

AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW HAVEN:
THE GOUNOD AND NEW HAVEN ORATORIO SOCIETIES

R. Andrew Clark, B.M.

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APPROVED:

Lester Brothers, Major Professor and Chair of the
Division of History, Theory and Ethnomusicology
Mark McKnight, Committee Member
Dale Peters, Committee Member
Thomas Clark, Dean of the College of Music
C. Neal Tate, Dean of the Robert B. Toulouse School of
Graduate Studies

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This study examines two of the smaller American choral societies that together existed for just over 30 years, 1888 to 1919: The Gounod and New Haven Oratorio Societies of New Haven, Connecticut. These societies are important because, especially in the case of the New Haven Society, they were closely related to Yale University and the work of Horatio Parker.

One must assume from the onset that the two choral groups examined in the following pages did not have the prominence of the many larger New England choral societies. However a more detailed knowledge about the struggles, successes, influence and leadership of two smaller societies illuminates a field of research in the history of American choral music that has been largely ignored.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chapter	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Gounod Society.....	4
3. Horatio Parker and the Beginning of the End.....	12
4. A Time of Transition.....	21
5. The New Haven Oratorio Society.....	32
Appendix A.....The Constitution and Bylaws of the Gounod Society.....	46
Appendix B.....The Constitution of The New Haven Oratorio Society.....	51
Appendix C.....Gounod Society Budget Example.....	54
Appendix D.....The Future of the Gounod.....	56
Appendix E.....Works Performed by the Gounod and New Haven Oratorio Societies...	58
Bibliography.....	61

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN CHORAL MUSIC SOCIETIES AT THE END OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The state of choral music in America and more specifically that of New England during the waning years of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century was one of constant and dynamic changes. Gone were the days of the “monster” concerts put on by Patrick Gilmore. Most of what remained of choral music outside the church by 1900 were the sporadic and often irregular performances of a handful of choral societies and unions. The preeminent choral musician Peter Lutkin would, in 1928 be asked by the Music Teachers National Association to give an address on the *Larger Choral Groups and Preeminent Choral Leaders Since 1876*. To establish his list of “larger choral groups” Lutkin turned to the entries on American choral organizations in Waldo Selden Pratt’s American edition of the *George Groves Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.¹ This was further evidence that War World I had brought an end to support for most choral groups, leaving many in need of financial gifts, participation, and audiences. Lutkin makes reference to this fact when he states:

Unfortunately we must admit that the love of choral music is not deeply ingrained in the American Soul. Most choral

societies and choral festivals are dependent upon the soloist

¹ Peter C. Lutkin, “The Larger Choral Groups and Preeminent Choral Leaders since 1876.” *Music Teachers National Association Proceedings* 23 (1928): 81.

not the chorus singers to attract audiences in paying quantities.²

After about 1920 it can safely be said that only the fittest of choral groups survived and these could only be found in the largest cities of the Eastern, Midwestern, and Western United States.

The goal of almost all American choral groups that came into fruition during the nineteenth century was to emulate the English choral festivals that had been successful on the other side of the Atlantic. It must be said that few of the American groups were actually able to achieve the success of the English, and the English choral groups themselves, like their American counterparts, experienced a period of decline following the end of World War I.³

This study will examine two of the smaller choral societies that together existed for just over 30 years, 1888 to 1919: The Gounod and New Haven Oratorio Societies of New Haven, Connecticut. These societies are important because, especially in the case of the New Haven Oratorio Society, they were closely related to Yale University and the work of Horatio Parker. Therefore it is useful to explore in detail the founding, history and influences that these groups had on the larger American choral scene. It is also important to examine Horatio Parker's involvement with these groups. While it is not the intent of this paper to explore the many detailed events of Parker's life, work that has been done already, it will briefly reexamine Parker's European training and long-

²Ibid., 81.

³William Kearns makes reference to the decline of the English choral societies with the start of World War I in his article "Horatio Parker and the English Choral Societies, 1899-1902." *American Music* 4 (Spring 1986): 20-33. It is generally common knowledge that after World War II composers focused less and less on choral genres and that modern forms of entertainment took away from the audience base for choral groups.

standing commitment to choral music. This background will enable us to assess more carefully his relationship with the New Haven Oratorio Society.

One must assume from the outset that the two choral groups examined in the following pages did not have the prominence of, as Lutkin calls them, the “larger groups” such as The Boston Handel and Haydn Society or the New York Oratorio Society. However a more detailed knowledge about the struggles, successes, influence and leadership of two smaller New England choral societies should expose a field of research in the history of American choral music that has been largely ignored.

This field of research might include further studies in the management, repertoire, and mission of various American choral societies. Another area of research could possibly include cultural studies on how the societies were embraced and supported by their respective communities. The most important point to make is that both research and writing on American choral music in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century is almost nonexistent and therefore any work in the field should be encouraged.

CHAPTER II

THE GOUNOD SOCIETY

The famous nineteenth century French composer Charles François Gounod apparently made a profound and lasting impact on the New Haven, Connecticut, musical scene. Even before his death in 1893 there were numerous organizations using his name as a point of identification.¹ The *Loomis Music and Masonic Journal* of New Haven carries several pages, beginning in 1870, with such headings as: *Gounod on Music*, *Gounod on Conducting*, *Conversations with Gounod*, and *Gounod Ambition and Genius*.² There is little doubt that Gounod was important in New Haven, and it comes as no surprise that many musical groups decided to adopt the name of this composer for their own organizations. The Gounod Society might have experienced some of the instant recognition that the name brought it, but eventually the Society would, through its own merits, become the most important choral group in New Haven by the 1890s.

The Gounod Society began more as an amateur ensemble than a fledgling new choral group. In fact, without the intervention of a few dedicated individuals, the Society

¹ Martin Cooper and Dennis Libby. "Charles François," *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, 20 vols. (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1980), 7:580.

² *The Loomis Music and Masonic Journal*, published in New Haven, Connecticut, ran from 1867-1900.

might not have survived beyond its first performance of the group had actually occurred some two years before 1888, the date when the bylaws were drawn up.³ A statement on the history of the Society found in a concert program of 1896, tells the story of the Society's shaky beginnings:

The Gounod Society was organized some ten years ago, beginning with a membership of forty carefully selected voices. The first public concert was given on January 24, 1888....

....The season of 1890-1 marked a crisis. The first concert was given December 16, 1890, with Miss Olive Mead, violinist, as the solo attraction. It is to be noted that up to this time the Society had not aspired beyond glees and part-songs, but it now became evident that, if the public was expected to follow us further, we must give them something more satisfactory. It was then that the ambition arose to render annually some work of the great masters, with the aid of the leading artists as soloists, and yet with the prices on a popular basis. It was realized from the first that such an undertaking demanded a good organization, a hard-working and homogeneous chorus, good business management on the part of the officers and the retention of such a conductor as Mr. Agramonte had proved himself to be....⁴

The last sentence outlines several items that led to the success of the Society. Paramount to that success was the employment of one Emilo Agramonte as the conductor.

Secondary to the employment of an excellent conductor was the ability of the board to manage the Society's affairs as well as choose a wide selection of excellent repertory.

Emilio Agramonte, the Society's conductor, seems to have been one of the most interesting musicians to grace America and New Haven in the late nineteenth century. By all accounts he was a profoundly successful musician having gained the knowledge and experience needed to be an effective conductor. A Gounod Music Festival Magazine of 17 April 1896 remains the only source of biographical information on Agramonte.

³ Yale University Music Library MSS 60: *The Gounod Society Papers: 1887-1919*, folder 2.

Emilio Agramonte was born in Puerto Principe Cuba in 1844, graduated as Doctor of Laws in Madrid, at 21; simultaneously with law he studied music with the best masters in Europe. In 1869 he came to this country, and a few months after his arrival was appointed director of the 8 o'clock Musical Club, a flourishing organization in New York at the time, conducted by Mr. Pietro Abella, husband of Mrs. D'Angri. Since then his career has been very successful, having shown his ability as a thorough musician in every capacity as master of the voice, as chorus conductor and as interpreter and accompanist. His numerous pupils occupy important positions in church choirs, academies and theaters.

Mr. Agramonte has always been a believer and champion of the American composer and organized the American Composer's Choral Association. He is catholic in music, being an extreme Wagnerian and at the same time an admirer of the good representations of Italy, France, Russia, England and all other countries. In this way he can lead all ancient and modern musical literature, having ability as a pianist and is one of the best sight readers in the country. He is at present conductor of the Gounod Society of New Haven, with a membership of 350, which has given "the Messiah," "the Creation," "Elijah," "St. Paul" and "Redemption" Masses "Eve" and many other important works.

Mr. Agramonte, who is personally very magnetic, is a member of the MTNA and has served on numerous important committees, the program committee among the rest. He is a ready speaker and plays the piano with finish and exquisite taste. He was also Vice President of the Manuscript Society.⁵

This biography shows clearly the admiration that the members of the Gounod Society as well as the residents of New Haven had for Agramonte.

A clear example of Agramonte's leadership style occurred in 1897 during the waning years of the group's existence. It is apparent from correspondence that the Society had lost its accompanist. Under consideration by the Society for the position were four persons: Jepson [no first name given], Stanley Knight, Newton [no first name given], and a Grace Nichols; the society board requested Agramonte's input into the selection of the next accompanist.⁶ The board made clear in a letter sent to Agramonte

⁴ Gounod Society Music Festival Souvenir Program dated April 1896. Information taken from "A Bit of History" on page 6. Filed in Yale University Music Library MSS 60, Box 1.

⁵ Biography taken from the Gounod Society Music Festival Magazine dated 17 April 1896. Yale University Music Library MSS 60, Box 1.

