

# English and Welsh Harp Playing in Colonial Australia: Contrasting Modes of Cultural Transmission

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## INTRODUCTION

The British colonized Australia in the late eighteenth century, and harps and harpists began arriving in the new colony from at least the 1820s. While the early period of European settlement in Sydney, Hobart, and then Melbourne was musically conservative, elite and largely English, the 1850s gold rushes brought a huge influx of immigrants from many other parts of the world and Britain, including Wales. A “spectacular” musical boom occurred, and a concomitant expansion of “popular” performances was seen, particularly on the Victorian goldfields where there

*could be found a complete array of nineteenth century music in Australia. There were comic singers and Eisteddfodau, authentic performances of Chinese opera and an occasional aboriginal corroboree. Nowhere else did the travelling musician find such a profitable circuit in a comparatively small area; the newspapers were constantly crowded with the arrival of entertainers, from Tyrolese yodellers to Lyster's Grand Italian Opera Company...<sup>1</sup>*

In this thriving musical environment, harp players found opportunities to play and perform, and disseminate their musical traditions. This article explores how two immigrant groups, the English and the Welsh, passed on knowledge of harp playing in a colonial context. My focus is on what the evidence reveals about the way musical knowledge was transferred to others, namely the mode of learning in a broader sense, inclusive of less explicitly articulated attitudes to the role of harp playing in these two cultures. By examining the regional and social characteristics of musical transmission in Australia in detail, I aim to contribute to our understanding of culturally determined national identity as it related to the harp.

## ENGLISH MODES OF TRANSMISSION

The English approach dominated Australian harp playing at settlement and into the twentieth century, representing a mode of knowledge transference that is very familiar to professional musicians today. Learning an instrument was popular among English settlers in Australia, and there were harp teachers available in all major cities during the colonial period. Just as in England, formal structured lessons for the young were the main way that individuals passed on knowledge of harp playing. Harp lessons were particularly sought for young female amateurs, while most professional harp players trained in English music institutions or learned from harpists back “home” (i.e. in England). The way the English taught and passed on harp knowledge was far more visible in the historic record than for other cultures due to the high number of newspaper advertisements by teachers wanting work. English harp teachers were also from a more affluent section of society and able to be traced through immigration and other records more easily.

Most of the English women and men who became professional harp players in the Australian colonies came from families who could afford to give them the musical training necessary for the profession, could buy a ticket to Australia, and could afford to buy a harp. The overwhelming majority of imported harps played by English immigrants at this time were single or double-action pedal harps from makers such as Erard, Erat, Grosjean, Browne, Schwieso, and Egan. Harp teachers catered mainly to the widening middle classes that sought social mobility and outward recognition of their place in the world.<sup>2</sup>

Harp teaching provided an opportunity for educated women, in particular, to earn their own income in an acceptable occupation at a time when most women “were

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not expected to earn a living at all.”<sup>3</sup> Historian Ruth Teale declared that “the majority of women musicians were strictly amateur” in the colonial period, but there were a surprising number of female harp teachers who worked as professional musicians.<sup>4</sup> One of the earliest examples of this kind of “lady” teacher was Eliza Pierson. Mrs. Pierson travelled without her husband from London to Sydney, arriving on 23 January, 1838.<sup>5</sup> By March she was advertising in *The Sydney Herald* for students, describing herself as “A lady recently arrived from England” offering lessons on “Harp or Pianoforte, either at home or abroad.”<sup>6</sup> She continued to advertise for students throughout the 1840s and also for a housemaid and a man servant who could cook, indicating her comfortable financial status. Harp tuition was often offered by smaller, private educational establishments when teachers were available, reflecting the popularity of the instrument in England during the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> In the 1850s Miss Bennett at the Kyneton Seminary offered lessons in “the Harp and Guitar by a lady who has resided abroad.”<sup>8</sup> The young ladies at the Carr Villa Establishment near Launceston were instructed in “reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, history, composition, geography, and astronomy, with the use of globes; plain, fancy and ornamental needlework; mental calculations, algebra, pianoforte, harp, singing, French, drawing, painting and dancing.”<sup>9</sup> The Carr Villa Establishment considered that this selection of studies combined “the elegant acquirements of female education with intellectual and religious improvement.”<sup>10</sup> Australian schools established by the Irish Sisters of Mercy and the Loreto Sisters in the mid-nineteenth century also had a particular emphasis on music and harp. The Sisters of Mercy school for young ladies in Melbourne offered harp lessons from the 1870s and the Loreto College at St Mary’s Mount in Ballarat similarly offered harp lessons to its students from at least 1867.<sup>11</sup>

