Music During The Centennial of American Independence

Music has played an important role in the life of America. It has ranged from hymns of praise to popular ballads, folk songs to patriotic airs, concert and operatic selections to martial tunes. The United States has produced its own composers, styles of music, and musicians and makers of musical instruments, but, at the same time, Americans have willingly accepted contributions from other countries.

Celebrations—whether the Fourth of July in some small hamlet, the return of troops from war, the observance of an anniversary, or the inauguration of a President of the United States—have not been without music of some kind. The Centennial of American Independence in 1876 was certainly no exception. The musical program of the Centennial was three-fold in nature: first, there were the numerous selections written and composed just for the occasion; secondly, special musical programs and special events were scheduled; and third, musical instruments, both of modern manufacture and those of primitive cultures, were exhibited at the International Exhibition in Philadelphia.

Not every city waited until 1876 to start celebrating the centennial of the American Revolution. Four years earlier, Boston staged a World Peace Jubilee from June 17—the ninety-seventh anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill—to July 4. The leaders of politics and society in Boston, who were aware of the significant and heroic role that Massachusetts had played in the Revolution and the importance of events like the Boston Tea Party and the Battle of Bunker Hill, decided that an enormous concert festival would be an appropriate form of commemoration.

In addition to local concert groups, the committee in charge invited celebrities from Europe. Among them were the popular German composer Franz Abt, the German pianist and conductor
Hans von Bulow, and Johann Strauss, the "Waltz King." At first Strauss wanted to decline the invitation, but he was sorely tempted. The Bostonians had offered him $100,000 paid in advance and all expenses, including those of his wife and two servants.

Arriving in New York only a day before the festival was to start, Strauss went immediately to Boston where an enormous hall had been constructed in the Back Bay area. It had a platform capable of holding 20,000 performers and an auditorium which could seat more than 100,000. Four rows of pillars, hung with flags, supported the roof.

The immense building was crowded on the evening of Strauss' first concert. As he reached the center of the stage, "a thunderous ovation went up from one hundred thousand throats." Around him were nearly 20,000 musicians, including a 1,500-man orchestra. Strauss, whose conductor's stand was a high wooden platform, later described the evening:

In order to conduct the giant assembly of singers and orchestra members I had assigned one hundred sub-conductors. I could see only those who stood closest to me. . . . Suddenly there is a cannon shot—a subtle hint for us twenty thousand to begin The Blue Danube. I give a sign. My hundred sub-conductors follow me as fast and as well as they can. . . . Somehow I managed to do it—it was really the only thing I can do. The audience cheered. The noise was fantastic.

He went on to conduct a total of fourteen highly successful concerts. In spite of his busy schedule while in Boston, he found time to write the New Jubilee Waltz, which ended with a waltz arrangement of the "Star Spangled Banner."¹

Two events were especially noteworthy among the musical programs that were presented in 1876. These were the opening of the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia on May 10 and the Fourth of July celebration in the same city. However, there were numerous other occasions for the music lover throughout the Centennial year.

In 1875 the United States Centennial Commission offered the musical directorship of the opening ceremonies at the Exhibition to Theodore Thomas, the well-known German-American conductor.

The Women’s Committees of the Exhibition, under the presidency of Mrs. E. D. Gillespie, suggested to Thomas that he also give a series of summer evening concerts. The ladies promised to promote them by every means in their power. Under such auspices Thomas was confident that the 1876 season would be a very profitable one for him.  

When Thomas accepted the directorship of the opening day, Mrs. Gillespie wrote that her committees would be responsible for the expenses of a chorus and would also pay an honorarium for the composing of an inaugural march, if Thomas could arrange with some famous European composer to do this.  

Thomas at once opened negotiations with Richard Wagner, who accepted the commission, writing in December, 1875, that “I will say that it is quite possible that for the opening of the American national festival, something may occur to me—perhaps in broad March form—that I can make use of...”  

