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The Development and Gentrification of Musical Commerce in  
Williamsburg, Virginia, 1716-1775

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at  
Virginia Commonwealth University

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## Abstract

### THE DEVELOPMENT AND GENTRIFICATION OF MUSICAL COMMERCE IN WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA, 1716-1775

By Joshua R. LeHuray, M.A.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at  
Virginia Commonwealth University

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013

Major Director: Dr. Carolyn Eastman, Associate Professor, History

This thesis explores the burgeoning musical commerce industry in Williamsburg, Virginia between approximately 1716 to 1775. It especially focuses on the gentrification of this industry and the ways in which elite Virginians made use of music to establish themselves as inheritors of British culture and musical entertainment. A diversity of musical businesses appeared in Williamsburg during the eighteenth century, including instrument sellers, music and dancing teachers, and two theaters utilized by theatrical troupes, to name a few. Drawing on evidence from the *Virginia Gazette*, as well as journals, letters, playhouse reports, and account books, the thesis concludes that music provided an important means for the formation of an elite colonial identity in a time and place heavily influenced by an American consumer revolution and a desire for refinement.

## Introduction

When a Williamsburg music teacher named Cuthbert Ogle died in 1755, the executors of his estate had his belongings listed in the *Virginia Gazette*, as was common practice at the time. What made Ogle's estate listing unique was that it included a detailed list of the sheet music he owned, including a concerto by Charles Avison (valued at one shilling, four pence) and George Handel's "Apollos Feast," (valued at five shillings) with an overall total sheet music value greater than thirteen pounds, equivalent to the considerable amount of approximately £1100 in today's money. More frequently in such estate inventories administrators simply listed music as a "lot" or "bundle" and gave one overarching value to the whole. This detailed list of Ogle's musical library provides an unusual view of at least one individual's access to secular music during the eighteenth century, and perhaps also a broader glimpse of Virginians' musical tastes beyond religious music. Just as important, Ogle's music collection offers one way for historians to scrutinize one aspect of the nascent market for music that emerged in the port city of Williamsburg, Virginia's metropolitan hub during the pre-Revolutionary period – an era during which colonists increasingly spent more discretionary funds on music and presumably placed a greater emphasis on music's value. Over the course of these decades, inhabitants gained access to music via concerts, plays, or music lessons in the home, and became aware of an even broader musical world by seeing advertisements for dances, theater performances, and music lessons. My thesis examines that world in order to better understand the value of music for colonial Virginians.

This thesis explores the subject of a secular music "industry" in Williamsburg, Virginia, the colonial capital and sole major city in the colony. My thesis analyzes the importance of secular music to gentry society in colonial Williamsburg and its surroundings in order to

highlight the complex, diverse economy that accompanied popular music. By adopting the music and musical entertainment found in Europe, Virginia's elite helped create and define a cultural identity they considered to be increasingly similar to that of British gentility. In addition, the thesis explores how this musical marketplace changed over the course of sixty years. For clarification: the term "industry" is intended to encompass a diverse market of music instructors, instrument and sheet music makers/sellers, and various forms of musical entertainment – in other words, not one organization or monolithic business, but a growing universe of businesspeople who sought to capitalize on colonists' growing interest in various types of music.

The focus of the paper begins in 1716, the year William Levingston, a Virginia merchant, proposed to build the Williamsburg theater – the first theater anywhere in the American colonies. Shortly afterward, concerts, operas, and other forms of secular music began to appear in large, wealthy cities along the eastern seaboard, including Williamsburg. The scope of the thesis ends in 1775, for much has been written about music during and after the American Revolution. Finally, because many scholars have already dedicated serious research to the study of religious music, this thesis focuses primarily on secular music.

Few historians have studied the subject of music in colonial America, and even fewer have studied the Virginia context. The most detailed scholarship surrounds the discovery of Cuthbert Ogle's estate inventory, mentioned above. A transcript of the estate originally appeared in the *William and Mary Quarterly*, while Maurer Maurer wrote a more in-depth article years later further exploring his life. Despite the attention given to Ogle, his story is only one small piece of the puzzle of how music wove its way through the lives of colonial Virginians. Another highly specific example of scholarship is John Molnar's *Songs from the Williamsburg Theatre*, which similarly provides deep insight into the theater's role in the Williamsburg music scene; I

have drawn on these scholars, but my analysis covers a much broader chronology and subject base.

Despite the importance of music to the lives of elite Virginians, few scholars have explored the rise of the secular music industry and the ways it shaped cultural life and identity in colonial Virginia. In developing my analysis, I draw extensively on the work of two scholars. In his book *The Refinement of America*, Richard Bushman explores the increasing importation of material goods to the colonies, as well as the increasing size and complexity of elite domestic residences and their use in genteel entertainments.<sup>1</sup> T.H. Breen's *Marketplace of Revolution* delves further into the American marketplace and how colonists' consumption of imported goods led to massive debts, feeding into the growing schism with Britain which resulted in the American Revolution.<sup>2</sup> Though neither scholar focuses on the music industry specifically, both prove fundamental for understanding the growing complexity of the colonial marketplace, as well as the importance of credit and debt to citizens who spent increasing amounts of money to stay on par with the European genteel.

The majority of research done specifically regarding music in the American colonies focuses on New England, and the Puritans specifically. These studies explore the origins of Puritan church music and how it was taught, read, modified, and understood. Other studies focus specifically on Boston or other New England towns, or on Quaker and German music in Pennsylvania. Charleston, South Carolina is also frequently explored in various monographs. These works have been integral to my thesis because I have sought to emphasize secular and often fashionable music as it circulated in Virginia, very often imported from England.

More broadly, my analysis benefits from an array of recent studies that examine the subject of music in early America from a variety of perspectives. Historians such as Kate Keller



and Joy Cleef have published monographs examining different types of dancing and the accompanying music, while Mary Stanard and Louis Wright look at culture in the colonies and the various ways in which colonists entertained themselves. These and other studies have provided valuable insight into the various roles music played in colonists' lives during the eighteenth century.

Many of Williamsburg's citizens experienced music in one form or another during the eighteenth century. Any person walking into a tavern in town would have heard a fiddler or other instrumentalist playing the most popular tunes for the customers' entertainment. Yet despite the ubiquity of music in Virginia, the highly diversified commercial industry that developed surrounding it was not directed towards the common citizen, but rather to the upper class gentility of the colony. These elite Virginians were quite aware of their British heritage and desired to emulate the fashions, habits, and pastimes of their overseas brethren. They believed by adopting the lifestyle of London's upper classes they might evade the European stereotype of Americans as backwoods country farmers compared to British citizens of equal status.

To do so, over the course of the eighteenth century Williamsburg's wealthiest citizens increasingly spent more of their disposable income on musical instruments, lessons, and entertainment to elevate their cultural status. Acquisition of instruments and printed music was mandatory for the genteel, and hiring music or dancing masters from England helped teach proper techniques to adults and children alike. Gentlemen amateurs regularly held concerts for their peers, though it was considered taboo for them to accept any remuneration as it would have lowered their social status to that of a tradesman for hire. Williamsburg's governors integrated music into their social lives and often held concerts and dances at the governor's mansion or the capitol, and treated dignitaries to the sorts of entertainment they could expect in Europe, often

with slaves playing the accompanying music. Virginian citizens were quite well aware of how music was utilized in elite British society, as the *Virginia Gazette* regularly published accounts of the balls, concerts, and theatrical performances held by and for European royalty. These articles gave Williamsburg's upper crust up-to-date knowledge of the most fashionable European music and performers, allowing them to experience this music for themselves.

Elite citizens held balls and dances regularly, with tickets sold at prices only the well-off could generally afford, generating previously unavailable revenue for the organizers. With dancing as highly prized as instrumental proficiency, elites also hired dancing masters to teach the intricate steps for complex dances such as the minuet, as well as some of the associated niceties of European etiquette and physical bearing that would likewise distinguish the genteel from country hicks. These teachers educated Virginians on how to act the part of a European-style upper class, not only when dancing but in all public situations.

Elites also patronized multiple theaters that arrived in Williamsburg. Though slow to take off, by 1752 the theater featured theatrical companies and operas that had appeared in London and other parts of Europe and the colonies, allowing Virginians to feel equal in cultural literacy to their British peers. By spending increasing amounts of money on these musical activities, Williamsburg's elite citizens helped to Anglicize themselves, growing closer in culture and manners to the English gentry, while at the same time establishing a complex musical economy in colonial Virginia.

My sources draw on a wide variety of genres, most especially the *Virginia Gazette* and records from the Williamsburg theater. I have also explored numerous other areas, ultimately utilizing transcribed letters, diaries, and manuscripts of Williamsburg residents and visitors. Additionally, George Washington and Thomas Jefferson's account ledgers provided valuable

financial information regarding their expenditures for theater tickets, and meeting notes from the College of William and Mary shed light on the school's involvement with dancing instruction. All quotations retain original spelling including errors, but frequent capitalization has been reduced to ease reading.

The thesis proceeds in three parts. Chapter 1 offers an overview of music in the colony, while chapters 2 and 3 examine more chronological developments including the rise in a multifaceted economy of musical industries and the sporadic, yet increasingly popular Williamsburg theater.

## Chapter 1: Williamsburg's Musical Marketplace Revolution

In October 1767 an account appeared in the *Virginia Gazette* taken from an English paper. The writer, only identified by the pseudonym Socratissa, had observed a conversation while dining at the home of a Lady Ramble. Ramble's sister had decided to question her niece, a young eleven-year-old girl known as Miss, about her duty in life as a woman. Standing before the group, Miss was asked what was the business of a fine lady, to which she replied, "To play at cards, go to routs, balls, plays, opera, &c. and carry on intrigues." Having heard this response, Ramble's sister declared, "I vow my niece is very perfect in her education, and will make a fine accomplished woman." As the girl had so eloquently described the duties of an eighteenth-century woman, Socratissa decided to have Miss's answer published as "it may be of service to other young Ladies of Quality."<sup>3</sup> This amusing anecdote captured the extent to which a "fine lady" must dedicate her time to musical activities.

It comes as no surprise that the editors of the *Virginia Gazette* decided to run this particular piece of social commentary, for Virginia in 1767 was in the middle of a musical renaissance, with Williamsburg at its epicenter. Plantation owner Landon Carter noted in his diary while walking through the town, "I hear from every house a constant tuting may be listened to, from one instrument or another."<sup>4</sup> Virginians increasingly integrated music into their daily lives during the course of the eighteenth century, allowing it to grow intertwined with their business and political dealings. Those living in or near the city were constantly exposed to activities and events associated with music, and part of their social duties included attending the balls, plays, and operas frequently held in the area. An anonymous writer identified only as Old

Sterling noted, in a critical fashion, the people of Virginia had become constant “resorters to plays, balls, operas, masquerades, [and] concerts.”<sup>5</sup>

This desire for musical entertainment helped Virginians, and especially those in the upper classes, to associate themselves with and emulate the genteel lifestyle of British citizens. Part of this emulation took the form of acquiring instruments and books consisting of musical compositions by famous European composers, so as to better integrate music into home life and raise one’s social status. Newspaper ads and an increase in a North American consumer culture helped propel these sales, further expanding the influence of music in the daily lives of the citizens of Williamsburg. This chapter consists of a broad overview of the music industry in Virginia, exploring the ways in which the wealthiest citizens strove towards an increasingly refined and genteel culture. The expansion of the eighteenth-century economy, and specifically the musical marketplace, helped the gentility approach the elite status they craved.

In 1699 the Virginia legislature voted to move the state capital from Jamestown to the city of Williamsburg. Though located a decent distance away from the water, the city was conveniently located between the James and York rivers, with Queen Mary’s port and Princess Anne’s port offering access only a few miles away to allow the easy transportation of goods and people into the town. The city at the time was already the home of William and Mary, the second oldest college in the colonies, which further underscored its importance to wealthy citizens of the state. Soon after, important buildings began to appear in the town: by 1701 a capitol building was under construction, followed shortly by the building of the governor’s mansion started in 1706. These were followed by Bruton Parish Church, a jail, taverns, a hospital, and other typical colonial buildings.<sup>6</sup> By the middle of the 1700s Williamsburg had grown from a few buildings into the largest city in Virginia. Even though the permanent eighteenth-century population

probably never exceeded fifteen hundred persons, according to one estimate the population tripled or quadrupled during the June court session.<sup>7</sup> For comparison, London's population during the same time period was approximately 675,000 individuals.<sup>8</sup>

The city was described by the traveler Reverend Andrew Burnaby, who toured through the colonies on a trip from England in 1759. He noted that Williamsburg contained about two hundred houses and approximately one thousand residents. He commented upon the "handsome square in the center, through which runs the principal street, one of the most spacious in North America, three quarters of a mile in length, and above a hundred feet wide."<sup>9</sup> Burnaby also described the college and capitol buildings, noting their locations at either end of the street and shingle-covered wooden houses that lined it: "The whole makes a handsome appearance." He also believed that "the governor's palace is tolerably good, one of the best upon the continent." He observed ten or twelve gentlemen's families resided in the town, in addition to merchants and tradesmen. Though Williamsburg's population did not match the size and density of other colonial cities like Boston or Philadelphia, the minister remarked that during the time of the Virginia assemblies and general courts, the town "is crowded with the gentry of the country." According to him, when these wealthy merchants and plantation owners gathered in the city for these events, inevitably wealthy Williamsburg families or the governor would host "balls and other amusements."<sup>10</sup>

Burnaby was right: the governors in Williamsburg frequently made music and dances part of their annual Virginia court sessions. These activities represented the refinement and elite status of the participants, and were similar to those that would have been experienced in European governmental sessions. Reverend Hugh Jones, mathematics professor at William and Mary, commented in his 1724 book *The Present State of Virginia*, that "At the capitol, at publick

times, may be seen a great number of handsom, well-dress'd, compleat gentlemen. And at the Governor's house upon birth-nights, and at balls and assemblies, I have seen as fine an appearance, as good diversion, and as splendid entertainments in Governor Spotswood's time, as I have seen any where else."<sup>11</sup> The *Virginia Gazette* announced in 1746 that balls and assemblies would be held every other night during that year's court session, "for the entertainment of gentlemen and ladies."<sup>12</sup> During the session of 1768 the governor threw frequent "stately receptions to which flocked ladies and gentlemen in court apparel; there was no end of music, dancing, and private entertaining, and there was a two months' theatrical season."<sup>13</sup> These entertainments showed that Virginia's governors and their guests might be as civilized as Britain's governmental leaders.

Virginia's governors also provided musical entertainment for those of different cultures considered of a higher social status. According to the *Virginia Gazette*, on November 9, 1752 Governor Robert Dinwiddie received the "Emperor of the Cherokee nation with his Empress and their son, the young Prince, attended by several of his warriors and great men and their ladies." That night the honored guests were taken to see a performance of *Othello* with musical accompaniment at the Williamsburg playhouse. The *Gazette* subsequently reported that during the play the actors fought with "naked swords on the stage," causing the Cherokee Empress, who apparently did not understand the concept of play-acting, to order her warriors to stop the on-stage fighting and "prevent their killing one another."<sup>14</sup> By observing a European-style performance the Cherokee experienced one of the ways in which Virginia's governors utilized musical theater to integrate British culture into their governmental proceedings – and the misunderstandings about the on stage fighting, whether true or not, allowed readers to witness a

sharp contrast between the sophisticated whites of Williamsburg and the perceived cultural ignorance of neighboring tribes of Native Americans.

Governors also held frequent exclusive concerts for privileged and important members of the town. Governor Francis Fauquier became acquainted with a young Thomas Jefferson through George Wythe, Jefferson's mentor in Williamsburg. Fauquier, who was also a musician, invited Jefferson to play violin at his weekly concerts along with future Virginia Governors John Tyler and Patrick Henry.<sup>15</sup> Though these concerts were held in the drawing room of the Governor's palace, professional chamber concerts were also frequently performed in the palace's ballroom for larger crowds.<sup>16</sup> In fact, according to historian Daniel Mendoza de Arce, seemingly the first organized concert in the American colonies was held at the Governor's mansion in Williamsburg in 1720.<sup>17</sup>

Virginia's governors hardly needed governmental meetings, visiting dignitaries, or organized concert performances to justify throwing parties. Election days, holidays, muster days, and the commencement of William and Mary were sufficient reasons to obtain the services of musicians and hold a ball.<sup>18</sup> Governor William Gooch celebrated King George II's birthday in October of 1736 with a "firing of guns, illuminations, and other demonstrations of loyalty" and to cap off these festivities, "at night there was a handsome appearance of gentlemen and ladies, at His Honour the Governor's, where was a ball, and an elegant entertainment for them."<sup>19</sup> In 1755 in honor of George, Prince of Wales's birthday, Governor Dinwiddie gave "a ball and entertainment at the palace, where was a splendid appearance of gentlemen and ladies, and the evening was concluded with the greatest demonstration of mirth and loyalty."<sup>20</sup> That same year to once again celebrate King George II's birthday the governor threw yet another ball at the palace, as well as illuminating the entire city to underscore the grandness of the occasion.<sup>21</sup>



Scheduling musical festivities was important to Williamsburg's leaders as the dates they were held often corresponded with celebrations in Britain. As such governors needed to choose which of these events deserved special attention and which could be overlooked. Eleven years after Governor Dinwiddie's 1755 celebrations, Governor Fauquier and other "principal gentlemen of this city" decided that it would be a mistake to throw a ball or find other means of honoring King George III's birthday. Rather, they believed, it would make more sense to postpone it and celebrate in conjunction with the King's ascendancy date in October as Williamsburg had "a great deal of company generally being in town at that season of the year."<sup>22</sup> It is certainly possible this decision was made in protest of the Stamp Act, as the genteel citizens of Williamsburg, in conjunction with Governor Fauquier and other members of the local government, did not hesitate to throw a ball at the capitol building in June 1766 "upon the joyful occasion of the repeal of the Stamp Act."<sup>23</sup>

At the opposite end of Duke of Gloucester Street from the capitol building, William and Mary College also encouraged the growth of commerce in the musical arts as most of its students came from the upper strata of society. In 1716 William Levingston, a merchant in nearby New Kent County, decided to open a dancing school in Williamsburg and approached the William and Mary Board of Visitors for permission to use one of the college buildings to hold his classes. On March 26, 1716 not only did the Board allow him "use of the lower room at the south end of the colledge," but encouraged Levingston to teach the scholars and students of the college to dance.<sup>24</sup> The Reverend Hugh Jones, writing as a former mathematics professor at the school, felt it necessary to offer suggestions on how best to run the college in his *The Present State of Virginia*. Though Levingston had opened his dancing school in a William and Mary classroom eight years earlier, this was a temporary situation until a proper school could be built elsewhere

in Williamsburg. As such, it appeared to Jones that the school needed to at least occasionally teach the musical arts, and felt the need to recommend to school leaders that “as for the accomplishments of musick, dancing, and fencing, they may be taught by such as the President and Masters shall appoint at certain times, as they shall fix for those purposes.”<sup>25</sup> Aware of the importance of dancing and music to upper class students, those in charge of the college made sure to teach dances like the minuet and country-style dances and reels, offering these classes “well before its academic faculty was complete.”<sup>26</sup>

As these passages indicate, music increasingly became associated with refinement during the eighteenth century in Williamsburg. By participating in events like balls and concerts, many of the city’s elite citizens integrated music, instruments, and musical activities into their daily lives in an effort to attain a level of gentility. During the eighteenth century the term “genteel” had come to loosely mean polite, polished, refined, tasteful, and other terms that represented the concept of being well-bred and upper class. As Richard Bushman has shown, later in the century use of “genteel” spread to encompass “a host of objects, situations, persons, and habits... genteel persons with genteel educations practiced genteel professions.” Clothing, food, furnishings, towns, and schools were all referred to as *genteel* in an effort to gentrify certain aspects of life.<sup>27</sup> The concept of gentility created a “cultural and social gulf” between elites and those of the lower social ranks in Virginia. Those of a lower sort deferred to those above them, a rule that held true also among the elite themselves. Eventually everything about the genteel, from the clothing, food, houses, and entertainment, differentiated them from the lower social ranks.<sup>28</sup> Also, while the British concept of gentility entailed a complex web of heredity, money, culture, and rank dating back hundreds of years, two things defined Virginia’s elite: wealth and property.<sup>29</sup> This

differentiation between British and American gentility provided an important barrier most Virginians would struggle to overcome in their efforts to emulate the English gentry. While many individuals could claim wealth and property by the eighteenth century, Virginia's elite needed to adopt those other genteel qualities the British displayed to achieve any sort of parity with their overseas brethren.

