population in the county, Latinos grew considerably, from less than one tenth of the city’s population to over a quarter during the same period.<sup>14</sup> This demographic picture contrasts with that of Joel’s New York home, where the Latino population was smaller in numbers and as a proportion of the city’s (larger) total population.<sup>15</sup> Joel’s musical activities, 1963–1970, also bear little Latino influence. His early bands, such as the Hassles (joined in 1967) and Attila (a duo with Jon Small in 1970), were soul and heavy metal outfits, respectively.

It is easy to read “Los Angelenos” as indicating Joel’s “increasing dissatisfaction with California culture and [his] desire to return home” to New York and as evidence that he believed his “art was being diluted by the California ambiance.”<sup>16</sup> Yet Joel’s own remarks problematize such a conclusion. “I didn’t move out to California assuming I was going to stay there forever,” he told biographer Fred Schruers. “I was there temporarily, and when I left, it wasn’t so much because of a bad experience in Los Angeles; living there was actually quite pleasant at that time. . . . The California lifestyle was very easy.”<sup>17</sup> Thus, the song is perhaps also usefully understood as an insightful example of the musical expression of social boundaries rooted in a sense of place, as Joel’s observations of what makes (his experience of) Los Angeles, as a place, dif-

ferent from (his experience of) New York, as a place. This view supports Martin Stokes's conclusion that "music is socially meaningful not entirely but largely because it provides means by which people recognise identities and places, and the boundaries which separate them."<sup>18</sup>

The jubilation of Joel's return to New York in 1975 shows up on *Turnstiles*, released the following year and reaching #122 on the *Billboard* 200 chart. The cover image pictures Joel and his band at the gates of a New York City subway station, dressed in costumes corresponding to characters from the album's songs. "A lot of the *Turnstiles* album was really that dynamic of coming home," Joel explains.<sup>19</sup> When compared to *Piano Man* and *Streetlife Serenade*, *Turnstiles* exhibits a more purposeful use of genre and style, in addition to lyrics and vocalism, to make geographic references. The album's opening track, "Say Goodbye to Hollywood," announces Joel departure from Los Angeles while simultaneously featuring a style and recording technique associated with that city. Later, "New York State of Mind," a paean to the Empire State, invokes some of the Big Apple's musical hallmarks, including jazz and Tin Pan Alley.

"Say Goodbye to Hollywood" begins with a distinctive kick and snare pattern on Liberty DeVitto's drums.<sup>20</sup> After two bars, the band enters and we hear alongside Joel's piano and Doug Stegmeyer's bass the added sound of castanets—reflecting the Latin influence in Los Angeles—a split-second before each snare hit. Each of the song's four verses ends with a refrain that includes its title. The lyrics describe Bobby and Johnny, friends whom the unnamed protagonist is (sadly?) leaving behind.<sup>21</sup> The bridge, played after the second and third verses, carries the crux of the song's message: friendships can be fragile and fleeting, but now it is time to part ways.

On "Say Goodbye to Hollywood," Joel attempts to emulate the sound Phil Spector produced in such recordings as the Crystals' "Then He Kissed Me" (1963) and The Righteous Brothers' "You've Lost that Lovin' Feelin'" (1964).<sup>22</sup> In his words: "I did it in a Phil Spector style. I was thinking of [Spector's wife] Ronnie Spector and the Ronettes when I did it."<sup>23</sup> To create his signature "wall of sound," Spector typically used a large rhythm section with a studio orchestra, employed multi-track recording techniques to build up many layers of sound, and applied a strong echo effect, including a version of the mix played through a loudspeaker in a converted bathroom and then re-recorded by another microphone nearby. Albin Zak calls the result an "extravagant use of ambiance" that soon "became part of rock's recording lexicon."<sup>24</sup> Spector described the records made this way as "symphonies for the kids."<sup>25</sup>

Joel's song follows Spector's formula. Not only do we hear the band from the song's introduction throughout the rest of the track, but Joel also adds new layers along the way. Backup singers join him on the refrains and harmonize his lead during the repetition of the bridge and the final verse. Additionally, strings enter on the second verse and grow more prominent during and after the first bridge (though they recede during Richie Cannata's saxophone solo). Whether Joel's efforts to harness this effect ultimately succeeded is a matter of debate. Biographer Mark Bego writes that the wall of sound "was totally the sound that Billy achieved on 'Say Goodbye to Hollywood,'" while Stephen Holden claimed that the song "failed to build a mighty enough wall of sound."<sup>26</sup> Ronnie Spector was impressed, however. She released her own version of the song, accompanied by Bruce Springsteen's band, as a single in 1977.

Joel has been clear about the connections between "Say Goodbye to Hollywood" and both Spector's production style and his own departure from Los Angeles. Yet, because *Turnstiles* was recorded in New York (after a failed attempt with Elton John's band at Caribou Ranch recording studio in Colorado) rather than Spector's Gold Star studio in Los Angeles, and because it featured Long Island-based musicians (who would eventually become his regular touring and studio band) rather than L.A. session musicians, one could argue that Joel's song lacks some of the elements crucial to the original wall of sound. Instead, its style and recording technique stand as a carefully and consciously crafted emulation, perhaps homage, something for which Joel would be criticized by those who claimed he had no style of his own.<sup>27</sup> Thus, in order to mark his departure from Los Angeles on "Say Goodbye to Hollywood" Joel overtly conjures, if not totally recreates, one of the most distinctive features of that city's popular music soundscape.

Upon his return to New York, Joel immediately wrote "New York State of Mind," penning the lyrics while making his way up route 9W from LaGuardia Airport toward his new home in Highland Falls, near West Point on the Hudson River.<sup>28</sup> "I got off the Greyhound bus and walked into the new house and sat down at the piano and wrote," he later recalled. "That's how I was feeling: glad to be home in New York."<sup>29</sup> Now one of his most well known tracks, "New York State of Mind" is filled with geographic and cultural references to the Empire State, from the Hudson River to the City's newspapers and neighborhoods. He acknowledges that some might find other places more appealing—Miami Beach, Hollywood, the Rocky Mountains—but not he.

The depth of Joel's loyalty can be gauged from his comments published in 1978. In the mid-1970s, New York City was in the throes of an historic fiscal

crisis. With massive budget shortfalls years in the making, residents faced deep cuts to city services amid rising crime rates.<sup>30</sup> Without funds and unable to secure credit, Mayor Abraham Beame petitioned President Gerald Ford for a federal loan; the president's initial refusal prompted the famous *Daily News* headline, "Ford to City: Drop Dead."<sup>31</sup> Although Ford never actually uttered those words and eventually changed his mind and supported federal assistance to the city, the image of a hardened, unwelcoming metropolis in decline was indelibly etched.<sup>32</sup> The city's tarnished reputation affected Joel during his relocation to Southern California. "When the New York financial crisis started happening, there was a lot of anti-New York sentiment in L.A. from former New Yorkers and I got pissed off," he said. "I woke up one day and just said, 'I'm going back.'"<sup>33</sup> On the West coast, he sings in "New York State of Mind," the living was "so easy" precisely because people were "out of touch." By contrast, New York may not be an "easy" place to live but, Joel seems to imply, it is more genuine. It is "the rhythm and blues," a lyric that trades on associations between the predominantly African-American genre and concepts of authenticity.<sup>34</sup>

In strictly musical terms, however, "New York State of Mind" is not exactly rhythm and blues. Joel himself "saw it as more of a standard, a 1940s- or 1950s-style blues song, in the manner of 'Georgia on My Mind,'" according to Schruers.<sup>35</sup> Robert Schultz points to influences from both the classical and blues spheres, as its "motivic unity" is transformed and given a blues inflection.<sup>36</sup> Immediately suggesting blues or jazz, the piano introduction presents a quick succession of chromatic cascades and rich collections of pitches well outside the key in which the song is written, C-major. For example, A-flat serves as a chromatic passing tone from G to A in the ornamental figure that precedes the opening chord, an A-minor seventh. It then returns as a chromatic lower neighbor, and is joined by B-flat as an upper neighbor, in a turn that leads to the second chord, B-flat with an added 13th, which includes the non-diatonic pitch E-flat. Joel rarely uses such a full melodic and harmonic palette; none of the other songs discussed in this essay even come close. An evocation of jazz—indicated by the chromaticism, the song's later wide-ranging harmony (the bridge offers a sequence of tonicizations that travels through G, F, and A major), and the description of its intended purpose as "a standard"—is apropos, given New York City's position as an important site in the history of that genre.<sup>37</sup>

Beyond jazz, however, "New York State of Mind" also shares a few features with Tin Pan Alley, a genre of popular and Broadway songs with close ties to jazz (as many of its numbers have become jazz standards) that has been called "the first distinctly New York product."<sup>38</sup> The song includes four verses

that roughly fit the genre's conventional ABAC form and finish with the title in the lyric; melodically the first and third phrases differ only slightly. Moreover, the lyrical tour of the city's cultural touchstones—including neighborhoods like Chinatown and Riverside, and local newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Daily News*—recalls earlier Tin Pan Alley favorites such as “The Bowery” and “The Sidewalks of New York.” The fit is not perfect, however. While lacking a repeated chorus typical of Tin Pan Alley songs, “New York State of Mind” does contain a bridge that provides contrast with the rest of the piece, a formal feature more common in jazz and more modern popular music. Here, contrast is found in both the melody, which is lower in Joel's vocal range than in the verses, and in the harmony, which sequentially tonicizes several nearby keys. The lyrics strike a different tone, too—waxing more nostalgic and delivered in an almost speech-like manner.

Joel's celebratory return to New York is therefore conveyed on several levels. The lyrics include enough references to life in the city that both New Yorkers and non-New Yorkers alike will understand what he is singing about, while at the same time the mixture of joy and nostalgia is also clear. But beyond the words, Joel's strategic use of musical style purposefully evokes the sounds of New York through references to jazz and Tin Pan Alley, distinctive genres whose histories are linked to the city that never sleeps.

### **Songs about Social/Cultural Places**

If Joel's ode to New York comes across like a love song for a city (or at least a state), there is no mistaking his attitude towards places just beyond its limits.<sup>39</sup> Across his catalog, Joel frequently expresses a rather negative opinion of suburbia, describing it as a land of bland inconsequence, of mind-numbing commercialism, and with a complete lack of identity. He has consistently used his music to rail, gently and violently, against the simultaneous emptiness and excess of suburban life.

In the United States, suburban communities saw significant growth following World War Two. Hicksville, Joel's boyhood hometown, was one of the New York City suburbs that saw explosive development at this time. It was not far from the original Levittown, so named because William Levitt's company, Levitt & Sons, built hundreds of identical, inexpensive homes there in what became known as “tract housing” that was sold to returning veterans.<sup>40</sup> The conformity of the resulting landscape was captured in the song, “Little Boxes,” by Malvina Reynolds (1962), which was a hit for Pete Seeger the following year. Reynolds's lyrics describe the indistinguishable “ticky-tacky” houses “on the hillside,” noting the sameness not only of the structures, but of their

inhabitants, too, whose children go to school and summer camp, attend university, and glide into white-collar jobs as doctors and lawyers.

In the 1950s and '60s, the demographic shift away from urban centers toward suburban communities intensified and changed in character. Expanded transportation networks, especially the interstate highway system, enabled workers to commute to jobs over greater distances while at the same time reshaping and constraining minority neighborhoods.<sup>41</sup> Urban decay, including rising crime rates and shrinking tax bases, exacerbated the trend of upper-middle-class whites relocating to suburban neighborhoods in what has been called “white flight.” Joel’s formative years thus coincided with a time when American suburbs took on more overt racial and classist dimensions, reinforced by discriminatory lending, restrictive zoning practices, and popular culture representations.<sup>42</sup>

The resulting communities were much more homogeneous than the city and presented amenities the urban center could not, such as relatively spacious yards for the kids and a perceived sense of safety. But despite all their promise, many found the prefab suburbs like Levittown unimpressive. With its indistinguishable, cookie-cutter houses, the landscape was monotonous (and later pictured on the cover of Joel’s album, *The Nylon Curtain*). The character of its inhabitants seemed disappointing, too. The town where Joel grew up, writes Dave Marsh, was “a haven for people who left the city to find something better, only to find that their neighbors were only the cream of what they’d just left.”<sup>43</sup> The result, according to Joel, was a kind of identity crisis: “You’re a nothing, you’re a zero in the suburbs. You’re mundane, you’re common. You have 2.4 children, you have a quarter acre plot of land, you have a Ford Wagoneer. Who gives a damn about you?”<sup>44</sup>

“Captain Jack” captures this suburban identity crisis. The song was a small hit even before it was recorded for *Piano Man*. As part of the 1972 tour promoting *Cold Spring Harbor*, Joel played it at the Philadelphia radio station WMMR-FM. Months later, listeners were still calling in requests for the song. When stations in New York City started playing the tape, executives at Columbia Records became interested in this new, young voice who had quickly developed a “cult” following.<sup>45</sup> Thus, “Captain Jack” helped build momentum for Joel’s career back east while he was busy on the west coast.

