

THE THEATRE AND MUSIC IN HALIFAX¹

PHYLLIS R. BLAKELEY.*

THEATRICAL and musical entertainments flourished in Halifax in the latter half of the nineteenth century. More plays and concerts were performed by professionals than in other cities in British North America because Halifax was a garrison town and a naval station and because regular steamship routes made it easily accessible from England and the United States. The popularity of the theatre early in the history of Halifax was due to the patronage of the army and navy officers stationed in this outpost of the British Empire, who not only brought with them from England a fondness for plays but had the leisure and money to indulge such tastes. The citizens of Halifax had eagerly purchased tickets for the first drama in the town—the performance of Richard Cumberland's "The West Indian" by a group of officers at the Pontac Hotel in March 1787. The first theatre in Halifax was opened in 1789, five years before the first theatre in Boston and fifteen years before a theatre was established in Montreal. This was the Grand Theatre on Argyle Street where H.R.H. Prince Edward attended many plays. Haligonians enthusiastically supported the productions of Elizabethan and Restoration drama by professional actors of international reputation because society followed the leadership of the armed forces and discovered that the theatre provided both entertainment and culture.

With the exception of the companies of Placide and William Blake, a Halifax boy who became a celebrated actor in the United States, interest in the theatre was maintained by amateur productions during the first part of the nineteenth century. In 1857 the professional drama was revived by the advent of Sothorn's company; E. A. Sothorn, already recognized as a star on the New York stage under the name of D. B. Stewart, brought

1. This article is based on Jewitt, A. R., "Early Halifax Theatres", pp. 444-59 *Dalhousie Review*, Vol. 5, No. 4; Logan, J. D., "Plays and Players in Halifax a Hundred Years and More," in *Morning Chronicle*, January 1, 1926, p. 12, col. 1-3; Mullan, George, "The Professional Drama of Yesterday in Halifax," unpublished MSS of N. S. Historical Society; Power, James W., "The Passing Theatre," in Special Souvenir Programme at closing of Majestic Theatre, Halifax, N. S., June 27, 1929; theatrical and musical programmes collected by W. W. Waish and in Dr. Cox's Scrapbook on Theatre and Music, both in PANS, and scrapbooks of Mrs. J. McD. Taylor and Miss Elsie Taylor in the possession of Miss A. B. Taylor; information from Mr. Ifan Williams and Miss Toomey of the Conservatory staff, Miss Florence Blackwood, Mrs. G. Fred Pearson, Miss Ada Hoyt and others; and references in the following newspapers and magazines—*Acadian Recorder*, *Bluenose*, *British Colonist*, *The Critic*, *Halifax Conservatory of Music Journal*, *Morning Chronicle*, *Morning Herald*, and *Nova Scotian*.

*Research Assistant, the Public Archives of Nova Scotia.

a talented company from New York to Halifax, chiefly English actors playing in New York under Laura Keen's management. When he was refused the Temperance Hall because some of the directors objected to the theatre, he obtained the Theatre Royal, which had been used by the garrison amateur theatrical troupe and after enlarging it, he renamed it Sothern's Lyceum. The Lyceum, "a gem in its way, built entirely of wood, but very nicely ornamented both inside and out," was situated in Spring Gardens, on Queen Street opposite the present Halifax Tourist Bureau. The company experienced financial difficulties until the arrival of the British Naval Squadron from the West Indies. Mrs. Sothern's benefit as Miss Harcastle in Goldsmith's comedy "She stoops to Conquer" proved a gala affair as well as a financial success, perhaps because she was a relative of Sir Houston Stewart, Admiral of the Fleet. In 1858 Mr. Sothern scored a triumph in the role of Lord Dundreary in Tom Taylor's "Our American Cousin," a part in which he was to gain world-wide fame in the United States and England. Another member of the company was Joseph Jefferson, who made "a hit" as Asa Trenchard, and who was later to be acclaimed as the greatest American comedian, the creator of Rip Van Winkle as a stage character. E. A. Sothern did not repeat this role in Canada until 1876, when he acted as "Lord Dundreary" in Montreal.