Wagner accepted the honorarium of $5,000, making certain it was in the hands of his banker before Thomas had a chance to examine the score. In return, he promised that rights to the work in America should go to the Women’s Committees. At the same time, February 8, 1876, he pledged that he would not allow publication in Germany until six months after publication in the United States. However, Joseph Rubenstein had already arranged the piece for piano and its German publisher had shipped copies to New York music stores.  

In addition to the Wagner March, Thomas arranged for two American composers, John K. Paine, organist and composer at Harvard University, and Dudley Buck of Connecticut, to write choral pieces for the Exhibition. In order that their works would have a still more distinctly national character, the American poets John Greenleaf Whittier of Massachusetts and Sidney Lanier of Georgia were asked to write the words.  

In preparing to write his poem, Lanier impressed upon himself that the cantata was to be sung at a festival where “the world was

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3 Ibid., 110.
4 Ibid., 111.
5 Ibid., 110-114.
our invited guest”; “spread-eagleism would be ungraceful and unworthy”; something should be said in the poem; the composer should have the opportunity to “employ the prodigious tone-contrasts of sober reflection, the sea, lamentation, a battle, warning, and magnificent yet sober and manly triumph and welcome”; and, while the work should be rhymed philosophy, it should also be “a genuine song, and lyric outburst.” Having “put this offering on my altar, I waited,” he wrote. The next morning Lanier “saw that the Fire had come down from the gracious Heaven, and that it was burning.” In one day he wrote his first draft. Bayard Taylor, the poet, offered suggestions which Lanier incorporated in revisions of the cantata. A few days later he sent it to Buck, who replied, “It is certainly original both in thought and expression.” Two days later Buck added, “The poem is splendid—I am quite in love with it as it sinks in deeper & deeper.”

On May 10 the great Centennial Exhibition was formally opened. Nearly 100,000 people were massed in the space between the Main Building and Memorial Hall in order to take part in the festivities of the day. The speaking was not remarkable; rather, the music was the main feature. “The most entertaining, if not important feature of the programme,” the music “was most creditably rendered, rapturously applauded and in two special features encored.”

The musical prelude consisted of the national airs of sixteen nations in addition to that of the United States. The group of numbers opened with “The Washington March” and closed with “Hail Columbia.” In between were “God Save the Queen” and the “Marseillaise,” as well as the national hymns of Argentina, Brazil, Turkey and of every European nation except Portugal. These were performed by the large orchestra and a chorus of more than 1,000 voices.

At exactly eleven o’clock, upon the signal given by General Joseph R. Hawley, President of the Centennial Commission, Thomas’ grand orchestra “performed with fine effect” Wagner's
long-awaited Centennial Inauguration March. The opening of the number was bold and spirited, and, as chord after chord of richest euphony was struck with perfect certainty, the triumphant harmonies rolled out from 100 instruments.\footnote{Ibid.}

Following the invocation by Matthew Simpson, Methodist Episcopal Bishop, the chorus sang the first three and the last verses of Whittier's Hymn with organ and orchestral accompaniment:

\begin{quote}
Our fathers' God! from out whose hand
The centuries fall like grains of sand.
We meet today, united, free.
And loyal to our land and Thee.
To thank Thee for the era done,
And trust thee for the opening one.
\end{quote}

These words of praise had been set to music by John K. Paine. As the vocalists united in singing the number, the multitude "stood motionless, with bowed heads, as the sweet stanzas were wedded to the tender yet lofty melody."\footnote{Ibid.} In contrast to the instruments of the orchestra, the voices, particularly the altos and sopranos, could be heard for some distance.\footnote{Ibid.}

After the buildings of the Exhibition had been properly presented and accepted, Dudley Buck ascended the platform, the chorus rose to its feet, and with a wave of the baton, Lanier's "The Centennial Meditation of Columbia" was begun. The musical score by Buck excited great admiration, but the musical moment of greatest interest was when Myron W. Whitney, basso, began the solo of the selection:

\begin{quote}
Long as thine act shall love true love,
Long as thy science truth shall know,
Long as thine eagle harms no dove,
Long as the law by law shall grow,
Long as thy God is God above
Thy brother every man below,
So long dear land of all my love,
Thy name shall shine, thy fame shall glow.
\end{quote}