⁶ Information gathered from letters contained in Yale University Music Library MSS 60, folder 7.

on 25 September 1897 that they were asking for his help in the situation as well as his preferences for either a man or a woman for the job.⁷ Agramonte, welcomed the input and said, “I prefer a man on general principles,” in reference to the gender of the next accompanist.⁸ This letter also contains many persuasive comments about how Agramonte believed Jepson should be offered the position.⁹ The board however, was not very receptive to his recommendation of Jepson, and called for auditions for the accompanist to begin. By 16 October 1897 Agramonte sent a letter to the board with his top choices, Jepson and Nichols. He clearly stated that he did not want Newton for the job and Knight, by this point, had most likely removed his name from consideration.¹⁰ Finally, on November 9, 1897, Agramonte forwarded a letter to the board recommending that they hire Nichols for the job, stating that she “had all the qualities of a good accompanist.”¹¹ The board in turn offered her the position on 11 November 1897 and she accepted.¹² Among the many other letters that Agramonte wrote on behalf of the Society and its business is one regarding the Gounod’s performance of Horatio Parker’s *Harold Harfarger*. Agramonte, in the letter, asks Parker to come and conduct a rehearsal of the work; he closes the letter by saying, “I hope you are recovering from your indisposition, which leads me to have pity on you and not summon you to the tele.”¹³

⁷ Ibid., letter dated 29 September 1897.

⁸ Ibid., letter in response to the previous.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid., letter dated 16 October 1897.

¹¹ Ibid., letter dated 9 November 1897.

¹² Ibid., letter dated 13 November 1897.

¹³ Letter dated 15 February 1898 from Agramonte to Horatio Parker. Yale University Music Library MSS 60.

The management of the Gounod Society stands as a great example of how a civic arts-related organization should work, both in the late nineteenth-century and in our present times. The archival manuscripts at Yale University contain no minutes for the group prior to 1888, but it is clear that they had met in some form prior to then. There are several notable things about the leadership of the board that remained important to the overall success of the group.

First, at the second recorded board meeting, on 1 October 1888, the vice president relayed to the board that the current president of the Society could no longer fulfill his duties due to failing health.¹⁴ The provisions in the constitution bylaws, drawn up following a meeting on 31 May 1888, called for the vice president to assume the duties of the president. Thus, Charles S. DeForest became the president of the Gounod Society, a position he would hold until the group was dissolved in 1903.¹⁵

Another important figure of the early years of the Gounod Society was a woman identified only as Miss Wurts, who was the treasurer for the Society during its first two years.¹⁶ Wurts, seems to have been a rather influential figure in the New Haven arts scene. While not obvious in the Gounod collections at Yale, it is apparent, from the many times her name is mentioned in the minutes, that Wurts was fundamental in the establishment of the Society and its subsequent financing. Like almost every other choral society, the Gounod would by 1900 begin to experience difficulty in both securing

¹⁴ Gounod Society Minutes of 1 October 1888. Yale University Music Library MSS 60.

¹⁵ See Appendix A for reference of Gounod Society By-Laws. Also the next entry for the minutes of the Society list DeForest the president on 6 March 1889.

¹⁶ Miss Wurts remained listed as treasurer in the minutes of the Society until the 1890s.

funding as well as subscriptions to its concerts. Financial difficulties, in the end, would be one of the forces leading to the demise of the Society in 1903.

Finally, the Gounod Society was able, through the contacts of Emilio Agramonte and others, to secure high profile concert endorsements and soloists. In March of 1890 the American Music Teachers Association complimented the Society on its concerts and invited the group to perform at the AMTA branch meeting at Meriden, Connecticut, on June 2nd of that year.¹⁷ The AMTA would be involved in promoting the Society for several years. The soloists that the Society employed were significant in that most of the artists were from New York and included such nineteenth century performers as Gertrude Stein.¹⁸

Beyond any other aspect of the history of the Gounod Society, and standing as perhaps the most important aspect to its success, is the repertory that the chorus undertook. There is little doubt that the repertory was both challenging and eclectic.¹⁹ This can be attributed once again to the leadership of Emilio Agramonte. Agramonte was able to make a case for almost every work he put before the board for approval, including risky pieces by Wagner as well as the constant flow and encouragement for new works by American composers. From these records it is apparent that Agramonte was a champion for broad repertoire and was able to convey these works to both the chorus and the public.

¹⁷ Gounod Society Minutes of 24 March 1890. Also there is reference to Agramonte's involvement with this organization in his biography.

¹⁸ Gertrude Stein is listed in the minutes and on programs as being a soloist for the group from the 1890s forward.

¹⁹ A list of works performed by the Gounod Society can be found in the Appendix E.

Little in the way of criticism about the group's performances is available. Most of what can be found is both positive and flattering of the Society and Agramonte. They often had large audiences at the Hyperion Theater in New Haven and the chorus numbered well over 200 for performances.²⁰ It is certain that at least during the Society's annual festivals they were considered one of the most outstanding choruses in New England. The first music festival the Gounod Society presented in April 1896 was discussed in a newspaper clipping found in Horatio Parker's dairies.

The Gounod Society's music festival was inaugurated last evening in the midst of a thunder storm, but it suffered in no respect because of the unfortunate weather. The attendance was large, fully 2,000 people being present and the concert was in every respect the finest ever given in this city. Equal praise belongs to soloists and chorus. In Rossini's "Stabat Mater," and in Prof. Parker's "Harold Harfager," the Gounod chorus fully sustained its reputation. The attacks were firm and even, the shading was finished and the volume and balance of tone admirable, while the tone-quality was delightful.²¹

Horatio Parker was new to the New Haven scene and to the Gounod. Over the next few years a friendly relationship between the Society and Parker would develop, but just how long that relationship would last is uncertain. The Gounod Society and its famous conductor Emilio Agramonte remained at least for the immediate future the most influential and respected chorus in New Haven. Even Horatio Parker could not deny this fact and would eventually write one of the most eloquent descriptions of the Society's work.

New Haven, April 17, 1901

²⁰ For the most part the Gounod Society chorus numbered well over 200. The Music Festival program of 1896 has approximately 259 singers listed other reviews of performances often gave an approximate number around 300.

²¹ Newspaper Clipping found in the Diary Scrapbook of Horatio Parker. The review is for the April 1896 Music Festival. The review came from one of the New Haven papers as the scrapbook contains two other reviews beside this one.

My dear Mr. DeForest:

May I ask you to convey to the Gounod Society and their conductor my sincere and hearty thanks for their splendid performance of *Hora Novissima* last night.

The interest and animation of the chorus, their entirely competent and spiritual singing as well as their very kind appreciation of my work gratified me more than I can tell you. I know perfectly the labor which must be spent in preparing for as good a performance and assure you that the devotion of conductor and chorus were evident to every careful listener through the excellent artistic results which they attained.

With a lively remembrance of many Gounod concerts I can honestly say that I never knew either conductor or chorus to do a better piece of work.

Pray accept for them my repeated thanks, and believe me with the most cordial good wishes for the continued success of the Society.

Sincerely yours,

Horatio Parker²²

²² Letter from Horatio Parker to Mr. Charles DeForest, president of the Gounod Society. The letter is dated 17 April 1901 and is in regards to the Society's recent performance of Parker's *Hora Novissima*. The Society would in turn be asked to present the work again under Parker's direction for the Bi-Centennial Celebration of Yale University. Yale University Music Library MSS 60 Box 1.

CHAPTER III

HORATIO PARKER AND THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The Spring of 1894 brought many changes to New Haven, Connecticut, and its most famous institution: Yale University. Yale's president Timothy Dwight was successful in attracting Horatio Parker to be the school's first professor of music. Parker had, in recent years, become a rising star, and with the acceptance of the Yale position, he was poised to become a driving force in American music.

Shortly after arriving at Yale, Parker assumed the responsibilities for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra. The orchestra, made up primarily of members of the community, gave its first performance under Parker's direction in the Fall of 1894. Parker's presumed goal, which seems to have been accomplished quickly, was to associate the orchestra with the university. The last concert of each of the orchestra's seasons was set aside to perform the works of his students at Yale. He also used the orchestra as a major force in educating the public.¹

It was through the New Haven Symphony Orchestra that Parker would have the first recorded contact with the long-standing Gounod Society.

¹ William K. Kearns, *Horatio Parker, 1863-1919: His Life, Music and Ideas* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press Inc., 1990, 36-37.

On 10 March 1896 the Gounod Society and the New Haven Symphony Orchestra gave a joint concert. Parker directed the orchestra while Emilio Agramonte conducted the Society. A newspaper clipping in Parker's scrapbook tells the story:

. . . Professor Parker's Great Success—In Some Ways the Event is the Most Memorable in the History of the Society. . . The New Haven Symphony Orchestra, whose services were employed for this kind of work for the first time last night, did such excellent work that the usefulness of the orchestra for this purpose is surely proved. Much is expected of the union of the two organizations and after last night's performance there seems to be no reason why the most sanguine hopes for future achievements should not be entertained.²

Horatio Parker was the consummate turn-of-the-century American musician: he was born into an artistic family and trained professionally in Europe. His earliest musical instruction came from his mother, who had begun giving him piano lessons by the age fourteen. If it were not for his apparent drive to compete, Horatio's musical training would not have lasted long.³

Parker has been first and foremost known as both an educator and a church musician. His first church position by the age of sixteen set the pattern; the music of the church, both organ and choral, became his most enduring legacy. As a youngster he studied with, among others, George Chadwick, who helped to develop his budding talent and persuade his family, in the summer of 1880, to send Parker to Germany for more extensive training.⁴ There Parker studied with Joseph Rheinberger from 1880 to 1885. The rigorous commitment to excellence and perfection in music that he received from

² Clipping from the *New Haven Journal Courier* dated 10 March 1896 found in Horatio Parker's Scrapbook.

³ Isabel Parker Semler, *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for his Grandchildren Compiled from Letters and Papers* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 33.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 44.