At the time of Confederation, Halifax was regularly visited each summer, and occasionally in winter, by professional theatrical companies from the United States, who acted in the Theatre Royal or the Temperance Hall. H. W. Fiske, the popular comedian, brought a large and talented company from Boston in 1866 and 1867 to play at the Theatre Royal. This seems to have been a repertory company, for as well as Shakespearean productions it performed such popular plays as "All is not Gold That Glitters," "Ticket of Leave Man" and "Colleen Bawn." Fiske spared neither trouble nor expense to have each piece "exceedingly cleverly performed" and he was rewarded each night by a "large and most fashionable audience." By 1868 the Lyceum had become delapidated and shabby, with dirty worn out scenery "not fit to present to an audience such as would appreciate the good acting" of the Keller Company in the farce "Rough Diamond" and Sheridan's "School for Scandal."

The Temperance Hall, situated between Starr Street and Poplar Grove, was now preferred by professional actors, although the stage was too small for the best plays. Another drawback was the distance from the south end, where most of

those with money and leisure to patronize the theatre lived. In 1868, 1869 and 1870 T. Charles Howard's *Olympic Theatre* played for several weeks each summer at the Temperance Hall, which had been built in 1849 for the Halifax Temperance Hall Company. The business manager of the Olympics was William Nannery, who later brought many fine companies of his own to Halifax and whose company had been acting at the Temperance Hall in 1876 during the visit of Barnum's Circus, when P. T. Barnum had appeared deeply interested in Frank Roche's impersonation of the Duke of Northumberland in *Ambition*, Alex. Dumas' great historical play in five acts.

In Howard's company were some of the most talented performers then in the United States, such as the handsome and magnetic Frank Roche who was a favorite as Elliot Gray in Lester Wallack's "Rosedale, or The Rifle Volunteer Ball," Mrs. D. R. Allen and J. W. Norton. The thrilling tragedy of "Lucretia Borgia" and the farce "The Cork Leg" were announced for the opening night on 28 May 1868, the price of admission being a quarter and a reserved seat half a dollar. Because of the sudden illness of the leading lady the beautiful "Streets of New York" had to be substituted. Because it was the best company Haligonians had seen for a number of years the Olympics played to crowded houses in spite of the competition from Keller's Company at the Theatre Royal in July, and absorbed several of its members when the latter disbanded.

The stage of the Temperance Hall having been enlarged, Howard's Company opened in April 1869 for a successful season. Although Howard brought leading actors and actresses to play for short engagements with his regular company, he was rewarded at first by slim audiences because of the poor selection of plays, and the heat and lack of ventilation. Finally Haligonians admitted that the season of 1870 had been the most brilliant since Sothorn. On 2 August Mr. and Mrs. E. L. Davenport, experienced and famous actors whom a few Haligonians had already seen in the best theatres in New York and Boston, appeared with the Olympics. One enthusiast expressed the hope that their performance would "elevate the Drama among our people, and give it a standing and respectability which it has never yet attained in Halifax." The production was J. H. Wilkins' beautiful play in five acts written for Mr. Davenport—*St. Marc! Or, The Soldier of Fortune*," and in it Davenport proved worthy of his reputation as a talented American tragedian and the finest

actor in the English language in thrilling scenes and impassioned speeches.

Howard also brought Miss Clara Morris, young, handsome and talented, who opened on Monday, 20 June, as Pauline Deschappelles in "The Lady of Lyons." On the same bill was the successful farce "An Object of Interest," which introduced the hit of the New York season, "Shoo Fly", which became the rage in Halifax that summer. Few people in this seaport had heard of Clara Morris, and all were extremely sceptical about her abilities, which had been advertized in the most glowing terms in the newspapers. Very often an actress had been announced as being famous in the States, and then Halifax audiences had discovered to their sorrow that such fame existed only in the imagination of the producer or the press agent! However, theatre goers in Halifax quickly recognized her exceptional talent, the newspapers praised her, and crowds flocked to see her. After a few weeks Miss Morris closed her engagement with Howard in "She Stoops to Conquer" and proceeded to New York to play leading emotional roles in Augustus Daly's celebrated Fifth Avenue Company and to become recognized as the greatest American emotional actress of the day. But Haligonians could remember that they had seen and appreciated this star before Broadway knew she existed.