\footnote{Philadelphia Inquirer, May 11, 1876.}
Great was the appreciation on the part of the vast audience as Whitney's voice thrilled them "as nothing else had yet thrilled them." His lowest notes were "like the tremulous vibrations of an organ's pipes." After the final chorus had been started, the applause was so great that Thomas had to stop in order that the solo might be repeated. There was no doubt that Mr. Whitney could carry away "a proud memory" of his being encored "by the largest audience which ever listened to a single singer."  

Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus" closed the program. It could not, however, be heard to advantage. Long before it was concluded, preparations for the procession to view the buildings of the Exhibition were underway. Confusion and noise were everywhere, drowning out much of the music by the massive chorus. Reactions to the musical numbers were varied. Newspaper reporters and critics were not agreed on either the greatness of the music, the quality of the performance, or the acoustical problems at the opening day ceremonies.

The grand musical treat was supposed to be Wagner's march. Everybody was full of anticipation and listened to it with rapt and appreciative attention. The march was described as a masterpiece of its kind. The instrumentation of the orchestra was splendid and worthy of the production. The scoring was extremely massive. Besides stringed instruments, it called for three each of flutes, hautboys, clarinets, bassoons, trumpets, trombones and kettle drums, four horns, one contrabassoon, a bass trumpet and a bass tuba, as well as great and military drums, cymbals, a gong and triangles.

A reporter who heard it thought that certain passages were destined to "become familiar house music." Somewhat on the negative side was the music critic of the *Atlantic Monthly* who declared the two contrasting themes of Wagner's march were "neither new nor especially interesting." True, they had "a certain stateliness and grandeur, but they do not of themselves produce any marked effect upon either the feelings or the imagination." Even

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14 Ibid.; North American, May 11, 1876.
15 Ibid.
16 Philadelphia Inquirer, Apr. 18, 1876; Christian Advocate (New York), May 18, 1876.
17 Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, May 20, 1876.
so, after playing the march some half dozen times, the critic found "it neither monotonous nor dry, but full of fire, dignity, and energy."\textsuperscript{18}

According to \textit{Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly}, the effect of the piece in the open air was very marked and the preponderance of brass instruments added to rather than diminished its impact.\textsuperscript{19} On the other hand, the \textit{Philadelphia Inquirer} noted the next day that the orchestral portion of the music was less effective than had been generally expected. The instrumental parts rendered by the string instruments were too weak for the open air. Many notes of the march barely reached the speaker's platform. It was felt that the place, the surroundings, and the vast spaces where the concert was heard were responsible for this failing rather than Thomas' musicians.\textsuperscript{20}

The \textit{Nation} thought some of the reports in the newspapers may have been misleading. The reporters were huddled in a location where "they could see and hear literally nothing. Some of the glowing descriptions by these gentlemen were drawn, I fear, chiefly from imagination," opined an observer.\textsuperscript{21}

Although Wagner's Inauguration March was to be played again at later functions of the Exhibition, it has since disappeared from repertories. Wagner's "generosity" in granting "exclusive American rights" to the Women's Committees was not taken advantage of by them. Perhaps it was just as well as the work did not achieve popularity. Thomas, who persistently encouraged the performance of Wagner's music in America, seldom performed the March, and Wagner himself is said to have remarked, "The best thing about that composition was the money I got for it."\textsuperscript{22}

On the other hand, Whittier's hymn was "grand and thrilling." It had a "stately air" and was sung by the chorus "in fine accord in admirable time." The music that Paine had written for Whittier's poem reminded a hearer of old choral music. To another it was "a very perfect piece of plain choral writing" which should be placed

