

**“RISE, COLUMBIA’S DAUGHTERS”: CONSTRUCTING FEMALE IDENTITY
IN THE UNITED STATES (1900-1920) THROUGH SUFFRAGE AND MUSICAL
PERFORMANCE**

by

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Women living in the United States from 1900 to 1920 were faced with an ideological dilemma surrounding the issue of woman suffrage. How could women reconcile the seemingly unbridgeable divide between what it meant to advocate for being a full-fledged, voting citizen while simultaneously upholding the feminine ideals rooted in the Cult of True Womanhood—which by this time had come to dominate the prescription of behavior for middle class women? Depending on a wide variety of factors, women often had disparate experiences navigating issues of femininity and women’s rights. Some, such as those associated with the National Woman Suffrage Association, chose to reconcile traditional ideals of womanhood and domesticity with their quest for suffrage. Other factions, like the Women’s Political Union, distanced themselves from and challenged these standards.

The varying degrees to which women embodied and negotiated the two forces represented in these suffrage factions—femininity and feminism—was not only applicable to women active in protest or other acts of organized social and political advocacy for change, but can be found in the realm of contemporary musical performance. While suffragists’ tactics reflected different ideologies and strategies for creating and shaping identity, female performers made similar decisions pertaining to self-presentation as musicians. These decisions took many forms, from the spaces that the musicians chose (or lacked the choice) to perform to the extent in which feminine ideals were inherent within organizational structure of ensembles. Decisions of this nature were

not limited to the concert hall, but materialized within suffrage music. Suffrage music-making entailed contrasting practices of femininity and feminism.

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PREFACE

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My journey in musicology began as an undergraduate at SUNY Fredonia and I would like to thank my former professor, Dr. James Davis, for providing me with the encouragement I needed to pursue this path. Thank you for demonstrating an unequalled and inspiring passion for music scholarship and the discipline.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Women living in the United States from 1900 to 1920 were faced with an ideological dilemma surrounding the issue of woman suffrage. How could they reconcile the seemingly unbridgeable divide between what it meant to advocate for being a full-fledged, voting citizen while simultaneously upholding the feminine ideals rooted in the Cult of True Womanhood—which by this time had come to dominate the prescription of behavior for middle class women?¹ The Cult of True Womanhood was an ideology that sought to protect mid- to upper-class women from the corrupting factors of the public sphere.² The Cult was centered upon four primary tenets: piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity.³ These ideals were meant to prescribe to women the ways in which they should act and behave in order to be “true women.”⁴ Women’s primary purpose was to create a cheerful place within the home to which men could seek refuge from the outside world.⁵ Unfortunately, these prescriptions were specific to class and race, leading to disparate experiences

¹ The Cult of True Womanhood has alternately been labeled the Cult of Domesticity. See Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Cult of Domesticity,” in *The Reader’s Companion to U.S. Women’s History* ed. Wilma Mankiller, et al. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998).

² Sheryl Hurner, “Discursive Identity Formation of Suffrage Women: Reframing the “Cult of True Womanhood” Through Song,” *Western Journal of Communication* 70 no. 3 (2006): 3.

³ Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976), 21.

⁴ These prescriptions of behavior were codified through a variety of contemporaneous publications, such as *The Young Lady’s Book* and *Godey’s Lady’s Book*. Authors writing about this particular topic apparently used the phrase “Cult of True Womanhood,” but did not provide concrete definitions as to what the phrase entailed, though they provided descriptions of how to follow these ideals. For more information, see Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18 no. 2 (1966). Also, Barbara Welter, *Dimity Convictions: The American Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1976).

⁵ Barbara Welter, “The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860,” *American Quarterly* 18 no. 2 (1966): 163.

when navigating issues of femininity and women's rights. For example, because women from a less advantageous financial background might need to seek employment rather than having the luxury of leisure time, they would not have been able to fulfill the stipulation of remaining within the domestic sphere. This exclusivity inherent in who could be true women also can explain why white, middle-class women focused much of their efforts of civic clean-up and social uplift on the urban poor and immigrant populations. Because white middle-class women were framed by the Cult's scope as superior and socially elevated, "true women" viewed themselves as using their own position to socially uplift other, non-white, non-middle-class groups. Some, such as those associated with the National Woman Suffrage Association, chose to downplay traditional notions of ideal womanhood and domesticity with their quest for suffrage. Other factions, like the Women's Political Union, distanced themselves from and challenged these ideals.

The woman suffrage movement is often considered to have begun at the first American Woman's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. Much of the early history of the movement occurred within New York State as well as other Northeastern states, which is why I will focus primarily on these locations. The suffrage movement has a longer and less structured history that predates the Seneca Falls Convention.⁶ I use the term "suffrage" primarily in the context of this thesis as "a vote given by a member of a body, state, or society, in assent to a proposition or in favour of the election of a person" as well as an "approval, sanction, consent."⁷ However, other definitions, such as that of an "intercessory prayer" could apply to woman suffragists, particularly when considering the religious context in which many suffragists developed their arguments. The use of the term "suffrage" was prevalent in the naming of many suffrage organizations and

⁶ Lori Ginsburg, *Untidy Origins: A Story of Woman's Rights in Antebellum New York* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 8-9.

⁷ Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "suffrage," accessed March 19, 2017,

primarily referred to the first definition.

Two national organizations were formed in 1869: the National Woman Suffrage Association led by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, and the American Woman Suffrage Association by Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe. Eventually in 1890 the two organizations merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), for the purpose of yielding more power and effectiveness. Following the formation of the NAWSA, the suffrage movement achieved little progress until 1913. This period has been referred to as the doldrums of the movement.⁸

In 1913, women in the United States began to adopt the more militant tactics employed by their British counterparts of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). Alice Paul and Lucy Burns organized and initiated many of these new tactics, such as marching in parades and forming protest picket lines outside of the White House. When arrested for picketing during a time of war (World War I), the suffragists suffered deplorable treatment and conditions in prisons and executed hunger strikes, resulting in forced feedings. The news of the treatment the suffragist prisoners faced was disseminated to the public. Outrage over the treatment eventually placed pressure on President Woodrow Wilson to pass the nineteenth amendment in 1920.

The ways in which Paul and Burns utilized music as a strategy differed from those of older or more conservative factions of the suffrage movement, resulting in a variety of different kinds of suffrage music. While this means the music of the suffrage movement is rich in repertoire and the variety of materials, musicological research in this particular field has been disappointingly scarce. The number of full-length studies of music and the woman suffrage movement are few and include Francie Wolff's publication *Give the Ballot to the Mothers* and a recent master's thesis written by

⁸ Eleanor Flexner, *Century of Struggle: The Woman's Rights Movement in the United States* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), 256.

Rosyln Brandes, *“Let Us Sing as We Go”*: *The Role of Music in the United States Suffrage Movement*.⁹ Numerous articles as well as a memoir focused on British suffragette composer Ethel Smyth have also been produced.¹⁰ Musicologist Elizabeth Wood has published articles about both Ethel Smyth and women’s suffrage.¹¹

In other fields, particularly sociological, cultural and literary studies, suffrage history has experienced more development. Often these studies focus on a specific element of the suffrage movement but expand to incorporate many aspects of suffrage culture, often including musical examples to illustrate their point.¹² Musicological research in the area of suffrage music would benefit from approaching the music in a similar fashion. By expanding the scope through which we view the music, suffrage music-making will take on greater meaning as an activity within a larger social movement. For example, I spend some time discussing suffrage contrafacta, socially and politically relevant texts that were set to familiar popular songs and hymns, which provide an engrossing and valuable lens through which to view the suffrage movement.

The varying degrees to which women embodied and negotiated the spectrum of female identity in these suffrage factions—represented by their poles of domestic femininity and activist feminism—was not only applicable to women who chose to participate in protest or other acts of organized social and political resistance, but can also be found in the realm of contemporary

⁹Francie Wolff, *Give the Ballot to the Mothers: Songs of the Suffragists* (Springfield, MO: Denlinger’s Publishers, Limited, 1998). Also; Rosyln Brandes, *“Let Us Sing as We Go”*: *The Role of Music in the United States Suffrage Movement* (master’s thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2016).

¹⁰ Rachel Lumsden, “‘The Music Between Us’: Ethel Smyth, Emmeline Pankhurst, and ‘Possession’,” *Feminist Studies* 41 no. 2 (2015): 335-70. Ethel Smyth and Ronald Crichton, *The Memoirs of Ethel Smyth* (London: Viking, 1987). Christopher Wiley, “Music and Literature: Ethel Smyth, Virginia Woolf, and ‘The First Woman to Write an Opera’,” *The Musical Quarterly* 96 no. 2 (2013): 263-95.

¹¹ Elizabeth Wood, “Performing Rights: A Sonography of Women’s Suffrage,” *The Musical Quarterly* 79 no. 4 (1995): 606-43. Also; Elizabeth Wood, “Women, Music, and Ethel Smyth: A Pathway in the Politics of Music,” *The Massachusetts Review* 24 no. 1 (1983): 125-39.

¹² For example, Amy Shore’s book *Suffrage and the Silver Screen* focuses on suffrage film, yet incorporates many other examples non-specific to film, such as cartoons, allegorical plays, and music.

musical performance. As I have worked through the issues discussed in this thesis, I have imagined the notions of feminism and femininity as a kind of continuum. Women, particularly suffragists, had to consider both factors when constructing their identity and presentation. As I attempt to demonstrate, women could exhibit aspects of feminism and femininity simultaneously, negotiating between the two in a manner of continuous gender performance, in terms of Judith Butler's use of the phrase. The way which I use the term "feminism" here and throughout this thesis refers to the definition associated with first wave feminism, as opposed to later periods. I am using the term to refer to its basic conception of equality and equal rights. Femininity, on the other hand, is a method of identity presentation, possibly linked to gender, and based upon culturally or socially ideals of what or how women were expected to present themselves.¹³

Just as the tactics of various suffrage organizations reflected different ideologies and strategies for creating and shaping identity, female performers had to make similar decisions pertaining to how they presented themselves as musicians. These decisions took many forms, from the spaces in which the musicians chose (or lacked the choice) to perform, to the extent to which feminine ideals were inherent within the organizational structure of the ensembles, to the choice of instruments that the women played. Such decisions were not limited to the concert hall, but also materialized within the music incorporated by suffragettes. By approaching suffrage music from the perspective of female music-making and the practice of femininity and feminism at the dawn of the twentieth century, a complex and rich picture emerges of this genre and the ways in which it functioned within the woman suffrage movement.

¹³ Kareen R. Malone and Shannon D. Kelly, "Femininity," in *Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology*, ed. Thomas Teo (New York: Springer-Verlag, 2014), 697-702.