Those who considered themselves to be genteel in Williamsburg had a social obligation to be refined in manners and the ways in which they presented themselves, including their participation in musical activities. One contributor to the *Virginia Gazette*, writing under the pseudonym Hector, offered his advice on what fashionable activities the genteel should pursue: "You must often go to the playhouses, and there always distinguish yourself as highly as possible."<sup>30</sup> Advice such as this instructed Virginians how to properly act the part of the British-style gentry.

Hector's advice reflected a growing genre of writing during the eighteenth century when Virginians imported a wide array of courtesy manuals and other guides for manners designed to educate those aspiring towards gentility, including instructions for proper dancing techniques, signaling the "arrival of the genteel code."<sup>31</sup> These books instructed the reader on the ways to be a gentleman, including conversational skills, proper physical placement of hands, feet, and arms, and how to manage human body functions such as belching or expectorating. Part of the instructional requirements for the genteel also included learning the "'polite' arts, dancing, and other forms of sociability as the principal amenities of such a privileged mode of existence."<sup>32</sup> Contemporary letters and diaries reveal how important Virginians considered those lessons. For example, Philip Vickers Fithian, who worked as a tutor at Nomini Hall plantation for Robert Carter III from 1773 to 1774, kept a diary and recorded many of his experiences with the elite

family employing him, including his observations on the activities of the genteel. While writing to another tutor to advise him on obtaining a teaching job in Virginia, he noted, “Any young gentleman travelling through the colony, as I said before, is presum’d to be acquainted with dancing, boxing, [and] playing the fiddle.”<sup>33</sup>

Dancing was an integral part of what made a person genteel, as “an indispensable symbol of high breeding was the southern gentleman and lady’s ability to dance.”<sup>34</sup> In his diary Fithian lamented on multiple occasions that he never learned to dance, observing that in Virginia dancing “is a necessary qualification for a person to appear decent in company!”<sup>35</sup> Ladies gained from their ability to dance as it gave each one an “opportunity to demonstrate her dignity and skill at moving gracefully.” Gentlemen were also required to be good dancers, though not necessarily excellent ones, as “being too proficient in executing fancy steps, his masculinity might be called into question,” as historian Ronald Davis puts it.<sup>36</sup> Young men and women took these opportunities to partake in the “intrigues” mentioned previously by the young “Miss” at the opening of this chapter. Dances brought elite citizens together, allowing the young to showcase their dancing prowess. Dancing in Virginia, “especially the jig, with its vigorous alternating pursuit and retreat – was a stylized representation of bold, active courtship on the part of both sexes.”<sup>37</sup> In July 1766 Landon Carter commented that nothing could stop his daughter Judy from attending a dance at her uncle’s, though it was an extremely hot night and he was worried she would become ill. Indeed, she came down with a stomach flu the next day.<sup>38</sup>

These dances and other entertainments were considered almost mandatory by the Virginia gentry as they were part of polite society. Despite lacking dancing skills, Philip Fithian found it almost impossible to avoid these types of genteel social gatherings. He noted following church service several different gentlemen inevitably invited him to various dinners, feasts, and

balls.<sup>39</sup> While living in Virginia, almost every week Fithian noted he was “strongly invited” to a “luxurious entertainment” filled with “charming music.”<sup>40</sup> Apparently some Williamsburg citizens desired to comment on the importance of these musical activities to upper class Virginia citizens. A March 1752 *Virginia Gazette* news item indicated that, due to the death of the Queen of Denmark, the Danish king had issued an edict banning all plays, balls, operas, and concertos for a year. Following this piece of news, editor William Hunter wryly commented, “Heaven preserve us from such mourning which would send at least half of our gay polite gentry to the grave.”<sup>41</sup> Luckily for Virginians they apparently felt no need to honor the King’s request.

In Virginia, genteel social events like balls and concerts helped define a person’s place in society. While information about weather and trade filled the diaries of farmers, elites kept note almost religiously of the various formal entertainments they had attended, including balls, concerts, tea parties, or other assemblies. As gentility expanded in the eighteenth century from the wealthiest to some of middling status, these types of activities spread along geographical lines from cities and towns to more rural areas with high concentrations of planters. To be clear: these events were not generally found in the countryside, but rather existed in plantation society or in cities. Balls took days to plan, and provided the participants with days’ worth of gossip to tide them over until the next event.<sup>42</sup>

Even Williamsburg’s openly accessible spaces established a degree of social demarcation. Those elite citizens living in cities established their own areas where the wealthier were permitted to go, while average citizens were generally shunned. Certain streets and fenced parks, generally located near government buildings or luxury shops catering to the upper class, were utilized predominantly by the well-to-do, where they could expect to encounter people of their own social level and conveniently bypass those of a lower station.<sup>43</sup> Conversation, games,

dancing, and music were regular activities in which genteel citizens participated in Williamsburg's taverns. While cities fostered many such establishments, some would be available to common citizens, while others were reserved solely for the use of polite society. Frequently these taverns were located close to the places of power in a city, like the capitol building or governor's mansion in Williamsburg, allowing convenient access to musical entertainment for the city's upper class. Not only did dancing and musical performances take place in these businesses, but admittance "to the public activities of polite society" was "the ultimate test of one's position and culture." The dancing and music experienced by elites in social spaces might be no different than that experienced by the lower sorts, yet experiencing it surrounded by the genteel elevated the activity to a higher social level.<sup>44</sup> Tavern keepers kept their own instruments available for customers' use, perhaps as much to keep those patrons spending money in the establishment as to keep them entertained.<sup>45</sup> In addition to hosting balls and other festivities, these taverns also served meals for political figures and sometimes housed government meetings. The Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg hosted the Virginia legislature for a time in 1774 when Governor Dunmore suddenly dissolved the assembly.<sup>46</sup> By utilizing taverns, members of the elite were able to extend a genteel environment away from their mansions and plantations.

Although common spaces became more prominently utilized by the gentry during the eighteenth century, large plantation houses remained the primary locations of balls, concerts, and other socializations. These grand houses first appeared in cities up and down the East Coast, and eventually merchants and politicians began building a few miles outside of town. Beginning about 1725, planters in Virginia began to build large mansion-style houses on their plantations. Elite citizens built these grand houses due to an economic boom that took place during the

eighteenth century, when per capita wealth increased fifty to one hundred percent between 1760 and 1770.<sup>47</sup> Whereas most Virginia houses during this period consisted of hewn logs covered in clapboards and comprised one room and an attic, these new mansions had two stories with an attic with multiple rooms dedicated to single purposes (bedrooms, parlors), while also being made of brick, which created a stark contrast with the small, unpainted wooden structures of their neighbors.<sup>48</sup>

The interiors of these houses were also designed to promote a genteel lifestyle and contribute to the social interactions necessary in the lives of upper class citizens. The new Georgian-style house incorporated a central hall upon entry with rooms to either side. This isolated visitors from the private activities of the house, and seemed to imply that guests must wait for permission to enter certain areas designated for the evening's entertainment.<sup>49</sup> Spaces for entertainment were an important concern when choosing to either build or purchase a house in the eighteenth century. A 1770 *Virginia Gazette* advertisement for a large mansion and grounds for sale indicated the house was "very commodious" as it had a large room which was forty feet by twenty feet that, "would make a good ball room," a necessity for the kind of individual likely to purchase the dwelling. The seller, a B. Grymes, also listed a different large building he believed "would make a good theatre, which might be very beneficial to the town in general, and country adjacent," though not just anyone should be allowed to perform in this theater since only "proper persons, and of good demeanor" could contribute to the well-being of the city and surrounding area.<sup>50</sup>

Colonial Virginians' obsession with gentility partially arose from a desire to emulate their European brethren. This emulation required them to act as the British, French, and other enlightened countries did in regards to social etiquette, as well as copy their forms of

entertainment as “they were determined they should not revert to barbarism in the wilderness. At no time did they allow themselves to forget that they were inheritors of British civilization,” according to historian Hunter Farish. This meant the Virginia elite needed to fashion their manners and activities around those found in the lives of British gentlemen.<sup>51</sup> In the third quarter of the eighteenth century, music in British society was one of those activities extremely popular among the genteel, with the *Virginia Gazette* noting in 1769:

It is very justly observed, by many hundreds of the fair sex, as also by the gentlemen of the several musical societies dispersed over England, that musick was never so much in vogue as at this time, which is in no great measure attributed to that great and amiable patroness, our most gracious Queen, who in a very masterly manner plays on the organ, harpsichord, and piano forte; which seems to have stirred up the youth of both sexes, nay even grown persons, to attain this great and most agreeable of all accomplishments.<sup>52</sup>

To mimic the actions of the elite British citizenry, Virginians first needed to learn how, specifically, their overseas counterparts integrated music into their lives.

The theater became one such focus. In March 1751 the *Virginia Gazette* commented upon the passing of Maurice de Saxe, a Marshal General of France, noting that he had built a theater in his castle at Chambord. It was not enough, however, to simply state that the theater had been built, but it was also necessary to elaborate this particular theater featured decorations which cost more than 60,000 livres and that “his company of players was composed of excellent actors and actresses.”<sup>53</sup> By highlighting the enormous expense Saxe had invested in his theater, as well as the skill of his performers, Virginians emphasized the importance of theatrical and musical



extravagance in an elite culture. This news item also potentially encouraged American citizens to integrate theatrical entertainments into their own dwellings; perhaps B. Grymes's advertisement pronouncing that a room in his home would make an excellent theater reflected that message. Surely any individual prestigious enough to own their own theater would stand out amongst their peers as a truly elite citizen.

Accounts reflecting the importance of the theater to the genteel also appeared from England. In August 1751 the *Virginia Gazette* dedicated almost the entire first page to a *London Daily Advertiser* review of a performance of *Othello* at the Drury Lane theatre in London. This appraisal notes the play was performed by "persons of distinction," and the gentlemen who put on the play had been "long celebrated for their taste and spirit in gallantry." As noted by the author, these types of entertainments were designed for the genteel by the genteel: "Theatrical performances have lately been often exhibited by persons of the first fashion." As such, those putting on the play made sure the genteel in attendance were kept separate from "all improper people among them." The author lavished additional attention on the royal family in attendance, the elaborate stage decorations and embroidery work on the sets, "magnificent" and "well fancied" dresses worn by the women, and, perhaps the most important aspect of any stage show, "The band of musick, was a very fine one."<sup>54</sup> This *Virginia Gazette* account highlights most of the criteria of what made a person genteel: The activities they attended, their distance from those of a lower status, and the spectacle of the items in which they surrounded themselves. Reprinting stories like these from London conveyed important information about proper genteel behavior in regards to musical and theatrical entertainment to Virginia colonists.

Descriptions of British entertainments appeared in the Williamsburg paper, highlighting how Virginians gained a sense of this form of musical cultural consumption and presentation.

Editors of the *Virginia Gazette* also made it a point to include brief descriptions of grand balls, concerts, and theater performances that took place in England, briefly highlighting how many people were involved and their ranks, the specific types of entertainment, and the clothing styles worn by the attendees. In 1752 a ball held in London and attended by the Prince of Wales, Princess Augusta, the Duke of Cumberland, and Prince Edward was described as “the most splendid that has been known for many years,” with the royals dancing minuets.<sup>55</sup> When George II took a summer vacation to Hanover, Germany, the paper noted the king “ordered French plays to be acted three times a week, and allotted [*sic*] the other days for assemblies, balls and concerts.” Keeping up on the king’s summer vacation, it noted George “take[s] three times a week the diversion of seeing a play,” and during one of his afternoon meals “there was a fine concert.”<sup>56</sup> The newspaper described a ball in 1766 at St. James’s in London as “the most brilliant and numerous that has been for many years.” The Duke of York and Princess Louisa Anne danced minuets, and after they withdrew country dances were initiated by the nobles, lasting until 2 a.m.<sup>57</sup> This focus on how royalty and nobles listened to concerts, attended plays, and danced at elaborate balls informed the Virginia elite about an entire world of entertainment, manners, and gentility required to be considered on par with their European counterparts.

The desire of the Virginia gentry to emulate the British also extended to owning the same consumer goods as the European elite. The middle third of the eighteenth century witnessed a consumer revolution selling British goods to the colonies. Many of the musical items necessary for one to be considered genteel were only made in London or elsewhere in Europe until the last quarter of the century. All printed sheet music came from London, for example, forcing Virginians to purchase these necessary items from overseas. Before this time, exporters in Europe were slow to realize the potential markets that existed for their goods in America. Just as

important, even if these businesses had been willing and able to ship their items overseas, before the 1740s many elite Americans could not have afforded to buy the items they desired.<sup>58</sup> As a result of easy credit and a growing consumer mentality, however, by 1773 American colonists were buying almost twenty-six percent of all goods produced in England, compared to a mere six percent at the beginning of the century.<sup>59</sup> The total value of goods Britain imported into America during the mid-1740s amounted to just shy of £900,000, of which Maryland and Virginia alone purchased forty-three percent. By 1771 imports had increased to an astonishing £4,500,000 of imported merchandise for the colonists to purchase, of which the two Chesapeake colonies still purchased approximately thirty percent.<sup>60</sup> This massive increase in purchasing imported goods was not just limited to the upper classes of Virginia. By approximately the 1740s “manufactured goods inundated the households of people of all classes” in the Chesapeake, leading some scholars to refer to the rise in consumer spending as “rapid and unprecedented.”<sup>61</sup> Desiring to emulate their social betters, as that group in turn wanted to be like the British elite, middle and lower rank Virginians demanded luxury goods like instruments and music books in order to copy more closely the lifestyles of those above them.

