

**CREATING A HOME CULTURE FOR THE PHONOGRAPH: WOMEN AND  
THE RISE OF SOUND RECORDINGS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1877-1913**

by

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**Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of**

**Music in partial fulfillment**

**Of the requirements for the degree of**

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Pittsburgh**

**2007**

**UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH**  

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**Nathan David Bowers, Doctor of Philosophy**

**University of Pittsburgh, 2007**

This dissertation explains processes of change and adaptation undergone by the early phonographs and talking machines, documenting social and musical forces through which consumers and businessmen shaped an in-home culture for sound recordings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. As a force for change in music in the home, the early phonograph embraced middle-class ideologies exemplified in the parlor of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries in order to create a domestic market. Early phonograph companies realized that women maintained and managed the affairs of the parlor, deciding what items were purchased for display and what activities were morally acceptable. Other responsibilities included controlling the household funds and providing music education in the home. For these reasons, the developing recording industry targeted women as a specific consumer group ensuring the success of the talking machine and creation of an “in-home” culture for pre-recorded music in America, one that continues to affect the way we consume music today.

Initially designed as a speech recorder, Edison’s invention was viewed by the majority of Americans as a machine without daily application. Instead, the phonograph needed to be identified as a perfected instrument, a piece of parlor furniture, and a device capable of saving housewives time, labor and money. By providing pre-recorded music in the form of discs, this device replaced playing and singing around the piano in the



home. Opera arias were featured in the early phonograph advertisements since they represented the “best music,” sung by the “greatest singers,” and provided an instant source of culture, quality entertainment, education and social status for those who purchased the pre-recorded discs. Capitalizing on the “prima-donna” complex prevalent among young women of the time, the early recording industry also promised superior voice lessons by the greatest singers on repeatable discs. Finally, the early phonograph companies placed a high priority on music appreciation. The ability to enjoy “quality music” and discuss merits of a particular piece became an important display of musical ability, one as relevant and refined as actual playing and singing.

## PREFACE

This dissertation would not have been possible without the assistance of many teachers, colleagues, friends and family members. Although I cannot possibly list every individual who helped bring this project to a conclusion, I want to recognize as many as I can in the following pages. I thank first my dissertation committee for their valuable insights that helped create the final version of this paper. Specifically, I offer my sincerest gratitude to my dissertation advisor, Deane Root, who contributed many hours with countless meetings, many thoughtful questions, unlimited verbal encouragement and editorial suggestions, all of which contributed to an overwhelmingly positive defense. His genuine interest in this project provided not only practical, but also much needed emotional support throughout its many stages. Don Franklin's care and concern have been exceptional. He was always available to discuss my latest research and life concerns, and his pertinent questions provided priceless guidance in the formation of this topic. From the beginning, Mary Lewis's insights and comments have proven invaluable, being the first to question the role of women in the history of the early recording industry. And Michael Broyles, whose gentle spirit and straightforward questions offered me renewed energy at crucial points along the way. Furthermore, his work on the historical understanding of art music in the United States provided research vital to this project.

I thank the librarians and professors in the music department at the University of Pittsburgh for their many contributions to my graduate school experience. Specifically, I thank Jim Cassaro, head music librarian, for his aid in locating resources and materials,

and providing direction in my many different research projects; Kathy Haines, for generously providing input as well as unlimited access to the many rare collections in the archive at the Center for American Music—her friendship, insights and encouragement have also proven invaluable; John Harvith, for providing valuable feedback in the early stages of this project, and continuing to make his collection of recordings and related materials available to me. I also thank Charles Reynolds for allowing access to the Edison surveys housed at the University of Michigan Music Library.

I thank my family, specifically my parents, David and Eileen Bowers, for their years of support, love and prayers, which sustained me through many dark hours—dad, you are still one of the wisest people I know; Mom and Pop Hallstrom for welcoming me into their family, offering artistic insights and spirited conversation—your unmerited support is priceless; and my many brothers and sisters, Jenn, Katie, Amanda, Robin, Kay, Drew, Josh, Eric, David and Steve, for always putting family first, even when I could not.

Some friends deserve special thanks: Glen Meakem, for his refreshing, energetic and positive spirit during the final days of this project, and for helping me see “the light at the end of the tunnel;” Mark Peters, for aid and advice on chapter four, strength of character and work ethic; Sam Hsu, for being the first to realize I was a musicologist; David and Eleanor Shockey, for your love of music and teaching; Kevin Patterson, for our craft brewing partnership—you will never know how much I benefited from those hours spent around the brew pot; the guys in Greenville, Bill, Rob, David, Reggie and Jeff, allowing me to vacate for a day or two in the country without ever requiring anything in return; Ed and Susan Norman along with Mark and Carol Elek for helping me replace my computer halfway through this project; and Jason Grant, Joanna Hasting

Smolko, Dorcinda Knauth, Sister Agatha; Desmond Harmon; Camille Peters, Daniel Grimminger and Brandi Neal for adding to my years as a graduate student with many thoughtful discussions around both the seminar table and the dinner table.

Finally, I thank Joy, my greatest friend and wife for her unbelievable support financially, emotionally and spiritually. Thank you Joy, for working full time, paying our bills, preparing our tax returns, brainstorming with me, pretending to listen as I read paragraphs out loud, and examining various tables and illustrations for clarity and errors. Your commitment to this project and your constant belief in me is the greatest gift you could have ever given me.