2.0 WOMEN'S CLUBS: SETTING THE STAGE FOR POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND ORGANIZATION

One of the most significant enterprises to the formation and eventual success of the woman suffrage movement was the development of female-led organizations and women's clubs. Beginning in the early years of the nineteenth century primarily as religious societies, clubs later expanded to encompass a wide variety of cultural, civic and self-improvement ventures. Specifically, women's organizations were largely meant for white, middle-class women and often excluded individuals who were non-white or those who were not ethnically Western European. There were instances in which African American or non-Western European women developed and maintained their own clubs separately from those of the white middle-class.¹⁴ Not only did clubs provide a legitimate reason for women to venture from their domestic spheres and duty, if only for a short period of time, but these social clubs laid part of the basis for the suffrage movement by providing a model for solid structure and organization.¹⁵ This structure permeated through different levels and areas of society, particularly in terms of how music was organized and performed by women.

Women's clubs began to appear in the United States at least as early as the first decades of the nineteenth century. This thesis focuses primarily upon organizations located within the Northeastern region of the United States due to the prevalence of women's club and suffrage organizations that were active in this

¹⁴ Kathleen L. Endres, *Akron's "Better Half": Women's Clubs and the Humanization of the City, 1825-1925* (Akron, OH: University of Akron Press, 2006), 11-12.

¹⁵ Though it was probable that most men (husbands or fathers) of clubwomen supported—or at least tolerated—women's participation in clubs, there were some examples in which men thought clubs were dangerous for enticing women to leave their homes. In Akron, OH for example, a local rabbi questioned the legitimacy of clubs and accused them of corruption. See Endres, 12.

particular geographical location at this time. Such organizations were primarily formed by Protestant women, a trend which continued into and through the trajectory of the woman suffrage movement. Because of a multitude of factors, these particular women held more privileged positions in society than many of their compatriots who didn't share the same religious, economic, or social position. It is worthwhile to specify what the term "middle class" refers to during this time and within this context. During the mid- to late- nineteenth century—due in large part to urbanization and industrialization—a middle or "middling" class began to emerge in the United States. In an effort to distinguish themselves as a particular group apart from the lower and aristocratic classes, the new middling class developed particular cultural tastes as well as a demand for cultural and political institutions that would set them apart.¹⁶ The middle class of the United States at the turn of the century was comprised of a group of individuals who typically had more education and capital for spending and consumeristic purposes. Men's professions encompassed within this class distinction included managers, lawyers, and doctors.¹⁷ As the middle class emerged, fear of the lower classes began to develop as well.¹⁸ This fear could explain why uplifting the lower class would become a sort of social project for many club women wishing to improve urban landscapes.

The clubs that I primarily focus on within this study began to take shape following the Civil War. According to Theodora Martin, prior to the Civil War communities had been self-sufficient, based upon hierarchy determined by family relations and the Church.¹⁹ After the Civil War relations became more egalitarian, in large part due to the increased social and economic role undertaken by women during the fighting. During the years of the war, women's clubs undertook responsibilities of caring for wounded soldiers and the families left behind by the men fighting.

¹⁶ Simon Morgan, *A Victorian Woman's Place: Public Culture in the Nineteenth Century* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2007), 4. Morgan deals specifically with the middling class in Britain during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. While different from the United States in several categories, such as geography and religious and political traditions, the social demographic distinctions that Morgan makes are similar to those of the United States during the mid to late nineteenth century.

¹⁷ Andrew P. Haley, *Turning the Tables: Restaurants and the Rise of the American Middle Class, 1880-1920* (University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 5

¹⁸ Amy Schranger Lang, *The Syntax of Class: Writing Inequality in Nineteenth-century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 3-4.

¹⁹ Theodora Penny Martin, *The Sound of Our Own Voices: Women's Study Clubs 1860-1910* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987), 17.

This form of social and civic care and betterment continued into later decades and became the main driving force of Progressive Era women's organizations and well as many suffragists.

2.1 WOMAN'S POSITION IN SOCIETY DURING THE MID- TO LATE- NINETEENTH-CENTURY

During the Civil War, women experienced an increased role and responsibility in the support of war efforts, which resulted in a sense of increased self-confidence and self-assurance. The Sanitary Fairs of the Civil War are just one example of events organized by women who became involved socially and civically at this time. These charitable events, a sort of precursor to the suffrage bazaars of the twentieth century, were lavish and spectacular fundraisers held in Northern states to support medical relief for Union soldiers. Women took a leading role in these activities, often out of necessity because a large portion of the male population was off to war.²⁰ These sentiments translated into increased social and political involvement during the last decades of the nineteenth century once the men returned from war and middle-class women's schedules were marked by more leisure time.²¹

Whereas women had previously held profitable positions through the production of goods within their homes, by the latter part of the century members of the middle-class no longer had to rely on these sources of income.²² The prominence of factories and industrialized production meant that many of the products women had previously produced, such as clothing, could be outsourced and produced more quickly and at a lower cost. The developing industrial economy meant that a

²⁰ For a more in-depth study of the Sanitary Fairs and the incorporation of music into the Fairs' proceedings, see Jean Waters Thomas, *Music of the Great Sanitary Fairs: Culture and Charity in the American Civil War* (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1989).

²¹ Martin, 20.

²² The changing economy and its effects on women's position in society have often been discussed in studies of female domesticity in the nineteenth century. For more information see Christine E. Bose, *Women in 1900: Gateway to the Political Economy of the 20th Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2001).

middle-class husband's position of success and prosperity was marked by the ability of his wife to stay within the home at leisure. In conjunction with the middle-class man's position as sole economic provider, women became distanced from association with money. The separation both justified and was justified by the contemporary belief that women were morally superior to men. In the 1885 novel *The Rise of Silas Lapham* by William Dean Howells, the title character is a recently ordained member of the nouveau riche. Having obtained his wealth through industrial and commercial means, Silas is faced with a moral and ethical decision involving matters of his business. Though Silas is unsure how to proceed and nearly falters in making the morally upright choice, it is his wife who acts as his ethical voice and guide throughout the dilemma. Whereas Silas is easily corrupted and swayed by the temptation of profit, Mrs. Lapham—as the woman of the household and thus its moral voice—ensures that Silas does not stray from the moral and ethical path before him. Because of the corruptive nature of money and economics, women were able to maintain their “morally upright” nature by separating themselves from most aspects of money.²³ This perceived moral superiority would be used as both support for and an argument against women's involvement with the suffrage movement.

The new surge in women's leisure obviously allowed them more time for new and greater variety of pursuits. These pursuits included involvement with organizations based upon religion, self-improvement, and eventually political and social activism. Organizations devoted to activism would come to form the basis for political organizations concerned with woman suffrage. These organizations largely served either social or civic functions. While “social” could refer to the basic purpose of the clubs to enable the social gathering of individual women, in this context it more often refers to a social consciousness revolving around improving the lives of a variety of peoples,

²³ Martin, 22.

usually those considered of a lesser social status than the women performing the work. For example, the Woman's Christian Temperance Union was concerned with the sale and consumption of alcohol, what they saw as a social ill detrimental to home and family. The missionary work that they conducted was focused on correcting these issues as a means for uplifting society and its citizens. On the other hand, although the term "civic" has similar implications of social consciousness, civic refers to broader community and social organizations.

These ideals of uplifting the urban poor and working class were not limited to women's social organizations, but became a prevalent aspect of Progressive Era cultural development. One example of culture for the masses, or a democratization of the arts, can be found in the underlying ideology that supported the creation of Chicago's Auditorium Building in 1889. The Auditorium, which from 1891 to 1904 was the first home of the Chicago Orchestra led by Theodore Thomas, was constructed as a social project meant to adapt the classical and canonical works of European music to the American industrial environment of the period.²⁴ The building was designed as a "cultural machine," envisioned as a collaboration for social, financial, and artistic ends. One of the primary social goals enabled by the Auditorium's construction was the democratization of high art performances, allowing working-class citizens to purchase tickets, attend, and enjoy productions at the Auditorium. This democratization in turn would allow for a cultural uplift that was not limited to the upper class, but could be extended to poorer members of society.

Social uplift through the arts permeated from large professional ventures such as the Chicago Auditorium and Orchestra to much smaller-scale amateur music clubs. Musical clubs became popular during the late nineteenth century, particular throughout the last decade. Initially formed as organizations specific to city or region, they eventually joined in a national organization,

²⁴ Mark Clague, "The Industrial Evolution of the Arts: Chicago's Auditorium Building (1889-) and Cultural Machine," *The Opera Quarterly* 22 no. 3-4 (2006): 479.

the National Federation of Music Clubs, formed during the Chicago Columbian Exposition in 1893 by Rose Fay Thomas, the wife of Theodor Thomas.²⁵ This development from regional to national organization would eventually be duplicated by the suffrage movement during the first decades of the twentieth century.

2.2 WOMEN'S CLUBS AS VEHICLES FOR SOCIAL UPLIFT

The founders of most women's musical clubs and their initial members were elite and prominent members of society. Unable to perform professionally in public because of strict guidelines and expectations of femininity based upon the Cult of True Womanhood, these women sought to share and develop their love for music and musical performance while still staying within their appropriate domestic sphere. The Cult of True Womanhood required that women maintain a domestic position and spirit and that their actions revolve around their position in the home. Meeting with other women of a similar social, class position who were required to perform similar domestic duties and expectations provided women with suitable company to perform club activities. The activities performed by these organizations, likewise, revolved around the moral and social duties expected of a female citizen.

One example of such an organization was the Tuesday Musical Club of Pittsburgh. The club began in 1889 with a small group of prominent women.²⁶ The four founding members' status within the Pittsburgh community was representative of the general membership of many similar clubs. These women were from established and prominent families within Pittsburgh and several

²⁵ Gretchen Van Roy, "'The Seed Was Planted': The Story of Rose Fay Thomas," *Music Clubs Magazine* 87 no. 2 (2008): 9.

²⁶ Anne Marie DeGeorge, "Pittsburgh's Tuesday Musical Club Celebrates 125 Years," *Music Clubs Magazine* 93 no. 3 (2014): 12-13.

were married to some of the city's most prominent men. Eleanor Gillespie Magee, in whose home the Tuesday Musical Club initially met, was married to Christopher Lyman Magee, an industrialist and leader of the Republican political machine that controlled the city government. Another founding member, Kate Cassatt McKnight, though never married, was from a long established Pittsburgh family. Interestingly, in an article dedicated to McKnight within a 1911 genealogical volume, her work with religious and historical societies is praised along with her dedication to the city of Pittsburgh, yet no mention is made of her involvement with the Tuesday Musical Club.²⁷ Perhaps the club had not been sufficiently established at the time, or did not garner enough public attention to prompt its inclusion in the volume, or maybe her involvement with the musical organization was deemed too frivolous for mention.

The club structure also provided a means for bridging the distance between private and public performance. Women had previously been denied the opportunity to perform in public while maintaining a respectable position of femininity. The development of musical clubs allowed women to meet, perform, and compose music for and with each other without challenging the perception of propriety to their womanly duties or appearance. Under the guise of self-improvement, women socialized and further developed their own musical skills. In this way the musical club can be seen as a means for women to become professionals, or rather highly-skilled musicians. This is not to say that women were necessarily professionals in the sense that a male musician could be paid for his performances or compositions, but that women could complete similar professional tasks and skill-building exercises within the context of the organization. Club meetings initially took place in the homes and parlors of members. Although the early meetings of the club resembled the approved nineteenth century spaces that women had been traditionally

²⁷ John Woolf Jordan, ed., *Colonial and Revolutionary Families of Pennsylvania: Genealogical and Personal Memoirs* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1911), 3:1561-1562.

resigned to, eventually the clubs developed more standardized and rigorous structures of organization.