Rheinberger and the other teachers at the *Hochschule für Musik* in Munich, influenced his composition style and personal opinions on music.⁵

In 1885 Parker returned to the United States and assumed various teaching and church positions throughout New England. Eventually he saved enough money to sail back to Germany and marry Anna Ploessl, whom he had met while they were both students in Munich.⁶ The newlyweds moved first to New York and then to Boston, where he was the organist at the famous Trinity Church, before finally accepting the professorship at Yale University in 1894.⁷

For the most part, Parker and his family spent every summer and most of his sabbaticals from Yale in Europe. At first, the trips were probably made to visit his wife's family in Germany, but eventually they would become much more for Parker. In 1899 he received word that his oratorio *Hora Novissima* would be performed at the great Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, England.⁸ From that point on, Parker's favorite venue outside of the United States was England. He would eventually say of the English:

Since my first visit to England I have felt very much at home in that country. It seemed at first as though I was visiting relatives of whom I had always heard, but whom I never had seen.⁹

During most of these summer trips, Parker would leave his family in Germany and then travel to various villages throughout England conducting and composing for various choral groups and societies. By 1901 he was held in such high regard by the English that Charles Villiers Stanford would nominate him for the degree of Doctor of Music from

⁵ Ibid., 44.

⁶ Ibid., 70.

⁷ Ibid., 91.

⁸ Ibid., 106.

Cambridge University.¹⁰ Thus, in 1902 he became the first American ever to receive a Doctor of Music degree from Cambridge.¹¹ In his book, *Horatio Parker, 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, William Kearns quotes R.C. Jebb, an official of Cambridge University, as saying:

The council of the Senate agreed this morning on my motion, to offer the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Music to Professor Horatio Parker. It may be of interest to you to know that the decision was unanimous every member present voting in the affirmative.¹²

George Chadwick in his tribute to Parker after his death would also write of the degree:

The cordiality of the English people toward the music of Parker found ceremonious expression in the award of the degree of Doctor of Music by Cambridge University in 1902. If we consider the *conservatism of English musical taste* [emphasis mine], especially in Cathedral towns, we must admit that this is rather a remarkable record for a young American in his thirties.¹³

This conservatism of English musical taste was probably the one goal to which Parker aspired in his various choral activities in America.

By the end of 1902 Parker had returned to his duties at Yale and wrote a paper entitled *Impressions of a Year in Europe*, which he presented shortly thereafter.¹⁴ In it he sums up his experiences in Europe and provides a glimpse into his thinking about music in general.

He wrote of the Worcester Festival:

Although Worcester is a provincial town, the chorus is as good as our best ones. It is a remarkable and very significant fact that the choral singing in England is done in the provinces and the worst in

⁹ Ibid., 109.

¹⁰ Kearns, 46.

¹¹ Semler, 149.

¹² Kearns, 46.

¹³ Semler, 149.

¹⁴ Ibid., 155.

London. The provincial societies go to London from time to time, apparently to show the Londoners how to do it.¹⁵

On the musical training in England as a whole he stated:

The average of musical intelligence and efficiency is high in England. Vocal, or rather choral music is cultivated to a greater extent and more successfully than anywhere else on earth. They are waking up orchestral matters very rapidly...Not years ago the best orchestras in England were composed chiefly of foreigners, as is the case now in this country...*sic* [United States]¹⁶

On the music of the Germans versus the Anglo-Saxon he wrote:

We profit enormously in technical details from Strauss and his long train of followers, but I do not think that we, the Anglo-Saxon race, need be among them. We can admire but we need not imitate them.

...It may be that the art of absolute music is exhausted. Strauss thinks so, but I am loath to believe it. On the whole I am inclined to think that music among the Anglo-Saxons of today is built upon a solid foundation, one better calculated to sustain the weight of an imposing superstructure than the music of the Germans...For the present English and American music is surely as a whole more impersonal, more abstract than thin, and if it remains untainted by these (qualities) seems sure to bring forth results of great beauty and value...Not that I object to addition to our means of expression—but the new vocabulary must always remain a means, and never become an end of expression.¹⁷

It is clear from the comments above that Parker had made definite conclusions about the music he had experienced in Europe, even going so far as to say that the current music of the Germans was not as outstanding as that of the English. However, Parker was probably speaking primarily against overt expression in music, even though much of the music he championed and wrote contained such expression--always being masked under

¹⁵ Horatio Parker, "Impressions of a Year in Europe," MSS 32, Box 35, Folder 15, Series V, p. 2, In the Horatio Parker Papers, Yale University Music Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

the element of control. Perhaps the most revealing comment is found at the end his paper:

Had much encouragement and profit from a year's absence but was glad to come home again. Quite convinced that this is the only country for a self-respecting American to live in permanently.¹⁸

It was obvious that Parker loved America and in so doing, aimed for American composers to take the best of the European models and apply them to their own voice. David Stanley Smith, one of Parker's students and his successor at Yale, late wrote of Parker's music: "His music is, after all, well steeped in Americanism, its native quality being strengthened but not greatly altered by what he learned in Munich."¹⁹ He was apparently able to accomplish that with both his own works and his teaching at Yale.

There is little doubt that Parker arrived at Yale already well-respected in the musical circles of both America and Europe. With the first performance of *Hora Novissima* in 1893 and his travels to conduct some of the most distinguished choruses in England, he was undoubtedly one of the best American conductors alive. Parker's reputation allowed him to be associated, as either musical director or conductor, with some of the most successful choral societies in the Eastern United States. These choral groups consisted of at least the following: the Derby Choral Society, the Lichtfield Choral Union, the New Haven Peoples Choral Union, and finally, both the Orpheus and Eurydice clubs of Philadelphia. By 1903, Parker would add to this already exhaustive list of responsibilities, the conductorship of the New Haven Oratorio Society.

¹⁸ Ibid., 15.

¹⁹ David Stanley Smith, "A Study of Horatio Parker," *The Musical Quarterly* 16 (April 1930): 154.

At this point, it is important to make clear that the author of this study believes that there is much doubt as to whether Parker was able to provide, for these choral groups, anything more than suggestions of music to be performed, and then leadership to prepare that music for performance. Parker had taken on too many different tasks to provide each of them with a generous amount of his time. Furthermore, his letters clearly reveal that by the 1890s he was constantly suffering from various health problems that often hindered his work. The most prevalent of these health problems seems to be a recurrent reference, both in Parker's diary and letters, to a battle with gout.

It is more likely that Parker, during this time of extensive activity, was taking advantage of both his name recognition and the chance to augment his salary from Yale. Parker's real influence upon these groups comes from his unparalleled skill at upholding the highest standards of his art, or in other words, perfection in everything musical. After all, these high standards had been instilled in him in Munich and then observed in England. Parker probably sought not to impose his beliefs actively on any particular group, but rather to help them see how important it was to do things consistently well. An excellent example of this can be found in a letter that Parker wrote on 16 March 1898 to Walter R. Downs, then the treasurer of the Gounod Society. Parker had apparently just helped rehearse the Society for a performance of his own *Harold Harfarger*. Towards the end of the letter Parker wrote:

I think earnest leaders in musical undertakings ought to help each other, and as I expect at some time to call on the directors of the Gounod Society to help me

substantially, I want them to think that in all things which make for good music I am heartily at their service in the meantime.²⁰

This letter clearly points out that Parker welcomed the opportunity to help others in musical endeavors and that he obviously had plans to use the Gounod Society, with which he was not formally associated, in the future. The less obvious thing revealed in this letter is Parker's willingness to work with the leadership of other groups even if they did not always agree with him. As stated in the above chapter, the Gounod Society's conductor, Emilio Agramonte, who had been described as an *extreme Wagnerian*, something Parker was definitely not.

Further proof of Parker's commitment to excellence in music is evidenced in the fact that the repertoire the various choral groups undertook was in keeping with what was generally being performed both in England and America—a wide and revolving selection of standard oratorios along with some newer compositions, often by emerging twentieth-century musicians.²¹

One could easily counter the above conclusions by pointing out that Parker, having been trained in the deep musical traditions of Europe, would always have that

²⁰ Quote taken from a letter of thanks to Walter R. Downs, treasurer of the Gounod Society, from Horatio Parker thanking the Society for the \$25 check he was paid for helping the Society to prepare for the performance of his work. The letter is dated 16 March 1898. Yale University Music Library MSS 60 The Gounod Society Papers.

²¹ The repertoire of the various groups seems to be somewhat standardized. This standardization is probably due to the apparent popularity of certain works at the time. Peter Lutkin in his address to the MTNA in 1928 provides a very clear summary of the music that the larger societies were pursuing at the time. Lutkin also includes a rather dated list of the first performance of various works by American composers. During the research for this paper many programs and letters were reviewed. The author kept a running list, in his notes, of works that were being rehearsed or performed. This list while clearly not exhaustive included references to the following repertoire: Handel's *Messiah*; J. S. Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* (noted as the Passion Music); Bruch's *Arminius*; Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*; Mendelssohn's *Athalie*; S. C. Taylor's *Song of Hiawatha*; Brahms's *German Requiem*; Parker's *Hora Novissima*, *St. Christopher* and *Harold Halfarger*; and Edward Grell, *Missa Solemnis*.

agenda to impose on his musical contacts. While I believe that Parker would have preferred that everyone fit his mold, it is clear that he never willingly kept any of his students or organizations from exploring their own musical voice. Many authors have sought to label Parker as one who was not open to anything new and desired only to perpetuate European models. One recent example of this attitude can be found in Jan Swafford's book on the life of Charles Ives. While it is widely known that Ives did not much care for Parker, Swafford in his book seems to make this into a value judgment on Parker's overall character.²² In fact, Ives's frustration with Parker was probably more consistent with the average collegiate student-teacher relationship.

It is true that Parker thought all students should follow a very traditional (European) form of musical studies. The curriculum he established at Yale is still the model used by many universities today. Despite many who believe to the contrary no one has yet to uncover any recorded time that Parker kept a student or group from attempting something new. Parker and the rest of the Second New England School were the last of the European-trained traditionalists who, in turn, provided the education for the world's next generation of musicians--musicians who were radically different than their teachers.