\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Atlantic Monthly}, July, 1876, 122.
\textsuperscript{19} Leslie's, May 20, 1876.
\textsuperscript{20} Philadelphia Inquirer, May 11, 1876; The Nation, May 18, 1876.
\textsuperscript{21} The Nation, May 18, 1876.
\textsuperscript{22} Thomas, 117; John Maass, \textit{The Glorious Enterprise} (Watkins Glen, N. Y., 1973), 41.
in the front rank among "the many modern attempts at original composition in this style. Few others in the United States could have written such a great hymn."\textsuperscript{23}

The cantata, "The Centennial Meditation of Columbia," was the most "conspicuous feature" of the program. Buck's music, written for Lanier's poem, was "the masterpiece" and "carried off the honors." The music was "a composition of much more merit than the words." The parts for the chorus were "spirited and fantastic." In all, it was considered a "very favorable example" of the composer's work. Anything except a masterful treatment of "early melodious and dramatically pertinent themes" would have been a surprise. The great problem was that Lanier's poem was "ill adapted to musical treatment in the purely musical style" in which Dudley Buck was at home. "Musically considered, the cantata is a most capital piece of writing," a critic concluded. From the first, Lanier's cantata had been much criticized, but many people found that some parts were "exceedingly dramatic." There were many fine ideas and some fine lines in it, and it had "the merit of boldness and originality."\textsuperscript{24}

The next day, May 11, Thomas conducted the program at the inaugural of the Women's Hall. The Women's Committees had acquired the use of the mansion and grounds of the late Edwin Forrest, the American tragedian. A music hall seating 4,000 was added, and the house was fitted out as a restaurant. The orchestral platform seated 600 choristers and an orchestra of thirty-five stringed instruments and the supporting brass, woodwinds, and percussion.

The program for this event included the music that had been performed at the opening of the Exhibition. In addition, there were Beethoven's "Overture, Op. 124" ("The Consecration of the House"), Daniel Auber's "Masaniello Overture," "Invitation to the Waltz" by von Weber, Schubert's "Serenade" orchestrated by Thomas, Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsody, No. 14" and the "Blue Danube Waltz" by Strauss.\textsuperscript{25}

\textsuperscript{23} Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, 124; Christian Advocate, May 18, 1876; Baltimore Sun, May 11, 1876; The Penn Monthly, June, 1876, 415.
\textsuperscript{24} Penn Monthly, June, 1876, 415; Atlantic Monthly, July, 1876, 123-124; Baltimore Sun, May 11, 1876.
\textsuperscript{25} Evening Star (Washington, D. C.), May 12, 1876.
Although Thomas and the Women’s Committees hoped that these evening concerts would prove a great success, especially financially, this was not to be the case. Apparently people were content to remain in their hotels after a strenuous day of sightseeing at the Exhibition. Consequently, Thomas did not receive the large sums of money for which he had hoped in order that he might get out of debt.26

There were, however, many concerts and recitals in the buildings and on the grounds that were successful. The planners for the Exhibition realized that the average visitor could be induced away from the exhibits by an unexpected pleasure, such as a musical concert. People would invariably stop to observe, listen, and enjoy it as they passed. While doing this, they could take the opportunity to sit and rest.27

In the Main Building there were industrial art exhibits to see, and opportunities for learning were present on all sides. However, “the most interesting thing to the people was the people themselves.” Secondly, to the majority of the visitors, the next greatest attraction was an entertaining musical performance.28

A raised circular platform was placed in the center of the Main Building at the intersection of the nave and transept. This could accommodate an orchestra of sixty-five. The area around the platform, thirty feet in width, together with portions of the nave and transept, was provided with settees. The arrangement proved to be a complete success. For several weeks this was the scene of concerts by P. S. Gilmore’s Band at noon and in the evening. Immense crowds gathered in the vicinity of the stand to hear the “masterly renditions.” As a result, the walkways were obstructed, and the exhibits could not be seen to advantage.29

To solve the problem, the concerts were moved to Lansdowne Ravine where thousands could sit in the shade around an amphitheatre of hills. A music pavilion, octagonal in shape and capable of seating 100 musicians, had been built in the Ravine.30 Gilmore’s