When examining the activities of such women's organizations, several questions arise. Were these women—who left their regular activities and domestic duties for short periods of time each week to participate in social clubs—performing defiance against contemporary standards of femininity? Or were they simply contributing to the reification of the system in which they were entrenched? How did women's participation in clubs, either as defiance or conformity, contribute to the suffrage movement as it developed in the twentieth century? In her scholarship on women's study clubs, Martin portrays the club women as fulfilling their roles as deemed appropriate by the Cult of True Womanhood. Rather than breaking from their appropriate positions, Martin argues that these women carried the Cult “to its natural extension.”²⁸ Conversely, Karen Blair argues that club women's actions were actually defiant and feminist.²⁹

From Martin's perspective, women formed clubs—particularly study clubs—as a means for becoming more like the ideal feminine image portrayed through the Cult of True Womanhood. Through self-improvement, women were able to argue that they could become better wives and mothers. One specific aspect of this assertion was that it was necessary for women to gain as much knowledge as possible. By learning a variety of skills, including those associated with literature and music, mothers would be more adept at teaching their own children, thus producing better citizens.

Women who sought a level of education and knowledge beyond their approved grasp were often portrayed as strange creatures. While middle-class women may have been encouraged or at least tolerated for acquiring a certain degree of learning, they achieved a college or seminary

²⁸ Martin, 28.

²⁹ Karen J. Blair, *The Clubwomen as Feminist* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers, Inc., 1980).

education only at their own social peril. During the 1880s, Josephine Dexter said of her position as an educated woman, “A college woman was such a curio that it was almost impossible to escape self-consciousness. Other women and men, too, were afraid of us, and set us on such a lofty pedestal that we were in constant fear of falling off.”³⁰ In other instances, women met with “yells, hisses, ‘caterwauling,’ mock applause, offensive remarks upon personal appearance,” when entering the site of instruction or lectures.³¹ Such unpleasant occurrences took place in coeducational settings and were one of the motivating factors for women to create and enter single-sex educational institutions. Single-sex, female-oriented institutions took the form of public or normal schools, institutes of seminaries, or women’s colleges, such as the Seven Sister colleges.³²

Another argument that club women used to demonstrate the connection between organizations and the Cult of True Womanhood was women’s moral responsibility and obligation to social activism. Because women were believed to be morally superior to men due to their distance from financial earnings, many women dedicated their newly gained leisure time to aiding the poor and less fortunate. Reform efforts often included focus on destitute women such as prostitutes or unwed mothers, the urban poor as well as newly arrived immigrants, and the reformation of drinking laws.

Despite the evidence that club women perpetuated ideas of domestic femininity without challenging social norms, this argument ignores the breadth and depth to feminine identity during this time. These assumptions discredit women who were able to fulfill ideals of domestic feminism while simultaneously subverting mainstream notions of how upper class women should behave. While it is very likely that, as Martin suggests, many club women believed themselves to be

³⁰ Martin, 43.

³¹ Ibid., 44.

³² Petra Meyer-Frazier, *Bound Music, Unbound Women: The Search for an Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (Missoula, MT: The College Music Society), 97.

fulfilling their duties as laid out by the Cult of True Womanhood, this did not prove true for all women, especially as can be seen during the early decades of the twentieth century within more progressive, militant sects of the suffrage movement. In opposition to the fulfillment of feminine norms, Karen Blair's notion of "domestic feminism" frames the club women's actions in a more progressive light. Blair works to redefine the more conservative view of these middle-class women by claiming that they were actually feminists.

Under the guise of domestic feminism, Blair suggests that while the women were intent on carrying out their feminine duties based upon morality, domesticity, and service to others, the clubs could be understood as a sort of "loophole."³³ By masking their actions as concessions to domesticity and femininity, club women were able to leave the confines of the home in order to engage with the public sphere. As the Progressive Era began and the nineteenth century turned into the twentieth, middle-class women's involvement within organizations outside of the home became almost obligatory. In order to uphold their positions as morally superior beings, women were required to undertake social and political reforms, and to clean up the corruption wrought by men's political and business dealings upon urban landscapes. The American woman was required "to supervise the moral standards of her community, or wickedness would destroy the home she had uplifted."³⁴

While the ideology behind domestic feminism could justify women expanding their sphere into the public realm, domestic feminists often held fast to the traditional notions of domesticity. Rather than outwardly challenging the social and familial standards accepted by the majority of middle class society, domestic feminists embraced the woman's position in the home and used their prescribed duties as a method for entering the public sphere without bringing scorn or concern upon

³³ Blair, 7.

³⁴ Martin, 7.

themselves. One woman's organization that followed these standards was Sorosis, founded in 1868.³⁵ The club was primarily comprised of career women, many of whom could not depend on a male relation for income. The organization was formed when Sorosis' founder and journalist, Jane Croly, was excluded from a New York Press Club dinner held in honor of Charles Dickens.³⁶ Outraged, Croly and other women formed Sorosis in reaction to the social slight that they had been subjected to. The members of the club were adamant that their organization would have little to do with men and would exclude them from membership. Croly was convinced that if men were to be admitted, rather than the women working with men as equals the "men would overpower them [women] if they tried to work together."³⁷ Perhaps as a way to make a statement against the men who had recently slighted them and to further establish themselves as a force to be heard, the members of Sorosis chose Delmonico's Restaurant in New York City as the location for their bimonthly meetings, the same location where the New York Press Club dinner for Dickens had been held. Apparently the choice of Delmonico's was particularly precarious because unescorted women had not previously been able "to procure a meal at a first-class restaurant in New York."³⁸ Yet, despite these actions that challenged established norms, Jane Croly was adamant that more controversial subjects, such as woman suffrage, should be prohibited from the organization's proceedings.³⁹ Though the women of Sorosis all shared a dissatisfaction with women's place in society, Croly believed that they could only improve it by conforming to ideals of femininity and domesticity.

³⁵ For more information concerning Sorosis and its founder, Jane Croly and Sorosis, see Jane Cunningham Croly, *Memories of Jane Cunningham Croly, "Jenny June"* (New York: Woman's Press Club of New York City, 1904). Also Jane Cunningham Croly, *Sorosis: Its Origin and History* (New York: J.J. Little and Co., 1886).

³⁶ Blair, 20.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 21.

³⁸ Blair, 20.

³⁹ *Ibid*, 23.

2.3 THE TEMPERANCE MOVEMENT

The temperance movement experienced four major waves of influence and activism from the mid-eighteenth century through the passing of national Prohibition in 1920. During the first phase, the Great Awakening (1740-1744), women did not typically perform dominant roles in comparison to their male counterparts.⁴⁰ They were more or less dependent upon and subordinate to the male members' actions. It was during the Second Great Awakening (1797-1840) that women began to exude a stronger and more influential force on the face of the movement. Rather than relying on men's directives, "Women played an instrumental role in fostering revivals, and women's piety took on a militancy that was directed especially against irreligious or insufficiently pious men."⁴¹ Temperance women enacted the striking strategy of directly attacking men, which was supported by the women's supposed superior sense of morality. These actions were taken a step further during the Woman's Crusade (1873-74) in which women directed their energy towards deconstructing "institutions of male culture," the saloon. Women's role as the ideal of domesticity and morality was eventually epitomized during the fourth and final phase of the temperance movement with the creation of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) in 1874. The quest for temperance and control of men's drinking became woman's moral obligation in order to defend the sacred realm of the family and home. While women took militant actions, such as storming taverns and reciting speeches to the patrons and proprietor, these actions were legitimized by the feminine, domestic, and civic duties required of all "true" women.

It is important to note the overlap in supporters that occurred between various Progressive

⁴⁰ For more information regarding women's culture and activities related to the period of the Enlightenment, see Elizabeth Eger, *Bluestockings: Women of Reason from Enlightenment to Romanticism* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

⁴¹ Barbara Leslie Epstein, *The Politics of Domesticity: Women, Evangelism, and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century America* (Middleton, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1981), 1.

Era reform movements, particularly between the suffrage and temperance movements. Either organization would often look to the other to garner more support and strengthen their own numbers. A pair of particularly famous suffragists, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, were both involved with the temperance movement following the organization of the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848. Anthony led temperance meetings in Rochester, New York, where she met Stanton.⁴² During this same period in the 1850s, Stanton crafted writings that demonstrated a correlation between the abuses of alcohol by husbands and fathers and the inequality faced by women.⁴³

The woman-led portions of the temperance movement in the late nineteenth century, particularly the WCTU, organized themselves in a similar way to women's clubs. It is the organization of the temperance movement and similar religious reformation groups that influenced how women chose to structure their various clubs. Apart from the gatherings that were held, such as demonstrating at and picketing near pubs, temperance leagues held regular meetings. These meetings often featured a varied selection of music, from organ voluntaries to group singing.

2. 4 SUFFRAGE ORGANIZATION AND TACTICS

Domestic feminism of the mid-nineteenth century carried into the later decades of the suffrage movement, particularly among more conservative parties associated with the movement. These organizations, such as the Woman Suffrage Party (founded in 1909), relied upon similar ideology of domestic feminism by translating woman's moral superiority into "civic housekeeping." The Woman Suffrage Party (WSP) built their platform upon philanthropic politics. Because women

⁴² Sue Davis, *The Political Thought of Elizabeth Cady Stanton: Women's Rights and the American Political Traditions* (New York: New York University Press, 2008), 85.

⁴³ Davis, 86-87.

were moral, and because women's clubs had established a position for women within the public sphere, they were obligated to clean up and correct urban corruption and enact reforms within areas of education, housing, and sanitation.⁴⁴ Just as Sorosis relied in large part on the traditional roles of women, the WSP extended women's function beyond the domestic realm into the public sphere.

Much like the women's clubs, the WSP appealed to society women of the upper and middle classes. By the beginning of the twentieth century suffragists were associated with images of masculinized and unfashionable women. Part of the WSP's mission was to further the suffragist cause by changing public opinion and the images that were associated with suffrage. WSP members emphasized fashionable and feminine images through publication materials, sponsored events, and through the party members' own appearance. One such event was the suffrage bazaar. The suffrage bazaar sold and "valorized" the use of domestic objects, household gadgets such as vacuum cleaners.⁴⁵ While suffragists attended the bazaar in order to raise money for the support of suffrage, the objects for sale encouraged women to maintain their domestic duties and their role within the private sphere.⁴⁶ According to Amy Shore, by desiring and upholding consumer products as symbols of femininity, women demonstrated an ideal feminine image, and thus an ideal voter: "the logical outcome of woman's sentimental identification led to voting for the female who most closely embodied the model female voter—the one who demonstrated the capacity to make good consumer decisions."⁴⁷

"Sentimental identification" was meant to create a sympathetic response in the woman who came in contact with it. The concept "drew upon Victorian notions of domestic womanhood to negotiate the historical problematic of suffrage representation during the era."⁴⁸ If more

⁴⁴ Amy Shore, *Suffrage and the Silver Screen* (Ph.D. Diss., New York University, 2003), 46.