The lyrics describe a sense of boredom, even amidst comfort and pleasure, to which many suburban listeners could relate. Despite several attempts to excite or distract himself—a trip to Greenwich Village, listening to music, even a turn at masturbation—the song’s narrator resorts to drug use. (In the song, Captain Jack is the dealer; in reality, it was a street name for heroin.) Life is

so easy that it is tragic: “you’ve got everything, but nothing’s cool / they just found your father in the swimming pool.” There is no escape, just a relentlessly nagging feeling that there must be more but, even with a new car, no way to get it.

The song’s introduction begins with an organ, as if recalling a staid mainline church. During the verses, which detail this sense of insatiable yearning, Joel’s vocal delivery is dynamically flat, reinforcing the dull sentiment portrayed in the lyrics. Only the piano, bass, and a sparse drum pattern accompany the singing while a slight echo on the vocal line is almost taunting. When the chorus (and Captain Jack) arrives, the musical excitement is palpable: a distorted electric guitar roars in, the organ returns with a fast repeated figure, and the drums are noticeably busier. After the first chorus, the intensity drops a bit. The guitar is no longer distorted, the organ plays slower sustained chords, and the drums adopt a simpler pattern. By the time the next verse arrives, the instrumentation has again been pared down, letting Joel’s languid piano move the song along as the organ lingers in the background, a nagging reminder of the excitement of the chorus.

Like many of Joel’s songs, “Captain Jack” does not necessarily represent Joel’s experience, but instead his observations of others. He has called it a “look out the window song,” written when he was living in an apartment near a housing project and could see, from his window, suburban teenagers drive by and purchase drugs from one of the project’s residents. Joel’s middle class suburban upbringing left him ill equipped to understand why more affluent suburban kids would need to turn to drugs for excitement. “What’s so horrible about an affluent young white teenager’s life that he’s got to shoot heroin?” he asks. “It’s really a song about what I consider to be a pathetic loser kind of lifestyle.”<sup>46</sup>

In “The Great Suburban Showdown,” from *Streetlife Serenade*, Joel is less concerned with the excitement of the suburbs (or lack thereof) than with its banality. The song’s protagonist is on an airplane headed home for a visit with his family back east. The four verses detail his destination, the images of which are pleasant but mundane. There will be a lot of sitting around and re-telling old stories as the television plays in the background and food is grilled on the barbeque in the meticulously manicured backyard. “Bored to death,” he will be driven to “hide out” in his old bedroom, as usual. “I know it should be fun,” he sings, “but I think I should’ve packed my gun.”

A meandering synthesizer line introduces the track, and a few seconds pass by before it feels like this opening melody has any sort of direction—exactly Joel’s point. Unlike “Captain Jack,” the lead vocal in “The Great Suburban

Showdown” is mixed dry, discarding the taunting echo in favor of a more plaintive affect. Midway through the first verse the pedal steel arrives in the background, further contributing to what has been called the song’s “languorous atmosphere” and subtle Western undertone.<sup>47</sup>

During the bridge, Joel fills in the picture a bit. He has “been gone for a while” and, in the process, grown and changed. Now his old hometown seems monochromatic, “the streets all look the same.” Yet he knows well the ritual of the visit and he has to “play the game” by taking part in what now seem like quaint family activities, what Ken Bielen calls the “ceremonies of suburbia.”<sup>48</sup> The last verse reveals the final twist: he is “only coming home to say good-bye” and plans never to return again. (On this point Joel’s life story and that of the song’s protagonist clearly differ.) Thus “The Great Suburban Showdown” draws on both Western mythology—in the character’s origin, the use of pedal steel guitar, the reference to his gun, and of course the song’s title—and quaint images of a middle-class east coast lifestyle while painting a picture of suburbia as not only uninteresting, but stuck in the past.

“No Man’s Land,” released almost twenty years later on *River of Dreams* (1993), reveals that suburbia is still very much on Joel’s mind. (The album was a #1 hit on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart.) The resignation of “Captain Jack” and “The Great Suburban Showdown” has been replaced by cynicism and anger, as the timbres of the song’s introduction illustrate: the electric guitar is severely distorted, the rhythm guitar repeats its rhythmic figure incessantly, and Joel’s sharp, metallic clavinet seems antithetic to the soothing (and absent) sound of his signature acoustic piano. Despite the fact that the verses start low in Joel’s vocal range and at a quieter dynamic, they are seething, as if hinting at an imminent explosion. At the third line of each verse, the melody jumps up an octave and Joel’s vocal delivery is as much screamed as sung. Two lines later, as the musical buildup to the chorus begins, Joel sings in a sarcastic, sardonic tone, listing all the things that might excite suburbanites but that actually illustrate their superficiality: the “big business,” the “sports franchise,” the “real thing.” In reality, Joel implies, modern suburban life offers nothing of “real” value.

The suburban reverence for big-box commercialism Joel observes is lyrically wrapped in a potent mock-religiosity that pairs capitalism with primitivism: “give us this day our daily discount outlet merchandise, raise up a multiplex and we will make a sacrifice.” On one hand, Joel’s lyrics reflect a growing national trend in the late twentieth century, in which retail chains simultaneously expanded the number of stores they operated and the number of products sold at each store, which often necessitated that the “big box” stores them-



selves become even bigger.<sup>49</sup> On the other hand, Joel's observations of the religiosity of the shopping experience align with theories about how that experience, in those places, fulfills a basic human need—a sense of physical and existential center—in ways similar to religion. Thus, “the geometric designs in the mall,” writes Ira Zepp, “tell a story about how we ultimately understand the world to be; they are a replication of the larger planet. We have said by this paradigmatic structure that our experience of the world is one of balance and harmony. We have traveled to the ‘center’ and discovered unity.”<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, in “No Man's Land” Joel slams the insubstantiality of suburbia, continuing the line of reasoning he established decades earlier in “Captain Jack.” The incessant focus on yuppie gossip replaces old-fashioned neighborly concern, as the highlight of a suburbanite's day is the revelation that a neighbor has been busted for cocaine. A line about “Lolita and suburban lust” presumably refers to Amy Fisher, a seventeen-year-old known as the “Long Island Lolita,” whose affair with a married man ended when she shot his wife in May 1992. The story made national news headlines and provided tabloid fodder for months. In this vapid and debauched environment, children do not stand a chance (witness “their boredom and their vacant stares”), which motivates Joel's ultimate concern: “God help us all if we're to blame for their unanswered prayers.” Suburbia unchecked, the song seems to argue, can destroy social fabric.

The remarkable thing about “No Man's Land,” Joel's most recent musical statement on suburbia, is the song's fervor, which outstrips all of his earlier songs on this subject. The chorus, which nostalgically pleads for the memories of some mythical pre-suburban time (“when it all began”), presents his strained voice, yelling over the distorted grinding of the band and backed by a choir of voices holding long chords on the syllable “ah” before joining in on the song's title lyric. Those words are sung with harsh attacks on “out” and “here” and accents emphasizing the short-long-long rhythm of the words, “no man's land” (see example 2). It is almost a (religious?) chant, delivered with great volume and requiring great energy. The third and final time he repeats the title, the band and backup singers cut out, leaving only Joel's voice and its taunting echo to drive the point home. The music video mixes shots of Joel and his band performing the song in a stadium with images of housing developments (including Levittown), construction vehicles, abandoned industrial buildings, traffic jams, and lonely figures walking down cold, empty streets.<sup>51</sup> Clearly, Joel's passion for the topic has reached fever pitch (literally: the first sound of the video is Joel, screaming the song's count-off). Unlike the placement of “Captain Jack” at the end of *Piano Man* or “The Great Suburban Showdown” buried on the second side of the *Streetlife Serenade* LP, “No Man's Land” is

the opening track on *River of Dreams*, demanding the listener's immediate attention.

### Conclusion

Although their topics and styles vary, the songs examined here offer a collective snapshot of American cultural geography in the late twentieth century. Of course, that image is composed from the perspective of one singer-songwriter. But, perhaps more than some of his peers, Billy Joel is the ideal individual to provide it, given his admitted interest in American history, aptly demonstrated in his 1989 hit, "We Didn't Start the Fire." His point of view is sometimes a negative one, as in "No Man's Land," but more positive portrayals also appear, as in "New York State of Mind."

Even critics who do not always take kindly to Joel's work admit the close association between his sound and American place. For example, Stephen Holden, while reviewing *The Nylon Curtain* for *Rolling Stone*, remarked how Joel's earlier songs "defined the New York suburban milieu," highlighting both geography and lifestyle.<sup>52</sup> That album, in fact, offers two commercially successful songs that employ places directly—naming them in their titles—in order to make broad political forces comprehensible vis-à-vis the stories of the people living there or passing through. "Allentown" tells a tale of the effects of deindustrialization in the American heartland while "Goodnight Saigon" traces one young soldier's path to, through, and back from the conflict in Vietnam.<sup>53</sup> That neither song deals with California, New York, or suburbia shows the range of places found in Joel's catalog.

Moreover, Joel's songs, especially "Say Goodbye to Hollywood," reveal how his use of place in American music need not concern a *particular* place as much as movement from, through, or between places. In "Los Angelenos," all the residents "come from somewhere," a distinction that uses the difference between people's origin and present location to effect a sense of distance. And "New York State of Mind" locates its singer on a Greyhound bus on the Hudson River line, similarly moving toward a place, this time, of comfort. Perhaps the most interesting "place" in Joel's oeuvre is his own mind, with its

Who re-mem-bers when it all be-gan out here in no-man's land...

**Example 2.** "No Man's Land." Words and music by Billy Joel. From *River of Dreams* (1993). 0:54–1:00.

marvelously creative ability to distill historical distress (and social destructiveness) in order to draw us in, to sympathize with, and express the deep feelings and needs of his (our) contemporaries. The cultural geography that he examines through his music is personal as well as sociological, but it succeeds by being much more than merely autobiography or sociology.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Scholarly treatments of Joel's music tend to cast it in terms of musical influences on others (see Fred Maus, "Intimacy and Distance: On Stipes' Queerness," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 18, no. 2 [2006]: 191–214 and Elina Shatkin, "The Strange Case of Chris Gaines and Garth Brooks," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 25, no. 3 [2013]: 389–97) or as an example of "bad" music (see Leslie M. Meier, "In Excess? Body Genres, 'Bad' Music, and the Judgment of Audiences," *Journal of Popular Music Studies* 20, no. 3 [2008]: 240–60). Notable exceptions include Walter Everett, "The Learned vs. The Vernacular in the Songs of Billy Joel," *Contemporary Music Review* 18, no. 4 (2000): 105–29; A. Morgan Jones, "The Other Sides of Billy Joel: Six Case Studies Revealing the Sociologist, the Balladeer, and the Historian," Ph.D. diss., University of Western Ontario, 2011; and Joshua S. Duchan, "Disappointment, Frustration, and Resignation in Billy Joel's *The Nylon Curtain*," *Rock Music Studies* 2, no. 2 (2015): 168–87.

<sup>2</sup> For example, a review of Joel's premiere performance as part of the first-ever residency at New York City's Madison Square Garden carries the subtitle, "Long Island Hero Launches Madison Square Garden Run" (Rob Sheffield, "Billy Joel Residency Begins with Salty Jokes and Sing-Alongs," *Rolling Stone*, 28 January 2014). In a review of an earlier performance at the same venue, Joel is praised for playing "the standards that made him the Bruce Springsteen of Long Island" (Laura Sinagra, "Showing the Fans That He's in Control," *New York Times*, 25 January 2006).

<sup>3</sup> On Tin Pan Alley, see for example Nicholas E. Tawa, *The Way to Tin Pan Alley: American Popular Song, 1866–1910* (New York: Schirmer, 1990). On Ives, see for example Denise Von Glahn, *The Sounds of Place: Music and the American Cultural Landscape* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Martin Stokes, "Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music," in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music: The Musical Construction of Place*, ed. Martin Stokes (New York: Berg, 1994), 5.

<sup>5</sup> Stephen Thomas Erlewine, review of *Cold Spring Harbor*, by Billy Joel, All Music Guide, <http://www.allmusic.com>, accessed 28 July 2014.

<sup>6</sup> This error was corrected for *Cold Spring Harbor's* reissue by Columbia in 1983.

<sup>7</sup> For example, *New York Times* writer Don Heckman described Joel's "gospel" performance at the April 1972 Mar y Sol festival in Puerto Rico as one that brought the "generally dispirited," rain-soaked crowd "to life" ("Pop Festival Excitement Grows as Night and the Stars Appear," *New York Times*, 4 April 1972, p. 55).

<sup>8</sup> David and Victoria Sheff, "Playboy Interview: Billy Joel," *Playboy*, May 1982, quoted in Mark Bego, *Billy Joel: The Biography* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2007), 62.

<sup>9</sup> “Travelin’ Prayer” reached #77 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and #34 on the *Billboard* Hot Adult Contemporary chart.

<sup>10</sup> Despite the obvious similarity in first name, the tale told in Joel’s song differs from that of the nineteenth century outlaw’s life. For example, Joel names Wheeling, West Virginia, as Billy the Kid’s origin, but most accounts establish New York City as Bonney’s birthplace. See Ramon F. Adams, *A Fitting Death for Billy the Kid* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1960).