Records in the archive at Loreto College in Ballarat reveal that Erard pedal harps were being taught and played. The students undertook music examinations from the Associated Board of the Royal Academy of Music (RAM) and Royal College of Music in England and learned harp repertoire that included pieces by harpists such as Robert Nicholas Charles Bochsa, John Balsir Chatterton, Alphonse Hasselmans, and John Thomas. The harp students participated in regular musical soirées and chamber music performances and accompanied singers for works by Rossini and Marchetti. Irish harps were not taught at the school until after the colonial period. In 1902

a visit from Mother Attracta Coffey, the Mistress of Music at Loreto Abbey in Rathfarnham, Ireland, encouraged an interest in Irish traditional music, and the school bought several Irish harps from the harp maker James McFall of Belfast. Before Mother Attracta’s visit, however, the school’s mode of musical transmission could be described as entirely English.

Even in the late nineteenth century when expert locally-trained teachers were available, there was a perception that teachers who had studied in England and had an association with a European teaching institution were better and should be preferred. Some historians argue that at this time there was a marked “Anglo-Australian phobia” that barred locally-educated musicians, artists, and writers from work before they had spent time studying and living in Europe.<sup>12</sup> The heavy emphasis in newspaper advertisements on training in England seems to support this idea. The harp teacher Mrs. Norman, for example, boasted in her advertising that she was a student of Chatterton, Professor of Harp at the RAM, and Sir George Smart, composer to the Chapel Royal.<sup>13</sup> Mrs. Norman’s training and experience in England, and association through Chatterton with the RAM, was a prominent part of her advertisement for students in the 1850s: “Mrs Norman, pupil of Sir G. Smart and Chatterton . . . flatters herself that the same success will attend her efforts for the advancement of her pupils that she has experienced in some of the first families in England.”<sup>14</sup> Similarly, another harpist advertised herself in 1885 as “a lady pupil of Bochsa,” the first harp professor at the RAM in the early 1820s.<sup>15</sup>

Not all harp teachers were women, however, and evidence suggests that there were probably slightly more male harp teachers and performers than women in the colonial period. Samuel Tapfield, a self-styled “Professor of Pianoforte, Harp and Singing,” for example, was music master at a school in Hobart during the 1860s.<sup>16</sup> He was also professor of music at the Hobart Town Classical and Commercial Academy in Macquarie St. Mr. Tapfield Esquire immigrated to Hobart from London in 1853 with his wife and six children.<sup>17</sup> He taught harp, pianoforte and singing privately, in addition to performing and conducting. He was also a well-known musician in Hobart and member of the Royal Society of Van Diemen’s Land. In 1862 he conducted a performance of Handel’s *Messiah* at the Theatre Royal in Hobart, a benefit concert in support of the family of another harpist and conductor,

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Frederick Alexander Packer. Mr. Tapfield later also assisted the Preparation Committee to organise music for the royal visit of Prince Alfred in 1867.<sup>18</sup>

English professional harpists often taught more than one instrument and sometimes harmony and singing. This diversification was common in England and present in Australia as well, as Derek Scott has identified: “To earn a living, musicians were diversifying—teaching, writing, and publishing—as well as performing and composing.”<sup>19</sup> In the case of male harp players, many were conductors like Samuel Tapfield. Others like Edwin Copley, for example, taught harp, piano, organ, harmonium, cornopean, and singing. Copley was also the organist and choir-master at St. Phillip’s Church in Sydney and often acted as conductor for local musical performances during the 1860s.<sup>20</sup> Like Mrs. Norman, he advertised himself as a pupil of Chatterton.<sup>21</sup> In 1854 Mr. Rington advertised himself as a Professor of Music giving instruction “on the Pianoforte and Harp, in Singing, Harmony and Thorough-bass” in Collingwood, Melbourne.<sup>22</sup> Another harp teacher, Mr. H.W. Ruxton, “late member of the Philharmonic Society, Liverpool,” was giving lessons in “Pianoforte, Harp, Organ, and Singing” in Melbourne in the 1850s. Mr. Ruxton was another student of Chatterton.<sup>23</sup> While several harp teachers claimed in their advertisements to be students of RAM harp professors, only a few were actually trained at the Royal Academy. RAM graduates included harpists Frederick Alexander Packer, William Saunders and Stephen Hale Marsh, who learnt harp from Bochsa.