Parker's association with the musical circles in New Haven had just begun. The acquaintance with the Gounod Society and the conductorship of the New Haven Symphony orchestra were just the beginning. He would, by 1903, help profoundly change the focus of the New Haven music scene.

²² Jan Swafford, *Charles Ives: A Life with Music* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1996), 111-112.

CHAPTER IV

A TIME OF TRANSITION

The last few seasons for the Gounod Society were relatively good ones. The Society's president, Charles DeForest, had presented a positive report following the end of the 1903 season.¹ The Gounod Society, for almost a year, had been headed for fiscal trouble, and, despite a glowing report from the President, it was becoming increasingly apparent that the future of the Society could be questioned.

As early as 26 May 1902 two suspicious votes were taken by the Society. The motivation for the votes, in the minutes of the Society, is unclear. The first vote asked the members whether or not the Society's conductor, Agramonte, should be retained. In that vote there were 84 total ballots cast with 70 in favor of Agramonte, 12 against and 2 blank.² The second, more general question, asked whether or not the Society should change conductors. This question produced a total of 80 ballots with 13 desiring to hire a new conductor, 65 wanting to retain the current conductor and 2 ballots left blank. Why would the board of governors of the Gounod see fit to have the chorus vote on

¹ Yale University Music Library (MSS 60: *The Gounod Society Papers : 1887-1919*), folder 5, pp.128-129. Undated Address.

² *Ibid.*, folder 5, minutes 26 May 1902.

Agramonte's future with the organization? One reason could have been the growing financial woes, which the Society had recently incurred, but Agramonte would not have been directly responsible for that.³ Furthermore, the Society, like many choral groups, always experienced periods of low funding. These financial woes had never produced actions so drastic as to lead to a vote of confidence for the conductor. The more reasonable explanation for the votes was probably the growing competition from Yale University. This competition was not rooted in singers or choral groups, but rather from the fast approaching completion of Yale's Woolsey Hall, coupled with the growing reputation of the music department under the leadership of Horatio Parker.⁴ Woolsey Hall in particular was designed to become the highlight of performing arts at Yale and in New Haven.

Parker's recorded involvement with the Society spanned from 1896, when he conducted the New Haven Symphony in a joint performance with the Gounod, to 1901, when he helped the Society prepare and perform his *Hora Novissima* for the Yale Bicentennial celebration in October of that year. The Board of Government of the Gounod Society had passed a resolution about this performance on 28 January 1901.⁵

The resolution read as follows:

Following Resolution was unanimously adopted—That the invitation of the Executive Committee of the Bi-Centennial Celebration of Yale University to the Gounod Society to render Parker's *Hora Novissima* in October next be accepted with pleasure, with the understanding that the University shall be responsible for all necessary expenses, and have full control of all the arrangements for the

³ For more information on the financial situation and an example of the Gounod Society budget for a performance see Appendix C.

⁴ Numerous references are made throughout the various newspaper articles, minutes, and correspondence of the Gounod Society regarding the fact that there was growing competition coming from Yale and Parker.

⁵ Yale MSS 60: Minutes 21 January 1901.

production of the work, but with the reservation that all matters connected with the admission and seating of new members in the chorus next Fall be subject to the regular rules of the Gounod Society.⁶

This resolution makes clear that any competition or desire on Parker's part to take over the Society was not readily apparent. In fact, Parker was still traveling to Europe on a regular basis, and was in England during the summer of 1901.⁷ Further evidence however, seems clearly to support the idea that either Parker or his supporters in the New Haven community were helping to bring a sudden end to the Gounod Society.

On 8 May 1903 one year after the votes on Agramonte and just weeks following the Gounod Society's spring performance, a series of articles about the Society's future began to appear in the New Haven newspapers. The first and most revealing appeared in the *New Haven Register* with the title: "Yale May Take Up Gounod; Society will not be in Existence on Present Plan Next Year; Annual Meeting Next Week."⁸ The unsigned article was both negative in tone and pessimistic about the future of the Gounod Society. The first part of the article identifies the Gounod as having serious funding problems, and is careful to point out that it was questionable as to whether the Society could function the following season.

It is almost certain that the Gounod society will not be organized next season under the old plan. It has proven a heavy burden upon those who have been instrumental in keeping the organization alive and it is stated that the guarantors feel that they cannot further keep the Society intact.

It has become a regular thing for the guarantors to be called upon to meet the deficiency in the fund, and this year the rendition of the oratorio of "St. Paul"

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ William Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: His Life, Music, and Ideas*, (Scarecrow Press Inc., 1990), 45-46.

⁸ Newspaper clipping found in the Gounod Society minutes. Most likely from the *New Haven Register*. The article was dated as 8 May 1903.

resulted in a deficiency of \$300 or thereabouts in the fund which had to be made up by the guarantors.⁹

The article goes on to discuss Yale University's desire to establish such a chorus in its music department along with the fact that Yale's leadership had apparently been trying to acquire and use the Gounod for some time:

It is said that while the organization will pass out of existence under the present management, next season the Gounod will be reorganized upon an entirely different basis. The musical department of Yale University is interested in the Gounod and it is said is anxious to keep it intact as chorus. The department it said, has been endeavoring to carry out such a plan for two or three years, but the way was not clear for it to do so.¹⁰

An unsigned response to the above article was distributed to the members of the Gounod Society in New Haven the next day.¹¹ This response systematically rebutted all of the accusations made in the first article:

Incorrect erroneous statements in newspaper about "annual deficits." Also, item which would seem to indicate that the Board of Governors had made overtures to the University regarding the adoption by the Letter of the Gounod Society. As a matter of fact this has not an atom of truth in it. The Board of Governors or no officer of the Board of Governors, has ever approached any mention of Yale University with any proposition of this kind whatsoever. Nor have we ever received any propositions of similar purport from the University.¹²

The author of the response seems to have been clearly aware of the fact that together, Yale University, Woolsey Hall, and Horatio Parker were a force that would be hard to compete with. A solution to the situation is offered by the author, who suggests that the Gounod Society should take a season off to see what develops with the new

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The complete text of this response can be found in Appendix D.

¹² Loose unsigned article found in the Gounod Society papers. The response reads as though it was distributed either the afternoon following the newspaper article regarding the coming end of the Society, or the next morning.

chorus, if there is one.¹³ In the end the response says that the whole matter seems really to be a simple business proposition:

And in view of this it has been deemed wise by your present Board of Governors to recommend to you that the whole matter be left for final Decision to the new board, if you elect one. The Gounod Society, is a organization duly chartered by the State of Connecticut and whatever is done it would seem best to retain our charter, take a vacation for a season and abide by the results of the experiment to be undertaken by the University, I say “University” advisedly for I am not sure under what auspices the affairs of the new chorus are to be conducted. Please understand that I am trying to state to you clearly the simple business proposition which will confront us next Fall in order that you may understand upon what conditions your new board will have to base their decision.¹⁴

In spite of all the negative rhetoric, the Board of Governors of the Gounod met on 16 June 1903 to elect new officers.¹⁵ The entry for 16 June 1903 shows the following slate of officers:

C.S. DeForest	President
Joseph Parker	Vice President
Philip E. Browning	Secretary
F. S. Ward	Assistant Secretary
C. E. Cornwall	Treasurer ¹⁶

The summer of 1903 went by without any further public discussion of the musical controversies in the city of New Haven. Then on 1 October 1903 Horatio Parker extended an invitation to several community members to attend a meeting.¹⁷ This

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Yale University MSS 60, minutes 16 June 1903.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Yale University Music Library (MSS 5: *The New Haven Oratorio Society Papers: 1903-1919*), folder 1, minutes for 1 October 1903.

gathering became the first unofficial meeting of the group of leaders who would form the nucleus of the New Haven Oratorio Society. The minutes of this first meeting state that Parker called the meeting “to consider the formation of a new organization for church music in cooperation with the music department of the University *sic*[Yale].”¹⁸ The minutes go on to say that Parker “stated that the recent completions of Woolsey Hall and the Newberry Organ were advantages to offer for the new group.”¹⁹ Attending that meeting were the following persons (listed by last name): DeForest, Horatio Parker, Palmer, Foster, Tracy, Smith, Bancroft, Ward, Pardee, Haesche, Gregory, and Browning. The minutes also state that Parker was named the chair of this group and that Philip E. Browning became their secretary.²⁰

Careful examination of the minutes of the above meeting, as well as the Gounod Society minutes of 16 July 1903, reveal that all but two of the officers elected by the Gounod Society were present at the meeting called by Parker. Furthermore, the current secretary of the Gounod Society was named the new secretary of Parker’s yet unnamed group. The only person who had been a major figure in the leadership of the Gounod Society over the past years, but who was not in recorded attendance at Parker’s first meeting, was the current treasurer of the Gounod Society, a C. E. Cornwall. So in spite of the fact that the Gounod Society had not yet formally disbanded, over half of its officers had taken on an active role in the new group being formed by Horatio Parker.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

On 8 October 1903 Parker's group held its second meeting. The minutes of that meeting stated that the name for the new choral group was to be: The New Haven Oratorio Society.²¹ The minutes also show that a list of possible singers for the chorus was to be prepared as well as Articles of Incorporation. The following persons were present at this meeting: Dr. Ray Palmer, C.S. Deforest, Professor H.W. Parker, Herbert F. Foster, Professor J.C. Tracy, W.G. Pardee, F.S. Ward, Haesche, Reverend G.F. Prentiss, Phillip Browning, and Professor H.E. Gregory.²²

The New Haven Oratorio Society board officially met for the first time on 15 October 1903.²³ The meeting was brief because it was decided that officers could not be formally elected until the articles of incorporation had been officially filed. The articles were to be drawn up and signed by Charles Ray Palmer and Charles S. DeForest and the official date of incorporation was then set for 21 October 1903.²⁴

The New Haven Oratorio Society board met again on 21 October 1903, for the sole purpose of electing officers and members to the corporation.²⁵ The new members of the corporation included those who had already been meeting as a group, as well as several new names. Among the new names was C.E. Cornwall, who, along with Joseph Parker (no relation to Horatio), was one of the only officers of the Gounod Society not present at Horatio Parker's first meeting, and Samuel S. Sanford, who, along with Parker, was one of the first professors hired for Yale's music department.²⁶ Once the corporation

²¹ Yale University MSS 5, minutes of the 8 October 1903 meeting.