<sup>11</sup> Everett, “The Learned vs. The Vernacular,” 111.

<sup>12</sup> Bill DeMain, “In a New Romantic State of Mind,” *Performing Songwriter*, November 2001, quoted in Bego, *Billy Joel*, 86.

<sup>13</sup> For some, Joel’s words and attitude were a little too much. *Rolling Stone* critic Stephen Holden labeled “Los Angelenos” “a hackneyed picture postcard of L.A. as sexual wasteland” (“Billy Joel: Streetlife Serenade,” *Rolling Stone*, 5 December 1974).

<sup>14</sup> Philip J. Ethington, William H. Frey, and Dowell Myers, “The Racial Resegregation of Los Angeles County, 1940–2000,” Race Contours 2000 Study, Public Research Report No. 2001-04, released 12 May 2001, [http://www.usc.edu/schools/price/research/popdynamics/pdf/2001\\_Ethington-Frey-Myers\\_Racial-Resegregation.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/schools/price/research/popdynamics/pdf/2001_Ethington-Frey-Myers_Racial-Resegregation.pdf) (accessed 9 July 2014).

<sup>15</sup> In 1950, less than one tenth of one percent of the population of the state of New York was identified as “other race,” and by 1960 it had risen to only one tenth of one percent (see tables A-8 and A-9 in Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for the United States, Regions, Divisions, and States,” U.S. Census Bureau Working Paper No. 56, September 2002; for more information on the inclusion of questions about Hispanic origin in the census data, see Dianne Schmidley and Arthur Cresce, “Tracking Hispanic Ethnicity: Evaluation of Current Population Survey Data Quality for the Question of Hispanic Origin, 1971 to 2004,” U.S. Census Bureau Working Paper No. 80, December 2007). Specific census data for the Latino population in New York City is unavailable for the 1950 and 1960 census, but 1970 estimates place it somewhere between 15.2% and 16.2%; by 1980 it was 19.9% (see table 33 in Campbell Gibson and Kay Jung, “Historical Census Statistics on Population Totals by Race, 1790 to 1990, and by Hispanic Origin, 1970 to 1990, for Large Cities and Other Urban Places in the United States,” U.S. Census Bureau Working Paper No. 76, February 2005).

<sup>16</sup> Richard Scott, *Billy Joel: All About Soul* (New York: Vantage, 2000), 25–6.

<sup>17</sup> Joel, quoted in Fred Schruers, *Billy Joel: The Definitive Biography* (New York: Crown Archetype, 2014), 115. Joel’s characterizations of Los Angeles to Schruers differ markedly from those he offered DeMain in 2001 (quoted above). The decade or so between the two remarks may perhaps explain the change of heart. Otherwise, these contradictory quotations illustrate the methodological challenge of relying on a composer’s words to explain his or her music—a challenge that may be faced with analysis of the actual song at issue.

<sup>18</sup> Stokes, “Introduction: Ethnicity, Identity and Music,” 5.

<sup>19</sup> Joel, quoted in Schruers, *Billy Joel*, 117.

<sup>20</sup> “Say Goodbye to Hollywood” reached #17 on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart and #35 on the *Billboard* Adult Contemporary chart.

<sup>21</sup> For example, "Johnny" is likely a reference to Jon Troy, one of Joel's early managers. See Schruers, *Billy Joel*, 108–10.

<sup>22</sup> See Bego, *Billy Joel*, 99–101; Ken Bielen, *The Words and Music of Billy Joel* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2011), 33; Stephen Holden, "Billy Joel: 52nd Street," *Rolling Stone*, 14 December 1978; and Scott, *Billy Joel*, 28.

<sup>23</sup> DeMain, "In a New Romantic State of Mind," quoted in Bego, *Billy Joel*, 86.

<sup>24</sup> Albin Zak, *The Poetics of Rock: Cutting Tracks, Making Records* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 78.

<sup>25</sup> Liz Thomson, "Phil(ip Harvey) Spector," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com>.

<sup>26</sup> Bego, *Billy Joel*, 100; Holden, "Billy Joel: 52nd Street." Holden compares "Say Goodbye to Hollywood" to *52nd Street's* "Until the Night," viewing the latter as a success in which the "caricature of that master pop caricaturist [Spector] works splendidly."

<sup>27</sup> For example, in his review of *Glass Houses* (1980), Paul Nelson calls Joel's music "fake," adding, "he's a lounge lizard, whipping himself into an artificial frenzy to put across some kind of warped notion of what he imagines, say, Bruce Springsteen, Neil Young or the Clash stand for." His comments on individual songs unfavorably compare them to the Beatles, the Eagles, the Rolling Stones, and Paul Simon ("Billy Joel: *Glass Houses*," *Rolling Stone*, 1 May 1980).

<sup>28</sup> While "New York State of Mind" did not climb any sales charts, it has been covered by numerous performers, including Tony Bennett, Elton John, Barbra Streisand, and Mel Tormé.

<sup>29</sup> David and Victoria Sheff, "Playboy Interview: Billy Joel," quoted in Bego, *Billy Joel*, 86.

<sup>30</sup> For a good summary of the city's situation at the time, see George J. Lankevich, *New York City: A Short History* (New York: New York University Press, 2002), 205–29, and Roger Dunstan, "Overview of New York City's Fiscal Crisis," California Research Bureau Note, vol. 3, no. 1, March 1, 1995, <http://www.library.ca.gov/crb/95/notes/v3n1.pdf> (accessed 4 August 2014), where it is reported that by 1975 the city had \$14 billion in debt and an operating deficit of \$600 million to \$2.2 billion.

<sup>31</sup> Frank Van Riper, "Ford to City: Drop Dead," *Daily News* (New York), 30 October 1975.

<sup>32</sup> See Sam Roberts, "Infamous 'Drop Dead' Was Never Said By Ford," *New York Times*, 28 December 2006, A30.

<sup>33</sup> Dave Marsh, "Billy Joel: The Miracle of 52nd Street," *Rolling Stone*, 14 December 1978, 74.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, Roger Davis Gatchet, "'I've Got Some Antique in Me': the Discourse of Authenticity and Identity in the African American Blues Community in Austin, Texas," *The Oral History Review* 39, no. 2 (2012): 207–29; Paul Gilroy, "Sounds Authentic: Black Music, Ethnicity, and the Challenge of a 'Changing' Same," *Black Music Research Journal* 11, no. 2 (1991): 111–36; Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); and Paul Oliver, Tony Russell, Robert M.W. Dixon, John Godrich, and Howard Rye, *Yonder Come the Blues: The Evolution of a Genre* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

<sup>35</sup> Schruers, *Billy Joel*, 115.

<sup>36</sup> Robert D. Schultz, "Three Analytical Essays in Twentieth-Century Music," (MA Thesis, University of Washington, 2005), 43–6.

<sup>37</sup> See, for example, Samuel B. Charters and Leonard Kunstadt, *Jazz: A History of the New York Scene* (New York: Doubleday, 1962); Tony Fletcher, *All Hopped Up and Ready to Go: Music from the Streets of New York, 1927–77* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009); Gary Giddins and Scott DeVeaux, *Jazz* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 113–44; Travis A. Jackson, *Blowin' the Blues Away: Performance and Meaning on the New York Jazz Scene* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); and Elijah Wald, *Escaping the Delta: Robert Johnson and the Invention of the Blues* (New York: Amistad, 2004).

<sup>38</sup> Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song in America* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1983), 341.

<sup>39</sup> Joel remarked: "It was really intended to reflect a New York state of mind, not a New York city of mind, but I wanted to include the city in it" (quoted in Schruers, *Billy Joel*, 116).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example, Barbara M. Kelly, *Expanding the American Dream: Building and Rebuilding Levittown* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993).

<sup>41</sup> See Kenneth T. Jackson, *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985).

<sup>42</sup> For an overview of white flight and its cultural dimensions, see Eric Avila, *Popular Culture in the Age of White Flight: Fear and Fantasy in Suburban Los Angeles* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> Marsh, "Billy Joel: The Miracle of 52nd Street," 72.

<sup>44</sup> Joel, quoted in Marsh, "Billy Joel: The Miracle of 52nd Street," 72.

<sup>45</sup> Bego, *Billy Joel*, 61.

<sup>46</sup> Joel, quoted in DeMain, "In a New Romantic State of Mind," quoted in Bego, *Billy Joel*, 71.

<sup>47</sup> Bielen, *The Words and Music of Billy Joel*, 31.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>49</sup> Emek Basker, Shawn Klimek, and Pham Hoang Van, "Supersize It: The Growth of Retail Chains and the Rise of the 'Big-Box' Store," *Journal of Economics & Management Strategy* 21, no. 3 (2012): 543.

<sup>50</sup> Ira G. Zepp, *The New Religious Image of Urban America: The Shopping Mall as Ceremonial Center* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997), 34.

<sup>51</sup> Billy Joel, "No Man's Land" music video, <http://www.billyjoel.com/no-mans-land-video> (accessed 18 September 2015).

<sup>52</sup> Stephen Holden, "Billy Joel: The Nylon Curtain," *Rolling Stone*, 14 October 1982.

<sup>53</sup> The songs reached numbers 17 and 56, respectively, on the *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. See also Duchan, "Disappointment, Frustration, and Resignation in Billy Joel's *The Nylon Curtain*."

Laurie J. Sampsel and Donald M. Puscher

## Colorado Stories, Colorado Songs

Colorado has inspired hundreds of composers, lyricists, and performers over the years. Songs reflect not only the state's history and geography, but also serve as a carrier of the culture of the state, the region, and the Rocky Mountain West.<sup>1</sup> Whether a song boasts about the natural beauty of the mountains and rivers, or perhaps expresses the loneliness of the cowboy, miner, explorer, or pioneer, Colorado songs help to both reflect and define the state's history, image, and culture.

The history of the Centennial State—from the earliest days of statehood to the present—is reflected in song. The twelve songs discussed here represent a variety of styles and genres of music, from folk songs to patriotic anthems, from country to rock, from rap to opera. They date from the late nineteenth century to the present, with stories spanning from the time of the cowboys to the 2013 Colorado flood. Not every story is happy, but each one resonates with audiences who understand the strong feelings associated with the Centennial State. These songs were chosen because of their Colorado stories.

The music ranges in character from the dark and brooding songs of Townes van Zandt to the humorous playfulness of Meredith Willson's musicals. None of the composers represented were born in Colorado, and not all of them spent time living in the state. Yet, each had an experience or reaction to a Colorado story so compelling that they turned to song to express, preserve, and share it. Colorado residents have taken a number of different paths to the state, just like the musicians who compose about her.

One of those paths is the trail—the Colorado Trail, to be specific. It was a branch of the Great Western Cattle Trail leading from Oklahoma north into eastern Colorado and is different from the well-known hiking trail of the same name.<sup>2</sup> This traditional American cowboy song reminds us that driving cattle

was a lonely job. Lamenting the loss of Laura, who had “eyes like the morning star, cheeks like a rose,” the refrain repeats:

Weep, all ye little rains,  
Wail, winds, wail,  
All along, along, along  
The Colorado Trail<sup>3</sup>

The folk song “The Colorado Trail” was first written down by poet Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) and published in his 1927 collection *American Songbag*.<sup>4</sup> Sandburg collected the song from Dr. T.L. Chapman of Duluth, Minnesota, who learned it from a cowboy under his care. Like most cowboy songs, its specific origins remain unknown.<sup>5</sup> The version published by Sandburg was arranged by Alfred George Wathall. It has been recorded in many variations, by a number of major artists.<sup>6</sup>

Ranching grew in Colorado beginning in the mid-1860s. Historians Abbott, Leonard, and Noel note, “Texas cattle raisers drove large herds north to Colorado, where local dealers bought and fattened them for city families, miners, and crews working on the transcontinental railroad.”<sup>7</sup> Many of those herds were bound for Denver. “With access to eastern markets opened up by the Union Pacific and Kansas Pacific Railroads, the territory’s stock raisers built their herds from 147,000 in 1867 to 271,000 in 1870 and 488,000 in 1875.”<sup>8</sup> Though to a much lesser extent than at the end of nineteenth century, ranching remains part of Colorado’s economy to this day. Ranchers past and present rely on the state’s rivers for water, and the most famous of these is the Colorado River.

In fact, the state was named after the Colorado River. It rises at the La Poudre Pass in Rocky Mountain National Park near Granby, Colorado, and flows through Utah, Arizona, Nevada, California, and Mexico before spilling into the Gulf of California, 1,450 miles from its headwaters. It is a vital source of water and power for the southwestern United States. The Colorado River created the Grand Canyon, one of our country’s most beloved natural treasures.