⁴⁵ Shore, 68.

⁴⁶ The bazaar was also a tactic utilized by the Sanitary Fairs of the Civil War.

⁴⁷ Shore, 71,

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 52.

conservative organizations were to gain the support of a larger number of society women, they needed to appeal to these women's ideological outlook. One approach was the creation of hagiographic, pro-suffrage texts and images. Just as the depictions of saints, famous suffrage leaders were depicted as moral beings who upheld the greatest sense of femininity and were more than worthy to win the right to vote. As Amy Shore describes, "In short, the practice of hagiography is intended to construct the life of an individual into that of the life of a saint, connect it to current day concerns of a moral dimension, and evoke in the listener/reader a moral response to that condition that is in line with the 'moral lesson' of the saint's life."⁴⁹ Not only did the comparison between the suffragist and saint emphasize the moral righteousness of the suffragist, but it also inscribed the strife that marked her life and the eventual and inevitable fulfillment of her efforts that was to come. In short, the suffragists became martyrs, upheld and documented in various publications.

In effect, hagiography was intended to create a response of sentimental identification. Whereas during the nineteenth century suffragists had been viewed by objectors as selfish women looking to gain voting rights for their own purposes, hagiography and its use of sentimental identification sought to increase support for the suffrage movement in the twentieth century. The term "sentimental" has a prevalent history in the United States throughout the nineteenth century, particularly in terms of literature. Shirley Samuels describes sentimentality during this particular time as "...a set of cultural practices designed to evoke a certain form of emotional response, usually empathy, in the reader or viewer[.]"⁵⁰ In literature, sentimentalism—often associated with women writers—took the form of conventionalized stories and plots whose purpose was to affect the reader's emotional state. This rhetoric often came under criticism for what detractors

⁴⁹ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁰ Shirley Samuels, *Culture of Sentiment: Race, Gender, and Sentimentality in 19th-Century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 4.

considered to be disingenuous or superfluous plots and reader reactions.⁵¹ In terms of the suffrage movement, sentimentalism was garnered as a way to create sympathy through nostalgia as well as identification with suffrage heroes. By depicting suffragists as civic-minded women who worked for the uplift of society rather than their own gains, women—particularly those of the upper and middle classes—found it easier to identify with the cause because of the correlation that existed between the suffragists’ motivations and the ideals of domesticity and femininity.

One of the most prominent uses of hagiographical discourse occurred in depictions of Susan B. Anthony. Anthony was, by the time of her death in 1906, a venerated saint of the early suffrage movement. While this was of course due in large part to her efforts, participation, and leadership during the nineteenth century, the prominence of Anthony and her connection with hagiography can be traced to the construction of the suffrage narrative. The epitome of this narrative came in the massive *History of Woman Suffrage*, which was initially created and written by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Anthony.⁵² Though the purpose of the book was to document the struggles and success of the woman suffrage movement in the United States up to that point in time, Stanton and Anthony had a well-defined agenda in creating the document. As the end of the nineteenth century approached, the history of the suffrage movement had not yet been defined or constructed. The ability for a social movement’s members to participate in remembrance and to share a collective historical memory was and is an important aspect in the creation of community and unity.⁵³ The realization of a standard narrative gave members a base from which to approach their current needs as a marginalized group. The importance of this narrative is seen in the use of hagiographic

⁵¹ Faye Halpern, *Sentimental Readers: The Rise, Fall, and Revival of a Disparaged Rhetoric* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2013), xi-xvii

⁵² Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, and Matilda Joslyn Gage, ed. *History of Woman Suffrage* (Rochester, NY: Charles Mann, 1887): <https://archive.org/details/historyofwomansu01stanuoft>

⁵³ Lisa Tetrault, *The Myth of Seneca Falls* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 1.

suffrage images as well as the common connection that was made between suffragists and historical and patriotic symbols.

The use of patriotic images recalled and referenced historical events situated in American collective identity. “No taxation without representation” was one popular slogan that the suffragists employed in order to identify and remind viewers of the connection between the women’s struggles and that of the American revolutionaries of the eighteenth century. These representations relied on both allegorical and patriotic images. By comparing suffragists and women to early patriotic events or ideals, women’s social work and civic duty were extended in a historical sense. They were imagined as mirroring the forefathers of the United States, who could be argued held a saintly, venerated status similar to the suffrage leaders who were fighting their own battle for equality and liberty. By drawing these patriotic connections associated with freedom and liberty, suffragists’ efforts were endowed with a noble and respectable quality. Such associations with patriotism were extended to encompass song. As will be discussed in more depth later, suffragists often appropriated patriotic tunes for use in the movement. Similar to the patriotic illustrations, suffrage music’s use of patriotic melodies created an aural connection for the listener between the suffragist and the patriotic American.

Suffrage images were not limited to printed publications. They also extended to the movie screen during the first decade of the twentieth century. Suffrage leaders such as Anna Howard Shaw often appeared in suffrage films where they portrayed themselves. A variation of the hagiographic suffrage texts, national leaders’ presence on the silver screen was marked by moral righteousness and dedication to civic duty and social uplift. The film appearances accomplished two tasks. The first was that the suffrage leader provided a source for identification while simultaneously providing representation. Other women and suffragists could see and recognize Shaw as herself, but also as the embodiment of the noble and civic-minded suffragists whom they

aspired to be. Also a source of representation, viewers who did not necessarily support the movement were given the image of a morally upright and uplifting woman who displayed all of the characteristics of ideal femininity. The second task accomplished was that suffrage films worked to bridge the physical distance between movement members who were scattered across the country. The movement could be truly national due to a geographically disparate audience's interactions with these types of text and materials.

These two aspects of suffrage film can also be extended to suffrage song and how these songs were produced and distributed. Suffrage songs were often produced as small collections in the form of songbooks or songsters.⁵⁴ Sold by regional and national organizations, women in various locales could own and perform the same songs across the country. While voices may have been united within individual meetings or conventions where women came together in song, an imagined community was created on a much larger scale. Not completely separated from the rest of an organization's members, suffragists singing in New York could imagine their compatriots singing the same collection of songs in New Hampshire. The expanded print culture as it existed at this time helped to facilitate a sense of connectedness that went beyond regional divisions, much as the silent films and projection shows were able to do visually.

Though more militant approaches to suffrage led by the Women's Political Union beginning in 1908 would eventually seek to counter this image of ideal woman and homemaker, the sources of the Woman Suffrage Party's (WSP) strategy can be traced through the domestic

⁵⁴ For more information concerning songsters and songbooks and how they were used in progressive movements, see: Paul D. Sanders, *Lyrics and Borrowed Tunes of the American Temperance Movement* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006); Amy Shore, *Framing Film: Suffrage and the Silver Screen* (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 64-68. Shore discusses the suffrage songster in the context of its nationalizing effects of movement members. Additionally, many primary source songsters of the suffrage, temperance and religious movements (such as: R. K. Potter, *Boston Temperance Songster* (Boston: White and Potter, 1850)) are within the public domain and readily available through various online archives.

feminism of the women's clubs and their attempts to bridge the private and public spheres.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Katherine H. Adams and Michael L. Keene, *Alice Paul and the American Suffrage Campaign* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2007), 37. These more militant approaches included the public parades—discussed later in this thesis—as well as the sale of suffrage newspapers on street corners, both activities that placed women outside of the home in the public eye.

3.0 MUSICAL PERFORMANCE FROM THE CONCERT HALL TO THE MEETING HALL

The Progressive Era saw a bending and stretching of the limitations that prescribed a woman's place within American society. Using the ideology of domestic feminism, women were able to extend their role outside of the domestic sphere into a public landscape, albeit with certain restrictions. By stepping out of the home and into the public arena, women projected their role as true woman not only within their own homes and families, but onto the population at large. So while women exercised a new set of freedoms separated from domestic duties, the public presence of a respectable woman carried implications that her function would be for civic duty. In many cases woman's musical performance, especially in the public arena, could be considered in a similar light as women contributed their music making to society as a sort of civic and cultural uplift. Though upper-class women had traditionally been denied the freedom to perform in public and become professional musicians, the domestic ideal could be upheld by performing women as long as they fulfilled some sort of civic function. Musical clubs provided women with a creative outlet that allowed them to couple their skill as performers with the virtues of True Womanhood.

Musical clubs offered women the opportunity to create and discuss matters of culture within a context that promoted both social and civic functions. Because these women were expected to live a life of leisure rather than holding an occupation, often the musical club would take the place of a career within the woman's daily life. While women often lacked access to male-dominated musical institutions such as professional orchestras (save for the occasional harpist or pianist), club meetings

gave women the opportunity to engage in discourse, to learn from one another, and to compose and perform each other's music.

3.1 WOMEN'S MUSIC CLUBS

There is a long historical association with women and the salon or parlor, the domestic site of musical performance and discourse. In this realm, the woman within her own household would typically have full reign over the musical selection, who was to be invited, and to a certain extent the conversation that would occur throughout the evening's proceedings.⁵⁶ At least in part because of its association with women in an amateur setting, the salon has typically been looked down upon by professional musicians and historians as a site of frivolous music of minimal difficulty and depth.⁵⁷ Yet, these conclusions underestimate the training of these musicians, particularly female performers and composers. Though these women may not have been professional musicians—for the sheer fact that they could not obtain such a position due to the cultural restrictions discussed earlier—many of these musicians were highly accomplished.

Trained in conservatories or through private instruction, depending on income and social position, club women were often quite skilled in their craft. Of course, the instruction of female performers was treated differently than that of men. One of the primary ways that female musicians were distinctly molded was instrument selection. Respectable or refined women were much more likely to play a piano, string instrument, or perform as a vocalist rather than take up brass, wind, or

⁵⁶ A great deal of literature has been written concerning women's roles within the salons of nineteenth-century Europe, particularly in Germany and France. For a more in-depth explanation see: Ruth Solie, "Biedermeier Domesticity and the Schubert Circle: A Rereading," in *Music in Other Words: Victorian Conversations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 118-52; Steven D. Kale, "Le Pays féminin (1815- 1848)" in *French Salons: High Society and Political Sociability from the Old Regime to the Revolution of 1848* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2004), 105-131.

⁵⁷ It should be noted that it was not only women who performed in parlors and salons, but also well-known performer-composers of the nineteenth-century such as Franz Schubert, Franz Liszt, and Frédéric Chopin.

percussion instruments. While women of the upper classes received private lessons and instruction, it was more common for women of a lower middle-class background to attend a musical conservatory or similar institution, often for the purpose of becoming a teacher.

The musical club allowed women to exchange and develop knowledge through discussion and conversation with fellow members. Upper-class women often did not have the opportunity of working daily among fellow musicians in a professional environment, so it was the club that filled this void and became both an outlet and source of learning. The eminent American composer Mrs. H. H. A. (Amy) Beach, eventually found herself later in life working within circumstances similar to many a club woman. Following 1918, Beach's large concert performances decreased and instead she spent much of her time performing within the context of women's club's recitals and conventions.⁵⁸ These more intimate settings provided her with an opportunity to perform as well as have her compositions heard and performed by others.