²² Ibid.

²³ Yale University MSS 5, minutes of the 15 October 1903 meeting.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Yale University MSS 5, minutes 21 October 1903 meeting.

²⁶ Kearns, p. 25.

members had been selected, the election of officers proceeded. It is important to remember that up until this point Horatio Parker was heavily involved in both the creation and management of this new board. It is interesting that the minutes for the 21 October 1903 meeting included both those who were nominated to an office, and those who after being nominated, declined. Many of those who declined had served in similar positions within the Gounod Society. The new officers of the New Haven Oratorio Society included:

Professor S. Sanford	President
C.S. DeForest (declined the Vice President spot)	
B. Jepson (declined the Vice President spot)	
F. S. Ward	Vice President
P. E. Browning	Secretary
C.E. Cornwall (declined the Treasurer spot)	
W.G. Pardee	Treasurer ²⁷

It is apparent the New Haven Oratorio Society board organized themselves in a similar way to that of the Gounod; there were the officers, the board of directors and members of the corporation. The board of directors apparently made most of the decisions for the chorus and met regularly, while the corporation as a whole seldom met. It is assumed that the corporation helped to handle business related to the total function and charter of the organization as well as with fund raising. The last item of business

²⁷ Yale University MSS 5, minutes 21 October 1903 meeting.

conducted on 21 October 1903 was to write and adopt a set of bylaws.²⁸ These bylaws will be examined in more detail in the next chapter.

The board of the Gounod Society met for the last time on 23 October 1903.²⁹ The meeting was obviously a formality since most of the members of the Gounod board were now heavily involved in the work of the New Haven Oratorio Society. The minutes for this last meeting included a list of members present: DeForest, Ward, Gregory, Pardee, Cornwall, Browning, and Tracy. They “approved a resolution ending the work and function of the society.”³⁰

New Haven, Conn., October 23, 1903

To the member of the Gounod Society

At a fully attended meeting of the Directors of the Gounod Society, held last evening, it was decided that it would be inexpedient to resume the work of the society, inasmuch as the new oratorio society recently formed to give concerts in connection with the Musical Department of Yale University is to cover practically the field of work hitherto occupied by the Gounod. The result of this decision was expressed in the following unanimous vote:

Resolved. That, in view of the fact that an oratorio society has lately been formed in this city for the purpose of giving concerts in connection with the Musical Department of Yale University, it is deemed advisable to postpone indefinitely the resumption of rehearsal, or the giving of concerts by the Gounod Society.

In recording this vote the Gounod directors wish it distinctly understood by the members and the many friends of the society who have so loyally supported its efforts in the past, that it is done with entire belief that the further promotion of the musical interests of New Haven will be best served by this action.

The fine equipment of the University for the further development including the new hall, great organ and other facilities tending toward considerable saving in expenses, renders the step both logical and necessary.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Yale University MSS 60, minutes Gounod Society meeting of 23 October 1903.

³⁰ Ibid.

The numbers past and present, of the Gounod Society therefore, are heartily urged to lend their cordial support to the new society and to co-operate in the formation of its chorus.³¹

The resolution was signed by all the members of the Board of Governors of the Gounod Society. Included in those who signed this resolution were, F.S. Ward, the new Vice President of the New Haven Oratorio Society, as well as DeForest, Cornwall, and P.E. Browning, who had been the Gounod secretary for many years and had assumed the same duty for the New Haven Society at its first organizational meeting.³²

It is clear that the one victim in the transition between these two societies was Emilo Agramonte, the longtime conductor of the Gounod. The only knowledge of Agramonte's last few months with the Gounod was a mention, in the minutes of the Gounod Society, of an event that likely occurred between the meeting of 16 July 1903 when the new officers were elected, and the meeting of 23 October 1903 when the Society was dissolved. The event was a testimonial held for Agramonte in which he was presented a gold watch. The financial records for the society show that a watch valued at \$103.77 was given to Agramonte at that event.³³

The resolution formally dissolving the Gounod Society ended many of the supposed conflicts that had surrounded the New Haven musical scene during the summer of 1901. The question--was there really a controversy at all?--will probably never be known, but the events that transpired were motivated clearly by a desire to create a chorus, that at least in musical matters, would be influenced by Horatio Parker. In the

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

end, the facts seem to show clearly that the transition, while full of words and opinions, occurred in a peaceful and smooth manner.

³³ Yale University MSS 60. Entry found in the minutes book. The event probably took place around 16 July 1903. Based on the biographical sketch found in the papers of the Gounod Society, Agramonte would have been 59 years old in 1903.

CHAPTER V

THE NEW HAVEN ORATORIO SOCIETY

The future of the New Haven Oratorio Society was filled with uncertainty. It was clear from the first organizational meeting that Horatio Parker desired to be more than just the new Society's conductor, but also to have a major role in both the selection of repertory and management of operations. Parker's reputation and musical abilities were unquestioned, but the ability of either the Society's board or Parker to manage the new group would come under question. The true successes and failures of the New Haven Society may never be completely understood. However, through the close inspection of the Society's constitution and by-laws, repertory, and financial situation, much can be discerned about the Society's short history.

The constitution and by-laws of the Society, as compared to its immediate predecessor the Gounod Society, clearly show the desire on Parker's part to be heavily involved in the management of the new chorus. Following the pattern of most choral groups of the time, as well as the state of Connecticut's requirements for chartered organizations, the by-laws of both societies are very similar.¹ The new additions to the New Haven Oratorio Society's constitution specify the conductor's responsibilities in two respects: input into the selection of music to be performed, and involvement in the selection of chorus members.

¹ Compare the two organization's by-laws, found in the Appendix A and B.

The stipulation of a conductor in the by-laws was not unusual for choral organizations. The interesting point is that the Gounod Society, of which most of the new Society's board had been leaders, contained no such a section in their by-laws. This change was likely instigated by Parker himself. Article II of the New Haven Society's by-laws, which were created on 21 October 1903 reads as follows:

There shall be a [musical]² conductor elected by the board of government for a term of one year, who shall have control of the choice of music to be studied and its manner of presentation, subject to the approval of the Board of Government.³

Parker, despite the authority given in this article, would be challenged by the board on many of his decisions. In fact, they did just that when Parker announced his intent to have the chorus prepare the *St. Matthew Passion* by J.S. Bach. Although the minutes of 14 December 1903 state that "it was voted to sing the Passion Music,"⁴ there were many concerns about this choice. Other entries in the minutes of that meeting state that "discussion followed upon the chorus ability of taking up so different a work in so short a period of time."⁵ The minutes state that Parker had to give reasons for his choice of this piece; unfortunately, these reasons were not recorded.⁶ The Society, in the end, sang the work for its first performance on 29 March 1904 in Woolsey Hall at Yale

² This word had a strike through it in the original documents.

³ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, Constitution of the New Haven Oratorio Society 8 October 1903 minutes.

⁴ Ibid. minutes of 14 December 1903

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

University.⁷ Apparently the performance was not flawless. The following letter from Yale Professor Bernadotte Perrin to Horatio Parker, dated 30 March 1904 reviews the Society's first performance.

My Dear Colleague:

I tried long to find you last evening, because it seemed to me that I could not sleep before I had expressed to you my personal gratitude for an exalting, uplifting evening. I felt when I heard that you were to attempt the Passion Music that you were too ambitious, but such success as you achieved inspires all your fellow workers to dare more nobly.

I may represent perhaps the average listener last evening, and I can honestly say that I noticed only twice that the chorus did not attack well, but even then the sensation of incompleteness was not pronounced, and was very fleeting.

The extempore tenor was weak at the start, but increased in power and effectiveness up to the very last.

Of course you will be conscious of many imperfections, but I think you ought to feel that you have done the University and the community of New Haven an inestimably great service in bringing into the life experience of some three thousand people so fine a rendition of so great a work. And Bach! ah, what a revelation to me of his power to achieve great results by honest means! All the quaint fervor of evangelical Teutonic piety was poured out into every listener's soul!

I hope you may feel some slight reward for all your exacting and multifarious labors in the knowledge that my sense of gratitude to you, deep and keen, is shared, whether they take the trouble to tell you so or not, by many who realize more and more every year what a blessing your presence and work among us is...⁸

Parker would once again be challenged about his music choices during the 1905-1906 season. At the board meeting on 20 November 1905 the Society voted to present Max

⁷ There is clear evidence in the minutes that preparations were made to hold the performance in March, and the date of the letter that Professor Perrin wrote to Parker, on 20 March 1904 confirms the actual date of the performance.

⁸ Isabel Parker Semler, *Horatio Parker: A Memoir for his Grandchildren compiled from Letters and Papers* (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1942), 102-103.

Bruch's *Arminius* on 15 March 1906.⁹ The minutes of 20 December 1905 meeting record that:

It was voted that it is not expedient to make [plans]¹⁰ in regard to *Arminius*, after considering that a petition signed by 70 members of the chorus requesting that Bach's *Passion* be the program for the next concert.¹¹

Nevertheless, Parker apparently triumphed when the work was performed as scheduled.¹²

There is no entry in the minutes of a reversal of the 20 December 1905 vote or of the board effectively ignoring their request.

One month after the completion and acceptance of the by-laws, the Society passed an amendment to create a "Superintendent of the Chorus" to work with the conductor.