Legendary country singer Johnny Cash (1932–2003) wrote the song “You Wild Colorado” about the Colorado River, and recorded it for his 1965 album *Orange Blossom Special*.<sup>9</sup> Cash wrote:

Oh you wild raging river from the fountains of the mountains  
You ripple down the valleys growing wide and swift and deep  
With what power you cut your canyons how long ago  
You’re as wayward as my woman, you wild Colorado<sup>10</sup>



## THE COLORADO TRAIL

A hoss wrangler brought a car of ponies to Duluth, Minnesota. The next day, after brave stunt riding, he was laid in a hospital bed with "ruptures on both sides." He told the surgeon Dr. T. L. Chapman, in a soft, forgiving voice, "That was a terribly bad hoss—not only throwed me, but he trompled me." Out of past years this rider had, Dr. Chapman's examination disclosed, "bones of both upper and lower legs broken, fractures of collar bone on both sides, numerous fractures of both arms and wrists, and many scars from lacerations and tramlings, the bones knit any way that God and Nature let them heal." As his strength came back he sang across the hospital ward in a mellowed tenor voice. And they always called for more. One song was The Colorado Trail remembered by Dr. Chapman as here set down.

Arr. A. G. W.

*Moderato; molto espressivo*

Eyes like the morning star, Cheek like a rose, Lau-ra was a pret-ty girl, God Almighty knows.

*mf Dolcissimo*

Weep, all ye lit-tle rains, Wail, winds, wail, All a-long, a-long, a-long The Col-or-a-do trail.

*colla voce*

1 Eyes like the morning star,  
Cheek like a rose,  
Laura was a pretty girl,  
God Almighty knows.

Weep, all ye little rains,  
Wail, winds, wail,  
All along, along, along  
The Colorado trail.

Figure 1. "The Colorado Trail" from Sandburg's *American Songbag*. Courtesy of the Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.



**Figure 2.** *Orange Blossom Special* record jacket.

Cash's love of the West, especially the Grand Canyon, is well known.<sup>11</sup> However, Cash spoke about this particular song during an interview with Anthony DeCurtis:

The songs that I put the most into were songs that I never even thought about selling any records on. The songs I especially liked—"The Legend of John Henry's Hammer," "Mr. Garfield," "Hardin Wouldn't Run," or "You Wild Colorado"—weren't in any way meant to be commercial. I told June [Carter Cash] a couple of times, "I like this one so much, I'm not going to let anybody hear it. This song is just for me and you." I said that about a lot of songs I wrote.<sup>12</sup>

Exploration of Colorado led not only to development and ranching, but to mining as well. Leadville, Colorado, nicknamed the "Cloud City" because of its elevation, was a center for silver and gold mining. "[T]he Leadville bonanza

of 1877–79 foretold a boom in the 1880s. The actual results of the decade—doubling of the state’s population, tripling of its property values, sextupling of investment in factories—all reflected the supernova that was Leadville.”<sup>13</sup> Two of Colorado’s most famous “rags to riches” women called Leadville their home during its mining era—Baby Doe Tabor and Molly Brown. Although neither was born in Colorado, both of these amazing ladies became legends.

The story of Elizabeth McCourt “Baby Doe” Tabor (1854–1935) seems to have been destined for the stage. Complete with a love triangle, Cinderella story gone wrong, and the backdrop of Leadville’s silver rush, composer Douglas Moore (1893–1969) and librettist John Latouche (1914–56) wrote a great opera. In the words of music historian Gilbert Chase, “*The Ballad of Baby Doe* is unquestionably the most successful grand opera by an America to deal with the historical past of the United States.”<sup>14</sup>

The score for the opera *The Ballad of Baby Doe* has the following forward:

The story begins in 1880 at the peak of Tabor’s success. After twenty years of poverty, he and his wife, now in their fifties, have attained wealth and power. The classic triangle is formed when Mrs. Elizabeth Doe, known to the miners of Central City as Baby, leaves her husband, Harvey Doe, and comes to Leadville to better her fortunes.



**Figure 3.** Elizabeth McCourt “Baby Doe” Tabor (1854–1935). Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.



**Figure 4.** Tabor's Matchless Mine. Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

What begins as a flirtation, ends as a deep and abiding love for the man thirty years her senior [Horace Tabor]. But the price of this love is ruin for Tabor. Baby Doe remained true to his memory, however. In 1935, she froze to death at the Matchless Mine, ending the long vigil she had kept there since Tabor's demise in 1899.<sup>15</sup>

The opera premiered at the Central City [Colorado] Opera House in 1956, a town that Baby Doe called home before she moved to Leadville. The plot focuses on the period between 1880 and 1889, the year Horace died. It ends with a vision of an elderly Baby Doe at the Matchless Mine.

The tale of Horace Tabor's (1830–99) wealth was no exaggeration; more silver was mined in Leadville than anywhere else in Colorado, beginning in 1874. But he lost his fortune after the 1893 repeal of the Sherman Silver Purchase Act. Ironically, the man who built opera houses in both Leadville and Denver became an opera character himself.

Any of Baby Doe's five arias would make an excellent example for this study. They are: "Willow Song," "The Letter Aria," "I Knew It Was Wrong," "Gold is a Fine Thing," and "Always through the Changing." Of the group, perhaps "Gold is a Fine Thing" is the most apt. The aria follows in the plot just after Baby Doe and Horace's wedding, and she sings the praises of silver, the source of their wealth:



**Figure 5.** Tabor Opera House, Leadville. Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

Gold is a fine thing  
 For those who admire it  
 Gold is like the sun,  
 But I am a child of the moon, and silver.  
 Silver is the metal of the moon.<sup>16</sup>

Leadville was a place where mining fortunes were both made and lost. Just as the Tabors began to lose their silver fortune, the Browns found theirs—with gold in Leadville’s Little Jonny Mine in 1893. Margaret Tobin (1867–1932) moved to Leadville at the age of eighteen; and married James Joseph (J.J.) Brown before he struck it rich. Margaret Brown, known to her friends as “Maggie”—she was only dubbed “unsinkable Molly” after her death—owed her fame to having survived the sinking of the Titanic in 1912. Her rags to riches story became the subject of Meredith Willson’s (1902–1984) musical *The Unsinkable Molly Brown*. The musical premiered at the Winter Garden Theatre in New York in November 1960 with a libretto by Richard Morris. In 1964 it was turned into a movie musical starring Debbie Reynolds as Molly and Harve Presnell as J.J. Brown.

Willson introduces J.J. Brown with the song “Colorado, My Home.” He is outside singing of his love for the state, using the nearby mountains for their musical echoes. From the first line of the song, J.J. proclaims his pride, “Colorado, my home sweet home!” Despite some confusion in the lyrics about



**Figure 6.** Margaret (Molly) Brown (1867–1932). Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

the location of the Rio Grande River, the song testifies to Brown’s love of his mountain home.

A sky full of Rockies for my roof up there,  
 A great golden meadow for my rockin’ chair,  
 A claim and a cabin and some breathin’ air . . .  
 Colorado, my home.<sup>17</sup>

As with *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, multiple songs in *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* focus on the state. In addition to “Colorado, My Home,” J.J. Brown also sings “Leadville Johnny Brown.” Two songs focus on Denver, where the Browns lived on Pennsylvania Avenue after leaving Leadville. These are “The



**Figure 7.** Molly Brown House, Denver, the Tobin's home after leaving Leadville. Courtesy of Denver Public Library, Western History Collection.

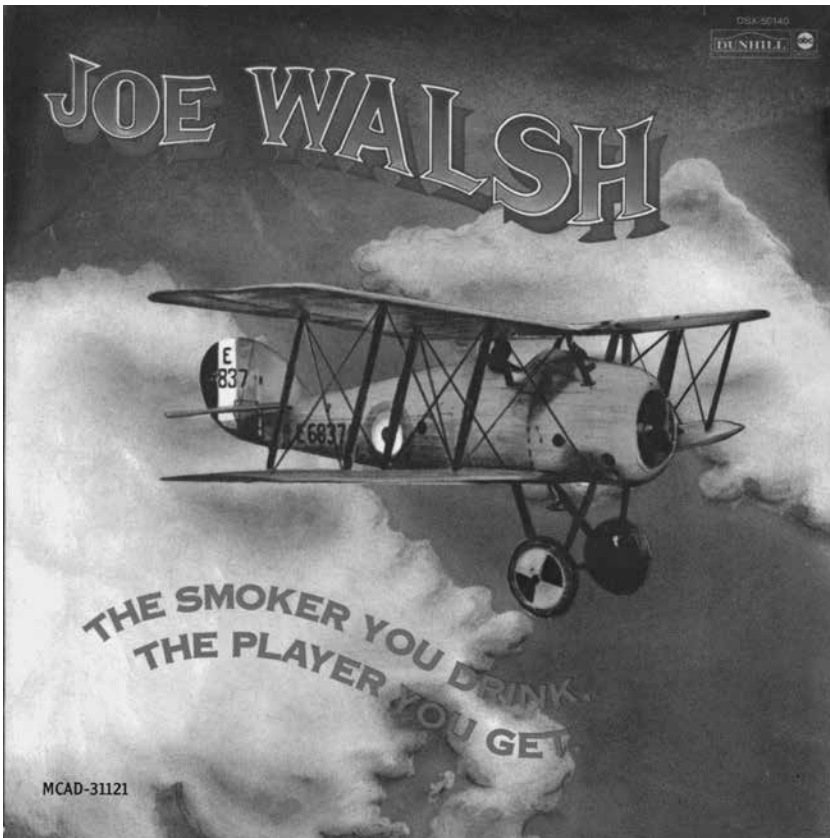
Denver Police" and "Beautiful People of Denver." The Brown's home in Denver, now known as the Molly Brown House Museum, is a popular historical attraction.

While the Browns felt at home in Colorado for most of their lives, that was not the case for Joe Walsh (b. 1947). For him, Colorado was a temporary stopping place on the road to success. Walsh had just left his home in Cleveland to strike out on his own, moving to Nederland, and later to nearby Boulder, in November 1971 to try and do something different in a musical way.<sup>18</sup> "They were strange times and it was hard, but it took me back to basic survival, which is always very positive in terms of creative energy. When you have to get yourself together, you play differently from when you're rich."<sup>19</sup> In Cleveland Walsh had been part of the James Gang, a band known for two hit singles "Funk #49" and "Walk Away." Shortly after his time in Colorado, he joined the Eagles and his career took off.

The beginning lyrics of "Rocky Mountain Way" came to Walsh while he was out mowing his yard during the summer of 1972. As he tells the story, he left the mower running dashing into the house to write down his ideas while the

machine continued rolling into the neighbor's garden.<sup>20</sup> The song was co-written with his band at the time, Barnstorm, whose members included Joe Vitale, Rocke Grace, and Kenny Passarelli.

Spent the last year  
 Rocky Mountain way  
 Couldn't get much higher  
 Out to pasture  
 Think it's safe to say  
 Time to open fire  
 And we don't need the ladies  
 Cryin' 'cause the story's sad  
 'Cause the Rocky Mountain way  
 Is better than the way we had.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 8.** *The Smoker You Drink, They Player You Get* album jacket.



“Rocky Mountain Way” was recorded at Caribou Ranch recording studio for Barnstorm’s 1973 album *The Smoker You Drink, The Player You Get*.<sup>22</sup> The group’s second album prominently featured Walsh’s name on the cover but doesn’t mention Barnstorm. Walsh was the first to record at Caribou, using the studio before the rest of the building was completed.<sup>23</sup> Owner James Guercio wanted to build “the world’s best recording facility,” but when it was nearly completed in 1972 he was in Hollywood working on a movie. Walsh and producer Bill Szymczyk talked Guercio into using the new space before it could be properly equipped, so conditions were less than ideal. Szymczyk remembered “[W]e were on our own. There was no maintenance guy. No studio manager. Nothing. The buildings were there but they hadn’t been refurbished. There was a mess hall from when it was a working ranch but there was no one there to cook. We showed up with our lunch.”<sup>24</sup>

Despite this shaky start, Caribou Ranch soon became a “destination studio” for dozens of world-class performers including Michael Jackson, Elton John, John Lennon, and Chicago.<sup>25</sup> The ranch barn recording studio was damaged by a fire in 1985, and was never again used for its original purpose. During the summer of 2014 the property was sold for \$32.5 million.<sup>26</sup> Joe Walsh and Barnstorm, along with the Caribou Ranch, will soon be inducted into the Colorado Music Hall of Fame.<sup>27</sup>



**Figure 9.** Musicians at Caribou Ranch Recording Studio. Courtesy of Carnegie Branch Library for Local History, Boulder, Colorado.