Part of the reason for this explosion in consumer purchases by the colonials was that their population had vastly increased during the century. Between 1700 and 1770 the colonial population, both black and white, had increased from approximately 250,000 to over two million citizens. During the period following 1740 alone the population grew an astounding 137 percent.<sup>62</sup> As more people came to live in the colonies they required more British goods to sustain the lives they desired. Another reason consumer purchases increased in the latter half of the eighteenth century is that social and economic conditions improved during this time, giving the white upper classes more leisure time to spend on entertainment activities.<sup>63</sup>

One of those activities was the purchasing and playing of a wide variety of musical instruments. Having the skills to play an instrument, Virginians believed, increased an individual's social image. Men and women often played different types of instruments, with men focusing on the flute and violin and women primarily playing keyboard instruments like the harpsichord, virginal, clavichord and fortepiano. The flute and violin were generally not played by genteel women as "it was considered unladylike for girls to learn to play them," according to historian Ronald Davis. Many likewise frowned upon gentlemen learning to play wind instruments as the wind variety had a tendency to "puff out the face in vulgar fashion," as one of Davis's sources indicated.<sup>64</sup> Some instruments like the guitar were played by both sexes, and there was, of course, some degree of crossover between the instruments played by each sex. John Blair, Sr., onetime president of William and Mary and future Acting Governor of Virginia, noted in his diary in January 1751 that he had two acquaintances visit him, and as part of their visiting a "Mr. J.R. play'd on his violin & Dr. Hackerston on his G flute."<sup>65</sup> Philip Fithian and Ben Carter, one of his students, frequently played the flute together at the behest of Robert Carter, owner of Nomini Hall. Fithian also encouraged Ben to play the flute for him when he retired for the evening, being paid "half a bit a week" for this duty.<sup>66</sup>



“A Musical Gathering.” This eighteenth-century painting shows a group of gentlemen amateurs playing the violin, oboe, trumpet, and hammered dulcimer. Images like these portrayed the proper musical activities of the genteel.<sup>67</sup>

The violin, often referred to as the fiddle in colonial writings, was one of the most prominent instruments in the eighteenth century among the elite. The instrument’s popularity represented a radical change in attitude from the 1600s, when “most Virginians regarded professional fiddlers as rogues and rascals almost by definition and perfectly capable of theft or most any other unscrupulous act.”<sup>68</sup> Indeed, a fiddler named John Utie migrated to Jamestown from England and was elected to the House of Burgesses only to face attacks from William Tyler, a political enemy, who sought to unseat Utie in part by criticizing Utie’s “fidlinge.” By the beginning of the 1700s, however, their association with rascals dissipated and violins appeared frequently at balls, dances, and various other forms of entertainment.<sup>69</sup> In one celebration twenty fiddlers played in a contest of musical skill, with the best player winning a new violin. Of course, it was required the contestants own their own instruments, as no one had “the liberty of playing, unless he brings a fiddle with him.” Following the contest the participants all played a variety of tunes together in celebration of the event.<sup>70</sup>

As previously noted, one of Thomas Jefferson's favorite instruments was the violin and he often played it with other influential Williamsburg figures at the governor's mansion, rising at 5 a.m. at times to practice.<sup>71</sup> According to biographer Henry Randall, while living in Williamsburg Jefferson purchased a small violin he called a "kit," used chiefly by dancing masters, along with a small case that fit on his saddle. He took this violin with him everywhere in town as it afforded him a "capital way of whiling away the time before the people were up where he was staying." Due to its quiet tone he could practice wherever he pleased without disturbing anyone nearby, including indoors, at least if the walls were thick.<sup>72</sup> Eager to acquire a new violin, Jefferson wrote to John Page in 1763 about his desire to purchase "a good fiddle" in Italy.<sup>73</sup> In 1768 he subsequently purchased one in Williamsburg from Dr. William Pasteur, an apothecary and seller of a variety of items, instruments included.<sup>74</sup>

By the second half of the eighteenth century, slaves also learned to play the violin for their masters' entertainment. A slave named Simeon Gilliat frequently played at the governor's palace in Williamsburg, and eventually became the official fiddler at state functions held in the town. Performing at these functions meant Gilliat needed to appear similar to a member of the gentility, and subsequently dressed in a powdered wig, "an embroidered silk coat and vest of faded lilac, silk stockings, and shoes with large buckles."<sup>75</sup> Jefferson himself mentioned the skills of black musicians, noting, "In music they are more generally gifted than the whites with accurate ears for tune and time."<sup>76</sup> Philip Fithian noted an instance where his employer's enslaved people "collected themselves into the school-room, & began to play the *fiddle*, & dance." Catching two of his white students dancing to the music, he immediately dispersed them, believing it taboo to fraternize with the enslaved workers.<sup>77</sup> Nicholas Cresswell, a wealthy farmer who traveled to Virginia and Maryland in 1774 to explore life in America, seemed less

bothered by white people interacting with black fiddle players. He noted, while attending a barbecue, that “a great number of young people met together with a fiddle and banjo played by two negroes, with plenty of toddy, which both men and women seem to be very fond of. I believe they have danced and drunk till there are few sober people amongst them. I am sorry I was not able to join them.”<sup>78</sup>

In addition to the violin, members of the Virginia elite purchased other instruments as well to showcase their genteel credentials. At Nomini Hall, plantation owner Robert Carter owned and played a vast array of instruments, including a harpsichord, fortepiano, guitar, violin, and German flutes. It was not unusual for Philip Fithian to spend “most of the day at the great house hearing the various instruments of music.” Carter even converted one un-used end of Fithian’s classroom into a concert room which could hold the great variety of instruments he owned and to provide “a place for practice, as well as entertainment.”<sup>79</sup> Also in Carter’s possession was an exceptional organ that had been built specifically for him in London to his own specifications. Thomas Jefferson so appreciated this instrument that he offered to purchase it from him, though Carter declined as it was eventually going to be used to teach his daughters how to play.<sup>80</sup>

Aside from those mentioned above, a vast array of other instruments flooded the Virginia marketplace in the latter half of the eighteenth century. Jefferson expressed interest in purchasing pianos and clavichords for Monticello, and admired a small instrument Benjamin Franklin carried with him called a sticcado, which “resembled a small dulcimer with glass bars and keys and had a three-octave compass.”<sup>81</sup> In August 1757 a professional musician named Charles Love fled along a road in Westmoreland County north of Williamsburg holding in his saddlebags a violin, a German flute, an oboe, and a prized bassoon stolen from Philipp Ludwell Lee of

Stratford Hall. The latter instrument was valuable enough that Lee took out a newspaper advertisement asking the public to be on the lookout for Love.<sup>82</sup> In orchestras performing in Williamsburg it was possible to find “members of the string family, flutes, oboes, horns, and bassoons,” occasionally cymbals, and clarinets after the mid-eighteenth century.<sup>83</sup> As the century progressed the variety of instruments grew, with the string bass, cello, and viola appearing in concerts. As the variety grew so too did the number played overall at one time, oftentimes with multiple musicians playing the same instruments in harmony.<sup>84</sup> Though less common than violins or keyed instruments, bagpipes, guitars, Jews harps, bugles, fifes, hunting horns, drums, and banjos were also heard in the colonies, with the latter being a favorite instrument of slaves.<sup>85</sup>

As a multitude of instruments flooded the nascent American musical marketplace, customers needed a way to acquire these goods for their personal use. Most Virginians likely purchased their instruments directly from a seller or manufacturer in Europe, though some individuals such as Benjamin Bucktrout of Williamsburg had his own spinets and harpsichords for sale.<sup>86</sup> Due to the limited extant purchase records, it is impossible to know exactly how many instruments were shipped to the colonies.<sup>87</sup> By ordering instruments directly from the source, purchasers bypassed the usual method of items being shipped to stores or individuals in Virginia, and expedited the time it would take to receive their goods. Colonists had enough consumer savvy to know that specific English instrument makers created objects of great value. Instruments like spinets would sometimes be made by regular manufacturers, but at other times master craftsmen such as Roger Plenius or Jacob Kirkman would personally work on the items. Kirkman was the instrument maker to the Queen, so any musical device he made would have been of exceedingly high quality and highly sought after by consumers, no matter the cost.<sup>88</sup> By the time packing charges, freight, and commissions were added to the cost of the merchandise, it



represented a considerable expense for colonists to purchase and import an instrument, but many would have viewed such costs as necessary expenses. Upper class citizens gladly paid high prices as the musical instruments were considered essential to elevate a person's status above that of a common citizen.

In case a purchaser was unsure of how a particular instrument would affect their social standing, advertisers reassured them that their new item was "very genteel," sure to increase their prestige in Williamsburg, as one barrel organ merchant promised in the *Gazette*.<sup>89</sup> Sellers increasingly advertised not only the instruments but the many "genteel" musical accessories required to accompany them. For example, the *Gazette* explained in an advertisement that John Prentis's store featured "an exceeding elegant spinnet, in a genteel mahogany case, with a music desk, spare wires, quills, &c.," which taught newspaper readers that an instrument was simply one part of a well-appointed music room.<sup>90</sup> This vast array of instruments which gradually appeared in Virginia's marketplace helped expand a person's ability to associate with the genteel culture of Europe. Whereas earlier in the eighteenth century citizens were forced to settle for a small variety of musical choices, as the 1700s progressed more instrumental options, many already owned by European citizens, became available to Virginians as a result of the consumer revolution and Virginians' eagerness to display their connections to the gentry. Soon plantation owners could choose to play a different instrument each night of the week, adding an element of variety to their entertainment. Having a multitude of instruments also allowed elites to combine their playing abilities into impromptu concerts, further expanding their musical repertoire.

As observed in Cuthbert Ogle's will inventory from 1755, Virginians developed a taste for purchasing musical compositions to accompany their instruments in the latter half of the eighteenth century. After they had acquired the physical instruments themselves, citizens still

needed the ability to effectively play music to establish their genteel credentials. Not only would such talents show they were upstanding citizens, but acquiring the newest English music brought a sense of proximity to European culture: the music being played in a Virginia tavern might be the same played at the King's birthday celebration in London. Most of this imported music was originally published approximately between 1710 and 1752, with a majority of it coming after 1745. London music houses or printers issued all of the music, though it often consisted of German and Italian composers, and the books slowly made their way across the Atlantic and into the possessions of those in Virginia.<sup>91</sup> Purdie and Dixon, owners of one version of the *Virginia Gazette*, advertised in 1771 that, in addition to new instruments they had acquired, they also offered "musick, namely instructions for the harpsichord, violin, and German flute." Included in this list of instructions was music for famous eighteenth-century compositions such as *The Padlock*, *Love in a Village*, *Maid of the Mill*, *Cunning Man*, as well as Italian sonatas and numerous "eminent composers" like Vivaldi.<sup>92</sup>

Edward Cumins published the first book of theater songs in Williamsburg's printing office in 1772.<sup>93</sup> *The Storer, or American Syren: Being a Collection of the Newest and Most Approved Songs* was named for a young actress named Maria Storer. In 1771 Maria performed in Williamsburg as Lucinda in the play *Love in a Village* as part of the American Company, and the book was named after her in honor of her musical talents.<sup>94</sup> No longer were Virginians content to purchase music from London and play what was already old to the British elite. Now they began publishing their own music books, establishing a unique musical culture and elevating themselves to contemporaries of London's musical scene rather than its followers.

As instruments and books of music began to appear for sale in the latter half of the eighteenth century, the style of advertisements changed at this time as well. Before the 1750s

advertisements in papers “were generally small, one-column texts, but after mid-century it was not uncommon to encounter two-column spreads, announcing newly arrived consumer goods.” Advertisers began to pay more attention to “layout, ornamental borders, and creative variations in type size.” These design features helped differentiate different merchants from their competitors as the number of sellers increased in proportion to the amount of goods sold in the colonies. Following 1760 the total space dedicated to advertisements generally equaled or exceeded the amount of space to publish the news of the day. By 1775 it was not uncommon for some papers to have advertisements filling an entire page, which represented a new era in colonial commerce.<sup>95</sup>

This increase in advertising space represented the musical marketplace during the 1700s as it grew from a sometimes frowned-upon pastime to a societal obligation necessary to establish one’s place in Virginia. As the eighteenth century progressed, the genteel of Williamsburg developed a fascination with how the British aristocracy and upper class lived their lives. In an effort to reduce their image as backwoods, ignorant planters, Virginians strove to adopt the culture of their overseas counterparts, including their fascination with music. They integrated musical activities into a vast array of their social and governmental functions including balls and dances held during court sessions, and instrumentalists played at establishments frequented by the genteel. On an individual basis, gentility required that one must purchase the same instruments popular in Britain at the time, as well as the music books containing the most popular songs so they could hear the same operas and concertos that appealed to the British gentry. As the century progressed it was not good enough to own just one of these instruments or music books, and soon Virginia’s well-to-do citizens acquired sufficient quantities of musical accessories to consider themselves on par with Britons. Inevitably the necessity to acquire and

participate in the same musical entertainments as the British led to increasing financial expenditures and growing amounts of debt for Virginia's genteel. Now that the ability to create music was flooding Virginia, the citizens of Williamsburg needed to further expand on those venues which allowed them to partake in genteel activities.

## Chapter 2: Virginians will Dance or Die!

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1737, to celebrate St. Andrew's Day, a series of diversions "for the entertainment of the gentlemen and ladies" was held on land near Williamsburg owned by William Byrd. As part of the festivities the event coordinators held horse races, foot races, one-handed boxing contests, wrestling matches, and beauty contests for the "handsomest young country maid that appears in the field." Alongside these entertainments were several events representing the vast array of musically-inspired activities available to Williamsburg's genteel citizens. Following the contest (mentioned above) between twenty fiddlers, all twenty participants performed in a concert. Drums were played during the boxing contest every fifteen minutes to call for new challengers. A number of "songsters" competed in a singing competition, with the best singer receiving a book filled with different ballads. Not expected to take on this challenge with skill alone, each singer was provided with "liquor sufficient to clear their windpipes." Meanwhile, a pair of "handsome shoes" was awarded to the winner of a dancing contest. To cap off the event, a "handsome entertainment" was provided for those gentlemen and ladies who purchased tickets. Included in this entertainment was a musical concert for the guests consisting of "drums, trumpets, hautboys, &c." The following week the *Virginia Gazette* was pleased to announce the event's success, with gentlemen and ladies experiencing "drums [that] were beating, trumpets sounding, and other musick playing, for the entertainment of the company, and the whole was manag'd with as good order, and gave as great satisfaction, in general, as cou'd possibly be expected."<sup>96</sup>

This 1737 St. Andrews' Day celebration signals the extent to which Virginia was in the early stages of its commercial musical renaissance. Events featuring a multitude of musical

activities were just becoming fashionable; indeed, as this festival was only occurring for the second time its organizer felt obligated to explain its purpose, “as such meetings and entertainments are somewhat new,” even though its component activities had already become integrated into the daily lives of Williamsburg’s elite citizens.<sup>97</sup> In fact, the St. Andrew’s Day event was a showcase of the musical abilities genteel individuals were expected to observe and participate in on a regular basis. Singing, playing instruments alone or in concerts, dancing, and attending formal balls were all part of the expected duties of a gentleman in colonial Virginia, and as the eighteenth century progressed Williamsburg’s upper class wholeheartedly embraced the new musical activities and marketplace available to them. Building on the previous chapter, which scrutinized the importance of music to genteel society and its reliance on the consumption of English culture and goods, this chapter explores the growing complexity of Williamsburg’s musical economy during the middle third of the eighteenth century, as Virginians’ interest in music and English dancing reached new heights. This chapter also uses Virginians’ love of dancing and singing to highlight gender and social roles among the genteel, as well as exploring the intricacies of formal balls and their associated financial transactions, for these elements of the broader music culture and economy underlined the connection between social status, wealth, and refinement. In addition, this chapter explores the complexity of social rank and its relation to the invaluable roles music and dancing masters played in establishing a genteel culture.

The vast majority of secular music sung in Williamsburg consisted of songs popular in Britain, much of which required not only proper singing instruction but guidance on how to perform before audiences of one’s peers. This was particularly important for young women. If a girl could sing, especially popular songs enjoyed by Europeans, she might be asked to perform in public for the enjoyment of her social equals.<sup>98</sup> In October 1763 then twenty year-old Thomas

Jefferson wrote to his friend William Fleming, recounting meeting a Miss Jenny Taliaferro at a social gathering. Not only did Jefferson find Miss Taliaferro pretty, but he was also “vastly pleased with her playing on the spinnette and singing.”<sup>99</sup> The ability to master both instruments allowed Miss Taliaferro to elevate herself in the eyes of polite company, thus increasing her social status.

Though considered an essential part of a young genteel woman’s education in Virginia, not all enthusiastically pursued the skill of singing even if society demanded it. Philip Fithian was quite impressed with a seventeen-year-old girl named Jenny Washington and her various musical abilities, including her skill in singing. Fithian noted Washington was much more musically inclined than most girls he observed, writing, “She sings likewise to her instrument, has a strong, full voice, & a well-judging ear; but most of the Virginia-girls think it labour quite sufficient to thump the keys of a harpsichord into the air of a tune mechanically, & think it would be slavery to submit to the drudgery of acquiring vocal music.”<sup>100</sup> Others were equally unimpressed with the singing of some Virginia girls, who apparently sang solely because society demanded this skill of them. An anonymous writer to the *Virginia Gazette* wrote an article commenting on “various fashionable customs and ceremonies practised in publick and private companies.” The writer expressed frustration at “the absurd parade of asking some pouting miss to sing, who will bear teasing for a full hour before she complies, and then in a most wretched squall, she disturbs your ears for an hour; for when once set off she rattles away like the clack of a mill, while all the company are under the necessity of praising this screaming devil for the very torture she had given them.”<sup>101</sup> Whether or not this tirade accurately reflected the singing ability of most girls, Virginia’s genteel society required citizens not only to request a performance, but to listen patiently and praise the girl for her singing. The importance of experiencing musical

entertainment – and conducting oneself in accordance with the rules of gentility – overrode the quality of the performance itself. The necessity of young girls singing for audiences highlighted one important gender distinction for Williamsburg’s gentility, as men would not be required to participate in this type of activity, yet society demanded refined girls perform in this manner even if they were not particularly skilled.

Perhaps due to such newspaper accounts, many individuals desired to master their instruments to better emulate Europeans with access to the highest quality musical education, thus creating a strong market for music masters and helping to diversify an already complex labor marketplace for individuals who could assist Virginia’s elites. Performing a piece correctly marked an individual as having truly mastered the genteel arts. As a result, many upper class youths received some form of musical training, often under instruction from a music master. Frequently these masters were Europeans who had come to America to escape the competition of fellow musical teachers in their homelands<sup>102</sup> - a national identity that increased their prestige in the eyes of Americans, who believed the masters possessed direct knowledge of the newest musical trends embraced by the European elite, subsequently increasing the speed at which those trends could be adopted in Williamsburg.

Wealthy individuals hired music masters to come to a plantation or other residence primarily in order to instruct the children, though adults were taught as well. Visits from these musicians were usually “looked upon as a welcome relief from the monotony of rural life” as they provided entertainment and activities for the plantation families. Country plantation owners in Virginia sometimes pooled their resources and hired a single music master, requiring him to travel from house to house, sometimes in a carriage sent by the planter, according to a schedule.<sup>103</sup> An additional benefit of this sharing system was that each family in a locality would



learn the same songs as others in the community, enabling them to participate in group musical activities later on and ensuring all families became familiar with modern European music trends, prohibiting one family from gaining a cultural monopoly and developing a common musical repertoire in which all could participate.

Traveling teachers would generally remain at each house for two or three days, giving daily lessons. These music lessons often superseded general education, as planters often viewed the ability to partake in genteel culture as just as important as reading and writing. Philip Fithian often had his regular classroom instruction interrupted by the arrival of a Mr. Stadley, the music master hired to teach the children at Nomini Hall. Fithian described Stadley approvingly as “a man of sense, & has great skill in music,” though he also noted plantation owner Robert Carter had to teach his daughter Nancy some musical skills as Stadley “does not understand playing on the *guitar*.”<sup>104</sup> Both girls under Fithian’s tutelage were excused from his lessons every Tuesday and Thursday, as Priscilla worked with Stadley to learn the fortepiano and harpsichord, while Nancy practiced her guitar lessons with Robert Carter.

Not all music masters traveled from house to house in Virginia, however, particularly in more urban areas. Many professional teachers decided to instead set up shop in Williamsburg, utilizing advertisements in the local paper to notify students of their prices and accessibility. These masters provided convenient access for wealthier residents in town to receive a necessary musical education. Music masters who established themselves in Williamsburg were intimately involved in all aspects of Virginia’s musical industry, including acquiring and fixing instruments, giving music lessons, and performing in the theater and other social venues. They would have regularly interacted with Williamsburg’s elite in various music-related situations, and been familiar with which musical trends currently held the attention of the upper class.