Born into a prominent New England family, Beach received musical instruction from an early age, facilitated by her mother, Clara Cheney.⁵⁹ Beach eventually came under the tutelage of teachers Ernst Perabo and Carl Baermann. Despite a short period of time studying harmony and counterpoint formally, Beach was largely self-taught in the area of composition. As she explained, "At the start I had one season with Junius Hill, but everything beyond that has been my own labor. I possess about every treatise that has ever been written on the subject of harmony, theory, counterpoint, double counterpoint, fugue and instrumentation."⁶⁰ Unlike many American composers of this period, Beach neither studied at a university nor traveled abroad to Europe, preferring instead to rely on her own ability to self-study. She also received the support of many

⁵⁸ Jeanell Wise Brown, *Amy Beach and Her Chamber Music* (Metuchen, NJ: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1994), 77.

⁵⁹ Brown, 16.

⁶⁰ Brown, 20.

members of the Boston School of composers, most notably George Whitefield Chadwick and John Knowles Paine.⁶¹ These well-established composers helped Beach to gain more exposure and opportunity within the musical community of Boston. It was this same ideal of self-study and self-improvement, of continuing a legacy of education through intrinsic motivation, which many sought to uphold through their associations with musical organizations. As was the case with a many other club women, Beach was married to a prominent member of society, Boston physician Dr. H. H. A. Beach. Her husband's position allowed her the luxury of leisure time as well as a "luxurious mansion" located in the prestigious Back Bay neighborhood of Boston.⁶² Therefore, Beach had the time necessary to dedicate to her compositions and performances. Unlike many women of her social position, she was able to maintain a professional music career throughout her married life.

As mentioned earlier, Beach transitioned from formal concert hall performances to more intimate participation in musical clubs. Not only a location for social gatherings and self-improvement, the musical club provided women such as Beach an opportunity to perform music at a high level of performance while also fulfilling the civic duty that was so important to the foundation of domestic femininity. Many musical organizations would often offer programs for the public as a method for community outreach and for uplifting the general mood or morale of those in attendance. The moral work inherent in these programs was the belief that the "right" kind of music could be edifying for the listener.

Another way that musical organizations performed their duty to the general public was the establishment of scholarship funds for aspiring young musicians who did not have the means for paying for musical lessons or training. Not only were the clubs places for musical performance, but these women also organized around various fundraising efforts to fulfill a civic and social duty. By

⁶¹ Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victoria: The Life and Work of an American Composer, 1867-1944* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 104.

⁶² Brown, 29.

providing capital for the education of young, underprivileged musicians, musical club women attempted to secure a continuation of their own legacy. Not only was the contribution one of musical fulfillment, but these women also performed their “domestic” civic duty of improving the lives of the underprivileged. An action that affected a small number of individuals still contributed to the effort to clean up the poverty and corruption prevalent throughout the Progressive Era. In the case of Amy Beach, after marriage, her husband allowed her to continue performing professionally with the stipulation that the profits of the performances be donated as charitable contributions. Beach explains that “Dr. Beach was ‘old-fashioned’ and believed that the husband should support his wife. But he did not want me to drop my music, in fact, urged me to keep on, with the stipulation that any fees I received should go to charity. So hospitals, charities, institutions and similar organizations all were the recipients.”⁶³

While Beach did perform publicly, she still adhered to the ideals of civic duty by donating the proceeds. Yet, following her husband’s death in 1910, Beach left the United States for a period of four years in order to travel Europe.⁶⁴ During her travels Beach resumed more frequent performances. Upon returning to the United States in 1914, Beach continued her string of public performances until 1920, when she began to cut back on concertizing in exchange for more intimate club-based performances. Returning from Europe after her husband’s death, Beach seems to have shed the more dated garb of her married, domestic life for a more modern appearance and approach to life.⁶⁵

One example of a thriving musical club culture could be found in the city of Toronto.⁶⁶

⁶³ Brown, 32.

⁶⁴ Christine Ammer, *Unsung: A History of Women in American Music* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1980), 102.

⁶⁵ “Beach returned to American in 1914. She had adopted a more modern style of dress and coiffure, and she resumed playing in public here.” Ammer, 102.

⁶⁶ Of course Toronto is located outside of the United States, but its inclusion proves relevant to this study based on similarities between Toronto’s urban development during the turn of the century with comparable urban environments in the United States. Like many large cities in the United States between 1890 and 1920, Toronto experienced a quick

During the last decade of the nineteenth century, eight musical societies were established in the city. These organizations included the Toronto Ladies' Choral Club, the Toronto Chamber Music Association, the Ladies' Glee Club, the Ladies' Guitar and Mandolin Club, the Home Music Club, the Toronto Musical Improvement Club, the Wednesday Club, and the Thursday Musical Club.⁶⁷⁵⁹ Members of these clubs went on to form the Woman's Morning Music Club in 1899, later referred to as the Woman's Musical Club of Toronto (WMC).⁶⁸ As WMC historian Robin Elliott explains, these women—because of their social position—faced the challenge of many other female musicians of this time. “Many were born or married into the upper levels of Toronto social circles, but at the same time were highly trained and skilled performers. This posed something of a dilemma, as many people still thought that it was not suitable for women of a certain class to appear in public as performers, or even to earn wages of any kind. It was common for these women to abandon their public careers after marrying, whether at the instigation of their husbands or as a result of societal pressures.”⁶⁹ Beginning as a small salon, the club expanded and began to hold recitals given by active members. Initially many of the recitals were private events, although recitals were occasionally open to the public.

3.2 ALL-WOMEN ORCHESTRAS

While the musical club became a popular type of organization with strong national structure and

expansion of population and industrialization. Similar to the U.S. during this time, a large influx of immigrants arrived in Toronto, though the origins of the immigrants arriving in Toronto varied from that of the United States, depending upon the location of a particular city.

⁶⁷ Robin Elliott, *Counterpoint to a City: A History of the Women's Musical Club of Toronto* (Toronto: ECW Press, 1997), 26-27.

⁶⁸ Elliott, 31.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 50.

ties, two other models for women's musical performance, the club- and career- model orchestras, began to appear during the mid-nineteenth century. As it may be inferred from this label, the club-model was based on musical organizations such as the Tuesday Musical Clubs prevalent throughout the United States, and comprised of amateur musicians. It should be noted that the designation "amateur" during this particular period was not necessarily associated with a lower level of skill, training, or musicianship. In actuality, amateur musicians were often quite skilled musicians, having the resources to afford private and formal training.⁷⁰ Some all-women orchestras, such as the Viennese Ladies Orchestra and the Fadettes, employed the second type of organization, the "career-model," with the intention of earning economic profits from their professional performances.⁷¹

The club-model orchestras functioned in very similar terms as the musical club. The orchestra was managed by an established board of executives often comprised of women, but occasionally including men as well. Perhaps the main difference between the club-model orchestra and the musical club was the difference in repertoire, instrumentation, composers, and the spaces where each type of group performed. Musical clubs had the resources to host performances by larger orchestral ensembles as well as quartets, trios, and soloists while the club-model orchestra was restricted to the ensemble designated in its classification. Forming large-scale ensembles, the women's orchestras were often staffed with a sizable number of individuals. Though musical clubs surely had a large pool of members from which musicians could be found to perform, repertory was often limited to smaller chamber ensembles rather than a full-sized orchestra.⁷² Due to the

⁷⁰ Anna-Lise P. Santella, "American Women's Orchestras," in *American Orchestras in the Nineteenth Century*, ed. John Spitzer (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2012), 68.

⁷¹ Here I am referring to the term "amateur" in the sense of the first definition in the Oxford English Dictionary, "One who loves or is fond of; one who has a taste for anything." This first definition is used as opposed to the second entry, "One who cultivates anything as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally; hence, sometimes used disparagingly, as=dabbler, or superficial student of worker." See: *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "amateur," accessed March 19, 2017, <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/6041?redirectedFrom=amateur#eid>

⁷² In addition to chamber ensembles, large ensembles such as a symphony orchestra might occasionally be arranged.

possibility of smaller groupings of instruments, such as the trio and the quartet, a variety of ensembles could exist with a given program, providing a greater degree of diversity in the music that might be heard on a single program.

In contrast, the other option for women wishing to perform in an orchestra at this time would have been the career-model orchestra such as the Viennese Ladies Orchestra, which will be discussed later in this section. Unlike the women of the club-model orchestra who obtained the luxury of leisure time to dedicate to music, women performing in a career-model ensemble did so more or less out of necessity. Orchestra members were typically of a lower middle class, although they would have likely been able to afford training privately or at a conservatory, or otherwise have been born into a musical family from whom they could take musical lessons.

The women's club-model orchestra was often dedicated to playing "serious" canonical music. In this instance, "serious" music refers to full-scale orchestral European-based art music as opposed to "light" classical or popular orchestral arrangements. A concert performed by a woman's club-model orchestra often contained the works of the venerated European Romantic masters such as Tchaikovsky, Mendelssohn, and Schubert.⁷³ The primary distinction between the club-model and career-model orchestra would have been the difficulty of the repertoire, and attendant prestige associated with each. Like women's organizations and the musical club, many members of the women's club-model orchestra were primarily concerned with self-improvement, developing and excelling as musicians. Preparing difficult canonical repertoire at a high level took precedence over public performances. As the Los Angeles Women's Orchestra's president, Cora Foy emphasized, "We don't give music in public until we are prepared, but we study it in its highest forms."⁷⁴ It should be noted that Foy refers to her orchestra's repertoire as music's "highest forms." Though

⁷³ Ammer, 123.

⁷⁴ Santella, 68.

these women were considered amateur musicians because they did not and could not have a career in the field, the members of women's orchestras were often quite accomplished and well-trained. In fact, these amateur musicians were often considered to perform at a higher level than their lower-class counterparts performing in career-model orchestras. And unlike the career-model women, the club-model orchestras strove to perform highbrow music, often emulating the repertoire selection of professional men's orchestras.

Though club orchestras might perform in public at a concert or recital hall, their primary sphere of activity remained in more traditional feminine venues such as private homes and parlors or society events. It was this feature, along with several other important characteristics, that allowed women of the club-model orchestras to perform while maintaining their feminine respectability and without contesting contemporary gender norms. Labeling themselves as amateurs and performing without accepting payment for their own benefit allowed women to distance themselves from the corrupting effects of economics, and thus to maintain their feminine morality. In the tradition of the musical clubs, when the club-model orchestras did accept tender for a performance, it was typically for the benefit of civic services of the poor. Additionally, Santella describes the club orchestra's performance of femininity as a means for uplifting the public, or at least those in attendance of the concert "by presenting themselves as wholesome, girlish or ladylike, chaste, well-bred, and pleasant."⁷⁵

While club women—when they did perform—did so in respectable arenas of the private home or recital hall, career women often occupied spaces quite antithetical to "domestic feminine" ideals. Popular venues that the career-model orchestras performed in included vaudeville houses, beer gardens, theaters, restaurants, hotels, and public parks.⁷⁶ These were places for consumption

⁷⁵ Santella, 66.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 56.

because the career-model orchestra aimed to make a profit. Not only would these particular venues have been unthinkable for the society women involved with the club-model orchestras, but the acceptance of and involvement with performing for payment went against the notion that women were moral beings who were to be protected from such forces.