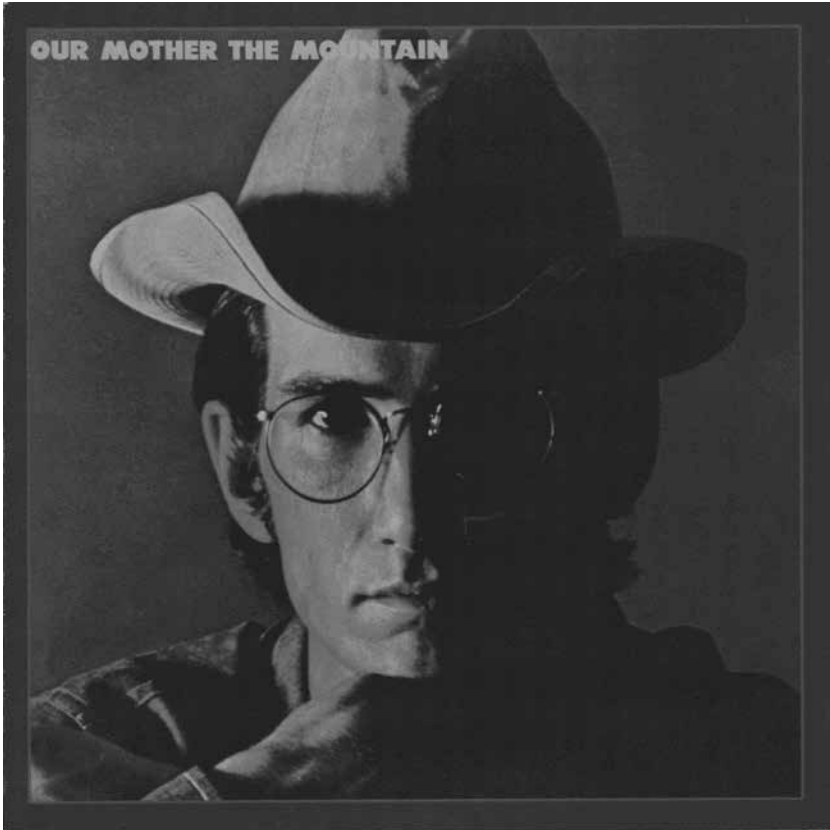


**Figure 10.** Emma Walsh Memorial, North Boulder Park. Courtesy of Don Puscher.

Walsh's Colorado story had a sad ending. The following year, his daughter Emma was killed in a car crash, just before her third birthday. A memorial water fountain in North Boulder Park still honors her memory. Walsh and his wife split up shortly after the accident, and he left Colorado.<sup>28</sup> For Walsh, Colorado offered a fresh beginning artistically, and for his music "the Rocky Mountain way, is better than the way we had."

Another artist who spent time in Boulder was Townes Van Zandt (1944–1997). While Joe Walsh quickly became known as a rock legend, Van Zandt was hardly known at all during his lifetime.<sup>29</sup> The Van Zandt family summered at Chautauqua Park in Boulder and later moved to the college town while Townes was growing up. He attended the University of Colorado in 1962–63, but his parents pulled him out of college at Boulder when he was diagnosed as suffering from depression, "acute schizophrenia and manic-depression."<sup>30</sup> He was prescribed three months of shock treatments (insulin and electroshock) during 1964 at the Titus Harris Clinic in Galveston, Texas. His long-term memory was permanently damaged, but his positive feelings for Colorado remained, and he returned often to the Boulder Chautauqua cabins during the summer months.

Van Zandt's love of the state resulted in five songs: "Colorado Bound," "Colorado Girl," "Columbine," "My Proud Mountains," and "Snowin' on Raton." His music is typically called folk-country and is dark and brooding, even when it expresses his love of Colorado. In "My Proud Mountains" he sang about dying:



**Figure 11.** Townes Van Zandt on *Our Mother the Mountain* record jacket.

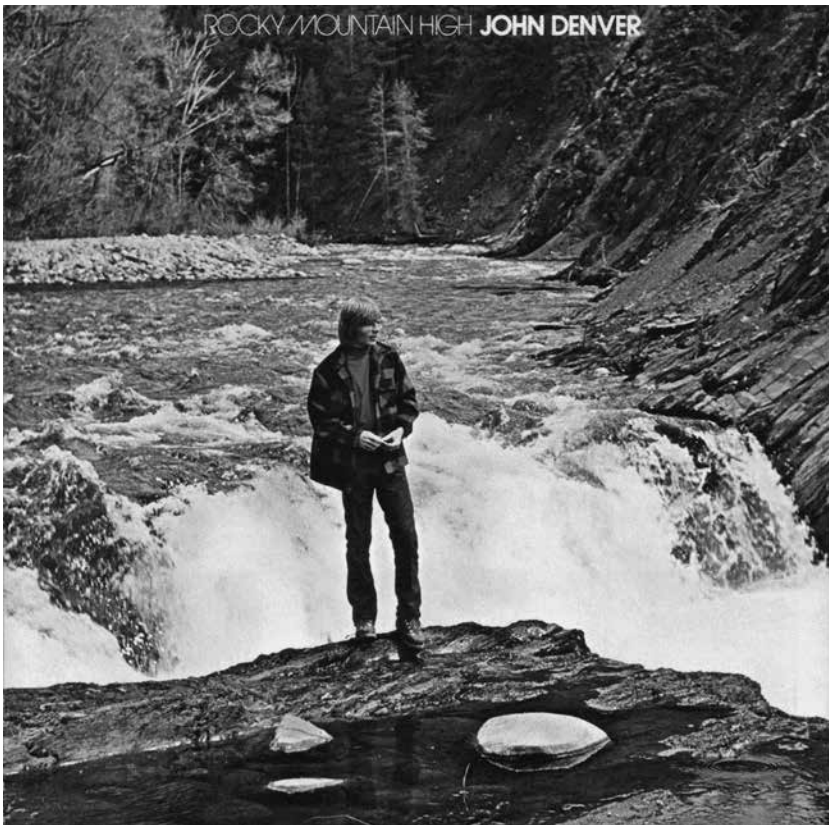
So friends, when my time comes as surely it will  
You just carry my body out to some lonesome hill  
And lay me down easy where the cool rivers run  
With only my mountains 'tween me and the sun  
My home is Colorado.<sup>31</sup>

While Townes Van Zandt was singing about being laid to rest in the Rockies, John Denver was singing about being with “Friends around the campfire, and everybody’s high.” No survey of Colorado songs would be complete without John Denver’s (1943–97) and Mike Taylor’s “Rocky Mountain High.”

In many ways, John Denver and Townes Van Zandt were artistic opposites, but their similarities are also striking. Both expressed a strong love of Colorado although neither was a native. (Van Zandt was born in Texas and Denver in New Mexico.) Both men spent time living in their adopted Colorado cities,

Denver in the ski town of Aspen and Van Zandt in Boulder and Crested Butte, a former mining town on the Western slope. Both wrote five songs about the state. In addition to “Rocky Mountain High,” Denver wrote and recorded “Aspenglow,” “I Guess He’d Rather Be in Colorado,” “The Mountain Song,” and “Starwood in Aspen.”

Yet, their lives and fortunes were poles apart. While Denver was appearing on national television, exclaiming how everything was “Far out!” and enjoying major popular and commercial success, Van Zandt was likely performing for small crowds in lonely dives.<sup>32</sup> Both musicians died prematurely in 1997; Van Zandt at the age of 52 and Denver at 53. Both men drank too much, but Van Zandt’s addictions were more serious and ultimately led to the physical deterioration that hastened his death. Denver died in the crash of an experimental plane that he had reportedly been warned was unsafe to fly.



**Figure 12.** *Rocky Mountain High* album jacket.

Denver enjoyed much acclaim during his lifetime—and was sometimes mocked as an overly sentimental balladeer, yet Coloradans still cherish his memory. He was dubbed Poet Laureate of the state in 1974 and was the first person inducted into the Colorado Music Hall of Fame in 2011, a fitting tribute to a man who chose Colorado’s capital city, his favorite city so he claimed, for his professional moniker. (Denver’s given name, Henry John Deutschen-dorf, Jr., was hard to pronounce, difficult to spell, and impossible to fit on a marquee.) John Denver and Mike Taylor’s 1972 ballad to the Rockies was declared Colorado’s second state song in 2007.<sup>33</sup>

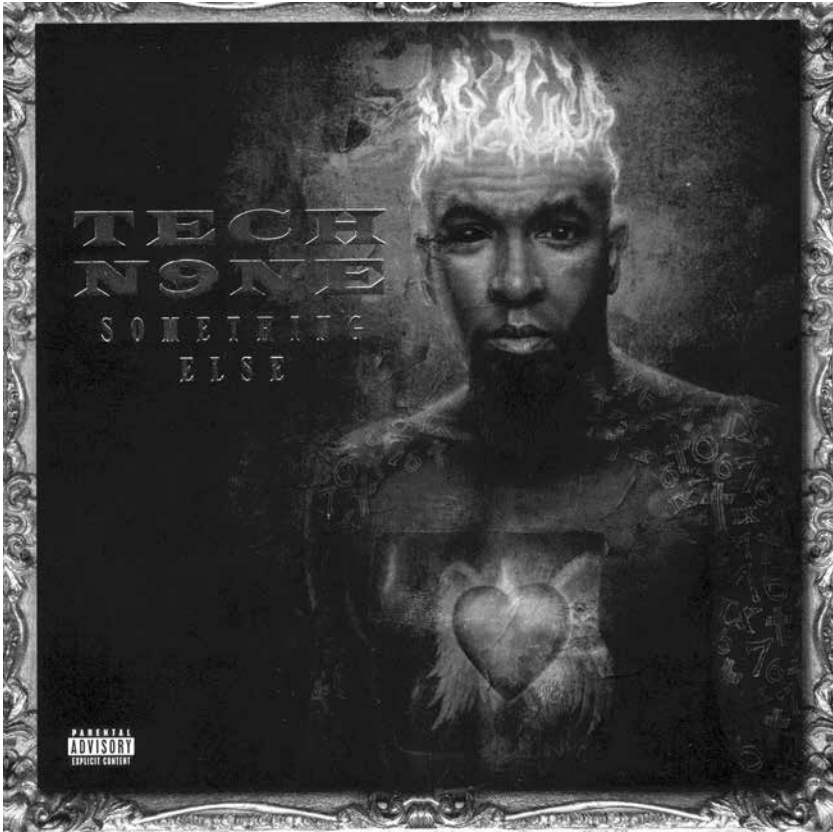
As the lyrics tell us, “He was born in the summer of his 27th year” when Denver first visited Colorado. In his autobiography, *Take Me Home*, Denver explains what inspired the song. He was camping with some friends at Lake Williams, near Aspen, to see the Perseid meteor shower in August. The experience of witnessing this cosmic event, “raining fire in the sky,” he claimed, was “spectacular.”<sup>34</sup> He went on to concede that while it was the seventies in Aspen, and everyone was using drugs, that the lyric meant much more.<sup>35</sup> “Some people had the idea that the song was about getting stoned in the mountains, and it’s true that was going on, but the song was about how exhilarating it was to *be* there, to feel free, to have come to such a place, both personally and geographically. And it was a reflection on mortality.”<sup>36</sup>

It’s a Colorado Rocky Mountain high  
 I’ve seen it rainin’ fire in the sky  
 Friends around the campfire and everybody’s high  
 Rocky Mountain high  
 High in Colorado  
 Rocky Mountain high  
 High in Colorado<sup>37</sup>

While Denver’s “Rocky Mountain High” may not have been about getting high, Tech N9ne (Aaron Dontez Yates) leaves no doubt that he is rapping about smoking marijuana in his 2013 song, “Colorado.”<sup>38</sup>

Toke, toke, toke, toke, you know it’s that fire, I can’t get no higher!  
 Toke, toke, toke, toke, I came to turn the night up, now watch me as  
 I light up<sup>39</sup>

In 2012 Colorado voters passed Amendment 64 to the state constitution legalizing the purchase and use of marijuana for adults over 21 (despite federal and other state laws restricting its sale). Within two years dispensaries had been set up all over the state and business was booming. Just as mining gave



**Figure 13.** *Something Else* compact disc jacket.

a boost to Colorado's economy in the late nineteenth century, tax income from marijuana sales is doing the same today. Tax revenue from 2014 topped \$76 million, and sales in 2015 are even greater.<sup>40</sup>

Kansas City native Tech N9ne (b. 1971) refers to Colorado as his “second home.” He is joined on this recording by B.o.B, Ces Cru, Krizz Kaliko, ¡Mayday!, Rittz, and Stevie Stone. It is included on his thirteenth studio album, titled *Something Else*, and released on the Strange Music label, which he co-founded in 1999 with Travis O’Guin.

Colorado is known for its rugged mountains. For a group of young men from Illinois visiting the state for the first time, reaching the snowy peaks was an adventure waiting to be had. During their first tour west of the Mississippi, the rock band REO Speedwagon played a bar in Boulder called Tulagi’s, a favorite venue for performers and fans alike. (Owner Ray Imel changed its earlier



**Figures 14 and 15.** Tulagi's exterior and interior. Courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Colorado Boulder.

name in 1948 to Tulagi's, for the Pacific island where his son died during World War II.) This intimate venue on Boulder's University Hill would host such outstanding acts as ZZ Top, the Eagles, Linda Ronstadt, Bonnie Raitt, the Flying Burrito Brothers, John Lee Hooker, and Miles Davis, among others.