A Mr. John Singleton advertised in 1752 to inform “gentlemen and others” that he taught the violin in the city for a pistole (a Spanish coin valued at approximately eighteen shillings, or just shy of a pound, in 1752 – approximately £114 in today’s value), provided he had at least six students. Singleton also promised to be willing to travel to the nearby cities of York, Hampton, and Norfolk should there be demand.<sup>105</sup> While Cuthbert Ogle resided in Williamsburg he advertised his willingness to teach “gentlemen and ladies to play on the organ, harpsichord or spinet; and to instruct those gentlemen that play on other instruments, so as to enable them to play in concert” and likewise would travel “upon having encouragement” to do so.<sup>106</sup> Francis Russworm, an unfortunate music master who drowned crossing a river on a ferry, might have been better off had he remained at the Williamsburg home where he opened a music education school in 1771. At this school Russworm taught “the young gentlemen in and about Williamsburg” how to play on the violin as well as both common and German flutes.<sup>107</sup> Instrumentalists who were part of traveling theater groups also frequently advertised their teaching skills in local papers when their companies visited larger cities for an extended period of time.<sup>108</sup>

Arguably the most well-known music master living in Williamsburg during the latter half of the eighteenth century was Peter Pelham. Pelham’s family moved to the colonies when he was about five years old, and Peter eventually received his musical education from Charles Theodore Pachelbel, son of the famous composer Johann Pachelbel. After serving as the organist of Trinity Church in Boston for a number of years, Pelham eventually was chosen as organist of Bruton Parish Church in Williamsburg after assisting in the first organ’s installation, which was not acquired until 1755. While living in town for over fifty years Pelham was extremely active in the musical community, taking on students learning the organ and harpsichord, tuning, building, and

repairing instruments, conducting performances of theater companies, soloists, and choirs, and organizing or sometimes playing in concerts.<sup>109</sup> In fact, Pelham supervised and helped play the music for the first Williamsburg performance of the famous eighteenth-century play *The Beggar's Opera* on June 3, 1768.<sup>110</sup>

Music masters developed a high demand and prestige because they remained surprisingly rare in colonial America. Though occasionally a town acquired a master like Pelham to teach lessons, as late as 1763 only twelve to fifteen music masters taught in all of the thirteen colonies, according to Mendoza.<sup>111</sup> Despite their rarity, many pursued other occupations because a master's pay was generally insufficient to serve as a sole source of their income. In Pelham's case, friends and patrons helped him secure various positions in the city, including supervising the printing of treasury notes and serving as the clerk for Virginia Governors Fauquier and Botetourt, which involved taking applications for tobacco inspections and issuing passes for ships.<sup>112</sup> He also served for a time as Williamsburg's jailer, which allowed him on occasion to bring inmates to Bruton Parish Church to help him pump the organ pedals during performances.<sup>113</sup>

Though some masters took non-music-related jobs like jailer or tobacco inspector, others chose to expand their expertise beyond the teaching of lessons. By the time music masters began circulating throughout Virginia in the latter half of the eighteenth century, enough of a diverse musical industry existed for someone in town to occasionally need their talents. In the 1750s frequent theatrical performances were held in Williamsburg, requiring musical talent to accompany the performers. It was common for music masters to play in theater orchestras or organize concerts and dances. Others copied music for potential students to purchase, or they sold instruments on the side. The best way for these teachers to make a full-time living through

music was to work for a theater group or a church; Pelham's career reflects precisely such an opportunity.<sup>114</sup> As the city's primary music master, Pelham oversaw the playing of sixty-nine different musical pieces for theatrical groups around the late 1760s, allowing him to dedicate his time towards other musical pursuits and earn income from his talents instead of menial labor.<sup>115</sup> This increased productivity represented a dramatic shift from earlier in the century when music masters struggled to make ends meet.

Another way music professionals could earn extra income while still participating in the music industry was to throw a "benefit" concert, which in the parlance of the time meant that it would benefit them personally. Concerts in the eighteenth century were lengthy affairs, sometimes lasting as long as three hours and broken into two or three sections or acts. The musical performances, which consisted of a mixture of vocal and instrumental music, were often followed by meals and balls offered by those hosting the show.<sup>116</sup> Not only could music masters earn a profit from these performances, but they also advertised a musician's skill and increased his exposure to the local elite. Sometimes they even performed these concerts for free with the hope that local gentlemen would be impressed by the talents of the master and either offer to act as their patron, or hire him to educate their children. These performances became an invaluable aid in publicity in an era when extensive advertising was difficult, thus supplementing the ads placed in local newspapers and the handbills distributed to announce upcoming shows.<sup>117</sup>

Winning the patronage of the elite helped musicians and music masters in many ways, for the gentry often comprised the primary or sole audience for concerts in Williamsburg. Tickets for those events were costly enough that primarily only those with the most money and of the highest social status would desire or be able to attend.<sup>118</sup> Advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette* emphasized that relationship by addressing gentlemen, ladies, or both, indicating the

performance would be genteel. One advertisement for a local concert performance was placed in the *Virginia Gazette* in October 1768. This “concert of instrumental musick,” performed at the courthouse in King William, would cost five shillings per ticket (£28.20 in today’s money). Geared towards the elite of Virginia, the ad emphasized the concert was taking place “at the particular request of several ladies and gentlemen,” and the performance itself would be conducted by “gentlemen of note, for their own amusement.”<sup>119</sup> This ensured attendees not only was the concert desired by the gentility, but as those same individuals performed the music all qualities of the show met the qualifications of being sufficiently elite.

The fact that music masters and professional musicians worked for money prevented them from being seen as gentlemen in the eighteenth century. Despite this, their social rank remains difficult to categorize as they had a unique ability to teach fashionable music and necessary social skills to the Virginia gentry who employed them. Due to their importance at elevating family members’ social status, music masters who lived temporarily at plantations inhabited a curious social position with their employers. Although considered hired help, their knowledge of musical culture granted them unique access to elite society. In addition to utilizing a family’s carriage for transportation between plantations, masters often joined families for meals and concerts, though not just as performers. On multiple occasions Mr. Stadley (the master employed by a group of planters outside Williamsburg) performed on the violin, harpsichord, and flute for the family, sometimes accompanying his student Priscilla Carter. On one occasion Phillip Fithian and Ben Carter performed a sonata for the family, earning “not only Mr Stadleys approbation, but his praise: he did me the honour to say that ‘I play a good flute.’”<sup>120</sup> Fithian expressed honor at this compliment perhaps in acknowledgment of the master’s musical expertise both in America and across the Atlantic. If they were not considered gentlemen, music

masters and musicians might best be considered on the same social rank as storekeepers or skilled craftsmen, while also enjoying intimate access to the families of the wealthiest Virginians unlike that of their craftsmen peers.

In fact, due to a dearth of professional musicians in the colonies during this era, concert organizers often filled out the ranks of players during performances using amateur performers. As music masters took on pupils consisting of upper class gentlemen and ladies or their children, they gained access to musical talent they could use for concerts.<sup>121</sup> In these cases, a sharp divide occurred between the genteel amateur musicians and the professionals who recruited them regarding the matter of getting paid for the performance. A concert held in Fredericksburg in 1766 announced “several of the best hands in Virginia will assist” the music master leading the concert, bringing three violins, one tenor, one bass, two flutes, one hautboy, one horn, and one harpsichord to play in the show. Following the performance, the advertisement promised those purchasing a ticket for a mere seven shillings, six pence would be treated to supper, liquor, and a ball “as long as the ladies stay.”<sup>122</sup> These “gentlemen amateurs” had no societal qualms about performing in public, but as historian Helen Cripe indicates it was a strict social more that, no matter their level of skill, they could never be seen taking any form of compensation for their performances. Instead, they had to voluntarily donate their time, and only perform because they enjoyed themselves.<sup>123</sup> Hence in the *Virginia Gazette* ad for the King William concert the “gentlemen of note” made sure to announce they were only performing “for their own amusement.” This refusal to accept compensation for their performances represented the gentlemanliness of Williamsburg’s male elite. True gentleman avoided physical labor as much as they avoided any compensation resembling a wage – all of which they viewed as beneath them.

Gentleman instead engaged in scholarly activities, such as reading or debating law and politics; pursuits of the mind rather than the body.

To further complicate the musical economy of eighteenth-century Williamsburg, some situations required neither professional musicians nor gentlemen amateurs, instead necessitating enslaved African Americans who excelled as musicians. One such activity was the highly frequent organized dance.<sup>124</sup> As popular as it was, the violin was the most frequent instrument played by slaves at dances and balls.<sup>125</sup> In many areas of the American colonies slaves were forbidden from playing all but stringed instruments due to fear of an uprising, as horns, trumpets, and drums were “regarded as too suitable for signaling and calling to arms,” as historian Gilbert Chase has explained. This was not a hard and fast rule, in the Williamsburg area at least, as some trusted house slaves were granted permission to expand their musical repertoire to perform at exclusive dances and balls, with the income going to their masters.<sup>126</sup> In addition to Simeon Gilliat, the official slave fiddler in Williamsburg, Governor Botetourt also frequently requested the skills of Landon Briggs, a slave flutist who performed with Gilliat at official state functions.<sup>127</sup> Displaying slaves with musical skills during organized dances emphasized the wealth of Virginia’s elite and furthered their genteel credentials.

Slaves with musical abilities were in high demand in Virginia. Between 1736 and 1780 more than sixty references to enslaved musicians appeared in the *Virginia Gazette*, forty-five of whom (75%) were violinists or fiddlers.<sup>128</sup> Only two such advertisements appeared before 1740, with the rest occurring in the decades following 1750, indicating either that more slaves learned musical abilities as the century progressed or that those who knew how to play an instrument rose in value to their owners and potential buyers. Indeed, sales of slaves often highlighted an individual’s instrument playing abilities as a selling point in the paper. In 1755, when Edward

Dial died, the *Virginia Gazette* listed that his estate included a “valuable negroe slave, about 28 years of age” who, among other qualities, “plays well on the violin.”<sup>129</sup> Another slave, about eighteen to twenty years old and recently arrived from London, was advertised as having “every qualification of a genteel and sensible servant,” including his ability to play the French horn. This instrument also came with the slave when he was purchased.<sup>130</sup> Other times a purchaser advertised his desire to buy a slave who could play an instrument, such as when William Fearson sought “to buy or to hire, an orderly Negro or Mulatto man, who can play well on the violin.”<sup>131</sup>

If wealthy Virginians’ use of their enslaved people as musicians prompted surprised comments from English visitors, it constituted a practice that illustrates how elites were willing to adapt their plantation economies and workforces to their need for musical entertainments. Advertisements for runaway slaves in the *Virginia Gazette* likewise included information about musical abilities alongside a list of a slave’s physical characteristics. Mentioning these skills in the paper also indicated how much musical skills added to the value of a slave as they could be utilized in balls and dances for Williamsburg’s elite. In 1752 Virginia Governor Dinwiddie himself posted an ad in the *Virginia Gazette* for two runaway slaves. The first, a “negroe man slave” named Guy, who had escaped from a jail, “plays on the violin.” The second “negroe man slave” in the ad, who belonged to William Hutchings, was identified as Dick, “a strong active fellow, and can play on the fiddle.”<sup>132</sup> One runaway slave boy was even good enough at the instrument that the advertisement listed him as “Fiddler Billy.”<sup>133</sup> Having slaves learn to play a variety of instruments at formal gatherings highlights the diversity and complexity of Virginia’s musical economy. As music became more ubiquitous in the colony, various groups like slave owners and music masters found new ways to earn income from a variety of music-related



industries. Slave owners realized if their slaves could play the fiddle or another instrument they had a potential source of additional revenue, further expanding the overall musical economy.

One final way in which Virginians' desire for music helped diversify the economy and the labor force was the growing importance of dancing masters as the century progressed. In a twist from the usual desire to separate themselves from those beneath them, in the mid-seventeenth century the genteel of England began to appropriate a dancing style similar to that of the peasant ranks. This dancing style, sometimes referred to as "country dances," was generally accompanied by one or two fiddles playing music "adapted from the country folk." In the eighteenth century, however, with the requirement of gentility and refinement, elites increasingly strove to distinguish their dances from those of lower ranks by adopting new styles of genteel dancing. While country dances retained their appeal, elites expanded their repertoires by learning minuets, cotillions, jigs, hornpipes, and reels. Whereas traditional dances had couples pairing off in a circle or small group, country dances instead positioned couples facing each other in long rows with men on one side and women on the other, referred to as "longways for as many as will." Due to this arrangement, as many couples as possible could participate in the dance, and beginners were encouraged to join in the fun as most of the movements were executed by those at the beginning of the columns. Such a dance allowed newcomers time to observe the head couple before they were required to participate themselves, which made this style of dance "a social, participatory affair."<sup>134</sup> According to historians Joy Van Cleef and Kate Van Winkle Keller, music for these dances was "drawn from the vast reservoir of popular tunes which were as well known as the dances themselves in England and the English colonies." These songs were generally simple songs, easy to remember and hard to forget, playable on any kind of instrument or they could be sung if no instruments were available. Most importantly the songs were popular

in England, making them a necessary part of Virginian society in their pursuit of Britishness. They were also extremely catchy, and therefore frequently played at balls and dances.<sup>135</sup> Other dances, like the minuet, required far more complicated training in the steps, for these dances asked couples to work as partners rather than allowing them to learn from other dancers on the spot.



“A Kentucky Wedding” by Howard Pyle, 1882. This drawing of an eighteenth century American wedding shows gentlemen and ladies at a country dance “longways for as many as will” with men in one column and women in another. Note only one couple is participating, allowing newcomers to observe and learn the dance moves. Also note the singular fiddle player in the background.<sup>136</sup>

Because dancing was an extremely important activity in England, often performed by not just the upper class of society but by the royals themselves, Virginians eagerly sought the same skills as those across the Atlantic. Dancing may have been popular throughout the American colonies, but historians suggest that elite Virginians especially embraced this activity. According to historian Mary Newton Stanard, “There is abundant evidence that dancing was by far the most

generally popular amusement in the colony. Wherever there was ‘company’ there was dancing. Everybody danced.”<sup>137</sup> John Kello, in a letter written to London from Hampton, wrote that in Virginia, “Dancing is the chief diversion here.”<sup>138</sup> Ben Carter, one of Philip Fithian’s students, was concerned on one occasion that he had no one to accompany him to a dance. Fithian had no such worries however, noting “blow high, blow low, he need not be afraid; *Virginians* are of genuine blood – They will dance or die!”<sup>139</sup> The Reverend Andrew Burnaby, when describing the women of Virginia, noted, “They are immoderately fond of dancing, and indeed it is almost the only amusement they partake of.” Despite their fondness, Burnaby was less than impressed with their dancing skills, observing that “they discover want of taste and elegance, and seldom appear with that gracefulness and ease, which these movements are calculated to display.”<sup>140</sup>

Considering how important these balls and dances were to the citizens of Williamsburg, it was imperative they had the proper instructor to teach them the intricate movements involved in the great variety of dances that existed. Like music masters, dancing masters were generally Europeans plying their trade in the colonies. Rather than focusing simply on dance techniques, however, these masters had a far greater responsibility: to teach Virginians how to be ladies and gentlemen. They offered lessons in fencing as well as dancing, as both involved intricate footwork and body movements.<sup>141</sup> Many dances in the eighteenth century were extremely elaborate and similar to dancing found in the theater, requiring precise movements that would be observed by many social peers and must appear as if they were accomplished easily and with grace.<sup>142</sup> Most likely such complicated dance moves were taught to students without the benefit of music, as hiring an instrumentalist to accompany the teacher would have been an added expense which would have cut into any small profit earned. Actual playing of music would have been unnecessary anyway, and perhaps a distraction to the master’s instructions. Instead the

dance steps would be learned by using vocal commands and the clapping of hands to create a beat.<sup>143</sup>

Several dancing masters set up classes in Williamsburg and advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for students. In 1737 William Dering gave notice that he opened a dance school at William and Mary where “all gentlemen’s sons may be taught dancing, according to the newest French manner, on Fridays and Saturdays.”<sup>144</sup> One French dancing master, Le Chevalier dePeyrouny, while living at Mr. Finnie’s in Williamsburg, not only taught dancing, but also “the art of fencing” and “the French tongue.”<sup>145</sup> Music master Francis Russworm also made himself available to teach dancing, offering to “wait upon young ladies at their own homes, to teach them to dance a minuet after the newest and most fashionable method.”<sup>146</sup> It is interesting that to effectively teach these genteel activities to their students, teachers were required to personally master each one. Yet, despite the ability to behave impeccably among elite individuals, many of whom lacked the skills of the teacher, their job was considered on par with a tradesman, similar to music masters. Thus dancing masters could never acquire the status they were helping others achieve.

Dancing masters would have also been hired by local plantation owners around Williamsburg and traveled from house to house, similar to music masters. The favored dancing master of Nomini Hall was a man named Christian. By the time he began teaching at Philip Fithian’s temporary home, Christian had been a dancing master in Virginia for about twenty years; in one of his earliest jobs he had received twenty pounds to teach Priscilla and Mary Rootes of King and Queen County.<sup>147</sup> Similar to the lessons of the children’s music master, Christian’s dancing lessons were important enough to the children’s education that they were regularly dismissed from Fithian’s classes, sometimes for multiple days.<sup>148</sup> The children were,

unsurprisingly, not always enthusiastic about attending these lessons. On one occasion Robert Carter's son Bob claimed he could not attend Christian's classes due to having no stockings or shoes. Perturbed, Carter sent someone to the store to obtain shoes for Bob, and while waiting for them to arrive he took the boy to his study and had him flogg'd severely for not having given seasonable notice, & sent him instantly to the dance."<sup>149</sup>

While staying at the plantation houses, music masters did not simply teach the students dance lessons, but also would have family members attend and lead informal group dances. Following one morning of dance instruction at Nomini Hall, Fithian noted Christian requested people to dance, after which "there were several minuets danced with great ease and propriety; after which the whole company joined in country-dances, and it was indeed beautiful to admiration, to see such a number of young persons, set off by dress to the best advantage, moving easily, to the sound of well performed music, and with perfect regularity, tho' apparently in the utmost disorder." Following an afternoon meal, the group again returned to the house's dancing room where Fithian observed Christian's teaching style. He described the teacher as "punctual, and rigid in his discipline, so strict indeed that he struck two of the young misses for a fault in the course of their performance, even in the presence of the mother of one of them! And he rebuked one of the young fellows so highly as to tell him he must alter his manner, which he had observed through the course of the dance, to be insolent, and wanton, or absent himself from the school."<sup>150</sup>

Dancing masters' ability to teach the proper manners of the genteel may have been as important as the dancing itself. Masters taught students how to stand or sit erect with the chin held up. In portraits, genteel subjects would be seen with their heads turned or perhaps inclined, but their chins would always remain raised from their chests. At formal entertainments in the

company of those they wished to impress, these subjects had to maintain their erect postures even when sitting, having their heads and chins up with their shoulders held back to maintain a rigid pose. When seated the legs needed to be motionless, and should never be crossed as it was considered disrespectful. The stance of the genteel was similar to that of ballet dancers, and when walking down the street they were taught to keep chins and torsos up, while never ambling or sauntering on the street.<sup>151</sup> By combining proper body movements and posture to the intricate steps involved in dances, dancing masters provided some of the necessary tools the gentry needed to make their way in elite society.