26 Thomas, 118–119.
27 Philadelphia Public Record, May 15, 1876.
28 Leslie’s, June 24, 1876.
30 Philadelphia Inquirer, Apr. 11, 1876.
Band appeared for several weeks, followed by the United States Marine Band. After the Marines last concert on July 29, a Philadelphia newspaper lamented, "The absence of music on the grounds is quite observable." A short time later the 1st Brigade Band began a series of concerts.31

When Gilmore's Band was moved to Lansdowne Ravine, various other organizations began to present concerts in the Main Building. The Handel and Haydn societies of 200 voices gave a concert of choruses, cantatas, and other music at noon and again at 5:00 p.m. on June 10. It was "highly successful and afforded entertainment to quite a large audience." The next month the choir of the Church of Notre Dame of Montreal appeared with "great success."32 A total of 148 band, piano, string quartette and vocal concerts were performed from this platform in the Main Building.33

The organ concerts were perhaps the most regularly attended of all the musical performances. The "Centennial" organ, built and exhibited by Hook & Hastings of Boston, was in the eastern gallery of the Main Building. It had four manuals and nearly 3,000 pipes. All registers were operated by pneumatic appliances. On the right and left sides of the keyboard there were wind and crescendo indicators, while the pedals were so arranged that, by one motion, almost imperceptibly the softest sounds could be increased to thundering tones of the full organ.34

Passages crossed the organ in each of four levels, connected by stairways, so visitors could easily have a closer view. The organ measured forty feet high, thirty-two feet wide, and twenty-one feet deep. It weighed more than thirty tons boxed and had required five freight cars to transport it from Boston.35 In the north gallery of the Main Building, H. L. Roosevelt of New York had built a three manual organ with forty-six stops.36 One hundred and fifty-nine recitals were given on the Roosevelt organ while 473 were performed on the Hook & Hastings instrument.37

31 Public Record, July 10, 29, Aug. 7, 22, 1876.
32 Ibid., June 7, 11, July 28, 1876.
33 U.S. Centennial Commission, Reports and Awards, I, 99-100.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 302-303.
37 U.S. Centennial Commission, Reports and Awards, I, 103.
Nearly a year before the Exhibition opened, many manufacturers of musical instruments were applying for space. Several of them assured officials that they could depend on fine performances as a central source of attraction during exhibition hours. Although the majority of the exhibits were in the same vicinity and performances were going on simultaneously, no serious annoyances occurred during the first few months.

After September 1 attendance increased rapidly and the instruments available for performances increased in proportion. For the mutual benefit of exhibitors and visitors, a schedule of regular hours for piano recitals was established. Thirteen manufacturers, including such familiar names as Mason and Hamlin, Steinway and Sons, Wm. Knabe and Company and George Steck and Company, were assigned hours from 10:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., Monday through Saturday. These piano recitals usually drew a large crowd. During the 159 days the Exhibition was open, 1,541 recitals were given.

Chimes of thirteen bells, representing the original states, were manufactured by McShane & Company of Baltimore and were placed in the northeastern tower of Machinery Hall. At sunrise, noon, and sunset a concert was given by Professor Frederick Widdows, formerly in charge of the chimes at Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church in Washington, D. C. The bells were immovably suspended from a frame on the top floor of the tower. Each bell had two hammers, one heavy and the other light, the latter being muffled to produce soft tones. These hammers were fixed in a frame containing two sets of levers, working up and down like pump handles, and were operated with twenty-six levers on the floor below. Some idea of the labor required to play the chimes may be gained by the fact that the ends of each set of levers were more than five feet apart. In addition, twenty pounds pressure was necessary to depress them. Even so, it was claimed that Widdows "never missed a note and never hit a wrong bell!"