Whereas the club women used their brand of domestic femininity as a means for public uplift by presenting themselves as the embodiment of feminine ideals, the career-model orchestra used—even exploited—the musicians’ femininity. The intentionally excessive display of femininity as a means for financial gain was counterintuitive to the ideals established by the Cult of True Womanhood. The career-model orchestra women did not conform to the Cult because their particular display of femininity was intended for monetary and self-gain rather than the sacrifice that marked domestic femininity. In the case of the Viennese Ladies Orchestra (VLO), which was active in the United States as early as 1871, the musicians’ sex was emphasized and treated as a novelty and spectacle.⁷⁷ The members of the orchestra performed in voluminous white gowns, while the concert hall was adorned with flowers that had been strewn across the stage.

Despite the high expectations regarding the orchestra’s appearance in New York as reported in various contemporary musical periodicals (particularly in terms of the projected beauty of the musicians), the ensemble was not received well. Reviewers did not respond well to the VLO’s initial performances, finding the worth of the ensemble diminished for the fact that they did not possess full instrumentation, lacking primarily in the brass and woodwind sections.⁷⁸ While the orchestra at first performed in a concert-hall setting—Steinway Hall—in New York, the women were later relegated to venues more often associated with female professionals: restaurants and beer gardens. They worked with little pay at all hours of the night, taking any job that they could find.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 57.

⁷⁸ Ammer, 121.

Similar to the suffrage leaders who acted as figures of representation in media culture, career orchestras were often led by matronly figures who functioned to protect and elevate the social prestige of the ensemble. The Fadettes Womans Orchestra of Boston was a performing orchestra conducted by such a woman, Caroline B. Nichols. The Fadettes, which Santella describes as a hybrid of the club and career models, was a professional orchestra that began as a club model organization.⁷⁹ Advertisements and publications for the orchestra emphasized the presence of Nichols and her mother-like duties to the women musicians. By acting as a chaperon, Nichols assuaged fears that many had concerning women performing in public, that the women would be “compromising their morality or femininity by playing in public for money.”⁸⁰ Mother-like figures served to add a sense of respectability and femininity to the female musicians. Unaccompanied, performing women ran the risk of being looked down upon by society. Thus the mother figure, like that performed by Nichols, functioned similarly to the suffrage leaders’ representations in films by providing an air of respectability.

⁷⁹ Santella, 69-70.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 70.

4.0 MUSIC AND SUFFRAGE

The organizational structures established by women in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—political, religious, and musical—provided a foundation from which the suffrage movement could grow and expand, a place where women learned how to form effective social and political operations. Yet, while musical organizations, club-model and career-model orchestras demonstrate the musical endeavors of women in a Western art-music tradition, the music dedicated to the suffrage movement did not always align directly with these practices. Suffrage music came in a variety of forms, from parlor songs to marches used in public parades. Here I will focus on those genres that most closely upheld the traditional music-making practices of the women's clubs as well as those that coordinated most easily with the ideals and values of femininity and domesticity. As I will show, though these specific genres may have originated from and been based in musical performance as prescribed to the domestic woman, that does not necessarily mean that women did not use music to resist and divert expectations. Eventually certain suffragists incorporated and transformed these genres to emphasize their cause and aid in the success of the movement.

To understand suffrage music and its use within the context of a social movement, it is first necessary to recognize the traditions from which this politically and socially viable music emerged. Though I have already discussed the musical organizations that contributed to the suffrage structure and generated the confidence to take such risks and leadership roles, I will now discuss the music

from one political context. One of the most influential and most musical of these social movements was temperance. While the official organization of the suffrage movement dates well before the twentieth century, the temperance movement stemmed from even older roots. Gaining momentum in the mid-eighteenth century in the United States, temperance would eventually become closely tied with woman suffrage as well as abolitionism. The temperance movement was primarily supported through its affiliations with protestant religion. Supporters included both men and women, whose mission was to promote the prohibition of alcohol consumption and sales.

The Order of Exercises from a temperance meeting attended by both men and women in Taunton, Massachusetts in 1833 lists that the events began with an organ voluntary, followed by a prayer, the singing of a hymn, an address given by a Mr. L.M. Sargent, and finally ended with a benediction (see figure 1). Another broadside program features a heading denoting that it is the Order of Exercises for a meeting at the Festival of the Daughters of Temperance in Bangor, Maine, on March 4, 1847 (see figure 2). Like the schedule of events for the Taunton meeting, the gathering included prayer and group singing. The Bangor meeting, apparently for an organization specific to women, featured a multitude of music. Although lacking an organ voluntary, the meeting began with an anthem that would have likely been sung, a prayer, an “original ode,” a Bible presentation, and finally a closing ode.

It is interesting to note that in these two cases, temperance meetings targeting female audiences scheduled multiple musical events in which the participants could actively engage. The Taunton meeting offered attendees only one opportunity to sing along, the other musical selection being an organ piece that would have been only listened to. In contrast, of the three musical events scheduled for the Bangor meeting, all three pieces allowed for active participation. Perhaps it was women’s experience with domestic music making based in the parlor that drew them to schedule a larger portion of music sung by attendees.

Temperance meetings regularly included both group singing and performance by professional singers as well as bands, which provided accompaniment during meetings and temperance parades.⁸¹ The Hutchinson family was a particularly famous group of musicians who were known for their performances of temperance songs along with other reform-based musics during the mid- to late-nineteenth century.⁸² The widest body of temperance music was comprised of communal songs, specifically songs that used borrowed tunes. Borrowed tunes, or contrafacta, are previously written melodies that are fitted with new lyrics. Members of social, political, and labor movements in the nineteenth and early twentieth century would often appropriate religious hymns, patriotic, popular, and folk songs to which they assigned new lyrics that supported their own cause. These songs were bound into small collections in the form of songbooks (containing words and music) and songsters (just the words and, often, the name of the appropriate tune). Because the melodies were so well-known, it was not always necessary to print the song in musical notation. The common practice for songster publications was to print only the lyrics assigned to the tune, as well as to denote the name of the original melody to which the text should be sung.⁸³ Published songsters were printed in a small, light format, making it easy to slip into a pocket and carry it from place to place. The freedom from printed notation meant that a large number of tune lyrics could be printed

⁸¹ Paul D. Sanders, ed., *Lyrics and Borrowed Tunes of the American Temperance Movement* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2006), 3.

⁸² For a more detailed explanation of the Hutchinson family's involvement with music in various social movements, see Scott Gac, *Singing for Freedom: The Hutchinson Family Singers and the Nineteenth-century Culture of Reform*. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁸³ Contrafacta have a long history within Western musical practice dating back to before the 15th-century. For more information see Robert Falck and Martin Picker, "Contrafactum," *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

TEMPERANCE MEETING.



Order of Exercises.

Voluntary on the Organ.

PRAYER—by Rev. Mr. Bigelow.

HYMN—by a member of the Society.

Eternal God, to thee we raise
Our grateful songs this day;
Thine is the glory, thine praise—
Oh! bless our cause, we pray.

And stay, great God, that turbid tide,
Which onward rolls its wave—
Speak, and its waters shall subside,
And close the drunkard's grave,

Look from thy glorious abode,
And let thy smile descend;
And fearless we will tread the road
Of Temp'rance to the end.

Thine eye hath watch'd us hitherto—
To thee we look alone—
Still guide, direct and lead us to
The temple of thy *Throne*.

ADDRESS—by L. M. Sargent, Esq.

Benediction.

Figure 1: Temperance meeting: Order of exercises (Taunton, MA, 1833) American Broadsides and Ephemera, 1, no. 4563.

ORDER OF EXERCISES
 AT THE FESTIVAL OF THE
Daughters of Temperance,
 BANGOR, MARCH 4, 1847.

ANTHEM.

PRAYER.

ORIGINAL GISE, BY G. W. SNOW.

Brothers, with an earnest zeal,
 Toiling in the cause we love,
 Time your triumph shall reveal,
 Time each barrier shall remove.
 With a patient, trusting heart,
 Let each one fulfil his part—
 Here we come to cheer you on,
 Pause not till the goal be won!

Brothers, ye are not alone
 In the strife for human weal—
 Where is heard the sufferer's moan,
 There must woman kindly kneel;
 Where a mangled victim falls,
 Where a voice for pity calls,
 There must woman's sphere,
 There is ever woman's sphere.

While our brothers lead the way,
 In the battle for the right,
 Tho' we may not join the fray,
 Yet the foe shall feel our might;

Though he heeds not prayers or tears,
 Answering each with heartless sneers,
 Yet both "aid and comfort," he
 Begs in his extremity.

But nor "aid" nor "comfort" e'er
 Shall he at our hand receive—
 It is ours to wipe the tear,
 Ours the wounded to relieve—
 Tears which he has caused to flow,
 Wounds inflicted by his blow—
 Thus must we our warfare wage,
 Thus we in the strife engage.

But, a surer hope is ours,
 Than the trust in human might—
 Vain were all our feeble powers,
 Did not "God defend the right."
 He is with us as we strive,
 He all needful aid will give—
 To His word we proffer here,
 May it strengthen, guide and cheer.

Bible Presentation.

MUSIC AND ADDRESSES.

ORIGINAL GISE, BY S. B. WESTON.

I.

Oh! give me the home where Temperance dwells,
 Where no broken spirit of agony tells;
 Where the morning dawn and the evening close
 Look down on a scene of quiet repose;
 Where the laughing eye and the merry cheek
 In the family circle we constantly meet,
 Where warm is the welcome and bright the cheer
 That crowns each rapidly passing year.

II.

Oh! give me the home where Temperance dwells,
 Where the fireside scene of happiness tells,
 Where Intemperance comes not with withering
 breath,
 To strike whatever is lovely with death;

Where no mother's breast is with anguish riven,
 Mourning a loved one to madness driven
 By the fiend of the bowl—who scoffs and jeers
 At a parent's prayers, or a parent's tears!

III.

Oh! give me the home, though humble it be,
 Tho' from wealth's gorgeous trappings and splen-
 dor it's free,
 Where the altar we raise shall sacred remain,
 Preserved from the foul inebriate stain,
 Where no wine cup shall e'er its charms unfold,
 Irviting the taste of the young and the old,
 Where Virtue and Love and Temperance combined,
 Shall cast o'er life's hours a lustre refin'd.

Figure 2: Daughters of Temperance, Central Union no. 3, "Order of exercises at the festival of the Daughters of Temperance, Bangor, March 4, 1846," (Bangor, ME, 1847). American Broad-sides and Ephemera, 1, no. 6883.

on a single sheet of paper in the form of a broadside. In turn, the broadside was convenient for carrying from place to place, during the events of a meeting, or when participating in a parade.