Not just anyone could show up and attend balls and dances, even those held in the more populous Williamsburg. Many advertised upcoming exclusive balls by word of mouth between friends and acquaintances, intentionally selecting the desired participants. Starting in 1737, however, the *Virginia Gazette* advertised some dances as ostensibly open to all, though many of these set ticket prices high enough that they effectively eliminated many of the lower and middle ranks from attending. This allowed those who considered themselves to be genteel to ensure only social equals were present at a dance, even if it was ostensibly an affair open to any citizen.

To accommodate this love of dancing, regular balls or formal dances were frequently held in Virginia, some of which offered financial opportunities for the organizers, thereby further expanding the colony's music-related economy. Because they could charge for admittance, music masters regularly organized balls in Williamsburg held in the ballroom at the governor's mansion, or at the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern, or occasionally in an individual's home.<sup>152</sup> Other upper class citizens, perhaps especially those experiencing financial difficulties, profited from the gentry's desire to dance. A Mrs. Barbara Degraffenriedt listed the first tickets advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* for a Williamsburg ball, appearing in February 1737. Her

husband Christopher, owner of a plantation on the James River, had experienced financial difficulties, and the couple's townhouse, which was adjacent to the Governor's Palace, made it an ideal place to hold dances.<sup>153</sup> Selling tickets served as an additional source of revenue to help the couple support themselves, in addition to supplying a product currently in demand in Williamsburg. Over the next two years Mrs. Degraffenriedt held multiple balls, with varying sorts of entertainment. Though she did not list the ticket price in some of her advertisements, in others she indicated an entry fee of five shillings, which most likely was the price for all of her entertainments. In her final advertisement in April 1739, she offered not only a room at her house for a dance, but also "musick, candles, and liquors," all for five shillings.<sup>154</sup> Though the only *Gazette* advertisement offering her ballroom for rent, it seems likely she rented this party space to anyone who could afford it given her family's financial distress.

Mrs. Degraffenriedt was hardly the only person in Williamsburg selling tickets to musical events. During the same time period Mary Stagg, widow and co-founder of the first Williamsburg theater with her recently deceased husband Charles Stagg, held regular dancing "assemblies" at the capitol building. Tickets for these events were sold for half a pistole each (approximately £35 or \$50 in today's currency), making this a prohibitively pricey event for many of lower status, and earning a substantial income for Stagg. Her agenda of excluding the lower ranks was hardly hidden, as Stagg addressed one *Virginia Gazette* advertisement "To the gentlemen and ladies" of Williamsburg. Later in the same ad she not only again repeated her appeal to "those gentlemen and ladies," but notified them if they would "favour her with their company, [they] are requested not to pay any money at the door," apparently giving them free entry simply to spend time with her.<sup>155</sup> Stagg sold tickets to these gatherings from her own home, usually on the night before an event or sometimes at the door; she often held two of these

dancing assemblies on back-to-back nights in Williamsburg. Additionally, dancing was not the sole form of entertainment at these events. Raffles were held at several of them where “several valuable goods will be put up to be raffled for,” including on one occasion “a likely young Negro fellow.”<sup>156</sup>

A decade later, starting in the 1750s, it became extremely common for the wealthier citizens of Williamsburg to advertise tickets for sale to balls or other entertainments held in town as musical commerce expanded in the colony. Anne Shields sold tickets for “a ball for the entertainment of gentlemen and ladies” at the city courthouse.<sup>157</sup> Richard Coventon, proposing “to have a ball for my scholars,” also sold tickets to a courthouse ball to “such gentlemen and ladies who are pleased to favour me with their company.”<sup>158</sup> Rather than posting notices for individual balls, Alexander Finnie notified “the ladies and gentlemen” that he would hold a ball once every week at the Apollo Room of the Raleigh Tavern, at least while the general assembly and court were in session.<sup>159</sup> Henry Wetherburn followed the same pattern as Finnie and simply notified he would be having a ball at his residence every Tuesday evening “during the sitting of the general assembly.”

Beyond Williamsburg, balls and dances held in plantation societies were so elaborate that they represented enormous financial investments by their hosts. Upcoming balls and dances were a constant source of conversation for Philip Fithian at Nomini Hall. With the holidays approaching, he wrote, “Nothing is now to be heard of in conversation, but the *balls*, the *fox-hunts*, the fine *entertainments*, and the *good fellowship*, which are to be exhibited at the approaching *Christmas*.”<sup>160</sup> With balls approaching, the young people living at the house could scarcely think of anything else. Robert Carter informed his boys “concerning their conduct this



day, & through the course of the ball – He allows them go to; to stay all this night; to bring him an account of all the company at the ball; & to return tomorrow evening – All the morning is spent in dressing.”<sup>161</sup> It was not unusual for these balls held at local Virginia plantations to last several consecutive days, with the participants staying at the house hosting the dance. Fithian noted a ball being prepared by a Squire Lee that would last four or five days, and to which the entire family was invited.<sup>162</sup> On one occasion a ball was hosted at Nomini Hall, and Fithian observed when a chariot arrived bearing “four young misses to be ready for the dance which happens here tomorrow.” The next morning he wrote the dance was taking place with “great spirit & neatness” with a play following the music, and on the third day “all our company continue,” showing no signs of leaving after three days on the plantation.<sup>163</sup>

The gossip generated by these elaborate plantation dances demonstrates why an organizer might be so willing to spend enormous sums of money on the event. Information about which dances were performed, who was there, how they were dressed, and the instruments played all reflected the host’s gentility and that of the gathered guests. These affairs offered ideal situations during which Virginia’s elites got to practice their own refinement and cultivate their ability to perceive it in their peers. Virginian society put great stock in the quality of these dances as the smallest details could either meet or fail societal criteria established overseas and embraced in America. The order of the dances itself was quite important, and generally followed a strict regimen. Balls usually began with a slow and stately dance requiring more extensive dancing lessons like the minuet, or perhaps a march, frequently performed by the host, whether the governor, another important official, or the owner of a plantation. Livelier country dances often followed.<sup>164</sup> At one ball Fithian noted “the company danced after candle-light a minuet round, three country dances, several reels.”<sup>165</sup> On another occasion his young charge Priscilla reported

to the family that she and her companions “had an elegant dance on the whole” and that “Mr. *Christian* the master danced several minuets, prodigiously beautiful; that Captain Grigg (Captain of an English Ship) danced a minuet with her; that he hobbled most dolefully, & that the whole assembly laughed!”<sup>166</sup> By recounting their experiences from the dance, family members mentally participated in these events even if unable to physically attend.

On another occasion the family at Nomini Hall attended a ball at Hobbs’s Hole near present day Tappahannock, where Fithian yet again went into great detail about the dance’s details. The dance was presented by a Mr. Ritche, a “merchant with much influence in that area,” increasing the importance of the event due to his prestige. Fithian goes into great detail about which participants opened the ball, the order of dances, and the clothes worn by attendees, including a wig “powdered white as snow, &crap’d in the newest taste.”<sup>167</sup> Fithian’s detailed account shows not only how important the dance itself was, but the intricate elements that went into a successful event. Dances had to be presented in a certain order, and ladies in particular had to wear the newest, finest fashions lest they be judged by their peers. The desire to possess these new fashions, many of which were presumably based on European styles, would have led to ever increasing financial expenditures on clothing as the eighteenth century progressed, further contributing to the growing Virginia economy tied to musical activity.

Plantation owners also found ways to ensure their neighbors held subsequent dances after the current one finally ended. In fact, they integrated a way to identify the next host into the current ball’s entertainment. Nicholas Cresswell, the British farmer exploring Virginia, observed a unique ritual at a dance near Alexandria. In the eighteenth century, Virginia plantation owners formed a tight community, and as such, similar to the residents of Nomini Hall, it was common for dances to be held in a rotation with each planter taking a turn at hosting. In the case of this

ball near Alexandria, a cake was made every year, which was cut into small pieces and handed around the room. At the same time participants took a ticket out of a hat “with something merry wrote on it.” The male who drew “the king” from the hat had to host the ball the following year, while the female drawing “the queen” had to make the next cake.<sup>168</sup> With the frequent gossip and observations taking place at these events, it is easy to imagine that each year participants would increasingly try to outdo each other’s presentation, spending larger amounts of money to not appear cheaper than their neighbors.

As these specific details of balls and dances were so closely catalogued by the attendees, participants had to be constantly aware of their behavior and maintain the poise and dignity expected of the upper class. These dances “were elaborately staged performances, with guests serving as both performers and audience,” as Richard Bushman has explained. “People did not attend such events to relax, but to present their most beautiful, gracious, and pleasing selves.” Each guest had to think about how they were performing at the dance, and how others were observing them. This meant a gentleman could not be seen fumbling with his buttons like a rustic person, while a lady may have to delay an appearance if her hair was not done right, as it was sure to generate talk behind her back. At times the pleasure participants received from the dancing itself was secondary to the idea of others watching and admiring the dancer.<sup>169</sup> Even the dancing itself was quite competitive amongst the participants, who closely watched and judged others for mistakes, sharing their observations with fellow attendees. Sometimes even the playing of the fiddler became competitive with the dancers, to see who had more endurance on the dance floor.<sup>170</sup>

As the eighteenth century progressed, Williamsburg’s upper class citizens needed new commercial entities to support their musical needs, and as a result, the musical economy grew far

more complex and diverse, permitting new kinds of individuals to benefit from it. To be like the British, Virginians needed to act like them, and that included partaking in those music-related ventures which were considered mandatory among the European gentry. To achieve this societal parity plantation owners and Williamsburg citizens hired European music and dancing masters to teach them the proper instrument playing and dancing techniques. They also learned how a gentry individual acts, stands, and walks, movements which further separated them from those of the lower stations in America. Though these masters were considered to be of a lower social status than those they taught, they regularly interacted in intimate settings with those above them. Slaves who were taught to play instruments for the entertainment of the gentry at formal affairs experienced the same social mixing. This indicated Virginians gladly set aside social distinctions in pursuit of their gentry credentials. After learning how to distinguish themselves from those beneath them, and to prove themselves just as good as their European counterparts, Virginians began increasingly participating in popular European musical activities such as concerts and formal balls. Though these events had existed previously and were quite popular, starting in the eighteenth century enterprising individuals discovered people were willing to pay high fees simply to attend a ball geared towards the upper class, in order to ensure they were classified in that same social group. Despite the impressive growth of Virginia's musical commerce in a pursuit of social status, financial success reached its apex with the success of the Williamsburg theater.

### Chapter 3: The Theater Arrives in Williamsburg

In April 1771, Colonel Hudson Muse of Middlesex County wrote to his brother Thomas Muse of Maryland, telling him of his travels through the Virginia countryside. In this letter he wrote of visiting Williamsburg and being detained in the city for eleven days. To make the best of a bad situation, Muse “spent the time very agreeably, at the plays every night” where he was entranced by the performance of Sarah Hallam, one of many performers from traveling theater companies that regularly visited Williamsburg, thinking her “super fine.” The playhouse in town was “crowded every night, & the gentlemen who have generally attended that place agree there was treble the number of fine ladies that was ever seen in town before.” So impressed by the performances he saw, Muse vowed at the end of the month, “I intend down again, & perhaps shall make out such another trip, as the players are to be there again, and its an amusement I am so very fond of.”<sup>171</sup> Hudson Muse’s appreciation for the variety of theatrical performances shown on the Williamsburg stage reflected the growing enthusiasm for American colonial theater.

As a complex music industry spread throughout Virginia over the course of the eighteenth century, more people became acquainted with popular plays and pieces of music popular in Europe. By observing these plays and the musical acts that accompanied them, the American gentility brought themselves culturally closer to Europeans experiencing the same shows. If a theatrical act was good enough for Britain’s elite, Virginians wanted to appreciate it on the same intellectual level. As the century progressed and the Williamsburg theater experienced periods of intense activity, the citizens of Williamsburg enjoyed many theatrical entertainments that came directly from London, appearing shortly after a London premiere.

Whereas early in the eighteenth century a European play might have taken years before it could be performed by an American company, by the 1770s Virginians frequently heard the same scripts and songs from across the Atlantic within months of their debut, an impressive feat considering oceanic travel times. Williamsburg's audiences now demanded the speedy arrival of new entertainments, no longer content to experience out of date theatrical performances.

Gentlemen and ladies in Williamsburg also learned the songs heard in newly-arrived plays as one aspect of keeping up with fashionable culture. While many heard these pieces in small gatherings, such as performing them in households or as groups of gentlemen amateurs in local taverns for concerts, Virginians increasingly felt the need for larger venues where an assembled audience could experience new musical fashions. The history of Williamsburg's two playhouses is more disjointed than the story of the broader music history discussed above. Through financial mismanagement and a lack of talented theatrical troupes in the colonies, Williamsburg experienced periods of nightly plays and musical acts, bookmarked by long stretches where the theater sat unused. Regardless of the theater's utilization rate, overall theatrical performances had become popular enough by the time of the American Revolution that the First Continental Congress felt obligated to ban the theater from the colonies as it represented English entertainment performed by English actors, as well as an unnecessary luxury during a time of intense political strain between America and Britain.

During the eighteenth century two separate playhouses appeared in Williamsburg, each used primarily for musical and theatrical acts, although they also featured other types of entertainment. As Hudson Muse's visit confirmed, these playhouses became the most popular locations in town, especially during the second half of the century, when many visitors and local citizens purchased tickets and spent their evenings listening to the newest European plays or

concerts. The frequency of performances and size of these types of theaters also allowed common citizens to pay for the experience of hearing music that had primarily been accessible only to those Virginia elites capable of visiting Europe or importing the latest music. The popularity of these venues was in part due to the creation of traveling entertainment troupes that moved up and down the East Coast and spent months at a time in Williamsburg putting on nightly shows. Through the popularity of playhouses and the groups that utilized them, music spread to a larger percentage of the Williamsburg population than ever before, and further helped expand the growing musical marketplace.



This map indicates the locations of the two Williamsburg theaters. The red line starting at the top left begins at the Governor's Mansion, traveling south across the Palace Green before heading east along Duke of Gloucester Street and ending at the capitol. The building highlighted in blue indicates the first theater (1716-1732), while the building marked with green is the second theater (1751-1772). Note their proximity to important governmental buildings, as Williamsburg's leaders were regular attendees.<sup>172</sup>

The first theater built in Williamsburg, indeed, the first theater built anywhere in the American colonies, was located near the governor's palace just to the east of the Palace Green that ran north to south in the city. William Levingston, a merchant from New Kent County,

Virginia (mentioned in an earlier chapter as teaching dancing classes at William and Mary), built the theater in 1716.<sup>173</sup> Seeking a partnership for his new venture, Levingston formed an agreement with his indentured servant Charles Stagg, a dancing master in Williamsburg, and his wife Mary Stagg; the group jointly petitioned Governor Alexander Spotswood for the “Sole privilege of acting comedies, drolls or other kind of stage plays within any part of ye sd colony.” As part of this agreement Charles and Mary Stagg would act in plays performed on the stage, as well as teaching others how to act, as long as they remained in Virginia; they would also grant Levingston the power to approve any plays in which the Staggs acted. Levingston constructed the playhouse itself to give them a location to perform these services.<sup>174</sup> Notices were sent to England, at Levingston’s expense, to recruit actors and musicians to come to Virginia and perform in plays, compensated at the same rates as local performers.<sup>175</sup>

The playhouse was probably completed by 1718, as part of Levingston’s stipulations for acquiring the lots required that buildings must be erected within two years or he would forfeit the land.<sup>176</sup> By 1721 the area around the theater had been enlarged to include a stable, a house, a detached kitchen, and a bowling green, indicating at least some initial commercial success for Levingston’s venture. Measuring eighty-six and a half feet long by thirty feet on a brick foundation, the playhouse was a good size and featured a shingled roof and five windows for light and ventilation. Inside, plastered walls and wood floors ran the length of the structure.<sup>177</sup> The theater’s completion represented a cultural step forward for Williamsburg’s citizens, as they now had a central gathering place, open to multiple social classes, to partake in new forms of musical commerce that had been previously relegated to homes or taverns catering to particular social groups.



Though ostensibly designed to hold theatrical presentations, Virginians could hear music just as frequently emanating from the new playhouse near the Palace Green. Almost every play in the eighteenth century utilized music, whether accompanying actors during a song or dance, or as an interlude between acts; music often appeared by popular demand. Indeed, without musical performances many patrons would have been reluctant to spend their money to see these shows.<sup>178</sup> As the *Virginia Gazette* was not published until 1736, it is difficult to ascertain how many performances, or even the names of specific plays, appeared at the first Williamsburg playhouse. Regardless, historian John Molnar has speculated that the 1705 comedy *The Tender Husband*, along with its accompanying songs, may have been one of the early plays performed. Written by Sir Richard Steele, this play focused on a Captain Clerimont, who disguises himself as an artist to court a woman named Biddy, painting her picture under the watchful gaze of her aunt. While working on the portrait, he claims he knows of a fellow painter who eloped with his model and subsequently wrote a sonnet for her; the enamored Clerimont claims he knows this particular song by heart. As Biddy desires to hear this song, he sends for his servant, who has a good singing voice, at which point the script declares, “Here it is sung.”<sup>179</sup>

The fact that we know so little about the first playhouse should not diminish our appreciation for its early appearance in the city. Despite the appeal of plays such as *The Tender Husband* containing multiple musical pieces, by 1727 Levingston had lost the land in Williamsburg and relocated to Spotsylvania County.<sup>180</sup> Additionally, although others subsequently used the building for performances, by 1732 the playhouse was only used sporadically. As William Hugh Grove of England observed while traveling through Virginia that even while the town ran two successful dancing schools, “There was a playhouse managed by Bowes, but having little to do is dropped.”<sup>181</sup> The students of William and Mary put on the only

known performances at the theater following Grove's visit to Williamsburg. In September of 1736 the "young gentlemen of the college" took out ads in the *Virginia Gazette* that they would demonstrate the acting, singing, and dancing skills learned at the school to perform *The Tragedy of Cato*, *The Busy-Body*, *The Recruiting-Officer*, *The Beaux-Strategem*, and *the Drummer; or the Haunted House* over a series of evenings.<sup>182</sup> By 1745 a *Gazette* notice indicated the building had fallen into a state of disrepair, requiring new shingles, paint, windows, doors, flooring, plastering, and carpentry inside.<sup>183</sup> As a result, students who wished to display their newly-acquired musical skills before large audiences were forced to find other venues. It would not be long, however, before a new theater appeared in Williamsburg.