In 1871, 1872 and 1873 Flora Myers' *New York Theatre* appeared both winter and summer at the Temperance Hall for short seasons. This was a repertory company, similar to Howard's which played the old favourites and "Rip Van Winkle" for the first time in Halifax and brought Marietta Ravel, danseuse and pantomimist from Montreal to star in the "French Spy" and "Jartine, the Pride of the 14th"—a thrilling melodrama. Actors and audiences alike were aware that the Theatre Royal and the Temperance Hall were inadequate. In 1869 many citizens considered it absolutely ridiculous that Halifax with a population of nearly 30,000 should not have "a respectable looking" Theatre or Concert Hall. Several companies were formed, one of which planned the Halifax Concert Hall on Hollis Street with spacious public rooms for concerts and lectures, a billiard room, and stores for rent. Another company actually started to erect a wooden Music Hall on the corner of Cogswell and Gottingen streets in 1873. Finally after endless discussion and the usual delays the Academy of Music was built by a company of prominent citizens to provide a large hall for concerts, lectures, plays and outstanding entertainments from

Canada, the United States and Europe. Designed by A.M. Jackson, an English architect, the Academy was constructed of brick faced with stucco, by S. M. Brookfield on Barrington street at the foot of Spring Garden Road, where the Capitol Theatre stands today. The building, site and furnishings cost about \$100,000.

The Academy of Music opened on Tuesday, 9 January, 1877 with a Grand Opening Concert by one hundred and fifty singing members of the Halifax Philharmonic Union under the direction of C.H. Porter, assisted by the Rudolfson Quartette of Boston and the Boston Philharmonic Club of Instrumentalists. The fine weather, the splendid programme and curiosity combined to fill the hall, although it was the most expensive entertainment yet offered in Halifax, at a dollar and a half for a reserved seat. The parquette circle in the shape of a horseshoe, which was greatly favored by many patrons, was later replaced by seats and boxes. The top gallery was known as "gods' pit" or "the gods." The large, brilliant and fashionable audience marvelled at the beauties of the interior, admired the handsome frescoed ceiling and gasped at the flood of radiance when the light was turned on in the huge chandelier. The Academy was lighted by electricity, one of the first public buildings in Halifax to be lit in this way, which caused many to compare the spectacle to Alladin's Palace. All rejoiced in the impression of lightness and airiness, the promptness and civility of the ushers, and enjoyed the concert immensely, especially the rendering of Haydn's "The Heavens are telling the Glory of God" by the Union, and "Heaven hath shed a tear" by the tenor of the Rudolfson Quartette.

A week later the Academy was opened on 16 January for the first time in its legitimate capacity as a theatre for a six-week season by the stock company of William Nannery. The first play presented was "Clouds", a pretty social comedy written by Fred Marsden which had been popular in its long run in New York. After a Prologue delivered by Mr. Veith, which was spoiled by late comers straggling to their reserved seats, a delightful rural scene was revealed to the crowded house. The leading man, Joseph R. Grismer, who later became a noted New York manager, and W. S. Harkins, the juvenile, spoke the first lines on the stage. The audience was not entirely satisfied with the dialogue, and some objected because the play did not end till the late hour of 11.40 p.m., but all agreed that Nannery's first night had been a great success.