English harp teachers and performers in colonial Australia derived mostly from the “middle” ranks of society. The instrument itself was a considerable cost, although the quality of harps available varied. During an 1865 court case, the plaintiff identified the cost of a “modern harp” as anything from £200—£500.<sup>24</sup> A second-hand harp for sale in 1885 was advertised for “25 guineas, original cost 120 guineas” (£26 5s, originally £126).<sup>25</sup> In comparison the wage of a shepherd working on one of the large squatting runs or farming properties in the Port Phillip District (Victoria), for example, earned about £17—£18 a year in 1845 and £20 by 1849—50.<sup>26</sup> A highly skilled building worker could earn as much as £150 a year in the 1880s, demonstrating that the purchase of a harp could easily be the equivalent of a year’s wages or more.<sup>27</sup>

The average fare for British migrants coming to the Australian colonies was £25 for steerage and £50 for cabin passengers. Over ninety percent of government assisted or sponsored immigrants were from poor backgrounds who

came to Australia to work as labourers. Sixty-two percent of the more financially able labouring workmen and their families managed to pay their way in steerage, while other unassisted immigrants included skilled tradesmen, professionals, and gentry.<sup>28</sup> Professional musicians and teachers were in the top ten to fifteen percent of unassisted immigrants, often travelling as cabin passengers with enough equity to set themselves up in appropriate accommodation for teaching private students when they arrived.

Most harp players in the colonial period in Australia were English and although some harp players and teachers, such as the Irish nuns, were not actually from England, their engagement with the harp was in the English manner. In other words during this period there was a commonality about the perception of the harp, its role in society, and the mode in which individuals chose to learn the instrument that can be broadly defined as English, and perhaps by extension, European. There were, however, other harp players during the colonial period who were on the margins of this English musical culture, transitioned between it and other cultures, or who were completely outside it. One example of this were the Welsh harpers in Victoria whose mode of knowledge transmission was quite different to that of the dominant culture.

## WELSH MODES OF TRANSMISSION

The Welsh community in Australia was a cohesive group present in several small towns in Victoria in the mid to latter half of the nineteenth century. They formed less than one percent of the immigrant population and often settled in groups because they shared a common language and working background.<sup>29</sup> Many Welsh immigrants had mining skills from working in the coal industry at home and looked to Australia for the opportunity to increase the profits of their livelihood. Young, unmarried men often ventured to Australian shores alone, while others left their wives and families in Wales, planning to return after they had made some money.

By the 1860s there were Welsh settlements in Williamstown, Sebastopol near Ballarat, and around Bendigo in Castlemaine and Maldon.<sup>30</sup> All of these areas were mining towns of some sort. Ballarat and Bendigo were predominantly gold mining centres and Williamstown, a seaport, included a large stone quarry where ballast for outgoing ships to Europe was collected and loaded. Most Welsh were motivated to come to




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Australia by the discovery of gold in the 1850s, and from 1851 to 1861 the overall number of people living in Australia who were born in Wales increased from 1,800 to 9,500 people.<sup>31</sup>

Following the influx of miners as part of the gold rushes, regular Welsh music events took place in Victoria, such as the Ballarat and Sebastopol eisteddfodau and St. David's Day celebrations in Melbourne and Ballarat. Several male

harpers played at these events, while women tended to participate in Welsh choirs. By 1857 there were choirs in Sebastopol, Welshtown, and Ballarat that by the end of the 1860s included a roughly even number of male and female participants.<sup>32</sup> These groups were largely comprised of Welsh miners and their wives who performed at church gatherings, charity fundraising concerts, and at eisteddfodau, often accompanied by a harp player. In 1866, for example, the Cambrian Vocal Union gave several

UNDER THE PATRONAGE AND IN THE PRESENCE OF *Int. Catalogue*

**His Excellency**  **The Governor,**  
**BRIGADIER-GENERAL CAREY, AND MRS. CAREY.**  
 HIS HONOR THE CHIEF-JUSTICE, SIR W. F. STAWELL. HIS HONOR SIR REDMOND BARRY.  
 THEIR HONORS MR. JUSTICE WILLIAMS AND MR. JUSTICE MOLESWORTH.  
 HIS HONOR MR. JUSTICE POHLMAN.  
 THE RIGHT WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR AND CORPORATION OF MELBOURNE.  
 SIR JAS. PALMER AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE MELBOURNE HOSPITAL.