Though it is unclear if the first theater's slow fall into disuse related to Williamsburg residents' initial lack of enthusiasm, by 1751 signs of new theatrical interest had begun to appear. Alexander Finnie, owner of the Raleigh Tavern, posted an advertisement in the *Virginia Gazette* in August 1751 notifying the readership that a theatrical company from New York intended to perform. This troupe, run by Walter Murray and Thomas Kean, went by the name of the New York Company of Comedians. Historian John Molnar has indicated although known for their theatrical productions, the troupe regularly featured musical acts as well.<sup>184</sup> Though Finnie desired to bring Murray and Kean's troupe to Williamsburg, at this point the first playhouse had been converted to a government building and no suitable location existed for performances. Finnie proposed to hastily build a theater during the two months before the company arrived. To pay for this ambitious project, Finnie initiated a subscriber system wherein "those gentlemen and ladies" purchasing a subscription for one pistole, payable at the Raleigh Tavern, were "entitled to a box ticket, for the first night's diversions." Finnie promised the newspaper's readers that the building would be ready in time for October's court.<sup>185</sup> A few days later on September 2, Finnie

purchased two lots for £40 on the east side of Williamsburg, almost immediately behind the capitol building off of Eastern Street, to build the new theater.<sup>186</sup> Its proximity to the capitol also afforded wealthier patrons convenient access to performances during their time in town attending to government business.

Subscription sales for the new playhouse lagged, but Finnie pressed on with construction. On September 26 the *Virginia Gazette* announced the company's first performance in Williamsburg would be "the tragical history of King Richard the Third," accompanied by "a grand tragic dance; compos'd by Monsieur Denoier, call'd The Royal Captive, after the Turkish manner, as perform'd at his majesty's opera house, in the Hay-Market."<sup>187</sup> Though sources suggest the hasty construction of the building left much to be desired, by the time of opening night it featured a stage, boxes, a pit, and a gallery.<sup>188</sup> A *Gazette* advertisement on October 17 set the prices for the show with boxes available for seven shillings, six pence, pit seats for five shillings, nine pence, and a gallery view for three shillings, nine pence.<sup>189</sup> This set the ticket prices at approximately £16-£32, or \$25-\$50, in today's money – rather substantial sums that would most likely prohibit many lower and middle rank patrons from attending performances. The more genteel the audience, and the more they could generally charge for ticket prices, the higher the prestige of the theatrical company. Williamsburg's gentility gladly paid high admission prices for shows that elevated their social status, as part of their required duties as members of the elite included attending the theater.

Though charging a somewhat steep price for tickets to their performances, in Williamsburg the New York Company of Comedians struggled financially, perhaps due to lackluster ticket sales or due to the cost of the hastily-built theater. The actors may also have lacked the European credentials the Williamsburg gentry valued enough to attend performances.

Whatever the reason for their financial difficulties, they could not afford to advertise in the *Virginia Gazette* other than the two occasions mentioned above, so instead they handed out playbills on the day of the performance in Williamsburg.<sup>190</sup> Three days after their first show, an ad appeared notifying the public that due to “a greater expence than they at first expected in erecting a theatre in the city of Williamsburg,” as well as needing funds to “procure proper scenes and dresses,” the company hoped to sell a share of the theater itself, with larger donors receiving a greater percentage of the returns.<sup>191</sup> Despite this last ditch effort, and following the performance of several more plays in and around the Williamsburg area, Murray and Kean’s troupe eventually disbanded, to soon be replaced by a much more successful traveling act that offered more appeal to the genteel sensibilities of eighteenth-century Virginians.

Soon after the New Yorkers’ departure, a new troupe arrived in Virginia directly from London, one that directly appealed to the cultured Williamsburg elite. In June 1752 the vessel *The Charming Sally* arrived in Yorktown bearing Lewis Hallam, his actress wife, and a company of ten actors, also known as the Company of Comedians, though emphasizing their origins as London rather than New York.<sup>192</sup> Great anticipation surrounded this new theatrical troupe’s arrival, as the *Virginia Gazette* noted they were “daily expected here.”<sup>193</sup> Part of the excitement stemmed from the fact this London-based company advertised European-style qualities appealing to Williamsburg’s elites in their pursuit of Anglicization. The company bragged in the *Gazette*, “The scenes, cloaths, and decorations are all entirely new, extremely rich, and finished in the highest taste, the scenes being painted by the best hands in London, are excell’d by none in beauty and elegance.”<sup>194</sup> This entire description succinctly summarized many of the qualities upper class citizens desired, including brand new goods from London that embodied “beauty and elegance,” both highly desirable to this group. To emphasize the refinement of their shows they

ensured that “ladies and gentlemen may depend on being entertain’d in as polite a manner as at the theatres in London, company being perfect in all the best plays, opera’s, farces, and pantomimes, that have been exhibited in any of the theatres for these ten years past.”<sup>195</sup>

Many of the company’s advertisements mirrored those for polite entertainments found in London – a connection the city’s genteel would not miss. This ensured customers that the shows performed were both acceptable for their social class, and that a portion of the audience consisted of their peers, preventing them from mingling with the lower sorts. Even the new and rich sets and costumes were designed by “the best hands in London,” automatically making them fashionable, and therefore desirable, in the eyes of Williamsburg’s elites. By importing not only the newest European music and plays to Virginia, but also the latest and most tasteful fashions, the Company of Comedians offered a venue where citizens could pretend they were indeed in London, or at least participating in the exact same entertainments of the same caliber experienced in Europe. The sights and sounds of these plays fully immersed customers in the world in which they wished to live.

After traveling overland from Yorktown to Williamsburg, Lewis Hallam likely rented one house for the troupe’s residence, as he later did while living in New York. Though the general public likely anticipated the company’s appearance, some government leaders in Williamsburg, Governor Robert Dinwiddie in particular, expressed concern. The previous group, the Murray-Kean Company, had gotten into trouble in the colony for “loose behaviour” and “the disturbance they had like to have occasioned in private families.”<sup>196</sup> In a letter to a friend and member of the Virginia Assembly, Dr. George Gilmer of Williamsburg wrote that due to the Assembly’s failure to pass an act “suppressing ordinaries and players,” Governor Dinwiddie and his Council wrote an order that “no player should act here; which is likely to prove the utter ruin

of a set of idle wretches.” Referring to Hallam’s Company of Comedians, Gilmer estimated the governor’s order would cost the troupe £1000 in lost revenue and other expenses.<sup>197</sup> The Governor’s Council wrote the order “to prevent unlawful playing of interludes” within two miles of Williamsburg, though luckily for Hallam the House of Burgesses rejected the council’s proposal.<sup>198</sup> As a result, Hallam’s players arrived to find some in town keeping them under a watchful eye.

The company still needed the governor’s permission to put on their shows, and though Dinwiddie initially rejected the petition, Hallam and his actors continued to prepare for their debut. The first step was to purchase the theater used by the Murray-Kean Company on the east side of Williamsburg. Hallam paid Alexander Finnie £150 for the building, as Finnie planned on also selling the Raleigh Tavern and heading to England. According to historian Hugh F. Rankin, despite having a gallery, boxes, and a pit, the second theater in town at this point was “little more than an empty barn-like structure” with poor acoustics.<sup>199</sup> The inadequate construction distorted speaking and singing voices, permitting only those patrons closest to the stage to understand the dialogue or lyrics. Though the theater was located just to the east of the capitol building, Williamsburg was small enough at the time that the building bordered the forest, close enough that years later, according to Lewis Hallam Jr., the actors shot wild game “from the doors and windows of the playhouse.”<sup>200</sup>

Despite these obstacles, Lewis Hallam and his company slogged on with their renovations and preparations for their first upcoming performance as the theater needed to reflect the refined ambiance they had advertised for their patrons. By the time of their opening night the *Gazette* reported that the troupe had “altered the play-house at Williamsburg to a regular theatre, fit for the reception of ladies and gentlemen, and the execution of their own performances.”<sup>201</sup> In

addition to upgrades to the boxes, pit, and gallery sections, a balcony had also been added for wealthier customers to get a better view of the stage and pay higher ticket prices for the luxury of being further separated from those of the lower sorts whose seats remained closer to the stage. Williamsburg's elite would not have wanted to associate with those considered beneath them by sharing a physical space, as their social status partially stemmed from their ability to physically and financially distance themselves from those they considered below them in rank. More expensive ticket prices would have been a small price to pay for this necessary geographic separation.

Even though we lack the specifications for Hallam's renovations, we can surmise the interior layout of the second Williamsburg playhouse based on other eighteenth-century theaters. Though lacking financial accounts, Hallam must have invested a significant amount of money into the local economy upgrading the theater to the modern London standards patrons expected. Props and scenery would probably have been rather crude by modern standards, but considering the dim lighting from multiple chandeliers holding whale-derived spermaceti candles, called hoops, providing the primary illumination on the stage, few would have noticed the difference between high- and low-quality scenery. These candles were less likely to run and drip, thereby preventing costumes from being ruined by wax falling from the ceiling. Sconces on the walls held additional candles made of tallow, which had a tendency to drip and run down onto the floor, providing lighting for audience members. The stage would have been slightly sloped and about five feet off the ground, with its edge lined with iron spikes, most likely to keep audience members a safe distance from the performers. Patron comfort received little consideration, as the primary goal was to squeeze as many customers as possible into the playhouse. Those in the pit and gallery seats sat on narrow benches, and metal spikes topped short walls to separate those

lower status patrons from the upper class attendees who would most likely be utilizing the box seats ringing the edge of the building, safely separated from their inferiors.<sup>202</sup> As Hallam's Company of Comedians' premiere date approached, and after finally obtaining Governor Dinwiddie's permission to perform, *Virginia Gazette* ads encouraged the ladies of Williamsburg to purchase their tickets early "for their places in the boxes," and make sure to send their servants to the theater early to save their seats "in order to prevent trouble and disappointment."<sup>203</sup>

On September 15 the Company held their first performance at the second Williamsburg playhouse, performing *The Merchant of Venice*, touted as "Written by Shakespear," as well as a farce called *The Anatomist; or, Sham Doctor*. Lewis Hallam performed the role of "Launcelot" while his wife Sarah played the role of Portia. While advertised as a play with multiple speaking roles, these types of productions also integrated a large amount of music, and the *Virginia Gazette* ad listed a Mr. Adcock in the role of Lorenzo "(with songs in character)."<sup>204</sup> It was common to see advertisements for playhouse shows listing various actors or actresses as having singing roles during the show. Colonial audiences would have expected music to be a large part of these performances, and the actors made sure to be at least passable singers to keep viewers happy, and this was especially important for those in leading roles.<sup>205</sup>

An emphasis on quality singing led to several surprising strategies in theatrical troupes like Hallam's. For example, there were instances where certain actors not up to the task of singing their parts could go off stage in order to be replaced by a fellow actor with more skill. At other times a play itself might call for a servant or other sidekick to the main actors to take on the singing roles, as these could then be filled by lesser known but more gifted performers. At times a play's dialogue might explicitly reflect this strategy, having the actor apologize for his singing voice, explaining he had a cold or was having an off day, justifying his lousy performance to the



audience.<sup>206</sup> The leading musician in the town hosting the theatrical troupe generally performed with the group during their performances, and as mentioned in the previous chapter Peter Pelham, eventual organist at Bruton Parish Church, played during Williamsburg's first production of *The Beggar's Opera* in 1768. Though the musician playing with Lewis Hallam's debut is not specifically mentioned in any sources, it was likely Cuthbert Ogle, he of the extensive printed music collection, who played harpsichord to assist the actors in their singing. It is also possible, as Rankin speculates, that music master John Singleton, while not playing the role of Gratiano in the play, joined Ogle on the violin to add to the spectacle.<sup>207</sup> Integrating local music masters into their performances provided yet another source of revenue to local musicians forced to work secondary jobs in order to survive – but these choices by troupes also reflected the fact that in a region as small as Williamsburg, they had little other choice.

*The Merchant of Venice* was a smashing success according to the editors of the *Virginia Gazette*, performed “before a numerous and polite audience” and followed by “great applause.”<sup>208</sup> It had not taken long for Lewis Hallam to capture the attention, and pocketbooks, of Williamsburg's citizens. The theater filled with large crowds three nights a week, and when Virginia's General Court was in session the troupe sometimes made upwards of £300 per performance, or the equivalent of over £25,000 per night in today's terms.<sup>209</sup> These rather substantial sums exemplified the costs associated with Virginians' Anglicization. One could not simply become genteel, but had to spend significant amounts of money acquiring the goods or experiencing the entertainments of Britain's gentility, even if it led to growing debts; the social prestige far outweighed any financial distress someone may experience.

Hallam's successful business venture lasted for eleven months in Williamsburg, before finally relocating the company to New York in 1753.<sup>210</sup> News of the plays performed must have

spread by word of mouth through the town, or perhaps handed out as leaflets to individuals in the city, because the only other play advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* during the company's time in Williamsburg was *Othello*, attended by the "emperor and empress of the Cherokee nation," who (as discussed in Chapter 1) assumed the fighting on stage was real.<sup>211</sup>

A typical crowd at an eighteenth-century theater displayed an interesting mixture of various social statuses and behaviors. The desired audience, and coincidentally those with the most money who could afford the highest ticket prices, consisted of those "ladies and gentlemen" who generally purchased box seats separated from other areas of the theater. These genteel citizens were perfectly aware that by spending their money on theatrical performances, many seen only recently in Europe, they thereby associated themselves with the entertainments of their English brethren they so desperately wished to emulate. Below these citizens in the pit and gallery area of the theater the crowd represented a different social world entirely.

It was not uncommon for rowdy lower status ticketholders in the pit and gallery areas to engage in drunken gambling and prostitution during a performance, activities perhaps encouraged by the smoking and drinking allowed in the playhouse. This rowdiness often led to members of the audience interacting directly with audience performers on stage, even hurling bottles at actors and musicians. Drunken observers also shouted at performers, either to criticize their singing and acting abilities or demand encores. Sometimes these demands would even be made during dialogue or other songs that were being performed.<sup>212</sup> It is not hard to imagine then why the genteel desired to separate themselves from this rabble. Safely enclosed in their box seats where they could absorb the culture of the performance in relative peace, they mingled with their peers while safely ignoring the lowbrow antics of the lower sorts literally and figuratively beneath them.



“The Laughing Audience” by William Hogarth, 1733. This painting shows a typical eighteenth-century theater scene in Britain. The wealthier patrons are behaving politely (if lasciviously) in the upper box seats, safely removed from the lower sorts who are demonstrating their uncouthness with broad emotions. Metal spikes separate the rabble from the musicians as they had a tendency to get rowdy during performances. It would have been common to see spikes lining the box seats as well.<sup>213</sup>

During the eleven months of thrice weekly plays, this eclectic combination of Williamsburg’s citizens experienced a multitude of various theatrical entertainments performed by the Company of Comedians. An evening at the theater provided attendees with a mixture of theatrical acts, singing, dancing, or even acrobatic maneuvers. The sheer variety of acts available to audiences guaranteed they did not grow bored by repeated viewings, thereby encouraging return patrons and additional ticket revenue. It was certainly possible the crowd could grow restless as shows usually contained two individual performances lasting between two and five hours total.<sup>214</sup>

By far the most popular forms of entertainment audiences would have experienced in the latter half of the eighteenth century were ballad operas.<sup>215</sup> As described by historian Ron Byrnside, these acts differed from modern operas, instead sharing similarities to current Broadway musicals, with a mixture of solo songs, some simple and some more elaborate, duets or group songs, dances, musical performances, and spoken dialogue.<sup>216</sup> In the early 1750s while Hallam's company resided in Williamsburg, one of the favorite acts performed at the theater involved the singing of ballads.

Several types of vocal music eventually made their way from various parts of Europe to America, but the oldest was probably the ballad. Hundreds of these types of songs circulated through Britain around the time emigration began in earnest in the 1600s. Some of these songs dealt with actual historical events, others believed to have been based off true events were unconfirmed, and some simply told the stories of fictional characters.<sup>217</sup> All of the ballads appeared in English, generally written simply as text without accompanying music. It was generally accepted that a written ballad would be set to one of several popular tunes commonly known at the time of publication. Even after the 1760s it was rare for music to be written specifically to accompany a ballad.<sup>218</sup> Being written in English and set to common, well-known music added a level of accessibility to songs performed in the theater, encouraging Williamsburg patrons to attend as they could easily relate to the pieces heard during shows.

Many ballads were distributed through the use of broadsides, large single sheets containing news, song lyrics, or advertisements and commonly found on street corners in colonial cities. Ballad texts were frequently sold on broadsides, and the person hawking the sheets was often a singer, attracting the attention of customers by singing some of the ballads he was selling. Some of the ballads sold in this manner were written by writers or journalists with a

keen ear for what appealed to the populace at the time the songs were written, while others were traditional ballads known to many people through frequent exposure over the years. The distributed ballads were “traditionally sung by a single unaccompanied voice” and were sometimes performed at home for family and friends. Other times these ballads would be performed in commercial venues such as the Williamsburg theater, where in 1768, for example, audiences experienced the song “My Heart was so free” from *The Beggar’s Opera*.<sup>219</sup> During the performance the singer was supposed to remain detached from the emotions of the song, telling a story in a detached manner. The performer would close her eyes, raise her head, and maintain a neutral facial expression, not smiling, laughing, frowning or crying. When the song finished, a short pause would follow, whereupon the singer would relax and repeat either the last line of the ballad or the song’s title.