Playgoing in Halifax became fashionable, as well as popular. Some of the plays performed at the Academy in 1877 were "In-gomar," "Enoch Arden," "Lady of Lyons," "Rosedale" and "Under the Gaslight," which had a run of six nights and a matinee. The scenery for these was painted by William Gill of Halifax, who did very fine work and afterwards became a well-known scenic artist, travelling with E. A. McDowell's company and later employed at the Tremont Theatre in Boston. In the closing decades of the nineteenth century many kinds of entertainment were offered at the Academy, ranging from grand opera to vaudeville. The fears that Haligonians would neglect the Academy after the novelty had worn off proved groundless. Interested audiences watched comic opera, ballet, pantomime, and hundreds of dramatic stock companies such as W. S. Harkins', Fifth Avenue Theatre and E. A. McDowell's, which first came in 1878 to perform such spectacular pieces as "The Naiad Queen" and "The Field of the Cloth of Gold." There were productions of "H. M. S. Albacore" and "Captain Reece of the Mantlepiece" by the officers of the navy and a recital by Lottie Mae MacKay, a charming young prima donna and a native of Halifax, when she returned from studying in England and Italy. Edward Johnson, famous Canadian tenor at the Metropolitan and now Chairman of the Directors of the Royal Toronto Conservatory, sang at the Academy during the May Festival of 1905. There were lectures by such noted lecturers as William Jennings Bryan and Oscar Wilde. The latter lectured in the Maritimes on his way to the United States in 1882. Although the *Presbyterian Witness* had objected to "the conceited idiot" being allowed to speak in Halifax the *Acadian Recorder* reported that "a large number of the best people of Halifax had their curiosity satisfied last night by a sight of the celebrated aesthete, for never since the opening of the *Academy of Music* was such an audience gathered together, at the same time so large and fashionable." They were disappointed because the lecture on "The Decorative Art" was dull, difficult to follow, unrelieved by striking phrases or apt examples, and delivered in a monotonous way.

After the erection of the Academy of Music the Temperance Hall was sold at auction to the Young Men's Literary Association, who refitted and renamed it the Lyceum. This building, which had been so intimately connected with life in Halifax for half a century, was completely destroyed by fire on 15 March, 1899.

Halifax was one of the outstanding musical centres in Can-

ada in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. Although Captain Moorsom had observed in 1830 that musical concerts were almost unknown, after 1848 there were many concerts by amateurs, both civilian and military, who had fine voices and were skilled instrumentalists, such as the Amateur Glee Club, St. Cecilia's Choral Society, the Halifax Philharmonic Society, Halifax Choir, Halifax Vocal Quintette Club, Haydn Quintette Club, Haydn Club and the Orpheus Club. The annual performance of "The Messiah" or "The Creation" by the Philharmonic Society was eagerly awaited by music lovers and performed for large and appreciative audiences. The city was visited by professionals from both the United States and Europe, like the Mendelssohn Quintette Club of Boston who first came to Halifax on 10 August 1871 and returned often to perform before their admirers; Herr Severin Froelich, the eminent violinist, who gave several wonderful concerts while Prince Arthur was here in 1869; Madame Albani the Canadian songbird who became a grand opera star and whose company was assisted by a number of talented Halifax amateurs such as Miss Daisy Foster, Mrs. H. B. Hagarty, Mrs. J. McD. Taylor, Miss Florence Lewis, T. Mitchell and D. C. Gillis in 1896; and Kennedy's Songs of Scotland entitled "A Nicht Wi' The Jacobites." The Alleghenian Vocalists and Bell Ringers performed at the Temperance Hall on their return from an European tour during which they had appeared before Queen Victoria and members of the Royal family at Windsor Castle. Halifax audiences enjoyed the music, which the London *Times* had praised as "not only melodious, but pure, tender, sympathetic and expressive."

Occasionally Haligonians had the opportunity of watching and listening to Grand Opera—a privilege they thoroughly enjoyed. When there were no gramophones, radios or movies people appreciated the opportunity of hearing music by professionals more than they do today, when good music by the finest singers and orchestras is no longer a novelty and may be heard daily over radios and record players. Their pleasure and gratitude at hearing classical music by professionals is abundantly clear from the reviews of the performances of the Brignoli Grand Opera Company in July 1871, reviews that do not find the slightest fault in "Il Trovatore" and "Martha" and praise the exquisite voice of Miss Isabella McCulloch, the only native prima donna to gain an established position upon the American stage in the 1870's. In 1872 Halifax had a season of Italian Opera when a troupe from New Orleans that had been touring