The day after REO Speedwagon's show lead vocalist Kevin Cronin (b. 1951) and lead guitarist and songwriter Gary Richrath (1949–2015) couldn't wait to get up into the mountains. "Eager to explore their new surroundings, Cronin and Richrath ditched their tour manager and had taken off for an ill-advised hike when a blizzard began moving in. Although they feared the worst, the pair were actually inspired by the adventure and, of course, made it out alive."<sup>41</sup>

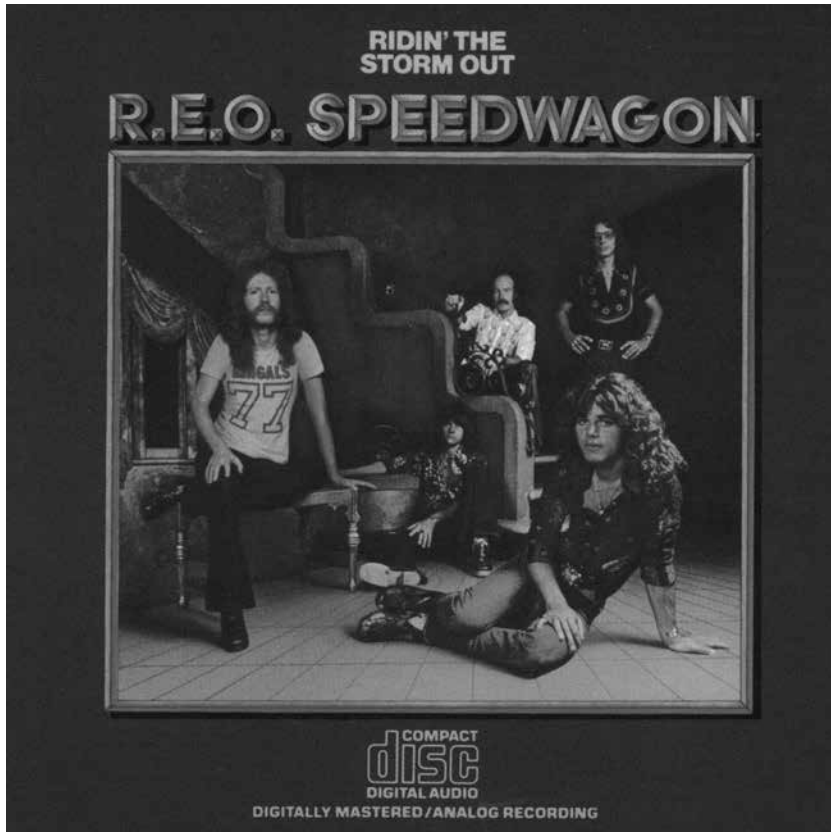
"It was an inspiring moment, walking in the woods, hoping to get our asses out of there," they later reported.<sup>42</sup> The next morning, Richrath approached Cronin with some lyrics that would become "Ridin' the Storm Out," a hit for the band, and a standard encore. On the album *Ridin' the Storm Out*, the lead vocalist was Michael Murphy since Cronin had left the band for a few years in the mid-1970s. But for decades, during live performances, Cronin continued to introduce the song by retelling the story, "The sun went down, the wind picked up, and big old dark storm clouds were coming in from the West. We knew we were in trouble, people."<sup>43</sup>

Ridin' the storm out  
 Waiting for the thaw-out  
 On a full moon night in the Rocky Mountain winter  
 My wine bottle's low  
 Watching for the snow  
 I've been thinking lately of what I'm missing in the city<sup>44</sup>

Even today, longtime Colorado natives can get into trouble with the weather-related natural disasters, as seen in the flood of September 2013. "The National Weather Service advisory issued at 9:41 am Thursday [12 September] warned of a 'biblical' rainfall."<sup>45</sup> Coloradans know how to deal with snow, and frequently encounter rock slides and forest fires in their normally dry climate, but not even seasoned mountain town residents knew how to handle so much water. Boulder and Larimer counties suffered nearly a full week of heavy rains. "Before the deluge ended, storm rainfall totals of 13.15 inches would be register by the NWS at Allenspark, 12.32 inches near Lyons, 9.3 inches at Estes Park and 8.19 inches just west of Longmont."<sup>46</sup> The devastation was both widespread and stunning, and the state is still recovering two years later.

Justin Roth is a singer/songwriter living in Fort Collins, Colorado, who helped those impacted by the flood by writing and recording the song "Rise," re-





**Figure 16.** *Ridin' the Storm Out* album jacket.

leased just weeks after the deluge on 26 November 2013. His inspiring lyrics metaphorically link the rising water to the rising of hope and determination of those recovering from the flood. He is using his song to raise money for ongoing flood relief efforts.

September 12th, 2:00 am

Rain's been comin' down for days and the river's risin'  
Sirens call, gotta get out of town

...

This land may never ever be the same  
But sister and brother we will lift up one another  
Whatever it takes to rise once again  
Rise . . . rise . . . rise . . .<sup>47</sup>



Figure 17. Justin Roth. Courtesy of Justin Roth.

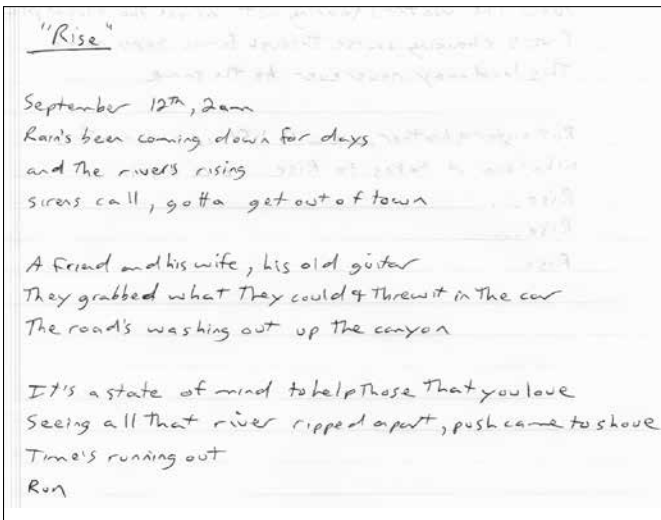


Figure 18. Manuscript lyrics for "Rise." Courtesy of Justin Roth.



DR. A. J. FYNN

**Figure 19.** A.J. Fynn (1857–1930).  
W.F. Stone, *History of Colorado*, Vol. 4  
(Chicago: Clarke, 1918–19), 277.

Many Colorado musicians responded to the flood through singing and song writing. Groups like Taarka, from Lyons, were displaced by the flood; their song “Waterbound” from their most recent indie folk album *Making Tracks Home* is just one of many examples. Concerts were held to raise money to help rebuild damaged homes and businesses.<sup>48</sup> Even amateurs posted their homemade flood song videos on YouTube.

With all the potential for natural disaster and physical isolation, why do people stay in Colorado? One obvious answer, attested by millions of tourists and generations of natives, is its panoramic natural beauty. Colorado songs almost automatically expound the beauty of the state, its terrain, fauna, and flora. “Where the Columbines Grow” is the earlier of Colorado’s two official state songs. It was written and composed by Arthur John (A.J.) Fynn (1857–1930). According to Robert Natelson, the poem was written in 1909, inspired by Fynn’s spying a field of wild columbines on one of his regular outdoor walks. By the turn of the century the white and lavender blooms had gained a long list of vocal admirers; after conducting a poll on its popularity, the legislature declared the columbine the official state flower in 1899.<sup>49</sup> Fynn published the sheet music in 1911 with a dedication to the “Colorado Pioneers.”

'Tis the land where the columbines grow,  
Overlooking the plains far below,  
While the cool summer breeze in the evergreen trees  
Softly sings where the columbines grow.

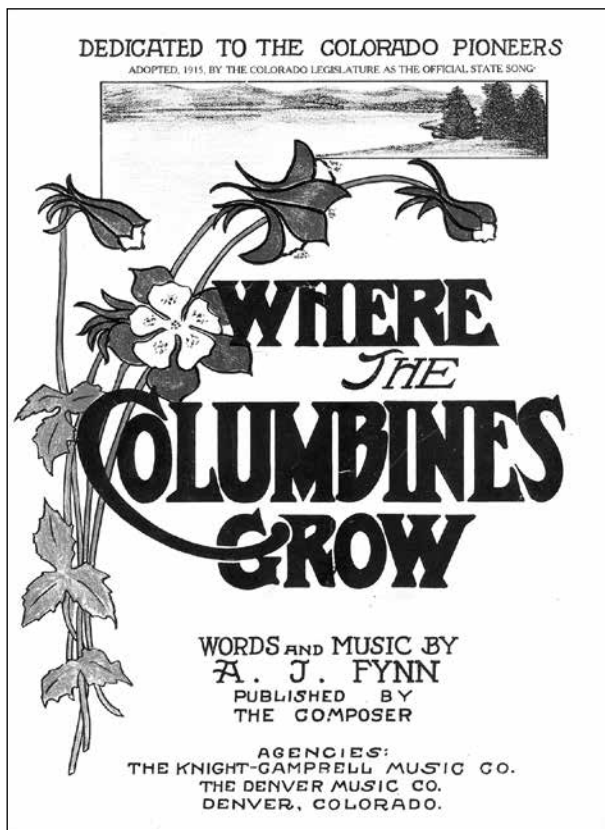
Let the goldenrod herald the autumn,  
 But, under the midsummer sky,  
 In its fair Western home, may the columbine bloom  
 Till our great mountain rivers run dry.<sup>50</sup>

Born and educated in upstate New York, Fynn came to Colorado to teach school in Central City in 1889; he later moved to Alamosa and Denver, where he remained for the rest of his life, establishing a solid reputation as a professor, archeologist, ethnographer, and historian of the West and writing two books on these topics. His output as an amateur composer includes two other published songs, “The Mohawk” and “Brother Jonathan Leaves Home” published in 1908 and 1917, respectively.

The twelfth and final song to be discussed, “America, the Beautiful,” also began its life as a poem before being set to music. The text, written by Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929), was inspired by her trip to Pikes Peak, thirty miles west and 8,000 feet above the city of Colorado Springs.<sup>51</sup> In 1893 the En-

**Figure 20.** “Where the Columbines Grow” sheet music cover.

Courtesy of Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.



2

## Where The Columbines Grow

A. J. FYNN

**Valse Moderato**

Where the snow - y peaks gleam in the moon - -  
 The bi - son is gone from the up - -  
 Let the vi - o - let bright - en the brook - -

*Piu Lento* *Tempo*

light, A - bove the dark for - ests of pine, \_\_\_\_\_ And the  
 land, The deer from the can - yon has fled, \_\_\_\_\_ The  
 side, In sun - light of ear - li - er spring, \_\_\_\_\_ Let the

Copyright 1911 by A. J. Fynn. Denver, Colo.

**Figure 21a.** “Where the Columbines Grow” sheet music.

Courtesy of Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.

3

wild foam-ing wa-ters dash on - - ward To-ward lands where the  
 home of the wolf is de - sert - - ed, The an - te - lope  
 clo - ver be - deck the green mead - - ow, In days when the

*rit.*

trop - ic stars shine; ——— Where the scream of the bold moun - tain  
 moans for his dead, ——— The war - whoop re - ech - oes no  
 o - ri - oles sing, ——— Let the gold - en - rod her - ald the

*a tempo*

*Piu mosso*

ea - gle ——— Re - sponds to the notes of the dove ——— Is the  
 lon - ger, ——— The In - di - an's on - ly a name, ——— And the  
 au - tumn; ——— But, un - der the mid - sum - mer sky, ——— In its

Where The C. G. 4

**Figure 21b.** “Where the Columbines Grow” sheet music.

Courtesy of Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.

4 *Piu lento*

pur - ple robed West, the land that is best, The  
 nymphs of the grove in their lone - li - ness rove, But the  
 fair West - ern home, may the col - um - bine bloom Till our

pi - o - neer land that we love.  
 col - um - bine blooms just the same.  
 great moun - tain riv - ers run dry.

CHORUS *a tempo* *accel.* *accel.*

'Tis the land where the col-um-bines grow, — O-ver-looking the plains far be-low, — While the

cool sum-mer breeze in the ev-er-green trees Soft-ly sings where the colum-bines grow. —

Where The C. G. 4

The image shows a page of sheet music for the song "Where the Columbines Grow". It features a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The music is in 4/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of "Piu lento". The lyrics describe a beautiful landscape with purple-robed nymphs, a lone land, and a grove of columbine flowers. The chorus, marked "a tempo" and "accel.", describes the land where columbines grow, overlooking the plains. The piece concludes with a "rit." (ritardando) marking.

Figure 21c. “Where the Columbines Grow” sheet music.  
 Courtesy of Waltz Music Library, University of Colorado Boulder.