This addition to Article I made on 3 November 1903 says:

Superintendent of Chorus serves 1 year duties: all matters pertaining to the seating of the chorus at rehearsals and concerts and of its general discipline, subject to the approval of the conductor and of the society and its Board of Government. Has also the authority to appoint the division officers of the chorus.¹³

This new position, whether conceived by Parker or not, would prove helpful in the organization of rehearsals and the auditioning of members for the chorus. The society board set up a general method for electing singers to the chorus.¹⁴ This method would be

⁹ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, 20 November 1905 minutes.

¹⁰ The original text reads "any in our plans."

¹¹ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, 20 December 1905 minutes.

¹² A program for the event carried the date of 15 March 1906.

¹³ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, 3 November 1903 minutes.

¹⁴ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, see Article VI in the constitution, found in the minutes of 21 October 1903.

challenged, changed, and finally done away with before the society came to an end.

Article VI reads as follows:

Annual Members. Annual member shall be such persons as are invited to sing in the choruses organized by this society. The invitations may be extended by a 2/3 vote of the Board of Government. Such members are chosen for one year and may have their names dropped from the roll for failure to pay dues or for absence from two successive meetings without reasonable excuse.¹⁵

By the chorus's first rehearsal on 9 November 1903 over 200 singers had been elected to the society and the superintendent had appointed division officers for the soprano, alto, tenor and bass sections.¹⁶ It can be assumed that these elected singers performed the *Passion Music* (Bach's St. Matthew Passion) in March of 1904 for the Society's first performance. The first challenge to the above method of singer elections occurred during the Society's second season at a meeting of the board on 14 October 1904. The minutes state that the committee on voice trials asked that the following be proposed as a new by-law.¹⁷

1. No person shall be allowed to sing in the chorus without having passed a satisfactory examination in reading and singing.
2. No person shall sing with the society more than three consecutive years without a retrial of the voice.
3. Members of the chorus are liable to be called upon at any time for a retrial at the discretion for the conductor or the Superintendent of the chorus.¹⁸

This by-law was accepted and recorded by the society. The motivation for such a dramatic and detailed process of electing singers could have only come from the

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of both 3 November 1903 and 16 November 1903.

¹⁷ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 14 October 1904. The members of this "committee on voice trials" was not contained in the minutes.

conductor. It was apparent that Parker did not believe that some of the current singers in the chorus were capable or committed enough to prepare the music being put before them. By 24 May 1905 at the annual meeting of the society, this by-law was rendered unconstitutional.¹⁹ The minutes for that meeting state “noted that the voice trial by-law of 10 October 1904 be null and void because of illegality. A committee was asked to make a new recommendation at next meeting.”²⁰ The members of this committee, unlike those who wrote the first bylaw, were recorded in the minutes. They included Parker, G.F. Prentiss, and Charles DeForest.²¹ The committee subsequently gave the following report, which was accepted by the society board at their meeting on 4 October 1905:

1. Any person can become a member of the chorus upon recommendation of the membership committee.
2. The membership committee shall be appointed annually by the President.²²

This by-law was obviously not as demanding of the singers and did seem to leave some decisions up to the conductor as to who could and could not receive a position on the chorus. However it limited the ability of the conductor to remove someone once elected to the chorus.²³

Horatio Parker’s decision to help form the New Haven Oratorio Society has been open to much speculation. Outside of comments Parker made at the Society’s first organizational meeting, there is no written record as to why Parker suddenly wanted to

¹⁸ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 10 October 1904.

¹⁹ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 24 May 1905.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 4 October 1905.

form a new choral group in New Haven. Furthermore, differences in management between the New Haven Society and Gounod Society, along with the resulting problems that the society board and Parker experienced, brought even more uncertainty as to Parker's motivations. One possible answer, which has already been argued, is that Parker simply wanted to have a community chorus that could be more closely associated with Yale University and its growing musical resources. Another reason for his motivation could have been a desire to exert more influence on the choice of repertory. The discussion regarding Parker's desire to perform Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* is one example of the supposed "new" repertory he wanted to perform.²⁴ The final possibility for Parker's actions might have been a desire to emulate the choral groups that he had the opportunity both to hear and conduct in England.

The most authoritative scholar on the life and work of Horatio Parker is William Kearns. Kearns, in both his bio-bibliography of Parker and an article on Horatio Parker's connections to the English choral festivals, says that Parker's motive for creating the New Haven Oratorio Society was based on a desire to reproduce the work of the English societies in America.

...the organization of the New Haven Oratorio Society in 1903 enabled him to realize an even more cherished goal. Having recently returned from English choral festival performances, he was taken with the idea of transplanting this tradition to New Haven.²⁵

²³ It is clear that this by-law is a compromise of the original. It is clearly less than what Parker wanted, yet retaining some of his power in the statement: "the membership committee shall be appointed annually by the President."

²⁴ That new repertory was really not new, as many other choruses were already performing many of the same works.

²⁵ William Kearns, *Horatio Parker 1863-1919: His Life, Music and Ideas*. (Scarecrow Press Inc., 1990), 37.

The New Haven Oratorio Society, which Parker helped to organize in 1903, the year following the peak of his English performances, is his most explicit attempt to emulate English choral practice.²⁶

Kearns, in both articles, explains that the Society never grew to the prominence of the New Haven Symphony Orchestra, and provides a repertory list of the Society's performances, which he uses as his only definition for being "...like that of the English choral societies.." The words *cherished* and *explicit* seem also to be rather strong and suggest a conclusion for which there is no clear evidence. Furthermore, Kearns provides no reference to a diary entry or letter that might help to substantiate his conclusions. He supports his ideas solely based on the fact that Parker had unashamedly embraced the English ideals in choral music and since he had spent so much time in England, he could not help but reproduce the same in America.

Further observations about Kearns's conclusions must be made. First, his evidence of Parker's English overtures is a list of works that the New Haven Society performed.²⁷ These works, while they may have been the standard literature of the English, were also already becoming standard in America. In fact some of the repertory had already been performed previously by the Gounod, a group that Parker had been at least remotely associated with, but not conductor of, during the last few years of its existence. One also wonders why Kearns assumed that out of all the choral groups that Parker currently or had previously conducted he would choose to make the New Haven

²⁶ William K. Kearns, "Horatio Parker and the English Choral Societies, 1899-1902." *American Music* 4 (1986): 31.

²⁷ Kearns lists the following works in his article: *Messiah*, Handel; *B Minor Mass*, Bach; *Passion According to Saint Matthew*, Bach; *Stabat Mater*, Rossini; *Elijah*, Mendelssohn; *Redemption*, Gounod; *Requiem*, Verdi; *The Dream of Gerontius*, Elgar; *St. Christopher and Hora Novissima*, Parker. A

Oratorio Society the one that would “emulate” the English. This study has already shown that Parker experienced one road block after another to the changes he tried to make. While in the end Parker was usually successful, there remains no clear evidence that he was intentionally trying to turn the New Haven Society into an English festival chorus. The New Haven Oratorio Society, for whatever reasons, joined a long list of choral societies under the musical leadership of Horatio Parker.²⁸ The known repertory of the New Haven Society shows that Parker did little to set it apart from the other groups. The New Haven Society performed the standard repertory of the day and on rare occasion Parker would recommend that the chorus perform less common works, such as excerpts from Wagner’s *Lohengrin* or *Tannhäuser*.²⁹ It would seem that a work by Wagner would hardly qualify as a reason to claim that Parker wanted the chorus to be more English.

The financial status and resulting struggles of the Society are more clearly spelled out in the minutes of the organization. In March of 1906, Parker was asked to estimate the cost of performing the Wagner works mentioned above or Brahms's *Requiem* and Mendelssohn’s *Hymn of Praise* for the next season.³⁰ The chorus board, on 6 April 1906 approved performing *Lohengrin* in the Fall of 1906, and the Brahms and Mendelssohn the following Spring. During the very same meeting Benjamin Jepson brought a resolution before the chorus that read:

Whereas,

comparison list of the works performed by the New Haven as well as Gounod Oratorio Societies is in Appendix E.

²⁸ Chapter II contains a list of the choral groups in New England that Parker was associated with during this time.

²⁹ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 27 March 1906.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

The Present condition of the New Haven Oratorio Society as compared with the situation one year ago is highly satisfactory and
Whereas,
We are unable at the present time to meet our chief indebtedness as regards the services of our able Director Dr. Parker, therefore
Resolved,
That the members of this organization are deeply sensible of the obligations we are under to our distinguished leader Dr. Horatio Parker. In recognition of his eminent talent and faithful service we tender our thanks, and pledge ourselves by punctual attendance and conscientious work at future rehearsals, to sustain him in his laudable efforts to place the New Haven Oratorio Society in the very front of choral organizations.³¹

This resolution was the first public comment on the financial situation the society was facing. While it can be concluded that the chorus was very content with Parker's leadership and the stature of the chorus in New Haven, it was strikingly clear that there was no money to pay him for his work. This rather mixed message would be the last "positive" event, outside of a few performances, that the New Haven Society would have.

On 11 April 1907 the Society minutes began to reveal an increasingly unorganized and struggling leadership style. First, the Society voted to sing Gounod's *Redemption* in the Spring of 1908 with the Derby Choral Society.³² They would follow that on 4 October 1907 with another vote to make arrangements to perform Handel's *Messiah* with the Derby group in December 1907.³³ Both events did eventually occur; the *Messiah* was sung on 7 December 1907, but *Redemption* was not presented until 18 March 1909. These joint performances were an advantage to Parker because there was less preparation required, from a man who already had failing health. The overwhelming

³¹ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 16 April 1906.

³² Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 11 April 1907.

³³ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 4 October 1907.

majority of the New Haven Society's performances were given in Yale's Woolsey Hall. Yale apparently charged \$150 for three recitals, under an agreement with the New Haven Society in June 1904.³⁴ Any help that the Society could garner for this and other expenses for these recitals was obviously welcome. The musical reasons for the combination would seem to be less significant, except that, in the case of the *Messiah*, the combined choruses numbered almost 400, whereas individually they usually ran around 200.³⁵

Outside of the above two performances, the minutes, as already mentioned, became increasingly vague. The usual entry included a discussion of works or performance dates followed by votes on these items. Eventually the works were performed, but again hardly ever on the date for which they were originally proposed. Moreover, due to the lack of existing programs, it becomes very difficult to prove that some of the performances actually occurred.