the Upper Provinces performed "Lucretia Borgia," "Martha," "Il Trovatore" and "Luci di Lammermoor." After the opening of the Academy of Music there were many engagements of English and Italian Opera Companies—the Hess English Opera Company in "The Bohemian Girl" and "Fra Diavolo," and Adelaide Phillipp's Grand Opera Company in "Gounod's immortal opera Faust." In May 1881 the Holman Opera Company played at the Lyceum in Offenbach's "La Grande Duchesse," and in 1891 Haligonians crowded the Academy to hear the Grau Opera Company in "The Gondoliers" and "The Chimes of Normandy." In April 1897, the Carleton Opera Company appeared at the Academy for two weeks with a cast of forty from the Metropolitan to present the "Queen's Lace Handkerchief," "Nanon" and "Dorothy."

In the nineteenth century stirring band music could be heard nearly every day in Halifax from bands of the British regiments. The bandmaster of the 60th Royal Rifles, G. Raineri, was a gifted composer as well as a fine musician and conductor, and his march "Autumn Manoeuvres" was "much admired by all who were fortunate enough to hear it" on the route march. Another of his compositions "Funeral March" (Op. 54) was published in Halifax by J. Hagarty at his Musical Warehouse. In summer these military bands played in the Public Gardens twice a week and on gala occasions such as Natal Day. When John Phillip Sousa and his famous band played at the Academy in June 1897 the appreciative audience encored every selection.

Love of music was fostered by talented amateurs, many of whom belonged to the army or navy, and by the church choirs, most of which had fine singers and well trained choir leaders. Several of the finest organists in Halifax were from England. In April 1873 when the new organ for St. Paul's arrived from London, Samuel Porter accompanied it to become organist and choirmaster. St. Matthew's was renowned for its fine music under the leadership of Arthur Bird, the English conductor of the Arion Club who later became famous in Germany as a composer, and under the guidance of C. H. Porter, an American organist.

On 26 October, 1842 thirty-eight men living in Halifax organized the first of those choral societies that were to have such an important influence on musical life in the city in the last century. John Slayter was President and Peter Nordbeck the Vice-President of this Halifax Harmonic Society, which was devoted to "the improvement of its Members in the higher de-

partments of Sacred Music," and under the direction of John St. Luke the Society began practicing "The Creation." The *Novascotian* remarked in 1856 on the general desire for the establishment of a Musical Society and ridiculed the notion that "a love of the science of sweet sounds unfits people for the ordinary avocations of life." The Harmonic Society was revived and presented three public concerts at the Temperance Hall in the winter of 1858.

A number of the members of the Harmonic Society later formed the Halifax Philharmonic Society for the cultivation of a taste for sacred song. On 1 March, 1869 every seat in the Temperance Hall was occupied for the performance of "The Messiah" by the Philharmonics, a rich musical treat for the citizens. Every winter during the 1870's the Philharmonic Society presented an oratorio for the pleasure and enjoyment of the citizens of Halifax. The oratorios performed were almost invariably "The Messiah" or "The Cretation," Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" proving difficult musically. Although this society has ceased to give concerts it still sponsors the Halifax Community Concert Association, which provides a series of subscription concerts each year by visiting artists.

The Orpheus Club was another group of amateur and professional singers that replaced the Philharmonic Society. This Club began in 1882, although it was not incorporated until 1891, and by the end of the century it was the oldest choral society with a continuous history in Canada. Haligonians were proud that their interest and enthusiasm had supported the club in such a flourishing condition for so many years. Professor Charles H. Porter, Director of the Halifax Conservatory of Music, was largely responsible for the growth of the society and the excellent quality of its choir. The Club gave many concerts that Haligonians found highly enjoyable. In 1891 the series of seven subscription concerts of the Orpheus Club with Ladies' Auxiliary and Orchestra was brought to a close in June in the Orpheus Hall. The Club was assisted by Miss Louise Laine, head of the vocal department of the Conservatory, and Herr Doering as guest soloists. Herr Ernst Doering was cello teacher at the Conservatory but left in 1891 to form the Doering-Brauer Conservatory of Music in St. Luke's Hall with his wife and his brother Karl.

