

Owner Bound Music: A study of popular sheet music selling and music making in the New Zealand home 1840-1940

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URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/10063/8049>

Date: 2019

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Abstract:

From 1840, when New Zealand became part of the British Empire, until 1940 when the nation celebrated its Centennial, the piano was the most dominant instrument in domestic music making and the home pianist an important feature of New Zealand's musical landscape. Many home pianists had their collection of individual sheets of music bound into composite volumes ("owner bound volumes"). This study's sample of over 100 owner identified owner bound volumes (OBVs) examines the cultural and commercial significance of music sellers and music owners. Beyond the sample of OBVs, the study draws on personal and business archives, newspapers, directories and local and family histories in exploring music making over the course of a century. During the 100-year span of the study the music seller facilitated access to popular music by acting as a conduit between those composing and publishing sheet music, and the individual playing the piano in their home. As well as being a study in commerce and culture, the study is also located within the field of print culture. Sheet music was the staple sold by the music seller and the study explores the availability, sale and "consumption" of sheet music. The wide range of businesses selling sheet music in New Zealand between 1840 and 1940 affirms music's significance to print culture commercially, socially and culturally.

This study examines the music seller's and music owner's role in domestic music making, and in particular, the distribution, ownership and longevity of the popular sheet music later bound into OBVs. Booksellers, newspapers and businesses selling all types of goods and services sold sheet music, but the biggest music sellers were the specialist music dealers who also sold musical instruments. Two of these, Begg's (1861-1970) and the Dresden (1883-1936) achieved nationwide coverage and longevity. Often based in substantial and impressive premises, specialist music dealers occupied prominent positions in the main commercial streets of towns and cities. The study also explores the societal, cultural and commercial links between women, the piano and sheet music. Gender is a theme throughout as the amateur female pianist was the primary customer for composers, publishers and music sellers, and women were also piano teachers, "play over girls" in music shops, pianists for the silent movies and mothers eager for their children to learn the piano. The study identifies the owners of the OBVs, exploring the differences in their backgrounds between 1840 and 1940. Initially the daughters of the wealthy, the landed or the educated, by 1900 the owners of the OBVs were from a broader socio-economic span with fathers who were labourers, barmen and railway workers. The study relates home music makers to the desire for, and purchase of, pianos in the context of gentility and democratisation.

Musical taste is explored through an analysis of the individual sheets within the OBVs. The bulk of music changing hands was "popular", music of the moment, rather than "classical" or "serious". In this sense the study is one of popular culture. The small number of locally composed and published pieces highlights the importance of global influences on popular music for the home in New Zealand. The advent of the gramophone and the radio, although lessening the dominance of the piano, led to music heard on these new technologies to be sold, music that had been recorded by soloists and groups, the latest "hits" from musicals and "the talkies" and songs promoted by favourite singers or bands.

This study confirms the music seller's place at the heart of a bustling commercial and cultural enterprise, supplying up-to-the-minute music for the piano which created lively home music making within the global popular music scene.

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Music Played in the 1940's Popular Music From the 40s. Back To Music Section Home Page Jump To World War II Big Band Latin Country Top Songs By Year. Music Styles, Bands and Artists During the 1940's. The 1940s was a time for many breakthrough artists who made their mark in the history of music and several of them are still recognized as innovators in their day. Advancements like the invention of the solid body electric guitar by Les Paul in 1941 also influenced the styles that were popular. Styles of Music Popular in the Forties. Big Band music, an offshoot of Swing and Traditional Jazz, was at the height of its popularity during the early 1940s. The genre focused on band leaders who often led four section musical ensembles with more than ten members. [Religion: Music Education] - started in NE, migrated - a way to help people learn how to sing - could associate a certain sound of a note with a shape (do a deer a female deer) - fudging tunes = only 4 syllables in shape note singing (not 7) (FA: Triangle, SO: Circle, LA: Square, MI: Diamond) - "New Jerusalem", A-B-B, 1804, homo-polyphonic - "Sacred Heart", most. famous kind of shape note singing, 1844. Second Great Revival (1790-1840). [Religion: Early Gospel Music] - music that serves as an account describing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus - "In the Sweet By and By", Ira Sankey, 1867, influence of Parlor songs, hopeful. Contrafact. [Religion: Early Gospel Music] - a musical composition consisting of a new melody overlaid on a familiar harmonic structure. The traditional and folk music here is categorised into various sections such as: Bluegrass, Old-time(Oldtimey), Old Country music, Carter Family, Cowboy songs, Jazz, Blues, Christian music - Country Gospel, Worship, Old-time Hymns, Spirituals, Christmas Music, Celtic - Irish & Scottish, Ballads, Blues, Session Tunes, Children's Songs etc. Tablature for Guitar & mandolin, Singing lessons, Song writing, Chord Charts for piano, guitar, mandolin & banjo. Downloadable PDF scores to print sheet music and MIDI backing tracks for many of the songs. A complete library of 100,000+ page Get Free Sheet Music and Music Theory Resources. Music theory is the study of the math, science, and art behind how music is created, sung, and played. It's the process of learning and practicing basic concepts that apply to single instruments, and concepts that apply to all instruments in the world of music. Why Music Theory Makes Music Easier. Rhythm, form, lyrics, structure, chords, notes, harmony, intervals, scales, staffs, clefs, tempo, genres, keys... These are all simple words that most musicians are aware of, but most people don't understand what makes them complex and difficult to master. They each have their own intricacies. By firming your grip on the knowledge of these ingredients that make up music, you feel more in control of what's possible with any instrument.