**Figure 22.** Columbine, the Colorado state flower. Courtesy of Special Collections and Archives, University Libraries, University of Colorado Boulder.

glish professor from Wellesley College came to Colorado Springs to teach a summer course at Colorado College. Her long journey across the country got her thinking about its natural beauty from “sea to shining sea.” But it was not until she traveled to the top of Pike’s Peak that the phrase “purple mountain’s majesty” came to her. She later wrote:

Our sojourn on the peak remains in memory hardly more than one ecstatic gaze. It was then and there, as I was looking out over the sea-like expanse of fertile country spreading away so far under those ample skies, that the opening lines of the hymn floated into my mind.<sup>52</sup>

In fact, Bates named her poem “Pikes Peak,” although it was retitled “America” when first published in *The Congregationalist* on July 4, 1895. Bates’s poem was first linked with Samuel A. Ward’s (1848–1903) hymn tune “Materna” in print in 1910.<sup>53</sup> After the text was revised, a new version was published in 1913, the one that become the patriotic song we know and love today.<sup>54</sup>



**Figure 23.** Katharine Lee Bates (1859–1929). Courtesy of Special Collections, Colorado College



O beautiful for spacious skies,  
 For amber waves of grain,  
 For purple mountain majesties  
 Above the fruited plain!  
 America! America!  
 God shed his grace on thee  
 And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

“America, the Beautiful” is one of our country’s most beloved patriotic anthems and is especially popular in Colorado owing to its origin story. Many of these Colorado songs are well known, even if the inspiration behind them is

**© mother dear, Jerusalem.**

Hymn Tune 27. S. A. Ward.

O moth-er dear, Je-ru-sa-lem! When shall I come to thee? . . .  
 When shall my sor-rows have an end? Thy joys when shall I see? . . .  
 O hap-py har-bour of God's saints! O sweet and pleas-ant soli-tude!  
 In thee no sor-row can be found, Nor grief, nor care, nor toll. A-MEN.

2  
*p* No murky cloud o'ershadows thee,  
 Nor gloom, nor darkness night;  
*er* But every soul shines as the sun:  
 For God Himself gives light.  
*mf* O my sweet home, Jerusalem!  
 Thy joys when shall I see?  
 The King that sitteth on thy throne  
 In His felicity?

3  
*mf* Thy gardens and thy goodly walks  
 Continually are green,  
 Where grow such sweet and pleasant flowers  
 As nowhere else are seen.  
*mf* Right through thy streets, with pleasing sound,  
 The living waters flow,  
 And on the banks on either side,  
 The trees of life do grow.

4  
*mf* Those trees each month yield ripened fruit;  
 For ever more they spring,  
 And all the nations of the earth  
 To thee their honours bring.  
*p* O mother dear, Jerusalem!  
 When shall I come to thee?  
 When shall my sorrows have an end?  
 Thy joys when shall I see?

1510

**Figure 24.** Samuel Ward’s “O Mother Dear, Jerusalem” (1888). Courtesy of Eda Kuhn Loeb Music Library, Harvard University.

*THE NATION*

**243 Materna** C. M. D. SAMUEL A. WARD, 1847-1903

1. O beau - ti - ful for spa - cious skies, For am - ber waves of grain,  
For pur - ple moun - tain ma - jes - ties A - bove the fruit - ed plain!  
A - mer - i - ca! A - mer - i - ca! God shed His grace on thee  
And crown thy good with broth - er - hood From sea to shin - ing sea! A - men.

(By permission of Mrs. S. A. Ward and Charles L. Hutchins)

<p>2 O beautiful for pilgrim feet, Whose stern, impassioned stress A thoroughfare for freedom beat Across the wilderness! America! America! God mend thine every flaw, Confirm thy soul in self-control, Thy liberty in law!</p> <p>3 O beautiful for heroes proved In liberating strife, Who more than self their country loved, And mercy more than life!</p>	<p>America! America! May God thy gold refine, Till all success be nobleness, And every gain divine!</p> <p>4 O beautiful for patriot dream That sees beyond the years Thine alabaster cities gleam Undimmed by human tears! America! America! God shed His grace on thee And crown thy good with brotherhood From sea to shining sea!</p>
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240 KATHARINE LEE BATES, 1859-

Figure 25. Samuel Ward's "Materna" (1913).

not. Some, like “You Wild Colorado,” come from well-known musicians like Johnny Cash, while others were penned by relative unknowns like Townes Van Zandt. The twelve songs discussed here were chosen on the basis of the Colorado stories that inspired them. Both the stories and songs reflect not only the historical span of time represented, but also a wide range of musical styles and genres.

From folk songs to rap, from country to rock, from opera to parlor song, from musical theater to pop, Colorado songs reflect them all. One might at first be surprised to think of Meredith Willson and Tech N9ne sharing artistic inspiration from the same physical place, but the legalization of marijuana is just as much a part of Colorado’s history as the mining industry. Musicians as different as John Denver and Townes Van Zandt grew from their time in the Centennial State. Composers as unknown as A.J. Fynn and as accomplished as Douglas Moore were both drawn to the state and her stories.

Colorado has provided inspiration across the years as people hoped to make new beginnings and a new way of life. The cowboys who came in search of work sang about the beauties of the state as did the miners seeking their fortune in the mountains. Some of them, like Baby Doe Tabor and Molly Brown, found it.

Four of the songs discussed came out between 1969 and early 1973: “My Proud Mountains,” “Rocky Mountain High,” “Rocky Mountain Way,” and “Ridin’ the Storm Out.” This seems especially fitting for the time, as national attention was beginning to focus on the human impacts on non-human ecosystems and the growing vulnerability of the natural world in general. The *Whole Earth Catalog*, a countercultural bible of sorts, first appeared in 1968; likewise, the *Mother Earth News* started publication in January 1970 and promoted ecology and a “back to the land” mindset,<sup>55</sup> drawing its readers from among disenchanted youth of the sixties West, looking for something better. The first Earth Day was also celebrated in 1970. Historians Abbott, Leonard, and Noel describe the period in Colorado as one of significant political change. “In the early 1970s, matters that had once concerned relatively few people—air and water pollution, urban sprawl and open space, preservation of wilderness, scenery and historic structures, the dangers of radioactivity, survival of endangered species, the merits of renewable energy, and the conservation of resources—became significant political issues.”<sup>56</sup> The time was right for songs about the Rocky Mountains.

After moving to Aspen, John Denver became an environmental activist for the rest of his life, and he put his ideals into action by co-founding the Windstar Foundation in 1976. His views on conservation are evident in the final stanza of “Rocky Mountain High.”

Now his life is full of wonder,  
 But his heart still knows some fear  
 Of a simple thing he cannot comprehend  
 Why they try to tear the mountains down  
 To bring in a couple more  
 More people, more scars upon the land.

Development is not the only cause of scars upon the state. Nature and weather also leave their mark. Separated by about forty years, Justin Roth and REO Speedwagon members Cronin and Richrath drew inspiration from dangerous storms. Luckily their tales of challenge are also tales of survival, told in songs “Rise” and “Ridin’ the Storm Out.” Roth is still using his music to raise money and awareness for flood victims. Coloradans continue to draw inspiration from conflict and struggle and go on to rebuild, all the time remaining awed by the beauty of the state, a beauty that has come to stand for a way of living within and as a part of the natural environment—a spirit that was captured in the early songs of Fynn and Bates, reflected in the more contemporary words of Joe Walsh; “The Rocky Mountain way is better than the way we had.”

Colorado will surely continue to inspire musicians in the future. In the final aria of Moore’s *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, the title character sings to her dying husband about her steadfast love for him, despite the challenges they have experienced.

Always through the changing  
 Of sun and shadow, time and space  
 I will walk beside my love  
 In a green and quiet place.<sup>57</sup>

Likewise, musicians will continue to express their Colorado stories in song, “Always through the changing / Of sun and shadow, time and space.”

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Stephanie Baker, Sharon Graf, and Petra Meyer-Frazier, “Music,” in *The Rocky Mountain Region*, ed. by Rick Newby (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2004), 323.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 333.

<sup>3</sup> Carl Sandburg, *American Songbag* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1927), 462.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> For more on folk music see Paul Malkoski, *The Denver Folk Music Tradition* (Charleston: History Press, 2012).

<sup>6</sup> For a discography of “The Colorado Trail,” see Jim Moran, “The Colorado Trail,” *Comparative Video* 101 (blog), 15 May 2009, <http://compvid101.blogspot.com/2009/05/colorado-trail.html>.

<sup>7</sup> Carl Abbott, Stephen J. Leonard, and Thomas J. Noel, *Colorado: A History of the Centennial State*, 5th ed. (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2013), 170.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> Johnny Cash, *Orange Blossom Special*, Columbia CS 9109, 1965, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Johnny Cash, “Johnny Cash Narrates ‘A Day in the Grand Canyon’: A Sonic Tour of America’s Great Natural Wonder” with Andre Kostelanetz and His Orchestra, *Grand Canyon Suite [by] Grofé*, Columbia MS 7425, 1970, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>12</sup> Anthony DeCurtis. *In Other Words: Artists Talk about Life and Work* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard, 2005), 10.

<sup>13</sup> Abbott, Leonard, and Noel, *Colorado*, 103.

<sup>14</sup> Gilbert Chase, *America’s Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present*, rev. 3rd ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 555.

<sup>15</sup> Douglas Moore (music) and John La Touche (libretto). *The Ballad of Baby Doe* (New York: Chappell Music Company, 1958), [2].

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>17</sup> Meredith Willson. *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* (New York: Frank Music Corp. and Meredith Willson Music, 1960), 31–32.

<sup>18</sup> John Tobler and Stuart Grundy, *Guitar Greats* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1984), 163.

<sup>19</sup> G. Brown, *Colorado Rocks!* (Boulder: Pruett, 2004), 44.

<sup>20</sup> Howard Stern Show. “June 4 2012-Joe Walsh.” YouTube video, 8:07. Posted 5 June 2012. <https://youtu.be/-dDdfE45NtM>.

<sup>21</sup> Joe Walsh [and Barnstorm], *The Smoker You Drink, The Player You Get*, ABC Records DSX-50140, 1973, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> This album was *Barnstorm*, ABC/Dunhill DSX-50130, 1972, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>24</sup> Mark Brown, “Reliving the Ranch,” *Rocky Mountain News*, 25 January 2008.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Kristen Leigh Painter, “Fabled Caribou Ranch above Nederland Sells for \$32.5 Million,” *Colorado Daily*, 30 June 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Colorado Music Hall of Fame, “Dan Fogelberg, Joe Walsh & Barnstorm, Caribou Ranch Induction Event TBD—2015,” Colorado Music Hall of Fame, 2015, accessed 25 October 2015. <http://cmhof.org/events/dan-fogelberg-joe-walsh-barnstorm-caribou-ranch-induction/>.

<sup>28</sup> Carol Taylor, “Emma’s Fountain Lives Long after Rock ‘n’ Roll Tragedy,” *Daily Camera*, 24 October 2010.

<sup>29</sup> His best known song, “Pancho and Lefty,” was recorded by Willie Nelson and Merle Haggard as a hit on the country charts. Townes Van Zandt performed it on *The Late Great Townes Van Zandt*, Poppy PP-LA4004, 1972, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>30</sup> See Robert Earl Hardy, *A Deeper Blue: The Life and Music of Townes Van Zandt* (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2008), 48, 275n4.

<sup>31</sup> Townes Van Zandt, *Our Mother the Mountain*, Domino Recording Company RE-WIGCD54, 2007, compact disc.

<sup>32</sup> John Denver and Arthur Tobier, *Take Me Home: An Autobiography* (New York: Harmony Books, 1994), 124.

<sup>33</sup> Jennifer Brown, “Natural Anthem John Denver’s 1970s Ballad ‘Rocky Mountain High’ Gets OK as Second State Song,” *Denver Post*, 13 March 2007: A.1

<sup>34</sup> Denver and Tobier, *Take Me Home*, 109–10.

<sup>35</sup> Denver admitted that the line, “They say that he got crazy once and tried to touch the sun” was about the first time he used acid that same summer. *Ibid.*, 111–12.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>37</sup> John Denver and Mike Taylor. *Rocky Mountain High*, RCA Victor AQL1-4731, 1972, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>38</sup> Readers be warned: the complete lyrics are explicit!

<sup>39</sup> Tech N9ne. *Something Else*, Strange Music SMI 258, 2013, compact disc.

<sup>40</sup> Elizabeth Hernandez, “Monthly Pot Sales Pass \$100M,” *Denver Post*, 10 October 2015.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen L. Betts, “See Sara Evans, REO Speedwagon Collide on ‘Ridin’ the Storm Out’,” *Rolling Stone*, Sept. 3, 2015, <http://www.rollingstone.com/music/news/0see-sara-evans-reo-speedwagon-collide-on-ridin-the-storm-out-20150903>.

<sup>42</sup> Brown, *Colorado Rocks*, 49.

<sup>43</sup> R.E.O. Speedwagon. “REO Speedwagon - Ridin’ The Storm Out (((Live)))” YouTube video. Posted Sept. 16, 2010. <https://youtu.be/4T5gjliLRCg> and R.E.O. Speedwagon, “Ridin’ The Storm Out,” *A Decade of Rock and Roll—1970 to 1980*, Sony, 1972, AAC music file, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/ridin-the-storm-out-live/id199991870?i=199995713>.

<sup>44</sup> R.E.O. Speedwagon. *Ridin’ the Storm Out*, Epic PE 32378, 1973, 331/3 rpm.