In June 1896 the Orpheus Club achieved a superb operatic success with their magnificent performance of the difficult opera "Martha" to a full house at the Academy, with Miss Lottie Mae

MacKay, Mrs. J. McD. Taylor, D. C. Gillis, G. E. Boak, A. Wylde and W. H. Houldsworth in the leading roles. The gay gowns of the ladies and the bright uniforms of the military and naval officers added to the brilliance of the scene. The Orpheus Club followed this success with a second production of "Martha," and by "Rip Van Winkle," "Bohemian Girl" and "Trial By Jury."

The first concert given by the Orpheus Club in the season of 1900-1901 provided a varied programme of songs, choruses, and violin solos by Leo Altman, head of the violin department of the Conservatory, all rapturously encored. The musical critic of the *Bluenose* observed that although he had heard some of the best choral organizations in the world "never yet have we heard better work than was done by the Orpheus (in Benedick's 'Hunting Song'). For crispness of attack, precision and shading we have never heard anything better. The *volume* of the chorus is not only great; but the *quality* is lovely—no straining and no effort."

When a number of the music teachers in Halifax united in 1887 to form the Halifax Conservatory of Music a marked impetus was given to music in both the city and the province. The aim of the founders was to establish a music school where all branches of music from the lowest to the highest grades should be taught. The Conservatory has continued to exert great influence upon musicians and musical tastes through its excellent teachers, its training of students, its recitals, its orchestra and its high standards of musicianship, and in 1898 it was affiliated with Dalhousie University to confer degrees in music. Although a few students undertook post graduate training at the New England Conservatory, the majority went to Germany for further study at Berlin and Leipzig. A number of the teachers at the Conservatory came from Germany.

From 1887 to 1900 Professor Charles H. Porter was the Director of the Halifax Conservatory, and his attractive appearance, his dignity and ability to make friends, combined with his skill as a pianist and teacher, made him a noted man in the community. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, when there were no moving pictures or radios to distract the public, it was a matter of great pride to receive an invitation to one of the Conservatory recitals when the Convocation Hall, which was situated with the Halifax Ladies' College on Pleasant Street, was filled with pretty girls in white gowns and ladies and gentlemen in evening dress. Mr. Porter resigned in 1900 to

become manager for the Equitable Life Assurance Company. The head of the violin department was Herr Klingensfeld, graduate of Leipzig Conservatory, who had come to Halifax from Munich in 1835. A vivid little man with black hair and bright black eyes, always wearing a pince-nez on a black silk cord, he was undaunted by the fact that he could not speak English and immediately began to learn the language from Shakespeare. When Herr Klingensfeld arrived there were few violin students in the city, for a young man who studied music was considered effeminate, and a lady never played the violin. Some of his pupils possessed splendid musical talent and their progress stimulated others. Herr Klingensfeld with other pioneer teachers of the Conservatory encouraged the study of music for its inherent cultural value and not merely for entertainment.

The production of orchestral music in Halifax was an impossibility, for only a handful of people had any knowledge of stringed instruments. The only attempts at orchestral music had been the Kinder-Sinfonie Kapelle and the Quintette Club. Singers and musicians, directed by C. H. Porter, reorganized the Kapelle and gave a musicale with several orchestral numbers, such as "Romberg's Symphony," in December 1882, the novelty of this concert thrilling the audience. The Haydn Quintette Club was flourishing in the 1880's under the efficient leadership of Samuel Porter, who played the viola, and gave some pleasant entertainments that prepared the way for a large orchestra. Herr Klingensfeld was requested to direct this organization, which expanded under the name of the Haydn Club. Enlarged by violin students and bandsmen from the line regiments the Club gave a number of concerts and was asked to join the Orpheus Club for combined concerts of full choral and orchestral masterpieces. Herr Klingensfeld left a lasting impression of instrumental music in Halifax. He went to California in 1893.