**GRAND CONCERT,**  
 IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF THE  
**MELBOURNE HOSPITAL,**  
 WILL BE GIVEN BY THE  
**CAMBRIAN VOCAL UNION,**  
 IN THE  
**EXHIBITION BUILDING,**  
 ON  
**THURSDAY, MAY 31.**  
**SIGNOR CUTOLO**  
 Has kindly given his services, and will play two solos.

**CONDUCTOR - Mr. D. LI. THOMAS. PIANIST - Mr. HENRY KING.**

**PROGRAMME - PART I.**

WELSH GLEE—"Nant y Mynydd" (The mountain brook) ...	Choir ...	<i>J. Thomas.</i>
GLEE—"Now, by day's retiring lamp" ...	Choir ...	<i>Bishop.</i>
SOLO, HARP—"Nos Galan" (New Year's Eve) ...	Mr. Williams (Alaw Dare), the celebrated Blind Harpist.	
WELSH AIR—"Oh! hail us, ye freo" ( <i>Ereani</i> ) ...	Miss Benjamin and Choir ...	<i>Fredd.</i>
CHORUS—"Oh! hail us, ye freo" ( <i>Ereani</i> ) ...	Choir ...	
WELSH AIR—"Rhyfelgyrch gwyr Harlech" (March of the men of Harlech) ...	Choir ...	
SOLO, PIANOFORTE—"Fantasia on airs from 'The Bohemian Girl'" ...	Signor Cutolo ...	<i>C. Cutolo.</i>
SOLO AND CHORUS—"Now, tramp!" ...	Choir ...	<i>Bishop.</i>
DUET—"Tell me, ye gentle stranger" (arranged from the Welsh air, "Y Ddafad gyrnog") ...	Mrs. Abraham and Mr. D. Thomas ...	<i>John Parry.</i>
CHORUS—"From our home, Gracious Lord" ( <i>I Lombardi</i> ) ...	Choir ...	<i>Fredd.</i>
PRIZE ANTHEM—"Y Ddaergryn" (The earthquake) ...	Choir ...	<i>Owen Alaw.</i>

**AN INTERVAL OF TEN MINUTES.**

**PART II.**

PRIZE GLEE—"All hail! thou Queen of Night" ...	Choir ...	<i>Martin.</i>
WELSH AIR—"Codiad yr Han" (Sunrise) ...	Choir ...	<i>Neithardt.</i>
THE CELEBRATED ECHO CHORUS ...	Mrs. Abraham and Choir ...	
SOLO, HARP—"Pen y Rhaw" (in Welsh costume) ...	Miss Jones ...	<i>Gwylson Gwent.</i>
GLEE—"Yr Haf" (The Summer) ...	Choir ...	<i>Thelwery.</i>
BUFFO DUET—"Tea and turn out" ...	Mrs. Davies and Choir ...	
SOLO, PIANOFORTE—"Fantasia on Meyerbeer's 'Les Huguenots'" ...	Signor Cutolo ...	
WELSH AIR—"Y Deryn Fawr" (The dove) ...	Miss Benjamin and Choir ...	
WELSH SONG—"Mae Robin yn swil" (in Welsh costume) ...	Mrs. Abraham ...	<i>Bishop.</i>
GLEE—"Let the lively banjo play" ...	Choir ...	
WELSH AIR—"Glan Medwlad Mwyn" ...	Miss Jones and Choir ...	

Doors open at Seven; Concert to commence at Half-past Seven o'clock.