Special programs were given on appropriate days. For instance, on the anniversary of the Battle of Bunker Hill a program featured

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38 Ibid., 98–99.
39 Methodist Protestant, Aug. 5, 1876; Leslie's, May 6, 1876; Ingram, 683–684.
40 Ingram, 683–684.
"Hail to the Chief," "The Star Spangled Banner," "Washington's March," "Rally Round the Flag," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" and "Yankee Doodle." The Fourth of July was ushered in by the Exhibition chimes with the quarter hours chimed in imitation of London's Westminster chimes and the hour of twelve tolled on the large bell. Following this, Widdows, assisted by John Senia of Grace Church, New York, gave an extensive program. It included "Hail to the Chief," "Hail Columbia," the national airs of a dozen other countries, and such tunes as "My Maryland," "Carry Me Back to Old Virginny," "My Old Kentucky Home" and "Wearing of the Green." During the holiday the chimes were played at 6:00 A.M., twelve noon, 5:00 P.M. and at sundown. At each time a program of national and operatic airs, marches, and popular melodies was heard.

Meanwhile similar festivities had taken place in the city. Following a grand torchlight procession through the streets of Philadelphia on the 3rd, ceremonies were held at midnight at Independence Hall. The 1st Regiment Band, with M. F. Aledo as conductor and J. G. S. Beck as leader, furnished the music, starting about 11:30. The first part of the program included selections from Verdi's "Aida," "The Star Spangled Banner," and a Strauss waltz, "Morgenblaetter." When the hour of twelve had struck, the chorus of 600 on a platform behind Independence Hall began to sing the national hymn, "My Country 'Tis of Thee." As the strains rose, the vast crowd joined in until it seemed that eight or ten thousand people were singing. For a short while excellent time was kept, but the multitude then got beyond the control of William Wolsieffer, the choral director. The band followed with "Yankee Doodle" and a medley of national airs. Each brought forth great applause; "Hail Columbia, Happy Land" brought down the house and touched "that vein of patriotism which was so very loose on this occasion." The ceremonies ended with the crowd singing the Doxology. As they dispersed and the chorus filed off the stage, the band continued with a medley of international tunes.

41 *North American*, June 17, 1876.
42 *Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 4, 1876.
43 Ibid.
Festivities on the morning of the Fourth in Independence Square were under the spirited baton of P. S. Gilmore. His orchestra of 250 musicians played "The Grand Republic," a stirring overture based on "Hail Columbia" and arranged for the occasion by George F. Bristow of New York. The opening strains were rich in harmonization, but there was at first no hint of the theme. This was heard only at the beginning of the second movement when the old hymn began to assert itself. The tune was brought forward more and more prominently until the full orchestra finally burst forth with the noble air, the pure simple harmonies of "Hail Columbia." 44

After Richard Henry Lee of Virginia read the Declaration of Independence, a hymn for the centennial of American independence, composed by A. Carlos Gomes of Brazil, was played. Emperor Dom Pedro II, the Brazilian ruler, had been greatly impressed by the music of the opening ceremonies at the Exhibition and had immediately cabled Gomes in Milan to ask him to honor the United States in this manner. Gomes' hymn had a martial character throughout and combined "the spirited melodies of the Italian school with the classic harmonization of the German masters." At the same time that Gomes' composition was being performed in Philadelphia on the Fourth, the composer was guest at a reception at the American Consulate in Milan, where the number was also being performed. 45

After an ode by Bayard Taylor, the orchestra performed a triumphal march with chorus, entitled "Our National Banner." Dexter Smith of Massachusetts had written the words which were "most admirably set to music" by Sir Julius Benedict of England. The effect of the chorus "bursting forth upon the air after the martial opening by the orchestra was most inspiring." Not only did every instrument add its full force to the strains of the music, "but 1200 voices were brought into play to swell the flood of harmony." 46

The order of the program after the prayer was the singing of the hymn, "Welcome to all Nations":

44 Ibid., July 5, 1876.
45 Ibid.; Henry W. Trimble, Consul, Milan, to William Hunter, 2nd Asst. Secretary of State, July 6, 1876, Milan Consulate Despatches, No. 25, Department of State Records, National Archives and Records Service, Record Group 59.
46 North American, July 5, 1876.
Bright on the banners of lily and rose,
Lo! the last sun of the century sets!
Wreathe the black cannon that scowled on our foes!
All but her friendships the nation forgets!
All but her friends and their welcome forgets!
These are around her, but where are her foes?
Lo, while the sun of the century sets,
Peace with her garlands of lily and rose!