The Halifax Symphony Orchestra was formed in 1897 under the leadership of Max Weil, a German Jew who was then head of the violin department of the Halifax Conservatory, who married a Halifax girl and eventually returned to the United States to conduct an orchestra. In June 1900 he resigned to found the Weil School of Music on Morris Street, where the offices of Mathers and Doull are now situated. Mr. Weil was able to make rapid progress with the Halifax Symphony by building on the foundation laid by the earlier orchestra and by his own energy, capacity for hard work, his quick eye and unerring ear. The members of the orchestra were rewarded

by the growing appreciation of the public and the flattering comments of people from larger musical centres.

The Symphony made its debut at the Academy of Music on 24 April, 1897, in a Schubert Memorial Concert under the auspices of the Local Council of Women to raise funds for the Indian Famine Fund. Mrs. Charles Archibald, who arranged the concert, became first president of the Ladies' Musical Club in 1905. The orchestra delighted the audience, for its playing "left nothing to be desired by the most fastidious", particularly in the "Unfinished" Symphony, although some questioned "the propriety of the conductor inserting two of his own compositions in a Schubert Memorial concert." There were thirty-eight in the orchestra, among them eleven ladies in the string section. Mr. Weil was able to draw on the Imperial bands for experienced musicians to augment his own pupils at the Conservatory in the wood wind and brass sections.

During the celebrations of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee delegates of the National Council of Women from all parts of Canada gathered at the Orpheus Hall while their president, the Countess of Aberdeen, explained the plan to raise a million dollar jubilee fund for trained nurses, which has become familiar as the Victorian Order of Nurses. To entertain their guests the Local Council sponsored a Symphony Concert at the Exhibition Building on 18 June. Showers of congratulations descended upon Conductor Weil and his musicians. One of the finest vocal numbers, all of which were accompanied by the orchestra, was the Quartette from "Rigoletto" by Miss Metzler, Mrs. J. McD. Taylor, T. Mitchell and W. R. Shute. By special request of the Governor-General, Lord Aberdeen, the Symphony repeated the "William Tell Overture".

Halifax with a population of forty thousand, compared with one hundred thousand to-day, was able to support this Symphony Orchestra for a number of years. In 1900 the Symphony had thirty-nine members—fourteen first and second violins, four violas, two cellos, one bass, one piccolo, two flutes, one oboe, two clarionets, one bassoon, two horns, three cornets, three trombones, tympani and drums. Four or five concerts were given each season, Mr. Weil bringing famous guest artists like Katherine Bloodgood and Leopold Godowski as soloists. He adhered firmly to the idea that if the people were given the opportunity of hearing good music played as it ought to be, they would learn to appreciate it and the standard of taste would be raised. For this reason he emphasized the classics on his

programmes. "One of the best pieces of work done by the orchestra so far was their performance of the music of *The Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Egmont*, both of which were rendered for the first time in Canada," concluded one critic. In 1900 a choral society of eighty-five of the leading vocalists of the city joined the Symphony to perform choral works with it, and it became known as the Halifax Symphony Orchestra and Chorus. On 26 February, 1901, they presented a Grand Wagner Concert, and sponsored the May Festival with Charlotte Maconda as soloist. In 1906 citizens could purchase a subscription to four "Pop" Concerts by the Halifax Symphony for a dollar and a half.

Both the Orpheus Club and the Symphony Orchestra did much to promote a love of good music in the city, and "it is largely owing to their influence that Halifax is now considered one of the most musical cities in Canada," wrote the music critic of the *Bluenose* in 1900. Although Halifax owed this position to the initiative and energy of a few talented people, who seldom were natives of the city, Haligonians had eagerly supported plays and concerts by professionals. Moreover, the citizens, often assisted by members of the Imperial army and navy, also produced amateur theatricals and concerts for their own enjoyment. In the last century there were far more theatrical and musical productions in Halifax than to-day, partly because these entertainments had not to compete with the movies, radios and record players, because there was the patronage of the army and navy, and because the city had a suitable auditorium for such performances. As Halifax was the fourth largest city in Canada in 1881 and seventh in 1901 its citizens had sufficient money and leisure to support the cultural influences of music and the theatre.