**ADMISSION: Reserved Seats, 5s.; Gallery, 2s. 6d.** Tickets may be had from Messrs. Wilkie, Webster, & Co., Musicians, Collins street east; Mr. McCulloch, Musician, Collins street west; Mr. Glen and Mr. Chapman, Musicians, Swanston street; and from Mr. B. Mier, 77 Swanston street.

**EDW. JENKINS, HON. SEC., 81 COLLINS ST. EAST.**

W. H. WILLIAMS, Printer, 23 Post-office place (late Little Bourke street east), Melbourne.

"A Grand Concert, in aid of the funds of the Melbourne Hospital, will be given by the Cambrian Vocal Union in the Exhibition Building on Thursday, May 31," Melbourne, W.H. Williams, [1866], State Library of Victoria, Australia.

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concerts, one of which was a fundraiser for the Melbourne Hospital. The concert included a solo performance from the blind Welsh harper John Williams.<sup>33</sup>

John Williams (Alaw Dare) was a triple harp player from Glamorganshire who immigrated to Australia from Wales in 1857. Williams had already won several eisteddfod prizes and accolades in Wales before he migrated. A local newspaper announced his arrival: “This celebrated musician, whose extraordinary performances on the treble [sic] harp caused such astonishment both in Wales and England, has lately arrived in the colony, and intends shortly to visit Castlemaine. Those who appreciate really good music will not neglect this opportunity.”<sup>34</sup> John Williams was a professional musician, his employment is listed as “harpist” on his death certificate, but I am yet to find any specific evidence of him teaching anyone else or passing on his knowledge directly through anything other than performance. He was a prominent harper at Welsh events because he played the triple harp, the instrument most closely associated with Welsh nationalism at the time. In the late 1850s he also performed regularly with a violinist, “Mr Jones,” touring around goldfield towns at locations such as the Fryerstown Hotel and the Castlemaine Mechanics’ Institute Hall.<sup>35</sup>

The most popular Welsh event in the colonial period was the eisteddfod, a highly nationalistic gathering usually undertaken almost entirely in the Welsh language. For the immigrant Welsh community, the eisteddfodau were positive and festive celebrations of their culture designed to perpetuate and preserve Welsh heritage and traditions as they existed at “home.” Along with speeches from leading members of the Welsh community, the eisteddfodau included prizes for singing, poetry, prose, and music. Welsh historian Bill Jones describes the eisteddfodau as “the most emblematic of Welsh cultural institutions and, to many, one of the most symbolic elements of Welsh ethnicity.”<sup>36</sup> Along with John Williams there were several other harpers who performed regularly at the eisteddfodau, including Llewellyn Thomas, Thomas Morgan, and Edward Evans.

The first eisteddfod in Victoria was held in a Welsh chapel in Ballarat in 1855, with later events in the Mechanics Institute.<sup>37</sup> A full description of the 1863 eisteddfod appeared in the *Ballarat Star*, where performances of John Williams and Llewellyn Thomas were highly praised:

*Mr. Williams, harper - “Jenny Jones,” with variations. The artist’s manipulation of this most delicious of instruments was admirable, and if the whole Eisteddvod [sic] had been harp music, we could have*

*no difficulty in imagining the Sassenach to be as elated with joy as the most enthusiastic and impressionable Cambrian that ever mounted leek or spoke in the mellifluous tongue of the ancient Gael. Mr. Llewellyn Thomas subsequently put in an appearance, and the two harpers played together in nearly all the concerted music sung by the choir during the sittings, besides performing on their instruments unaccompanied by the choir. Of these executants it is difficult to speak in too high terms, and a sober Englishman by our side was so moved by the music they discoursed that he protested it was “seraphic.” Few persons who have not heard the harp in the hands of such accomplished artists could easily conceive it to be capable of producing such a volume of the softest and mellowest “concord of sweet sounds . . .”*<sup>38</sup>

Llewellyn Thomas played the pedal harp as well as the Welsh harp and participated in Welsh and non-Welsh events.<sup>39</sup> He was born in Glamorganshire and was part of a musical family of harp players, including an elder brother, John Thomas, who was Chief of Welsh Minstrels (Pencerdd Gwalia) and harpist to Queen Victoria.<sup>40</sup> Several other of Llewellyn Thomas’s siblings were also harpers/harpists such as his brothers Thomas (Aptommas) and William, and his sister Catherine.<sup>41</sup>