The next troubling event with the Society occurs on 18 May 1908 when the minutes record that the annual meeting of the chorus could not be held since only one member outside of the officers was present.³⁶ This would occur again on 29 April 1909 and by 10 November 1911 the Society's board would vote to suspend all activities for a year.³⁷ The next entry in the minutes was dated 31 May 1911 and recorded the proceedings of that year's annual meeting. At that meeting several pieces for future programs were proposed and voted on. Most notably these works that were proposed

³⁴ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 15 June 1904.

³⁵ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, Box 1, collection of subscribers books and lists of personnel in the performances.

³⁶ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 18 May 1908.

included *Messiah* and *Judas Maccebeas* or *Israel in Egypt*.³⁸ All three of these works had been sung by the Gounod and almost every other chorus at some point in the past. The reason for such a step back must have only been to attract a larger audience and thus more money. The most important point of this meeting was not the repertory chosen but that the group suspended the constitution by-laws in order to elect officers from the floor of the meeting.³⁹ They elected a new President by moving a E. W. Brown into the position as well as returning P.E. Browning as secretary after a year off.⁴⁰ Browning was, outside of F.S. Ward the longstanding treasurer, one of the most prominent figures to remain involved consistently with the Society's leadership.

The Society would again suspend the by-laws on 24 May 1912 to elect new officers.⁴¹ The meeting of 11 November 1912 states that the Society voted to give a miscellaneous concert in March of 1913 without orchestra or soloists.⁴² The next entry of 12 March 1913 states that they voted to give the miscellaneous recital in Woolsey Hall on 24 April 1913 and that the extra music needed for the women's voices would be furnished by friends of the Society. The final entry in the minutes book for the New Haven Society is dated 20 May 1913. This entry states that there were many debt problems and the treasurer was instructed to pay the debt owed to Yale. Once again they suspended the by-laws and for the first time voted in Horatio Parker as president, while

³⁷ Ibid, minutes of the meetings on 29 April 1909 and 10 November 1911.

³⁸ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 31 May 1911.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid, minutes of 24 May 1912.

⁴² Ibid, minutes of 12 March 1913. It was noted over the words "orchestra" and "soloist" in the minutes that they were too expensive.

he was still serving as conductor.⁴³ The last entries in the Society's checkbook remain the final evidence of just how bad the financial situation had become:

Last 3 Checks and Final Total from NHOS Checkbook⁴⁴

DATE	FOR	AMOUNT/TOTAL
6-9-1913	Nesbit stables for a carriage	\$2.00
6-16-1913	Yale University	\$150.00
5-22-1917	Cash to F. S. Ward	\$45.66
TOTAL REMAINING		\$26.69

In conclusion, the constitution, repertory, and financial records of the New Haven Oratorio Society remain the most authoritative record of the success and struggle of this choral group. It is clear that the constitution and its various by-laws and amendments were really no different than those of the Gounod and many other choral societies. Without a doubt Horatio Parker, while possibly leading the rehearsal and performances like an English choral festival professional, was never able to take the chorus' stature in that direction, and the repertory is the best example of that. The financial difficulties, as with most musical organizations, are what finally brought an end to the Society's performances. When a group cannot bring in audiences and patrons, the cash does not flow, and thus it becomes impossible to exist without incurring major debt. Finally,

⁴³ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, minutes of 20 May 1913.

⁴⁴ Yale University Music Library MSS 5, folder 7, contains checkbooks of which the last one is quoted above it had a total of 17 blank unused checks left.

while there are several places both in Parker's diary and in the research of others that identified the New Haven Oratorio Society as continuing to perform after 1913, there are no entries or programs following that year. It is entirely possible that the New Haven Oratorio Society could have been confused with the dozens of other groups that were associated with Parker and Yale during this period. The onset of World War I and the death of Horatio Parker in 1919 brought complete and finally ended the Society's existence.

The demise of the New Haven Oratorio Society directly mirrors that of almost every other choral society of the time. It is unfortunate that the Parker and the leaders of the New Haven Society were unable to sustain it for as long as the Gounod. The Gounod, while also financially insecure, was often able to attract audiences through the use of soloists and a orchestra for most of their performances. In conclusion most of the successful community choral groups of today use a combined version of the management these two societies used. By relying both on the "star" power of soloists and orchestras as well as depending on local music schools to acquire the best members of the chorus most choral groups of today have had some success. However, nothing will ever approach the magnitude of interest the public had in American choral music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-centuries.

APPENDIX A

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Gounod Society

The Constitution and Bylaws of the Gounod Society

(these were originally written on 31 May 1888)

The Constitution

- I. This organization shall be known as the Gounod Society of New Haven.
- II. Its object shall be the promotion of the interests of music in the city of New Haven.
- III. The officers shall consist of a president, two vice presidents, a secretary and a treasurer whose duties shall be those usually pertaining to those offices.
- IV. There shall also be an executive committee consisting of the officers and two other members of the society. The executive committee shall have entire charge of the business of the Society, and shall appoint such committees from among their number as they shall deem advisable. Four members shall constitute a quorum and may transact any business. One of these committees shall be a finance committee, whose duty it shall be to audit all bills presented and approve them before the treasurer is authorized to pay them.
- V. The election of officers shall take place at the end of each concert season and shall be by ballot. Twenty members of the Society shall constitute a quorum, and a majority vote of said quorum shall be necessary to elect any officers.
- VI. This constitution may be amended or amended at anytime by a majority vote of the active membership.

The Bylaws

(These were written in 1891 and revised in 1894)

The articles below were written in a rather loose style, as if they were being discussed, approved and recorded all at the same time. As a matter of editing the language and structure of each article has been left unchanged.

Article I

The government of the society shall be rested in a board of nine directors to be called
“The Board of Government of the Gounod Society.”

Article II

There shall be an annual meeting of the society held during the months of April or May for the election of a Board of Government, to hold office for one year beginning on the first day of June following its election, and for the transaction of any other business necessary.

This and all other business meetings of the Society will be subject to the call of the President, notice of such meetings and their object being given to the members at least one week prior thereto.

Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Government, may be filled for the unexpired term by the board itself.

Article III

Forty members shall constitute a quorum of the Society for the transaction of business; but a low number shall be competent to adjourn for business to a certain day.

Article IV

The members of the Board of Government shall meet between the first and fifteenth days inclusive of the month of June following their election and shall choose by ballot the following officers of the Society for the coming year: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Librarian, Auditor and such other officers as may be deemed necessary for the management of the affairs of the society.

Article V

The President shall preside at all meetings of the society and of the Board of Government. In the absence of the President the Vice President shall perform his duties.

Article IV

The Secretary shall keep a record of the proceedings of the society and of the Board of Government, give all necessary notices of meetings, issue certificates of membership or membership cards, receive all moneys and pay the same over to the treasurer, taking his receipt therefore, and whenever required by the Board of

Government shall report the amount of such payments. He shall on each meeting of the society for the study or performance of music either by himself or suitable assistants take the names or numbers of all present.

Article VII

The Treasurer shall take charge of the society's funds and whenever required shall render an account to the Board of Government of all monies received and the state of the Treasury. He shall at the annual meeting, make a report of his receipts and disbursements as Treasurer, which report duly audited shall be place in the files of the Society.

Article VIII

It shall be the duty of the Librarian to take charge of the music and musical instruments belonging to or rented by the society, and to have general care and superintendence of the library.

Article IX

The Board of Government shall superintend the prudential affairs of the society: they shall have power to engage a musical director; to judge of the qualifications of candidates for membership in the Society; to select music for study and for performance, and to determine when any public performance may be given; to provide suitable accommodations for the society; to collect amarages due from members, when in their opinion circumstances require it and the best interests of the Society will be promoted. Manage everything which the insterests of the Society may in their judgement demand, which is not specifically provided for in these Articles.

Article X

The right to asses or tax members of the society for any purpose other than the annual fee for membership, and the sum required for the purchase of necessary music, shall rest exclusively with the society, and the Board of Government shall never exercise this however unless authorized in do, by a special resolution of the society.

Article XI

Meetings of the society for business, shall be held whenever, it is deemed expedient by the President or a majority of the Board of Government, or whenever 15 or more members of the Society shall make a request in writing to the President notice of such business or special meeting to be given or provided in Article II.

Article XII

No debate or discussion of any question shall be allowed during any rehearsal except by consent of the Board of Government.

Article XIII

No person shall be admitted to the society as a member, without first being approved by the Board of Government, as to quality of voice and ability in music reading and receiving at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of the votes of all members of the Board present at the time such candidate is balloted for, and no person shall be entitled to the privileges of the society, until such person shall have paid the annual membership fee and received a certificate of membership or membership card.

Article XIV

Any member refusing or neglecting for the space of 3 months, to pay money due from said member to the society, shall at the discretion of the Board of Government forfeit membership in the society, but shall nevertheless be able to pay such arrearages.

Article XV

No member of the society, except a member of the Board of Government, where present at any public rehearsal or performance given by the society, shall occupy a seat in the audience on penalty of a forfeiture of membership.

Article XVI

Any member who shall be absent from two consecutive rehearsals, or whom shall be repeatedly absent from rehearsal and when they fail to give to the Board of Government, through the division officer of that part of the chorus to which such member belongs, a satisfactory excuse for such absences, may be suspended from all rights and privileges by a vote of the Board.

The Board of Government may previous to any concert in which the society is advertised to take part, suspend from participation in that concert, such members as are in their opinions incompetent to sing the music to be performed.

Article XVII

No forfeiture of membership shall take place under Articles XIII, XII, XV, and XVI without the concurrence of a majority of the whole Board of Government, and in each case of forfeiture the member shall be notified by the secretary in writing.