Communal singing was not a clever invention of the suffragists, but was adapted by them from a variety of forms, many of them based in religious practices. One of the most relevant occasions for communal singing preceding the twentieth century was the gospel hymns sung in the Northeastern region of the United States during religious revivalist meetings. Perhaps one of the most influential teams of meeting organizers during this particular movement, Ira D. Sankey and Dwight L. Moody, combined the artful declamation of religious sermons with stirring renditions of gospel hymns and hymn-singing.⁸⁴⁷⁵ Though drawing upon a rich history of revivalist meetings, Sankey and Moody used this powerful combination to create a sense of community and a uniting force among congregates. The use of hymns, sung communally, crafted a sacred community by collectively lifting the voices and spiritual states of those involved. The act of communal singing in these particular instances functioned as a means for transcendence, not only raising the individual participant, but the group as a whole.⁸⁵⁷⁶

4.1 SUFFRAGE MUSICAL PRACTICE

The transcendental, unify experience evoked by the communal singing of Sankey and Moody is similar in many ways to the communal singing harnessed by later suffrage organizations. Communal singing, as well as the use of contrafacta, proved beneficial to the suffragist cause as a unifying force. The contrafactum in its published broadside and songster forms was conducive for

⁸⁴ Sandra S. Sizer, *Gospel Hymns and Social Religion: The Rhetoric of Nineteenth-century Revivalism*. (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1978), 3-4.

⁸⁵ Sizer, 19.

social movements because it helped secure an optimum number of participants. Not only were the melodies immediately recognizable, but the ability to quickly distribute the lyrics to a large audience meant that many people, even non-members of the movement, could join the singing at any time.

As in the temperance movement, suffragist songs were primarily comprised of contrafacta. And in a similar manner as temperance reformers, suffragists incorporated these tunes into their meetings, public demonstrations, and parades. The similarities that existed between temperance and suffrage movements were by no means coincidental. As mentioned earlier, a large number of members participated in both movements, as well as in abolitionism. Temperance reformers' main reason for action was to protect the integrity of the home and the family structure. To achieve a conservative end they incorporated often radical or unconventional methods. Providing women with a role outside of the home, or at least an extension of that duty via women's clubs, is only one example of these methods. Though many temperance members refused to support woman suffrage because they believed it to go too far and detract from the sanctity of home and family, others supported it because they believed it would do the opposite: that women's political influence could prove to be a stabilizing force for the family and domesticity.

Aside from borrowed tunes, more traditional parlor songs were also a popular choice for suffrage meetings and conventions. When examining convention programs from the National American Woman Suffrage Association and New York State Woman Suffrage Association, it is interesting to note that the music provided throughout the proceedings tended to be conservative in terms of the ways in which traditional domestic femininity was fulfilled—conservative in this case meaning parlor music.⁸⁶ By choosing to program parlor pieces, organizers maintained a formal

⁸⁶ Programs for the National American Woman Suffrage Association and New York State Woman Suffrage Association are available for perusal online in the Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks, 1897-1911 collection through the Library of Congress.

listening environment. Rather than actively participating in music creation during these selections, attendees were resigned to listening. This formal environment more closely resembled the music practice of domestic parlors and chamber recitals familiar through women's clubs. The choice of the more traditional and conventional genre of parlor music correlates with the ideology of these particular suffrage groups, which tended to be conservative in their depictions of femininity and women's identity.

The convention program from the thirty-ninth annual convention of the NAWSA, held February 14-19, 1907, features a wide selection of parlor pieces as well as art song and recital pieces. Several soprano and contralto solos were featured throughout the week's proceedings. Traditionally feminine-gendered instruments, the harp, violin, and keyboard instruments, were also featured on the program. In this particular program of events the only piece of music that is listed specifically by name is a work titled "Crossing the Bar" performed by Jennie F. W. Johnson.⁸⁷ This piece likely refers to a poem written by Lord Tennyson in 1889 and later set to music with versions by Joseph Barnby in 1893 and Sir Hubert Parry. Though it cannot be certain which version of the piece was performed, both are written as four-part chorales. Because there is only one performer listed, it could be surmised the four parts were transcribed for piano. Though this list of scheduled performances is intriguing in itself, what is noteworthy is what is absent; the opportunity for group singing. Though it is not included in the program, however, meeting minutes indicate that community singing did occur regularly at the NAWSA conventions. These records show that borrowed tunes and hymns were sung en masse during the course of the conventions, particularly the songs "America" and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic."⁸⁸

⁸⁷ National American Woman Suffrage Association, "Thirty-Ninth Annual Convention of the National American Woman Suffrage Association," (Chicago: NAWSA, 1907), 8. Miller NAWSA Suffrage Scrapbooks 5, p. 43. Library of Congress, Rare and Special Collections Division, <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.rbc/rbcmil.scrp3004201>.

⁸⁸ Rosyln Brandes, "Let us Sing as we Go": *The Role of Music in the United States Suffrage Movement* (MA thesis, University of Maryland, College Park, 2016), 70.

As Robert Branham and Stephen Hartnett describe in their study of the song “America,” “One of the most obvious reasons why ‘America’ has been so consistently employed in these multiple and contradictory political movements is its lyrical and musical simplicity, which enables even marginally talented poets to rewrite its lyrics without much effort, while even the tone-deaf can learn quickly to sing along with its simple tune.”⁸⁹ Thus, borrowed tunes often lent themselves to multiple, even countless versions of different texts for a variety of social causes and projects.

Community singing was also emphasized by the NAWSA leaders’ insistence that there be an activity that everyone could participate in order to create unity and community. In her study of suffrage music, Roslyn Brandes analyzes the original text of “America,” as it would presumably have been sung during the NAWSA national convention. Rather than viewing the song as the suffragists’ praise of the nation, Brandes describes the text as “a prayer for freedom, rather than an acknowledgement.”⁹⁰ By projecting their image of an improved America the suffragists reaffirm their mission to change America rather than fight against it. This interpretation of the song’s text aligns with the conservative nature of the NAWSA. While the notion of fighting against the nation is certainly aggressive and militant, changing the nation can be understood as a continuation of domestic feminism. Enacting change, instead of completely overthrowing the established order, required that the suffragists enact their womanly influence to correct or “fix” the broken structure of the United States political system. Just as women “changed” the urban landscape by cleaning up filth and corruption, suffragists could have the same effect on politics by changing the voting laws.

⁸⁹ Robert Branham and Stephen Hartnett, *Sweet Freedom’s Song: My Country ‘tis of Thee and Democracy in America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 8.

⁹⁰ Brandes, 71.

4.2 CONFLICTS AMONG SUFFRAGE ORGANIZATIONS

Whereas the NAWSA's ideology and practices were conservative, the National Woman's Party practiced more radical and militant techniques. Formed by Alice Paul in 1916, the organization was created when Paul—a member of the NAWSA—and her methods became too radical for the more traditional party. Prior to Paul's break from the NAWSA, she—along with Lucy Burns—organized the 1913 woman suffrage procession in Washington DC, which was sponsored by the same suffrage organization. Suffrage parades of this nature were startling for several reasons, from the space the women inhabited while they marched to the music that provided accompaniment. Suffrage parades worked to reaffirm and deconstruct certain notions of femininity and feminism.

While the largest and one of the most powerful suffrage organizations in the United States, the NAWSA, had carefully developed a refined, domestic image of feminine suffragists. Meanwhile, women involved in the British division of the movement cultivated a very different approach. Militant in their actions, British suffragettes relied on aggressive tactics to break through social and political barriers that were erected because of their gender.⁹¹ One British suffrage organization, the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) led by Emmeline Pankhurst and formed in 1903, was known for tactics of breaking the windows of government buildings, protesting and resisting violent arrests, and on one occasion in 1912, breaking into the home of the Prime Minister to perform a rousing rendition of the "Women's March."⁹² Compared to the methods of

⁹¹ A distinction was made between the use of the terms "suffragist" and "suffragette." The term "suffragist" was used to denote the more conservative and domestic suffrage woman as promoted by the NAWSA. On the other hand, "suffragette" was a term associated with militancy and aggressive suffrage women. For reference, see Francie Wolff, *Give the Ballot to the Mothers: Songs of the Suffragists* (Springfield, MO: Denlinger's Publishers, Limited, 1998), 98.

⁹² Elizabeth Wood, "Performing Rights: A Sonography of Women's Suffrage," *The Musical Quarterly* 79 no. 4 (1995): 618. A particularly colorful anecdote about suffragist composer Ethel Smyth tells of how she managed to break into the home of the British prime minister while he was holding a meeting. Smyth found a piano in a room upstairs above the meeting room and banged out a rendition of her "Women's March" before being dragged away.

the American suffragists, the British suffragettes' actions were deemed by many to be too militant.⁹³ This form of action went against the image that organizations like the NAWSA had fought to counteract. As a result, many of the more conservative members of the NAWSA were hesitant to incorporate methods that would be considered too aggressive or unfeminine.

However, this is not to say that American suffragists completely dissociated themselves from the British militants' tactics. Though older and conservative members denounced such actions, a group of young suffragists emerged during the 1910's who had close working knowledge of the British movement and believed their tactics to be appropriate for the American movement. As noted above, Alice Paul formed the National Woman's Party (NWP) in 1916. Prior to joining the movement in the United States, Paul had spent several years (1906 to 1909) in England where she developed connections with Emmeline Pankhurst and her daughters. As a result Paul was arrested three times and participated in the organization of the WSPU that included "planning meetings, questioning politicians, and hunger striking in jail to contribute to the English campaign for suffrage."⁹⁴ Upon her return to the United States, Paul would eventually incorporate these tactics into the movement during its last few years.

Despite the brutal and violent treatment that members of the NWP would face, Paul was dedicated to the use of non-violent methods. Coupled with an emphasis on visual and print culture, Paul hoped to revive a movement that she thought had been drained of life and energy Paul rejected the NAWSA's "reliance on writing and speaking—on journals, letters, pamphlets, meetings, and conferences"—which she believed lacked effectiveness.⁹⁵ Instead, Paul turned her energy towards mounting "a dramatic visual campaign, involving photographs, cartoons, parades, boycotts, car and

⁹³ Donna M. Kowal, "One Cause, Two Paths: Militant vs. Adjustive Strategies in the British and American Women's Suffrage Movements," *Communication Quarterly* 48 no. 3 (2009): 241.

⁹⁴ Adams and Keene, xiv.

⁹⁵ Adams and Keene, xvi.

train trips, picketing, and hunger striking in jail.”⁹⁶ One of Paul’s earliest and most well-known application of these methods was demonstrated in the 1913 suffrage parade. This suffrage parade, which occurred in New York City, required suffragists to present themselves in a very public space—the city’s streets—in a display of solidarity. Incorporating these tactics into the actions of an organization such as the NAWSA proved challenging, however, because the division between conservative and militant suffragist— between femininity and feminism—had to be negotiated. Older and more conservative members of the association found the idea of marching to be too far outside the limits of what was an appropriate action for women and instead opted to cover the parade route in automobiles.