Llewellyn arrived in Victoria in 1859, and his name first appeared in an advertisement for a performance at the Theatre Royal in Ballarat the same year.<sup>42</sup> He performed as a soloist and as an entertainer in larger vaudeville-type shows, as well as in Welsh cultural events. In 1860, for example, Llewellyn performed at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Melbourne alongside the San Francisco Minstrels and the Mammoth Sable Operatic Burlesque Troupe.<sup>43</sup> In December they performed at the Montezuma Theatre in Ballarat in a “Monster Programme - Good Old Times Revived,” which included the “side-splitting Burlesque, entitled the Virginia Mummy.”<sup>44</sup> This was popular entertainment—theatrical, musical and comedic. In 1860 Llewellyn’s brother John bought him a double-action Erard harp (no. 4103) in London that was shipped to Australia and arrived the following year.<sup>45</sup> It is unclear whether Llewellyn performed on a Welsh harp with a single row of strings or a triple harp at eisteddfodau or used his Erard. Pedal harps don’t seem to have been barred from Welsh competitions if the pedals were not used. In 1852, for example, Llewellyn had competed in his hometown of Bridgend, Glamorganshire, for the honour of “the best performance of Welsh airs, with variations, on the single harp.” Llewellyn played a Welsh harp but there was an objection to the instrument used by another



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competitor, “inasmuch as it was a pedal harp; but as he did not use the pedals the objection was overruled.”<sup>46</sup>

The Welsh harper Edward Evans also immigrated to Victoria at the end of the 1850s, although less is known about his activities. Evans won a prize at the 1864 eisteddfod in Ballarat and promoted himself as “the celebrated Welsh harpist.”<sup>47</sup> He played at small gatherings like the annual meeting of the Mechanics Institute in Castlemaine, entertained in local hotels, at St. David’s Day and was an accompanist for several Welsh choirs.<sup>48</sup> He is, however, the only one of the Welsh harpers who publicly put himself forward as a teacher. In 1873 he put an advertisement in the *Kyneton Observer* promoting himself as a Professor of Music available as both a teacher and performer: “Edward Evans, Harpist, Begs to announce to the Public of Kyneton, and surrounding districts, that he has taken up his residence in Kyneton, and will give LESSONS on the HARP and attend CONCERTS, BALLS, QUADRILLE and PRIVATE PARTIES on the most reasonable terms.”<sup>49</sup>

Morgan and David Jones. Both of these harpists were amateur or semi-professional players, however, David Jones was also a harp maker. At a St. David’s Day celebration in Melbourne in 1865 three harpists were present; David Jones, Thomas Morgan, and John Williams. During the celebrations a harp made by David Jones was presented to Thomas Morgan for his “services gratuitously for the amusement of his fellow countrymen.”<sup>50</sup> In 1869 Jones made a harp for another member of the Welsh community that was exhibited at a fine arts exhibition held in the Mechanics Institute in Ballarat. In all, David Jones made over a hundred instruments, as he was a harp maker in Wales before he migrated to Australia. According to the writer in the *Ballarat Star*, Jones made triple harps “possessing a brilliancy of tone unknown on ordinary harps, even of the best made.”<sup>51</sup>

Welsh harp players in Victoria during the colonial period mainly performed at Welsh events and passed their musical knowledge to others aurally. They did not

pass on their knowledge directly to others in the same way as the English. Harpers performed at Welsh gatherings with other musicians, learning their craft from each other aurally, performing songs and pieces that were an expression of their national identity.<sup>52</sup> Welsh harp playing skills were shared in families and instruments sometimes handed down from one generation to the next.<sup>53</sup> The eisteddfodau were part of a revived or reimagined Welsh tradition and the triple harp was closely tied to the spirit of this revivalism in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>54</sup> Despite the view of the writer for the *Ballarat Star*

that Jones’s harps may “meet with patronage among lady musicians, who may rest assured that his harps are alike ornaments to the drawing room,” the evidence suggests that Jones was making harps for other members of the Welsh community not for the general public.<sup>55</sup>



*“Governor opening completed facade and Fine Arts exhibition at the Mechanics Institute, Ballarat,” [1869], State Library of Victoria, Accession no. H5525, Victoria, Australia.*