<sup>45</sup> *Daily Camera*, *Trail Gazette*, *Reporter-Herald*, and *Times-Call* newspapers. A Thousand-Year Rain: The Historic Flood of 2013 in Boulder and Larimer Counties ([Boulder]: Prairie Mountain Publishing, 2013), 5.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Justin Roth, “Rise,” Roth, 2013, AAC music file, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/rise/id773768890?i=773768892>.

<sup>48</sup> For example, a Broomfield, Colorado, concert on 27 October 2013 featuring several local musicians and the Dave Matthews Band raised \$650,000. See Ashley Dean, “Colorado Rising Flood-relief Concert in Broomfield Raises \$650,000,” *Daily Camera*, 28 October 2013.

<sup>49</sup> Robert G. Natelson, "Reclaiming the Centennial State's Centennial Song: The Facts about 'Where the Columbines Grow.'" (Denver: Independence Institute, 2015), 8, accessed 25 October 2015, <http://constitution.i2i.org/files/2015/10/IP-3-2015b-Columbines.pdf> .

<sup>50</sup> A.J. Fynn [words and music], "Where the Columbines Grow." Denver: A.J. Fynn, 1911.

<sup>51</sup> The elevation of the city is over a mile high; the official elevation of Pikes Peak from sea level is 14,114 feet.

<sup>52</sup> Dorothy Burgess, *Dream and Deed: The Story of Katharine Lee Bates* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 102.

<sup>53</sup> Clarence A. Barbour, *Fellowship Hymns* (New York: Association Press, 1910), 266. "Materna" was first published in the *Parish Choir*, 8 (1888): 1510.

<sup>54</sup> Markham W. Stackpole and Joseph N. Ashton, *Hymns for Schools and Colleges* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1913), 240.

<sup>55</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Mother Earth News," *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother\\_Earth\\_News](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mother_Earth_News) (accessed 25 October 2015).

<sup>56</sup> Abbott, Leonard, and Noel, *Colorado*, 370.

<sup>57</sup> Moore and La Touche , *The Ballad of Baby Doe*, 246.





# **A Cultural History of the First Jazz and Blues Communities in Jacksonville, Florida, 1896–1916: A Contribution of African Americans to American Theater**

By Peter Dunbaugh Smith. Lewiston, N.Y.: Edward Mellon Press, 2015.

The history of American popular music is commonly discussed in terms which, by defining seminal individuals, trends and locales, serve to paint a broad picture of the development of the art form. In many contexts this is an appropriate method for analyzing and understanding the origins of American popular music. The convenience and widespread applicability of this approach, however, brings with it significant omissions and the likelihood that many aspects of the development of the music are overlooked. With an abundance of useful and well-conceived volumes addressing this kind of generalist approach readily available to readers today, more focused writing that takes specific perspectives on the development of popular music in America are warranted — even required. Peter Dunbaugh Smith's recent monograph involves just this kind of specific local perspective, and is a welcome addition to the literature addressing specialized developments in American popular music around the turn of the century.

By focusing on a cultural center in an American city not commonly associated with early developments in American popular music, Smith gives the reader a new lens through which to understand how familiar national figures in the performing arts of the era relate to those outside the traditionally accepted centers of musical development, namely New York, Chicago and New Orleans. Embedded in this narrative, Smith presents two primary threads of discovery. The foreground thread is his fairly comprehensive overview of African American performance traditions in the La Villa neighborhood of Jacksonville, Florida, and how that cultural center is connected to other musical commu-

nities across America. In this line of exploration, extensively researched and thoroughly referenced descriptions of the theaters, halls, productions and business ventures involved in the entertainment industry in Jacksonville over a twenty-year span are detailed. While many of the names and locales may be unfamiliar to most readers, by the third chapter, it becomes clear that the turn of any page can reveal a surprisingly direct connection to a much more familiar artist or composition. These discoveries, while seemingly trivial, add an exciting element to the overall impression on this reader.

The other thread of discovery illuminated throughout the text by virtue of the localized nature of the subject matter is a direct explication of the socio-cultural climate in African American communities of northern Florida as a representative region of the South at the turn of the century. By relaying the history of musical performance in Jacksonville and its neighboring cities in such a thorough and exhaustive manner, Smith necessarily tracks the influence of Jim Crow on what began as an era of hope for the African American community in the wake of Reconstruction. In the brief period between 1896 and 1916, we see the rise and decline of agency for African Americans, specifically in the performing arts, culminating in strict social segregation laws, political disenfranchisement, and the suppression of economic opportunity that came about through the misnamed “separate, but equal” national policy, which arose in the wake of the historic *Plessy v. Ferguson* Supreme Court decision in 1896.

Interwoven into these two threads is the story of American popular music, its relationship to musical theater and the African American contribution to all musical expression of early twentieth-century America. It is in this context that I question the prominent inclusion of jazz in the title of this book. While it is clear that Smith does make reference to a few artists in their formative years who later became known for their contributions to jazz, the use of the term and even the idiom of jazz at this time is perhaps anachronistic. Rather than exploring a jazz community per se, as the title suggests, the author’s references to individual jazz musicians appear as asides to the narrative of the development of African American musical performance traditions in general in Jacksonville at the turn of the century. This by no means diminishes the value of Smith’s work, but the inclusion of the phrase “blues and jazz communities” in the title strikes me as somewhat misleading for modern readers accustomed to the standard narrative of the New Orleans origin story.

Smith structures his book in seven chapters focusing on specific elements of the entertainment industry in Jacksonville, each laid out according to their own historical narrative. While the chapters are sequenced roughly chronologically, there is by necessity some significant overlap of periods. This ap-

proach allows for greater continuity within the narrative of each chapter, but sometimes the non-linear overall effect can be disorienting. Commentary regarding the economic, social and cultural implications of events related to musical performance during this time is interspersed with the more detail-oriented, factual representation of developments in personnel, venues, and production concerns that forms the substance of the book. Throughout all of the chapters are references to local players on the scene who have rarely, if ever, been afforded attention in print, as well as localized representations of figures who figure large in the history of American popular music.

In his introduction, Smith establishes the theoretical framework with which he approaches his subject. He also foreshadows a few of the surprising connections between Jacksonville's popular music scene and iconic figures well known on the national stage. Chapter 1 is explanatory and sets the stage of the narrative, by placing the African American community of La Villa as a cultural center within the greater Jacksonville metropolis, as well as outlining general demographic and industrial developments in the area: the shift in African American population from majority to minority, the building boom after the 1901 fire, and the short-lived role of the early film industry. This chapter is appropriately brief — seven pages including notes — but importantly acquaints the reader with specifics of the geography and history of the city.

Chapter 2 focuses on figures familiar to students of American music history and social justice, the brothers James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson. Smith weaves their Jacksonville roots with the story of their partnership with Bob Cole and the journey from the Johnsons' hometown of La Villa to the Great White Way of New York City. Already we see the two primary threads of inquiry explored, as Smith interrelates concepts of social justice in the South, from the perspective of this trio of social activists of the early twentieth century, with the intriguing back story regarding the origin of one of the most recognized popular songs in the African American community of the era, "Lift Ev'ry Voice and Sing." The Johnsons figure throughout the book, but in this chapter they are the subject of primary focus.

Chapter 3 resets the chronology to investigate the impact of influential performer and producer Pat Chappelle, one of the first black theater owners in the state. Smith describes the socio-political conditions that directly affected the development of music in Jacksonville, which in turn influenced music across the nation. By recognizing and placing African American artists from Jacksonville as major contributors to American music theater, Smith presents one of the most compelling arguments for his study. Increasing segregation in the South negatively affected the economic viability of black-owned theaters

and prompted Chappelle to increase his control of audience makeup by staging his own productions in tent shows. Chappelle was also among the first black producers to purchase his own railcars, leading to more control of his company's touring conditions. This new business model could also reduce the overhead of a given production—in this first case for Chappelle, his 1901 touring show *A Rabbit's Foot*—and was soon copied by theatrical producers across the eastern US. As an example of the interesting asides Smith presents throughout the text is how the 1905 *Rabbit's Foot* tour included both iconic early blues singer Gertrude “Ma” Rainey and a young Tim Moore, who later came to national attention for his portrayal of the Kingfish character on the *Amos and Andy* television program from 1951 to 1953.

Chapters 4 and 5 focus mostly on the development of theatrical venues in Jacksonville between 1904 and 1915, with special attention paid to many of the performers, composers, and producers involved. Smith maintains the balance between giving details of the music scene in Jacksonville and explaining the broad social, political and cultural factors affecting the city, state and nation that had such a powerful effect on that industry in this era. He also consistently links the local narrative, with names and locales most readers have likely never encountered, with more prominent figures of the time: a panoply of leaders on the American cultural scene, from composer Perry Bradford and New Orleans' Excelsior Brass Band to blues progenitor and publisher W.C. Handy to self-proclaimed inventor of jazz “Jelly Roll” Morton.

In chapter 4, however, Smith overreaches in attempting to relate the Jacksonville scene with the names of prominent jazz sidemen Freddie Green and Cat Anderson, of the Count Basie and Duke Ellington Orchestras, respectively. Smith describes these influential jazz figures as having started their careers in Savannah's Jenkins Orphanage Band, where Jacksonville's Eugene Mikell was the first musical director. But the implied influence by Mikell on Green and Anderson is hard to accept since Mikell's tenure there was short and preceded the influential jazz musicians by at least thirty years. While these men shared an association with the famous institution, there is simply no evidence given to support a meaningful link from Mikell to these prominent jazz players of the 1930s and 1940s. Skipping ahead to chapter 7, there is a much more substantive link to early jazz in which Smith devotes several pages to a connection between Mikell and the “Hellfighters” unit of World War I. When the United States entry into the war was imminent, Mikell enlisted with the 15th Infantry Regiment, the Harlem division of the New York National Guard. He was subsequently chosen as bandmaster for the all-black regimental band when it's organizer, James Reese Europe was at first deemed ineligible by army classification.<sup>1</sup> The regiment, later renamed the 369th U. S. Infantry Reg-

iment, was deployed to France and was long associated with Jim Europe and the band's sobriquet "The Hellfighters"—whose musical presence electrified French audiences and marked a critical moment in the recognition of early jazz music beyond the territorial boundaries of the United States.<sup>2</sup>

Chapters 6 and 7 serve to delineate the period leading to the end of this most impressive era in live theatrical entertainment in Jacksonville. While there is no shortage of descriptive detail about personnel and theatrical business, Smith focuses more attention on economic and social influences than he does in previous chapters. This is understandable and fitting, since he is outlining the causes of the demise of the thriving live theater scene. The establishment of crushing Jim Crow laws in the state of Florida by 1910 led to the Great Migration and the resultant departure of a large segment of the African American community in Jacksonville to destinations in the North. Other economic influences on the Jacksonville scene called out by Smith include the establishment of regional and national theater circuits, culminating in the dominance of the Theater Owners Booking Association, which favored white theater owners and established what became essentially a monopoly on the black entertainment business throughout the South.

While this book boasts an abundance of information and insight into the theatrical scene in Jacksonville during the era described, there are also noticeable gaps in Smith's coverage. After the first chapter, there is a clear absence of quantitative information regarding exactly how the demographics shifted in relation to the audiences and purveyors of entertainment through the period under investigation. Regarding the previously mentioned questions about overlapping chronology chapter by chapter in the narrative, the creation of a clearly linear timeline up front would have helped this reader more easily synchronize developments in different spheres and among individual actors. Smith includes only one national newspaper, the Indianapolis *Freeman* among his non-Florida primary sources, and while this particular publication is especially good as a record of black travelling performers, other prominent sources of the era, such as the Chicago *Defender* and the Pittsburg *Courier* might also have been consulted. These are admittedly minor and specific criticisms of an attractive book with many points of interest for readers concerned with American music at the turn of the century.

Peter Dunbaugh Smith's *A Cultural History of the First Jazz and Blues Communities in Jacksonville, Florida, 1896–1916* is a fascinating exploration of the musical and theatrical industries within Jacksonville's African American community in the years between the *Plessy v. Ferguson* decision and the first commercial jazz recording in 1917. Much more than simply a thorough survey

of key players and institutions of this local scene, Smith contextualizes his research as a local embodiment of the state of American popular music in this era. By framing his study of one clearly bounded music scene within the larger context of the American music industry and the social and economic concerns in the United States at the turn of the century, Smith transforms his ethnographic survey of the African American cultural center of Jacksonville into a thread within the rich fabric of American popular music and a representation of the unheralded contribution of many cities outside the dominant cultural and business centers of New York, Chicago and New Orleans. Smith's work here is an important contribution to a growing catalogue of musicological research that focuses on specific subjects and regions as a complement to the standard historiographical narrative of American popular music at the turn of the century.

Reviewed by Brian Casey

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Europe, soon to be commissioned as a first lieutenant in the National Guard, was originally not expecting to be directing the band, since army bandleaders typically were noncommissioned officers. Once Europe, however, as the most famous bandleader in New York, was brought on board by the commanding officer Colonel William Hayward, Mikell became Europe's assistant. Reid Badger, *A Life in Ragtime: A Biography of James Reese Europe*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 143.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

## Contributors to This Issue

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