Though earning substantial amounts of money performing ballad operas and other acts in Virginia, Hallam’s Company of Comedians also repeated some of the mistakes of the Murray-Kean Company before them. By the time the troupe left Williamsburg for New York, actors William Rigby, Charles Bell, John Singleton, and William Adcock owed large unpaid debts to local merchants. Although some debt was to be expected when members of traveling theatrical groups remained for some time in one location, during which a certain financial exchange developed, near the end of their stay these debts proved troubling. With their expensive lifestyles (some of the debts belonged to wig maker Edward Charlton), the actors frequently spent far more money than they had earned. Forced to decide between letting his actors serve time in a debtors’ prison and dissolve his troupe, or paying off the debts of his employees, Lewis Hallam chose to deed the second Williamsburg playhouse as collateral to settle their debts. If the actors did not pay back what they owed by October 10, 1753, he would lose possession of the theater.

Unfortunately for him, not a single actor repaid their debts, and the playhouse once again changed hands.<sup>220</sup> The actions of the Hallam troupe epitomized the problems associated with the Williamsburg theater. Desiring to raise their social status and partaking in the easy credit system that existed in the colonies, various actors accumulated large amounts of debt that would most likely never be repaid, forcing benefactors like Hallam to compromise not only the troupe, but the physical theater itself in an attempt to free them from their indebtedness.

During the years following the London Company of Comedians' departure the second playhouse sat unoccupied by theatrical troupes for long stretches; no theater performances were advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* until 1768. Sources suggest that similar to the first theater, however, it is likely various parties utilized the structure for gatherings, plays, or concerts even if they did not formally advertise the events during that fourteen year stretch. During the General Court in October 1755, for example, a mechanical contraption designed by Henry Bridges of London was displayed in the Williamsburg theater, variously referred to as the "Piece of Mechanism, The Microcosm, or The World in Miniature." This device consisted of a multitude of moving parts, many of which incorporated an array of musical works. According to its description in the paper, "the inward contents are as judiciously adapted to gratify the ear...for it plays with great exactness several fine pieces of musick." Also on the machine were "the nine muses playing in concert on divers musical instruments, as the harp, hautboy, bass viol, &c," plus "Orpheus in the forest, playing on his lyre, and beating exact time to each tune; who, by his exquisite harmony, charms even the wild beasts." When the entire machine was in operation "upwards of twelve hundred wheels and pinnions are in motion at once; and during the whole performance it plays several fine pieces of music, on the organ and other instruments, both single and in concert, in a very elegant manner."<sup>221</sup> Tickets could be purchased to see this marvelous

contraption for five shillings, or half that for children. Though overall ticket sales are unknown, considering the dearth of professional musical entertainment at this time in Williamsburg, it is conceivable there was much anticipation for this display and many citizens would have gladly paid the admission price.

Lewis Hallam Sr. never returned to Williamsburg, as after touring America the company relocated to Jamaica where he died. While living in that country his widow Sarah married David Douglass, who reorganized the company and returned to the colonies in 1758.<sup>222</sup> Still billing themselves as “A Company of Comedians from London,” or the Douglass Company, only four of the original troupe members remained, including Sarah Hallam, her two sons Lewis Jr. and Adam Hallam, and Mrs. Charles Love.<sup>223</sup> Sometime before October 1760 the traveling company had returned to Williamsburg when local merchant William Allason purchased two tickets to a performance, presumably held at the playhouse. Curiously the *Virginia Gazette* made no mention of this performance, nor did it offer editorial comments following the show. Historian Hugh Rankin speculates either the town was so crowded due to the General Courts that advertising was unnecessary, or the company was struggling financially and could not afford to take out any advertisements.<sup>224</sup>

It appears that during the troupe’s time in the city their behavior exceeded that of the previous theater groups, as Governor Fauquier, his council, and “near one hundred of the principal gentlemen of Virginia” wrote a letter vouching that Douglass’s group had made it a “constant practice to behave with prudence and discretion in their private character, and to use their utmost endeavours to give general satisfaction in their public capacity.”<sup>225</sup> Douglass’s Company of Comedians remained in Virginia from October 1760 until May 1761, though presumably the group did not just stay in Williamsburg, but toured other areas of the colony like

Fredericksburg and Norfolk. On October 8, 1760, while attending the General Assembly in Williamsburg, George Washington attended the theater on more than one occasion and noted in his ledger that he had spent £7 11s 3d to “By Play Tickets at Sundry times.”<sup>226</sup> He also purchased “Play Tickets in March” of the following year for £2 7s 6d while the Douglass Company was back in town.<sup>227</sup> Armed with the document from Governor Fauquier the new Company of Comedians headed for New York, and the citizens of Williamsburg were once again left without a resident theater troupe.

Sometime in early 1763 the company returned for a brief stint in Virginia. Since the group once again took out no ads in the *Virginia Gazette*, the primary source of information on their whereabouts at this time comes from George Washington’s ledger, in which he records the purchase of play tickets in April and May for multiple theater performances. Unfortunately he does not record the specific plays he saw, just that he bought the tickets amounting to £2 1s 3d over five shows.<sup>228</sup> By the fall of that year Douglass’s company again left Williamsburg and renamed itself the American Company. This troupe did not return to the town until 1770, by which time a competing theatrical company had arrived on the scene, and the second playhouse was entering its final years of use.

The years between 1763 and 1768 represented a comparatively stark time for the theater in Williamsburg, perhaps reflective of the broader economic depression that hit the colonies following the Seven Years’ War. The playhouse, for the most part, sat empty and had no official performances. To entertain themselves citizens had to rely on the balls and dances frequently held in town, or listened to gentlemen amateurs give concerts in local plantation houses or taverns frequented by the genteel. In January 1767 William Verling, a former member of the American Company, arrived in Williamsburg and put on two performances of the “celebrated



*Lecture on Heads*, so much admired and applauded by all who have heard it performed” at 6 p.m. “in the great room of the Rawleigh Tavern.”<sup>229</sup> This was a one-man play popular in the colonies at the time, and its production strongly implies Verling was the only member of the company in town, as otherwise he presumably would have teamed up with fellow actors for performances.

Then in March 1768 a simple statement in the *Virginia Gazette* notified the public that for the first time in almost five years, “On Thursday next the theatre here will be opened.”<sup>230</sup> By this time the paper had taken to referring to the playhouse as “the old theatre,” as it was nearing fifteen years old. A newly formed theater troupe calling themselves the Virginia Company of Comedians and led by William Verling utilized the structure. With the permission of “the worshipful...mayor of Williamsburg” George Wythe, the first play performed at the theater on Monday, April 4 was *Douglas*, followed by a farce called *The Honest Yorkshireman*. Specifically advertised in the *Virginia Gazette* and highlighted as part of the show was “a dance by Mr. Godwin.”<sup>231</sup>

The following month the company went on the stage again “at the old theatre, near the capitol,” this time with a dizzying array of performances crammed into one show. The primary piece was a comedy entitled *The Constant Couple; or A Trip to the Jubilee*. Between the first and second act “a prologue, in the character of a country boy, by Mr. Parker” took place. Following the second act “The Coopers” performed a dance, and sang a cantata and minuet following the third and fifth acts, respectively. Following the play Mr. Godwin played a hornpipe, followed by yet another piece, this time a farce called *The Miller of Mansfield*.<sup>232</sup> Considering the numerous displays of talent during a single night’s entertainment, we can assume those purchasing tickets got their money’s worth.

By permission of the Worshipful the MAYOR of *Williamsburg*,  
 At the old Theatre, near the Capitol,  
 By the VIRGINIA COMPANY of COMEDIANS,  
 On Friday the 8th of *April* will be presented a TRAGEDY,  
 C A L L E D

**VENICE Preserved,**  
 O R A  
**Plot Discovered.**

DUKE, PRIULI, JAFFEIR, PIERRE, BEDAMAR, RENAULT, ELIOT,	} by	Mr. CHARLTON. Mr. BROMADGE. Mr. GODWIN. Mr. VERLING. Mr. BROMADGE. Mr. PARKER. Mr. WALKER.
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BELVIDERA, by Mrs. OSBORNE.

To which will be added a ballad OPERA, called

**Damon and Phillida.**

ARCAS, CORYDON, DAMON, CYMON, MOPSUS,	} by	Mr. BROMADGE. Mr. GODWIN. Mrs. OSBORNE. Mr. PARKER. Mr. VERLING.
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PHILLIDA, by Mrs. PARKER.

Tickets to be had of Mr. *William Russell*, at his store next door  
 to the Post Office, and at the door of the Theatre.  
 The doors to be opened at six, and the play to begin at seven  
 o'clock precisely.  
 BOXES 7 s. 6 d. PIT 5 s. GALLERY 3 s. 9 d.  
*Vivant Rex & Regina.*

N. B. No person whatever can be admitted behind the scenes.

An example of the type of advertisement one would see in the *Virginia Gazette* for a Virginia Company of Comedians performance at the “old theatre” on April 8, 1768.<sup>233</sup>

Between March and June of that year Verling’s company put on numerous plays, dances, and songs at the Williamsburg playhouse, to the delight of those in town who had not seen these types of performances in years. As was his habit, George Washington attended some of these shows, apparently taking a group of individuals on May 2 consisting of “Colo. Bassett Colo. Lewis and Mr. Dick.” Altogether Washington spent £1 7s 6d for this group to attend the theater, and apparently was pleased enough with the performances to attend again on May 5<sup>th</sup>.<sup>234</sup> Thomas Jefferson also attended the May 2 performance, paying five shillings for a ticket and returning for the May 6 show.<sup>235</sup> As a prominent citizen of Virginia, Washington’s appearance at the theater surely added to the respectability of any performances he attended, further increasing ticket sales. The Virginia Company of Comedians left Williamsburg in June 1768 in dramatic

fashion, for some of the actors apparently aided the escape of a slave named Nanny who had “gone off with some of the comedians who have just left this town.”<sup>236</sup>

Verling’s troupe disbanded the following year and most likely never returned to Williamsburg.<sup>237</sup> Over the next three years David Douglass’s American Company visited town, usually during the fall court sessions, performing on numerous occasions, and it was during this time period that Hudson Muse wrote to his brother that he attended the playhouse eleven times in eleven days. The final theatrical performance by any theater company in Williamsburg was *The Fashionable Lover*, taking place sometime in May 1772. The *Virginia Gazette* touted the “industry of the American Company” for this show as the paper claimed this play had only been so far performed in London for not “above ten days.”<sup>238</sup> Before being abandoned for good, one final theatrical act utilized the playhouse in November 1772. A Mr. Gardiner used the theater to demonstrate “a magnificent piece of machinery” with sea monsters, ships, forts, and armies, all accompanied by music. At the end of this “Mr. Gardiner will extend himself between two chairs, and suffer any of the company to break a stone of two hundred weight on his bare breast.” Separating these two rather bizarre shows was “instrumental music, consisting of French horns and trumpets.”<sup>239</sup>

Altogether the various theatrical companies that visited the Williamsburg playhouses performed approximately one hundred plays, ballad operas, and comic operas, according to extant evidence. From these plays, however, historian John Molnar estimates “about two hundred songs...were performed during the action or between the acts” of these plays.<sup>240</sup> The theatrical scene in Williamsburg never again rose to the level of popularity it had in the twenty years starting in 1752. By 1774 Virginians had a potential conflict with Britain on their minds, and entertainment was not high on their list of priorities. In fact, not only did Americans lose

interest in the theater, but they became actively hostile towards it. As historian Ann Withington argues, “Americans expelled the theater, which was run by English actors and produced English plays.” The Continental Congress even “banned the theater as a menace to the common cause of colonial resistance.”<sup>241</sup> At this point the Williamsburg theater had drawn its final curtain.

Theatrical performances in Williamsburg represented the pinnacle of musical commerce in the eighteenth century. As disposable income grew in the 1700s, a wave of Anglicization swept over Virginia’s elite citizens such that becoming more British – in one’s personal appearance, belongings, and cultural activities – became the ultimate sign of refinement in the colony. The genteel of the city wanted to experience the same kinds of music and theater enjoyed by the British. Purchasing tickets to shows in Williamsburg that had only recently appeared in London allowed them to feel closer to those they admired and less rustic. Performances put on at the playhouses in town also provided a venue for those citizens of the lower social ranks to experience music in a way they had never been able to in the past. Before the construction of these buildings, most large-scale musical performances were held at plantation manors or taverns frequented by the elite, with no potential access for the less well-off. As the century progressed, increasing numbers of individuals had disposable income to spend on these performances, and groups formed specifically to sell tickets to those willing to part with their money in exchange for a night of entertainment in town. These groups integrated music, instruments, and singing, all of which came almost exclusively from Europe and all pastimes of the upper class, into their theatrical shows. Ticket sales for the numerous performances held over an almost sixty year span helped to expand and diversify musical commerce in Williamsburg and created a new marketplace for theatrical entertainment, until political conflicts with Britain abruptly brought its expansion to an end. The theater allowed the elite citizens of Williamsburg to immerse

themselves in the musical culture of Europe, bringing them closer to the British lifestyles they desired.

## Conclusion

When William Levingston acquired permission to build the first Williamsburg playhouse, he unknowingly helped to inaugurate a period of commercial growth and expansion for the burgeoning music industry in the region. Before the eighteenth century Virginians spent little supplemental income on frivolities, dedicating a majority of their time to acquiring land or simply surviving. Starting in the early eighteenth century, however, rising incomes and leisure time enabled elite citizens to join the growing consumer revolution and embrace lifestyles dedicated to genteel pursuits already fashionable in London and elsewhere in Europe.

As we have seen, music played a major role in Virginians' efforts at refinement, which few historians have previously noted. In their willingness to engage in musical entertainments, Virginia's elite also demonstrated how the identities of one social group might be articulated and formed in part by the culture they pursued. Eager to avoid being perceived as country bumpkins, Williamsburg's upper crust strove to adopt the fashions, material goods, lifestyles, and entertainments enjoyed across the Atlantic. Musical pursuits represented one of the cultural necessities gentility required in the 1700s. Gentlemen and ladies needed to know the proper dance steps for a multitude of dances, knowing when they attended increasingly elaborate balls in Williamsburg or at plantation homes their peers evaluated every misstep and gaffe. European dancing masters taught ambitious elites the proper steps, in addition to genteel bearing and mannerisms in everyday life. Aspiring musicians hired music masters to teach lessons, fully aware that gentility required playing an instrument or singing, often during concerts for which they must never be paid like a common laborer. Because of this social necessity, imports of instruments and music books increased during the century to accommodate Virginians' growing demand. Finally, the Williamsburg theater provided access to Europe's most recent and

fashionable music and entertainments, further narrowing the cultural gap between Londoners and Virginians. By increasingly adopting genteel lifestyles, Williamsburg's elites ushered in a new era of successful musical commerce during the eighteenth century. To appease their ever-growing desire for musical, cultured entertainment, Williamsburg's elite spent increasingly large amounts of money in their efforts to become refined. These accumulated debts reached an untenable level by the beginning of the American Revolution.

By the beginning of the Revolution many Virginians had successfully achieved gentrified status via musical commerce, even as their pursuit of Anglicization created complications the Continental Congress needed to resolve. By 1775 Americans increasingly relied on British goods to support their commerce-based genteel lifestyles. As the schism between Britain and the colonies grew, some Americans increasingly demonized anything associated with English gentility, including the theater and other musical activities. Congress's ban on the theater "as a menace to the common cause of colonial resistance" shows some believed British-style musical entertainments threatened the colonies' fragile alliance by generating longing for a lifestyle impossible to maintain during potential hostilities. Surely many of Williamsburg's elite citizens struggled with the contradiction of rejecting British monarchical rule while simultaneously craving their enemies' culture and lifestyles. Despite this conflict, the closing of the Williamsburg theater demonstrates elites ultimately chose rebellion over British-style gentility, ending one chapter of Virginia's musical history.

When I began this project I determined that one important aspect of Virginia's pre-Revolutionary musical history had not yet been told; yet as I complete it I recognize the ways in which the Revolution looms by the end. Although I have not addressed it here, I hope in subsequent work to answer questions about Americans' views of imported music, musical

education as vital to new citizens, the new post-Revolutionary theater, and the rise of home-grown musical compositions. Most of all I hope to understand more clearly how a new musical industry emerged following the Revolution, one less reliant on eighteenth-century gentrification and Anglicization, and perhaps more focused on American-based patriotic music celebrating the newly formed country.



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- <sup>1</sup> Richard L. Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1992).
- <sup>2</sup> T.H. Breen. *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).
- <sup>3</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 22 October 1767.
- <sup>4</sup> "Diary of Col. Landon Carter," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 13, no. 3 (Jan 1905): 159.
- <sup>5</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 24 January 1752.
- <sup>6</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 153.
- <sup>7</sup> Hugh F. Rankin, *The Theater in Colonial America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), 143.
- <sup>8</sup> M. Dorothy George, *London Life in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century* (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965), 24.
- <sup>9</sup> *Travels Through the Middle Settlements in North America in the Years 1759 and 1760; With Observations Upon the State of the Colonies by the Rev. Andrew Burnaby, Archdeacon of Leicester and Vicar of Greenwich* (London: Printed for T. Payne, at the Mews-Gate, 1798), 5-6. Burnaby is referring to the modern Duke of Gloucester Street.
- <sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>11</sup> Hugh Jones, *The Present State of Virginia* (New York: Reprinted for Joseph Sabin, 1865. Originally published 1724), 31.
- <sup>12</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 11 September 1746.
- <sup>13</sup> Mary Newton Stanard, *Colonial Virginia: Its People and Customs* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1917), 241.
- <sup>14</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 17 November 1752. See also Rankin, 57.
- <sup>15</sup> Helen Cripe, *Thomas Jefferson and Music* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 14, 44.
- <sup>16</sup> Ronald L. Davis, *A History of Music in American Life, vol. 1: The Formative Years, 1620-1865* (Florida: Robert Krieger Publishing Company, 1982), 47.
- <sup>17</sup> Daniel Mendoza de Arce, *Music in North America and the West Indies from the Discovery to 1850* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 134-35.
- <sup>18</sup> Louis B. Wright, *The Cultural Life of the American Colonies 1607-1763* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957), 188.
- <sup>19</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 5 November 1736.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 13 June 1755. George, Prince of Wales, would of course become King George III in 1760 and became famous for his role in the American Revolution.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 November 1755.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 June 1766.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 20 June 1766.
- <sup>24</sup> "Proceedings of the Visitors of the William and Mary College, 1716," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 4, no. 2 (Oct 1896): 169.
- <sup>25</sup> Hugh Jones, *Virginia*, 87.
- <sup>26</sup> Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 81.
- <sup>27</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 61.
- <sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.
- <sup>29</sup> Gilbert Chase, *America's Music: From the Pilgrims to the Present, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 73.
- <sup>30</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 29 January 1767.
- <sup>31</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 31.
- <sup>32</sup> Chase, *America's Music*, 73.
- <sup>33</sup> Hunter Dickinson Farish, ed., *Journal & Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774: A Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: Dominion Books, 1968), 212.
- <sup>34</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 44.
- <sup>35</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 43.
- <sup>36</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 44.
- <sup>37</sup> Isaac, *Transformation*, 86.
- <sup>38</sup> Carter, quoted in *ibid.*, 49. Carter was concerned Judy would become ill from dancing in the heat as it was her "Lunar period."
- <sup>39</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 220.