Apart from eisteddfodau, the Welsh in colonial Victoria often participated in general musical celebrations for St. David’s Day. Two other harpers are mentioned in newspaper reports as performers at these events—Thomas

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## NOTES

The way the Welsh disseminated their tradition of harp playing provides an interesting contrast to the approach of the English harpists. While the transmission of musical culture cannot generally be easily divided into neat categories of aurally transmitted versus notated, or classical versus folk, Welsh harp teaching and playing in Australia was more insular and community based than the self-improving, individualistic approach of the English harpists. There were musicians like Llewellyn Thomas who moved between the two approaches, but it was more likely that a Welsh harper would take up an English mode of transmission than an English harpist would choose a Welsh approach or attempt to participate in cultural activities that were not their own.

Ultimately, there was no continuation of the Welsh harp tradition as it was known in the colonial period. The Welsh tradition of harp playing was not sustainable in an Australian context, but other aspects of Welsh musical culture survived, in particular, the eisteddfodau; albeit without a strong Welsh harp presence. The eisteddfodau continued into the twentieth century, eventually evolving into general performing arts or specifically music competitions in Australia. In Ballarat, for example, the Royal South Street Competitions boast a history that dates back to the Grand Annual Eisteddfod of Australasia held in the city in 1891.

The English practices of harp teaching and disseminating musical knowledge, however, persisted. This is somewhat surprising given that the English harpists were mainly playing expensive imported pedal harps, making the instrument accessible only to a small section of society. There were no local pedal harp makers in Australia until recently, and the presence of a triple harp maker in the colonial period demonstrates that there was a glimpse of possibility for a locally made, more accessible harp. Compared to the Welsh, however, the English approach offered more gender diversity, encouraging young women to learn the harp, and provided a viable profession for the accomplished musician. The English mode of harp playing and learning was also supported by a flourishing music publishing industry resulting in a greater range of available repertoire for those who could read music notation. The numeric dominance of English migrants and their culture also had a role to play in weakening the continuity of aural cultural knowledge transmission within smaller groups like the Welsh and ensuring that the English mode of harp playing predominated.

1 Ann Carr-Boyd, "Music in Australia 1788-1888" (MA diss., University of Sydney, revised version, 1969), 149.

2 G.M. Young, *Victorian England* (London: The Folio Society, 1999), 349.

3 Ruth Teale, ed. *Colonial Eve: Sources on Women in Australia 1788-1914* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1978), 223.

4 *Ibid.*, 227.

5 New South Wales, Unassisted immigrant Passenger Lists, 1826-1922, Accessed 24 January, 2014, <http://ancestry.com.au>.

6 *The Sydney Herald*, March 19, 1838, 1.

7 Mike Baldwin, *Harp-Making in Late-Georgian London* (London: Bright Light, 2020); Robert Adelson, *Erard: L'empire de la harpe/Empire of the Harp* (Camac Harps, 2022).

8 *Bendigo Advertiser*, 22 December, 1858, 1.

9 *Launceston Examiner*, 21 December, 1850, 1.

10 *Ibid.*

11 M. Aloysius Macken, Loretto Convent Mary's Mount, to M. Scholastica Somers, 23 December 1877, Loreto Province Archives, Ballarat, SER344-2-026.

12 Teale, ed. *Colonial Eve*, 223.

13 Chatterton was a student of Nicholas Charles Boscha and took over from him as professor of harp at RAM when Boscha left in 1826.

14 *The Argus*, 6 October, 1852, 3.

15 *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 January, 1885, 1; Boscha was the first professor of harp at RAM from 1823 until 1826. Roslyn Rensch, *Harps and Harpists* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 190.

16 *The Argus*, 12 January, 1867, 7.

17 Tasmania, Australia, Passenger Arrivals, 1829—1957, Accessed from Ancestry 24 January, 2014, <http://ancestry.com.au>.

18 *The Mercury*, 4 December, 1867, 4.

19 Derek B Scott, *The Singing Bourgeois: Songs of the Victorian Drawing Room and Parlor* (2001), Chapter 11 "Music and Social Class in Victorian London", 207 accessed 10 July, 2014, <http://www.victorianweb.org/mt/dbscott/11.html>.

20 *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 February, 1865, 4; *Empire* (Sydney), 2 January, 1862, 3.