Article XVIII

Any member of the Board of Government who shall be absent from three successive meetings without giving a satisfactory excuse may be reported to the society at any regular meeting and the society may declare his seat vacant.

Article XIX

These articles may be altered or amended by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the members present and voting thereon at any legal meeting of the society, the proposed amendments or alterations having been given in the call for the meeting.

APPENDIX B

The Constitution of the New Haven Oratorio Society

The Constitution of the New Haven Oratorio Society

(This Constitution was drawn up in October 1903.)

Constitution

- I. Name The name of this organization shall be the New Haven Oratorio Society.
- II. Object The purpose for which this organization is formed is the promotion of Musical culture in the city of New Haven and the state of Connecticut, in Cooperation with the Department of Music of Yale University.
- III. Membership The membership shall consist of the incorporators and such other persons as may be elected members under the by-laws adopted.

Bylaws

1. Officers

The officers shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, who shall perform the duties usually pertaining to such officers. There shall also be 8 directors, who together with the officers above mentioned, shall constitute a Board of Government and shall have charge of all affairs of this organization not otherwise provided for.

2. Conductor

There shall be a conductor elected by the board of government for a term of one year, who shall have control of the choice of music to be studied and its manner of presentation, subject to the approval of the board of government.

3. Assistant Secretary

The secretary may appoint an assistant secretary who shall also act as librarian and who may receive suitable compensation.

4. Term of Offices

The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, shall be elected for a term of one year. At the first election held under these by-laws four directors shall be elected for a term of two years and four for a term of one year. Each succeeding year four directors shall be elected for a term of two years. The President and directors may not serve two terms in succession.

5. Membership

In addition to the incorporators the membership shall consist of such persons as may be elected by a $\frac{3}{4}$ vote of members present at any regular meeting, provided that the entire membership shall not exceed 35.

6. Annual Members

Annual members shall be such persons as are invited to sing in the choruses organized by this society. The invitations may be extended by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the Board of Government. Such members are chosen for one year and may have their names dropped from the roll for failure to pay dues or for absence from two successive meetings without reasonable excuse.

7. Annual Meetings

The annual meeting for the election of officers and transaction of business shall be held in April or May at a date determined upon by the Board of Government. At the regular meeting of the chorus preceding the annual business meeting, reports on the work of the year shall be made by the President, Secretary and Treasurer and the Conductor. At this meeting annual members may share in the nomination of directors.

8. Method of Election

All officers shall be elected by ballot without nomination. The first ballot shall be informal and any member receiving five votes will be considered a candidate. The balloting shall proceed until one member receives a plurality of all votes cast.

9. Quorum

Ten members shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

10. Annual Dues

Members of the society and of the chorus shall pay annual dues of one dollar. Assessments made upon members shall not exceed \$5 in any one year.

11. Amendments

These by-laws may be amended by a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote of the members present at the annual meeting provided that not less than three weeks notice has been given.

APPENDIX C

Gounod Society Budget Example

Example of a Gounod Society Budget for the season 1900-1901 and following their performance in April of 1901. The Society apparently had just performed one of Horatio Parker's works, thus the reason for the wreath that was presented to him.

Expenses		Receipts	
Agramonte	450.00	Membership Fees	90.00
Orchestra and Solo	912.25	Hora Nov. Scores	162.85
Accompanist	100.00	Motet Scores	108.40
Hyperion Theater	265.50	Donation for Wreath	4.00
YMCA Hall	91.00	Advertisements in the Libretto	67.00
Scores of Hora Nov	235.45	Afternoon Rehearsals	138.50
Scores of Motet	112.00	Evening Performance	708.00
Rented Scores	25.00	TOTAL	1278.75
Advertising	137.88		
Printing	36.25	Total Receipts	1278.75
Libretto	72.00	Deficits to Balance	1196.20
Wreath for Parker	4.00	TOTAL	2474.95
Moving Piano and Insurance	13.78		
Checking Attendance	10.50	Deficit for the Season	Of 1900-1901
Stage Carpenter	3.30	Messiah	=
Postage Expenses	6.04	Hora Nov.	404.34
TOTAL	2474.95	TOTAL	1196.20
			1600.54

APPENDIX D

The Future of the Gounod

The Future of the Gounod

(The following is an article that was apparently distributed to the members of the Gounod Society in May 1903 and was unsigned. The New Haven news media may very well have printed the article to the public, but no proof of such was found.)

Incorrect erroneous statements in the newspaper about “annual deficits.” Also, item which would seem to indicate that the Board of Government had made overtures to the University regarding the adoption by the latter of the Gounod Society. As a matter of fact this has not an atom of truth in it. The Board of Government or no officer of the Board of Government, has ever approached any member of Yale University with any proposition of this kind whatsoever. Nor have we ever received any proposition of similar purport from the University. Nevertheless, it must be stated that we have had an intimation from an authoritative source that the University is desirous of establishing a mixed chorus next fall. This is no new thing. It has been an open secret for a year or two that when Woolsey Hall was finished the University had this end in contemplation. Therefore, it may be said to you tonight that there will be an attempt made to start a chorus next fall presumably under the conductorship of Professor Parker. But there is absolutely no invitation before the society from the University to have us become the whole or part of this undertaking. And the only reason for bringing this matter up tonight is because a situation will confront your next Board of Government which will have an important bearing in the decision as to whether we shall give a concert or not next season. There are already two choruses in the field, the Gounod and the Choral Union. The addition of a third would mean financial disaster somewhere naturally. It would fall upon that society whose expenses were the largest. The new University chorus with its free hall for rehearsals and concerts, its fine organ, in case an orchestra was dispensed with, and a general diminution in the expenses would of course financially handicap the Gounod completely. We could not possibly exist. Therefore, it seems to me that if the University establishes this chorus it is extremely improbable that any Board of Government of the Gounod would deem it wise to give a concert next season. This is the present situation which we are to consider. And in view of this it has been deemed wise by your present Board of Government to recommend to you that the whole matter be left for final decision to the new board, if you elect one. The Gounod Society is a organization duly chartered by the state of Connecticut and whatever is done, it would seem best to retain our charter, take a vacation for a season and abide by the results of the experiment to be undertaken by the University, I say “University” advisedly for I am not sure under what auspices the affairs of the new chorus are to be conducted. Please understand that I am trying to state to you clearly the simple business proposition which will confront us next fall in order that you may understand upon what conditions your new board will have to base their decisions.

APPENDIX E

Works Performed by the Gounod and New Haven Oratorio Societies

Gounod Society

Adstant Angelorum Chori

Horatio Parker
16 April 1901

Aida

Verdi
May 1903

Arminius

Max Bruch
18 April 1896

Die Meistersinger

Wagner
17 April 1896

Harold Harfarger

Horatio Parker
17 April 1896
9 March 1898

Hora Novissima

Horatio Parker
16 April 1901
October 1901

Rienzi

Wagner
17 April 1896

Missa Solemnis

Edward Grell (German)
9 March 1898

Samson and Delilah

Saint-Saëns
29 March 1897

Stabat Mater

Rossini
17 April 1896

New Haven Society

Arminius

Max Bruch
15 March 1906

Elijah

Mendelssohn
27 January 1910

Hymn of Praise

Mendelssohn
14 March 1907

Judas Maacbaeus

Mendelssohn
14 December 1911

The Dream of Gerontius

Edward Elgar
19 March 1908

Hora Novissima

Horatio Parker
10 December 1908

Lohengrin

Wagner
6 December 1906

Messiah

Handel
12 December 1907

Requiem

Brahms
14 March 1907

Redemption

Gounod
8 March 1909

St. Paul Oratorio
Mendelssohn
19 March 1903

The Legend of Saint Christopher
Horatio Parker
7 December 1905

Tristan and Isolde
Wagner
18 April 1896

Stabat Mater
Rossini
10 Decemeber 1908

Women and Roses
C.A. Lidgey (English)
9 March 1898

Requiem
Verdi
9 February 1905

St. Matthew Passion
Bach
Spring 1904

The above lists are not meant to be exhaustive. The works were compiled as I reviewed programs and minutes of the organizations as well as the program collections in other Yale Music Library Miscellaneous Manuscripts having to do with Horatio Parker. The dates provided are when the work was performed. It is highly likely that both the Gounod and New Haven Society performed many works not listed here. Despite the lack of a total and complete list of works performed, the above works are a complete enough list to display a great variety in the selection of music performed.

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1. Manuscript book: Minutes and Records 10-01-1903-05-20-1913
Constitution
 2. Manuscript book: 2 Subscription records; 1905-1906 season,
1906-1907 season.
 3. Manuscript book: 2 Subscription records; 1907-1908 season,
1908-1909 season.
 4. Manuscript book: Subscription Records 1909-1910
 5. Manuscript book: Treasurer's Account book 11-1903-07-1913
 6. Two Programs 4-24-1913, Letter from Berry Bacon to P.E. Browning
11-13-1910.

7. Cancelled checks, checkbook, and balance statement; copy of outstanding notes; Statement of advertising bill for concert on 4-24-1913; Bill for use of a grand piano; Yale University bills to NHOS for use of Woolsey Hall and additional services; Treasurer's reports of the NHOS for: 1907-08; 1908-09; 1909-10; 1911-12; 1913.

Yale University Music Library, Archival Collections, MSS 60: *The Gounod Society Papers: 1887-1919*. 7 folders:

1. Programs and Clippings
2. Attendance Records and Minutes 1887-1891
3. Attendance Records 1891-1895
4. Attendance Records 1896-1897
5. Minutes Only 1891-1903
6. List of Members
7. Correspondence 1897-1901

Yale University Music Library, Archival Collections, MSS 32: *The Horatio Parker Papers* compiled by Adrienne Nesnow.

The Horatio Parker Diaries

Folders

1. Information on various choral societies
6. Individual correspondence