Suffrage parades could be considered progressive during the early twentieth century because of the ways that they deconstructed notions of femininity. Physically, women occupied a very public space when participating in parades. The event was a spectacle in glorious form and included the necessary elements of pomp and pageantry. Once marching down the street in formation, women were *the* object of attention within the public context. Whereas women had previously become acclimated to the public sphere through their religious work and commitment to social and civic duty, the parades represented a departure from those specific situations. However, the shock of these excursions from the home was softened by the notion that women were only expanding their domestic sphere rather than completely abandoning it. Though women had previously made the argument for tending to religious and civic-oriented tasks outside of the home, it was more difficult to frame the parade in terms of domesticity.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Because these women were not directly marching to perform these “motherly” duties, anti-suffragists could claim that women on parade were simply being selfish and unbecoming by placing themselves on display in such a public spectacle.

To counteract any hesitancy that more conservative members might have, care was taken in the crafting of the parade and the imagery that would be presented to spectators. Many suffrage leaders, such as Anna Howard Shaw, chose to travel the parade route in a motor vehicle rather than walk. Riding rather than walking apparently made them feel less hesitant to assume a place in the public sphere in such a manner as the spectacular parade. To counteract the militant image of the women marching down public streets, participants donned a uniform of flowing white dresses that portrayed a feminine ideal. Additionally, allegorical images were heavily incorporated within the parade itself as well as promotional images pertaining to the parade, such as the costume worn by Inez Milholland. A labor lawyer and active member in the suffrage movement, Milholland performed the task of leading the 1913 parade as well as leading a number of parades prior in New York City.⁹⁷ Riding atop a horse, Milholland wore a long white robe and was crowned with a tiara. The face of the parade and in a sense the movement, she represented an ideal woman, pure and feminine.

4.3 SUFFRAGE CONTRAFACTA AND THE CREATION OF A NATIONALISTIC IDEAL

The music that was sung and performed by various ensembles and participants during the parade was described as patriotic tunes and hymns. The songs that marchers performed were very similar to the ones incorporated at the NAWSA conventions for community singing. Songs performed

⁹⁷ Linda J. Lumsden, *Inez: The Life and Times of Inez Milholland*. (Indiana University Press, 2004).

during the 1913 parade include “America,” “Battle Hymn of the Republic,” and “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”⁹⁸ As Brandes argues, “using a patriotic melody as the basis of suffrage contrafacts [*sic*] also allowed songwriters to create a musical commentary that questioned the extent to which freedom was part of American life.”⁹⁹ Expanding upon this idea, the texts for suffrage contrafacta and which songs they chose could represent the ideology of the organization singing and to what extent they valued either feminism or femininity. Even within the same organization the songs could produce slightly different images of the suffragists’ projected nation and the means by which they would achieve it.

Besides the previously mentioned tunes, several other melodies were often appropriated as borrowed tunes, including “Marching through Georgia.” A Northern song of victory, “Marching through Georgia,” was originally written as a Civil War song for the Union Army. The text of the song recounts General Sherman’s march to the sea, in which the Union Army marched across the Southern state of Georgia. The lyrics strictly refer to the male members included in the army from the very first line, “Bring the good old bugle, boys, we’ll sing another song.” The pronouns “we” are used prevalently throughout the text, clearly referring to the males who are performing the militant action of marching. In an interesting reversal, the melody was later used as the basis for suffrage contrafacta, in particular one version that emerged in Utah, titled “Song for Equal Rights.”¹⁰⁰ In the text of the suffrage version, “we” is also used often throughout the text to denote a different kind of army for this cause, one without the same masculine connotation as its original: “We are the mothers of mankind, the daughters, sisters, wives.” The use of the pronoun “we” is worth noting in this specific version because the population that is encompassed in this “we”

⁹⁸ Brandes, 92.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Belle D. Edwards, “Song for Equal Rights,” (Utah: Office of the Woman’s Exponent, 1890): 22-23.

evolves over the course of the song.

The nationalist theory of political theorist Ernesto Laclau proves to be useful when discussing texts of particular suffrage songs. In his text, *Emancipation(s)*, Laclau simultaneously continues the work of Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* while also problematizing it. Laclau constructs a nation as being composed of particular and universal groups. In a constant hegemonic power struggle, a universal emerges and becomes an objective force under which the subjective particularisms reside.¹⁰¹ Due to the unavoidable power structure, Laclau explains that it is impossible to eradicate the notion of an objective universal group.¹⁰² Despite this structure, his theory allows for movement between particular groups and the universal. The power between individual groups is constantly in motion. Though the particular groups will be subsumed under the universal force, the particular groups always have the potential to gain power in order to become a new universal. Furthermore, according to Laclau the power of the universal is dependent upon the presence of the particulars. "The universal is incommensurable with the particular, but cannot, however, exist without the latter."¹⁰³ The particular's existence is required for the existence of the universal; the identities of the opposing forces are what gives the other shape and form. The importance of the particular is further emphasized by the fact that it is impossible to eliminate particular groups, that this difference "is the very precondition of democracy." While the particular is essential to the existence of the universal, the opposite is true as well. Though a particular can negotiate with power and attempt to become a new universal, by doing so the particular group must

¹⁰¹ Ernesto Laclau, *Emancipation(s)* (New York: Verso, 1996), 22.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 35.

reinforce the power of the universal: “If the oppressed is defined by its difference from the oppressor, such a difference is an essential component of the identity of the oppressed. But in that case, the latter cannot assert its identity without asserting that of the oppressor as well.”¹⁰⁴

Laclau’s theories of the particular and universal can be used to interpret the suffragists’ imagined nation and how they envisioned their own particular group functioning within the male universal. Returning now to the lyrics of the “Song for Equal Rights,” the singers of this song begin by first establishing themselves—a group of women—as a particularism that is separated from “mankind.” After positioning themselves as a particular, the women then evolve their particular voice so that it emerges as a universal voice, one that incorporates both “brothers” and “sisters.” The dialogue between the particular and universal throughout the song suggests a negotiation for power between the two different groups. Yet, when the particular is established during the verse, the identity of woman must refer to the category of man in order to attempt to gain power for itself. For example, the third verse admonishes “womankind” that she “should stand / Beside creation’s noble lords and help to rule the land.” By calling attention to the distinction between the two identities of “womankind” and “noble lords,” the women are, in Laclau’s theory, asserting the identity of the dominant power’s identity along with their own. Though the suffragists are calling for women to be raised to an equal footing as men, they are doing so by calling attention to their difference, the very reason why they are denied the same rights.

Another suffrage contrafactum, a version of “Hail Columbia” titled “Equal Rights,” functions in a similar way. The original text of “Hail Columbia” is once again male-centric in its descriptions and use of pronouns. The text produces imagery of battle and war, something that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were almost exclusively associated with men. Similarly to “Song for Equal Rights,” the suffrage version of “Hail Columbia” reverses the original

¹⁰⁴ Laclau, 29.

subject of the song's text.¹⁰⁵ Unlike "Song for Equal Rights," however, there is no confusion or transformation in terms of who "we" refers to. The first line of the first verse is very clear as to the particular's identification: "Rise, Columbia's daughters, rise." In fact, direct mention of men is avoided throughout most of the song except for the first lines of the second verse: "Shall we longer count as naught/ Rights for which our fathers fought? / The rights which all their sons enjoy?" Though the women position themselves as something separate from the "sons" to which they refer, this verse also implies that they are entitled to the "rights for which our fathers fought." By seeking to establish power for themselves, the women are required to bring attention to the dominance of men.

Leclau's theory establishes that it is impossible to abolish the power structures that surround a universal and its various particulars. Yet, it is possible for particular groups to negotiate power, and even to overthrow established universals. With the example of the suffragist contrafacta, it is perhaps best to imagine the shift in power from one particular group to another. However, it must be assumed that in this case, the women who sought to win the right to vote were not necessarily interested in completely negating the power of men. Rather, the women wished to be counted along with men and to a certain extent to be included within the same universal. They wished to shift the universal in a way that would incorporate a larger portion of the population. In order to recreate this universal, the suffragists had to initially negotiate power as a particular group with an identity separate from that of the male universal.

¹⁰⁵ Emily H. Woodmansee, "Equal Rights" (Utah: Office of the Woman's Exponent, 1890): 4-5.

5.0 CONCLUSION

It has become apparent through the course of this study that female identities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were crafted by a multitude of factors. Ideologies of femininity and feminism could exist as a negation between the two in the way a woman thought of herself, behaved, and chose to embrace (or resisted) aspects of either end of the continuum. The creation of identity was a continuous process of presentation and performance, where aspects of both feminism and femininity could simultaneously be on display. As discussed previously, these performances could take the form of participation in social movements and organizations as well as participation in musical activities and ensembles.

Though the variety of female activity during the historical period in question may often seem counterintuitive and disparate from the topic of suffrage and woman's rights, strong and illuminating connections are necessarily drawn between female organizations and social movements. Often domestic in nature and seemingly feminine at its core, women's domestic and organizational endeavors during the nineteenth century laid the foundation that the suffrage movement would later be able to construct itself upon. The ideology promoted by suffragists was difficult for many contemporaries to receive and accept. Yet, the positions that these later women were able to take—while of course at extreme costs—would not have been possible if not for the path paved by their foremothers.

The organizations and structures of the women's clubs were central to the development of

the suffrage movement. Music and musical performance also played a crucial role in female identity from the beginning of club formations during the early to mid-nineteenth century through the passing of the nineteenth amendment, ratified in 1920. Musical performance could be enacted to either emphasize a woman's ideal feminine qualities, as deemed by the Cult of True Womanhood, or to affirm a more progressive, feminist stance. The performance of a parlor song—perhaps the epitome of feminine domestic music-making—could reaffirm a true woman's position in the domestic realm whereas a woman's performance during a parade—often considered inappropriate for female performers as it was physically taxing and militaristic— could signify her defiance of prescribed feminine behavior. Thus musical performance was incorporated into meetings and public displays in a similar fashion, for religious meetings, club organizations, and within social movements. These moments of music-making served to create a certain environment and support certain beliefs concerning woman's position in society, to create negotiations between ideals of conservative and progressive female identity to varying degrees.

Throughout the course of this study, various assumptions have been made, often based upon available scholarship and resources. As discussed earlier in the paper in greater depth, the use of “women” in the context of many studies of religion, the club movement, and the suffrage movement pertains predominantly to white, middle- and upper-class women. This is not to claim that non-white, non-middle-class women did not participate in these events, but that scholarship does not carefully delineate these specific populations. Of course there are some studies that have already been completed, such as the biographies and publications concerning African American activist, abolitionist, and suffragist Sojourner Truth. Studies that do focus on these oft- neglected subjects often do so in a manner that segregates them from their more mainstream and well-

documented compatriots. Though more scholarship has been completed on middle-class white women, other women outside of these classifications were simultaneously working for equal rights.

Furthermore, I have not yet found a study that examines these other populations of suffragists specifically in terms of music or musical performance. I would call for a more inclusive study of these groups. Such a study could prove fruitful for understanding different perspectives of the suffrage movement as well as female musical performance, both directly and indirectly related to the movement.

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