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- <sup>40</sup>Ibid, 48.
- <sup>41</sup>*Virginia Gazette*, 27 March 1752.
- <sup>42</sup>Bushman, *Refinement*, 47.
- <sup>43</sup>Ibid, 166.
- <sup>44</sup>Ibid, 185.
- <sup>45</sup>Mendoza, *North America*, 26.
- <sup>46</sup>Bushman, *Refinement*, 164.
- <sup>47</sup>Ibid, 5.
- <sup>48</sup>Ibid, 15.
- <sup>49</sup>Ibid, 16.
- <sup>50</sup>*Virginia Gazette*, 20 September 1770.
- <sup>51</sup>Farish, *Fithian*, XXI.
- <sup>52</sup>*Virginia Gazette*, 28 September 1769. The queen referenced in this quote was the wife of King George III, Charlotte of Mecklenburg-Strelitz.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid, 14 March 1751. 60,000 French livres was valued at approximately 4500 pounds, or 383,000 pounds in today's currency.
- <sup>54</sup>Ibid, 8 August 1751.
- <sup>55</sup>Ibid, 15 May 1752.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid, 21 August 1752; 15 September 1752.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid, 2 May 1766.
- <sup>58</sup> Breen. *Marketplace*, 38.
- <sup>59</sup>Ibid, 61.
- <sup>60</sup>Ibid, 60.
- <sup>61</sup>Ibid, 52.
- <sup>62</sup>Ibid, 61.
- <sup>63</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 44.
- <sup>64</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 43-44.
- <sup>65</sup> Lyon G. Tyler, "Diary of John Blair," *William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 7, no. 3 (Jan 1899): 135.
- <sup>66</sup>Farish, *Fithian*, 88-90.
- <sup>67</sup>"A Musical Gathering." Artist unknown. c. 18<sup>th</sup> century. This painting most likely originated in the colonies. Source information found in Mendoza, *North America*, 133.
- <sup>68</sup>Ibid, 43.
- <sup>69</sup>Cripe, *Jefferson*, 12.
- <sup>70</sup>*Virginia Gazette*, 7 October 1737.
- <sup>71</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 43.
- <sup>72</sup> Henry S. Randall, *The Life of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1858), 1:132.
- <sup>73</sup> Julian P. Boyd et al, eds, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950), 1:8.
- <sup>74</sup>Cripe, *Jefferson*, 15.
- <sup>75</sup>Chase, *America's Music*, 68. See also: Charles Hamm, *Music in the New World* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1983), 123.
- <sup>76</sup> Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 140.
- <sup>77</sup>Farish, *Fithian*, 82.
- <sup>78</sup>*The Journal of Nicholas Cresswell, 1774-1777* (New York: Kennikat Press Inc, 1968), 30.
- <sup>79</sup>Farish, *Fithian*, 57, 68.
- <sup>80</sup>Cripe, *Jefferson*, 42.
- <sup>81</sup>Cripe, *Jefferson*, 65. Cripe notes Jefferson was never satisfied with these instruments as they were, instead desiring to have them personally modified to fit his meticulous musical tastes.
- <sup>82</sup>Chase, *America's Music*, 94.
- <sup>83</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 152.
- <sup>84</sup> John W. Molnar, *Songs from the Williamsburg Theatre* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), xviii.

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- <sup>85</sup> Ron Byrnside, *Music in Eighteenth-Century Georgia* (Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1997), 11.
- <sup>86</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 8 January 1767.
- <sup>87</sup> Albert Stoutamire, *A History of Music in Richmond, Virginia from 1742 to 1865* (PhD diss, Florida State University, 1960), 20.
- <sup>88</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 44. See also *Virginia Gazette*, 6 August 1767.
- <sup>89</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 18 January 1770.
- <sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 May 1773. This item was listed at 22 pounds, or approximately 1400 pounds in today's money.
- <sup>91</sup> Maurer Maurer, "The Library of a Colonial Musician, 1755," *The William and Mary Quarterly* vol. 7, no. 1 (Jan 1950): 50.
- <sup>92</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 29 August 1771.
- <sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 3 December 1772.
- <sup>94</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 143.
- <sup>95</sup> Breen, *Marketplace*, 55.
- <sup>96</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 7 October 1737. See also 9 December 1737.
- <sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>98</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 44.
- <sup>99</sup> Boyd, *Jefferson*, 1:12-13.
- <sup>100</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 163.
- <sup>101</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 29 December 1774.
- <sup>102</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 45-46.
- <sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>104</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 105.
- <sup>105</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 12 June 1752.
- <sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 March 1755.
- <sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, 16 May 1771.
- <sup>108</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, xviii.
- <sup>109</sup> Cripe, *Jefferson*, 6.
- <sup>110</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 20.
- <sup>111</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 47.
- <sup>112</sup> Cripe, *Jefferson*, 6.
- <sup>113</sup> Arthur C. Edwards and W. Thomas Marrocco, *Music in the United States* (Iowa: WM C. Brown Company, 1968), 13.
- <sup>114</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 47.
- <sup>115</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 20.
- <sup>116</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 82-83.
- <sup>117</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 150.
- <sup>118</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 85.
- <sup>119</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 27 October 1768.
- <sup>120</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 28, 34, 37, 57, 110, 160.
- <sup>121</sup> Cripe, *Jefferson*, 7.
- <sup>122</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 11 December 1766.
- <sup>123</sup> Cripe, *Jefferson*, 7.
- <sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>125</sup> Byrnside, *Georgia*, 11.
- <sup>126</sup> Chase, *America's Music*, 66.
- <sup>127</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 131.
- <sup>128</sup> Richard Crawford, *America's Musical Life: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2001), 107.
- <sup>129</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 1 August 1755.
- <sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 July 1767.
- <sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 14 September 1769.
- <sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 27 March 1752.

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- <sup>133</sup> Ibid, 4 November 1773.
- <sup>134</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 67-69.
- <sup>135</sup> Joy Van Cleef and Kate Van Winkle Keller, "Selected American Country Dances and Their English Sources," in *Music in Colonial Massachusetts, 1630-1820, I: Music in Public Places, A Conference Held by the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, May 17 and 18, 1973* (Boston: The Colonial Society of Massachusetts, 1980), 11.
- <sup>136</sup> "A Kentucky Wedding" by Howard Pyle, 1882. Originally printed in Charles Carleton Coffin, *Building the Nation: Events in the History of the United States from the Revolution to the Beginning of the War Between the States* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883), 109-110.
- <sup>137</sup> Stanard, *Virginia*, 140.
- <sup>138</sup> 1755 letter of John Kello, as found in Charles M. Andrews, *Guide to the Materials for American History, to 1783, in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, vol. II* (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1914), 322.
- <sup>139</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 232.
- <sup>140</sup> Burnaby, *Travels*, 28.
- <sup>141</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 46.
- <sup>142</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 68.
- <sup>143</sup> Byrnside, *Georgia*, 32.
- <sup>144</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 25 November 1737.
- <sup>145</sup> Ibid, 20 March 1752.
- <sup>146</sup> Ibid, 16 May 1771.
- <sup>147</sup> Stanard, *Virginia*, 144.
- <sup>148</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 42 for reference to dancing lessons at Nomini Hall; Ibid, 68 for reference to the children attending dancing class in Stratford.
- <sup>149</sup> Ibid, 205.
- <sup>150</sup> Ibid, 44.
- <sup>151</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 64-65.
- <sup>152</sup> Davis, *History of Music*, 46.
- <sup>153</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 17.
- <sup>154</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 25 February 1737; 21 October 1737; 31 March 1738; 21 April 1738; 20 April 1739.
- <sup>155</sup> Ibid, 22 April 1737.
- <sup>156</sup> Ibid, 24 March 1738. See also 13 October, 1738. It is unknown what sorts of "grotesque dances" took place.
- <sup>157</sup> Ibid, 11 April 1751.
- <sup>158</sup> Ibid, 24 October 1751.
- <sup>159</sup> Ibid, 27 February 1752.
- <sup>160</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 44-45.
- <sup>161</sup> Ibid, 75.
- <sup>162</sup> Ibid, 63.
- <sup>163</sup> Ibid, 117.
- <sup>164</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 102, 146.
- <sup>165</sup> Farish, *Fithian*, 165.
- <sup>166</sup> Ibid, 69.
- <sup>167</sup> Ibid, 203-04.
- <sup>168</sup> Cresswell, *Journal*, 52-53.
- <sup>169</sup> Bushman, *Refinement*, 52-57.
- <sup>170</sup> Isaac, *Transformation*, 81, 84.
- <sup>171</sup> "Letter from Hudson Muse, of Virginia, to His Brother, Thomas Muse, of Dorchester Co., Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly* 2, no. 4 (April 1894): 240-41.
- <sup>172</sup> Unedited map courtesy of eWilliamsburg.
- <sup>173</sup> Hunter D. Farish, "The Playhouse (First Theater) Historical Report Block 29 Building 17B Lots 163, 164, 169," 1940, eWilliamsburg, [http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1583.xml&rm\\_id=RM00091](http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1583.xml&rm_id=RM00091). Levingston rented the site where the theater was eventually located,

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along with two other lots, for “Yearly one rent of one grain of Indian Corn,” with the Trustees of the city stipulating that he must build on each lot “one good dwelling house or houses of such dimensions.”

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, xiii.

<sup>176</sup> Farish, “Playhouse.” As the lots stayed in his possession, it would seem he completed his end of the bargain.

Additionally, in June 1718 Governor Spotswood wrote to the Board of Trade that to celebrate King George I’s birthday he had given “a publick entertainment at my house, all gent’n that would come were admitted.”

Unfortunately Spotswood was perturbed that eight counselors not only failed to attend his party due to a disagreement over funds spent on the governor’s palace, but also did not attend “the play w’ch was acted on that occasion.” Though not indicated, presumably this play would have been put on at Levingston’s playhouse, located almost immediately next to the governor’s residence. This letter also indicates how the genteel of Williamsburg valued theatrical and musical entertainments and integrated them into their celebrations, even early in the eighteenth century. What is known for certain, however, is that the theater was up and running by 1721, as Levingston mortgaged five lots, including his playhouse, to Archibald Blair for a period of five hundred years. See R.A. Brock, ed., *The Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1710-172*, vol. 1 (Virginia: Virginia Historical Society, 1882), 284 and Ann Morgan Smart, “The Playhouse Archeological Report Block 29 Building 17A,” 1986, *eWilliamsburg*,

[http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1589.xml&rm\\_id=RM00091](http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1589.xml&rm_id=RM00091).

<sup>177</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 14-15.

<sup>178</sup> Cripe, *Jefferson*, 15.

<sup>179</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 117.

<sup>180</sup> Smart, “Archeological Report.”

<sup>181</sup> Gregory A. Stiverson and Patrick H. Butler, III, eds., “Virginia in 1732: The Travel Journal of William Hugh Grove,” *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 85, no. 1 (January 1977), 26. Bowes’s identity is unknown, though Rankin speculates he may have been an employee of Archibald Blair, the owner of the playhouse when Grove visited. See Rankin, *Theater*, 16.

<sup>182</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 10 September 1736; Ibid, 17 September 1736.

<sup>183</sup> At this point it appears the residents of Williamsburg had not yet fully embraced the love of theater that would grip their society in the later years, as the only other known mention of the first playhouse was in 1745, when a notice indicated the structure was to become a new courthouse. See *Virginia Gazette*, 19 December 1745.

<sup>184</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, xiii.

<sup>185</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 29 August 1751.

<sup>186</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 37.

<sup>187</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 26 September 1751. Despite the announcement of the plays to be performed on opening night, rumors began to swirl throughout town that due to time restrictions on building the theater troupe would not be performing after all. John Blair, president of the Virginia Governor’s Council, wrote in his diary on October 6, “Hear ye actrs are dispersed presid will nt come.” See Tyler, “Diary of John Blair,” 147.

<sup>188</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 37.

<sup>189</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 17 October 1751.

<sup>190</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 37.

<sup>191</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 24 October 1751.

<sup>192</sup> Wright, 182. It was common for theatrical troupes to call themselves “Company of Comedians,” but rather than just being a specific title it was also intended to describe the talents of the performers. For example: A Company of Comedians from New York, A Company of Comedians from London, etc.

<sup>193</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 12 June 1752.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 50-51.

<sup>197</sup> Dr. George Gilmer to Dr. Thomas Walker, 30 June 1752, as quoted in Odai Johnson and William J. Burling, *The Colonial American Stage, 1665-1774: A Documentary Calendar* (London: Associated University Presses, 2001), 157.

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- <sup>198</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 51.
- <sup>199</sup> *Ibid*, 52.
- <sup>200</sup> *Ibid*.
- <sup>201</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 21 August 1752.
- <sup>202</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 52-54.
- <sup>203</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 21 August 1752. The date of the actual premier is an interesting piece of historical information. In the *Virginia Gazette* on August 21, 1752, Hallam listed the first performance date as the first Friday in September, or the 7<sup>th</sup>. Yet the following week on August 28 he curiously states the show will be held the following Friday, which would be the 7<sup>th</sup>, yet lists the actual date as September 15, 1752. Historian Hugh Rankin points out that while some historians have surmised this was a typographical error on the part of the *Virginia Gazette*, and that the performance of the first play was actually September 5, what actually occurred was in 1752 England and its English colonies switched from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. This meant Wednesday, September 2, 1752 was immediately followed by Thursday, September 14, completely omitting the days in-between. Though this switch was presumably a bit jarring to the citizens of Williamsburg, Hallam made no mention of any confusion in the ads he placed in the paper, so citizens must have been fairly well-informed that this leap was going to take place. See *Virginia Gazette* 28 August 1752; also Rankin, *Theater*, 54.
- <sup>204</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 28 August 1752.
- <sup>205</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 73.
- <sup>206</sup> *Ibid*, xvii.
- <sup>207</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 56.
- <sup>208</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 22 September 1752.
- <sup>209</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 56.
- <sup>210</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 89.
- <sup>211</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 17 November 1752. Another possibility is at the end of each performance one actor completed an act called "giving out the play" wherein they would perform a dance or other small entertainment and then announce the next show to the audience. In the London theater the crowd would even sometimes vote with "ayes and noes" for which play they wanted to see on the next night, though it is unknown whether this was practiced in Virginia. See Rankin, *Theater*, 89.
- <sup>212</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 90-91; see also Mendoza, *North America*, 121. It makes one wonder how the genteel sitting in the box seats reconciled their view of the theater as a genteel activity with the raucousness of the crowds below them.
- <sup>213</sup> "The Laughing Audience" by William Hogarth, 1733. This image originally appeared on a subscription ticket. Image taken from Jane Moody and Daniel O'Quinn, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730-1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 62.
- <sup>214</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 113.
- <sup>215</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 88.
- <sup>216</sup> Byrnside, *Georgia*, 48-49.
- <sup>217</sup> Hamm, *New World*, 48.
- <sup>218</sup> Mendoza, *North America*, 141.
- <sup>219</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, 20.
- <sup>220</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 58-59.
- <sup>221</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 29 August 1755.
- <sup>222</sup> Mary A. Stephenson, "Second Theatre Historical Report Block 7," 1946, *eWilliamsburg*, [http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1107.xml&rm\\_id=RM00049](http://research.history.org/ewilliamsburg/document.cfm?source=ResearchReports/XML/RR1107.xml&rm_id=RM00049)
- <sup>223</sup> Rankin, *Theater*, 74.
- <sup>224</sup> *Ibid*, 89.
- <sup>225</sup> Burling and Johnson, *American Stage*, 212. See also Rankin, *Theater*, 90-91.
- <sup>226</sup> W.W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 6, 4 September 1758-26 December 1760* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 465-66.

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- <sup>227</sup> W.W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series, vol. 7, 1 January 1761-15 June 1767* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 1-11. The group stayed in the Williamsburg area until at least May 14 of that year because leatherworker Alexander Craig sold Lewis Hallam Jr. a pair of shoes on that date. See Harold B. Gill Jr., "Leather Workers in Colonial Virginia," August 1966, *eWilliamsburg*, <http://research.history.org/DigitalLibrary/View/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0107.xml>
- <sup>228</sup> Burling and Johnson, *American Stage*, 231.
- <sup>229</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 8 January 1767.
- <sup>230</sup> *Ibid*, 17 March 1768.
- <sup>231</sup> *Ibid*, 31 March 1768.
- <sup>232</sup> *Ibid*, 12 May 1768.
- <sup>233</sup> *Ibid*, 7 April 1768.
- <sup>234</sup> Mary Stephenson, "Second Theatre Historical Report Block 7."
- <sup>235</sup> Bear and Stanton, *Jefferson's Memorandum Books*, 1:74-75.
- <sup>236</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 30 June 1768.
- <sup>237</sup> Burling and Johnson, *American Stage*, 354.
- <sup>238</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 7 May 1772. According to Burling and Johnson in *The Colonial American Stage*, this play had premiered in London January 20, 1772, making it four months old at its premiere in Williamsburg. See p. 403.
- <sup>239</sup> *Virginia Gazette*, 19 November 1772.
- <sup>240</sup> Molnar, *Theater*, ix.
- <sup>241</sup> Ann Fairfax Withington, *Toward A More Perfect Union: Virtue and the Formation of American Republics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 21-22.

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