21 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 20 January, 1872, 9.

22 *The Argus*, 8 November, 1854, 8.

23 *The Argus*, 3 August, 1853, 3.

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24 *Launceston Examiner*, 16 December, 1865, 3.

25 *The Brisbane Courier*, 17 January, 1885, 1; In 1872 Llewellyn Thomas was robbed by four men who stole his harp. The instrument was said to be worth 70 pounds.

26 A.G.L. Shaw, *A History of the Port Phillip District* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 204.

27 Richard Broome, *The Victorians: Arriving* (McMahons Point: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1984), 103.

28 *Ibid.*, 74.

29 *Ibid.*, 101.

30 Broome cites the following population statistics for Welsh immigrants—in Williamstown they were two percent in 1891 and in Sebastopol they made up thirteen per cent of the population in 1861 and nine per cent in 1871. Broome, *The Victorians*, 101.

31 Bill Jones, “Welsh identities in Ballarat, Australia, during the late nineteenth century,” *Welsh History Review (Cylchgrawn hanes Cymru)*, 20, no. 2 (December 2000): 283-307.

32 Anne Doggett, “Beyond Gentility: Women and Music in Early Ballarat,” *History Australia*, 6, no.2 (2009): 7.

33 *The Ballarat Star*, 2 June, 1866, 3.

34 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 9 October, 1857, 4.

35 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 4 December, 1857, 5; *Mount Alexander Mail*, 9 December, 1857, 2.

36 Jones, “Welsh identities in Ballarat,” 289.

37 Carr-Boyd, “Music in Australia,” 148.

38 *The Star* (Ballarat), 30 December, 1863, 4.

39 *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette, 9 October, 1852, 3.

40 Rensch, *Harps and Harpists*, 208-209. *The Star* (Ballarat), 24 December, 1863, 1.

41 Graham Hall, “Bridgend’s Royal Harpist,” *The Genealogist*, 26 April, 2007, accessed 27 December, 2022, <http://www.thegenealogist.com/subscriberarticles/2007/bridgends-royal-harpist-232>.

42 Historical Death Certificate, Births, Deaths and Marriages Victoria, Certificate No, 13005/1889 Llewellyn Thomas; *The Star* (Ballarat), 13 December, 1859, 3.

43 *The Argus*, 4 December, 1860, 8; *The Argus*, 6 December, 1860, 8.

44 *The Star* (Ballarat), 27 December, 1860, 3.

45 *The Star* (Ballarat), 8 March, 1861, 3; Erard Harp Registers,

1828, Royal College of Music Library MS 10111, London, accessed 28 December 2022, <http://www.archive.org>.

46 *The Cardiff and Merthyr Guardian*, Glamorgan, Monmouth and Brecon Gazette, 9 October, 1852, 3. The “single” harp is a reference to the Welsh single row harp, such as those made by Bassett Jones.

47 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 4 December, 1857, 5; *Mount Alexander Mail*, 28 December, 1864, 2.

48 *Mount Alexander Mail*, 21 December, 1857, 2; *Mount Alexander Mail*, 8 July, 1864, 3; *The Ballarat Star*, 2 March, 1870, 3.

49 *The Kyneton Observer*, 22 April, 1873, 3.

50 *Geelong Advertiser*, 3 March, 1865, 2.

51 *The Ballarat Star*, 21 July, 1869, 2.

52 Cathryn Clayton, “The Importance of Harpist John Thomas as a Welsh Nationalistic Composer and his Impact on the Development of Virtuosi Harp Repertoire,” (DMus diss., University of Arizona, 2009), 18-19.

53 Mary Lewes, “The Lore of the Welsh Harp,” *The Musical Times*, September 1, 1924, 814; See also Roslyn Blyn-Ladrew, “Ancient Bards, Welsh Gypsies, and Celtic Folklore in the Cauldron of Regeneration,” *Western Folklore*, 57, no. 4 (Autumn 1998): 225—243.

54 Rhidian Griffiths, “The Eisteddfod Tradition,” in *A History of Welsh Music*, eds. Trevor Herbert, Martin V. Clarke and Helen Barlow (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 104, <http://doi.org/10.1017/9781009036511.008>.

55 *The Ballarat Star*, 21 July, 1869, 2.

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