This hymn, written by Oliver Wendell Holmes for the centenary of independence, was arranged to the air of "Keller's Hymn." In spite of the tremendous crowd, "with its ocean-like sounds," the music of the bands in the parade in front of Independence Hall, the shouts of the multitude of sightseers in the street, and the roar of the fireworks, "the voices of the singers could be heard distinctly for a great distance." The ceremonies of the day were closed with the "Hallelujah Chorus" followed by the "Doxology," in which the multitudes joined.

Not all special music for the Fourth in 1876 was written for the observances in Philadelphia. In the small town of Brandon, Vermont, Daniel C. Roberts, an Episcopalian minister at St. Thomas', wrote a hymn to mark the centennial. That work, sung to the music of the "Russian Hymn" by Alexis Lvov during the celebration at Brandon, is the well-known "God of Our Fathers":

God of our fathers, whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies,
Our grateful songs before thy throne arise.

The hymn received little attention at the time. Later it was chosen to be used at the centennial of the adoption of the federal Constitution. In 1901 Roberts wrote that "My little hymn has thus had a very flattering official recognition. But that which would really gladden my heart, popular recognition, it has not received." How little did he realize that "God of Our Fathers" would eventually appear in most hymnals and songbooks throughout the land.

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47 Ibid.; Philadelphia Inquirer, July 5, 1876; Leslie's, July 15, 1876.
The primary purpose of the Centennial Exhibition, of course, was to give the United States and foreign nations a chance to show their products, arts, and manufactures to the world. In the field of musical instruments sixty-four manufacturers—thirty-two from the United States—presented about 200 pianos. There were six exhibitors of church organs, twelve of parlor organs, and a very large number of orchestral and band instruments. In addition, primitive tribal and pre-modern instruments were included in the displays of several nations as well as that of the Smithsonian Institution.

In the display of pianos, the German, Russian, and Canadian exhibitors were the only manufacturers who could make any real attempt to compete with the Americans. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, this "competition is scarcely worthy of the term." Those who compared American pianos with those of other countries found that the former "almost uniformly excel in richness, brilliancy and solidity of tone." As far as the exterior finish was concerned, the instruments from the United States were "vastly superior in both workmanship and design."49

One of the most prominent features in the musical department was the display of parlor organs made by George Woods and Company of Cambridgeport, Massachusetts. These organs were remarkable for the variety and beauty of their musical effects, the high character of their workmanship, and the beauty and artistic designs of their cases. The Woods exhibit included two very large "tier-manual pipe-top organs," a "very powerful pedal six-octave organ," four "Parlor Grand" organs and a number of ordinary styles. Because Mr. Woods disapproved of the system of competitive awards, none of his organs were entered in the competition.50

Among the unusual instruments shown was the pianographe in the Italian exhibit. This was a small device which, when attached to a piano, wrote notes, accidentals, and musical lines for any piece of music being performed. The idea was conceived by Achille Parise.51

After six months and more than 8,000,000 visitors, the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition formally closed on Friday afternoon,

49 Philadelphia Inquirer, Sept. 13, 1876.
50 Leslie's, Sept. 2, 1876.
51 Public Record, Aug. 10, 1876.
November 10. Theodore Thomas conducted the final musical program, as he had the first, opening with "Hail to the Chief" and Wagner's "Inaugural March" and closing with the Doxology.52

An observer, writing from Philadelphia, declared there was one thing about the Centennial that deserved "unmeasured praise, and that is the music—it is the best that America has ever had at an affair of the kind, and such as we need not be ashamed to have our foreign visitors listen to."53

_Arlington, Va._

**Homer L. Calkin**

52 _Philadelphia Inquirer_, Nov. 11, 1876.
53 _Iowa State Register_ (Des Moines), May 26, 1876.