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

### The Topic

This dissertation is a musicological study of the social and musical forces through which consumers and businesses shaped an in-home culture for sound recordings during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The budding industry drew on established classical musical practices and Victorian American social ideology, particularly gendered responsibilities in the family, to transform the phonograph from an office tool that recorded individual dictation to an in-home product capable only of playing back pre-existent recordings. Women were the chief arbiters of every aspect of home life, including finances, culture, education, entertainment and social display of the family; they needed to embrace recorded music and bring it into the family sanctuary if the phonograph was to be installed in the musical life of the typical middle-class home in the United States.

In 1954, Roland Gelatt, editor of *High Fidelity* magazine, lamented that no one had yet seen fit to describe the legacy of the phonograph.<sup>1</sup> Half a century later, scholars have only begun to address larger questions concerning this heritage. Recorded music is ubiquitous today, but after Edison invented the phonograph in 1877, nearly 25 years passed before a recording industry actively sought to establish consumer demand for recorded music in the home.

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<sup>1</sup> Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph: From Tinfoil to High Fidelity* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott, 1954, 1955), 303-304. *High Fidelity* provided many reviews of commercially released recordings.

Thomas Edison viewed his invention primarily as a business tool for letter writing and dictation. In fact, many of the eleven uses he suggested emphasized the device's ability to record the speaking voice, creating a sort of vocal photograph: Fifth on his list Edison placed the musical possibilities: "The phonograph will undoubtedly be liberally devoted to music.... As a teacher it will be used to enable one to master a new air, the child to form its first songs, or to sing him to sleep."<sup>2</sup> Yet even in this statement, Edison fails to recognize the phonograph's entertainment potential, focusing instead on the notion of a teaching tool. He placed the machine's ability to record the human speaking voice at the foundation of his business plan for a phonograph industry. He failed to imagine the idea of creating an in-home market that focused on prerecorded music.

Although Edison completed his invention by 1877, historical accounts and many scholars of recordings often overlook the earliest records and the effects of a preexistent musical culture on the phonograph's placement, use and status in society. This has had the inadvertent effect of implying that a phonographic culture spontaneously occurred in the early twentieth century, and ignoring the first twenty-five years of recording history and earlier musical practices. My study seeks to provide a picture of the early phonograph's place in America's musical life, enriching our understanding of the musical and social forces that contributed to the rise of recording culture in America.

No other study has yet explained how the new medium of reproducible sound was a part of gendered society, depending on women (not businessmen) for its success. The cutting edge of research since 1995 explores the later recording industry's effects on our modern musical world, demonstrating how a recording culture changed and shaped

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<sup>2</sup> For a complete list of these uses, see John Harvith and Susan Edwards Harvith, eds, *Edison, Musicians, and the Phonograph: A Century in Retrospect* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 1.

musical expectations of performers, consumers and the educational system, addressing listeners' perceptions, performers' techniques, and scholars' memory in the twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> This dissertation, however, addresses a question fundamental to all this research but not yet posed by it: what were the cultural forces that shaped the recording practices in the first place. In particular, how did music intersect with business practice during a crucial time in phonographic history, creating and launching ideas that ultimately defined or redefined the initial purposes for Edison's invention. This study provides further insights into the earliest years of recording history, explaining why the success of the phonograph was gradual and not instantaneous, and why this success depended on the creation of an in-home market sustained through the advertising of particular musical genres on records that were purchased primarily by women.

No scholar has shown how or why the phonograph gradually replaced amateur performance as the principal means of private music making in the home. In comparison with the piano or parlor organ, the recording industry provided a cheap instrument, and its opera recordings allowed even working-class Americans access to "The Great Artists." Recording companies targeted an already recognized female consumer group by imitating successful marketing strategies of other industries for home products, including the sewing machine and prepared food. Advertisements promised to increase social status through musical training, moral education and uplifting entertainment on repeatable records that saved time, money and labor over learning to use the piano.

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<sup>3</sup> Recent scholarship includes Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Mark Katz, "The Phonograph Effect: The Influence of Recording on Listener, Performer, Composer, 1900-1940" (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Michigan, 1999), 3; Barbara Engh, "After 'His Master's Voice': Post-phonographic Aurality" (Ph. D. Dissertation: University of Minnesota, 1997), 104-120; William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), xiii.

Promising the “best music,” the recording industry recreated the admired performing tradition of opera arias on their discs, providing ownership and unlimited access to the voices of opera stars. These records provided not only moral music and quality entertainment, but also a “superior voice lesson” for students. As women increasingly welcomed the innovation of recordings, the phonograph found growing acceptance in the American home.

“Questions about the impact of the phonograph on contemporary culture have not received the critical attention they deserve.”<sup>4</sup> No avenue of life remains untransformed by the advent of recording devices. We are just beginning to grasp the extent to which a century of recorded music changed the way we listen to music, the way it is performed and what music we listen to. In past years, musicologists and music historians have been reluctant to investigate discs.<sup>5</sup> Colin Symes, a lecturer in the Australian Centre for Educational Studies at Macquarie University, challenges scholars in his book *Setting the Record Straight*: “Although much has been written about the ways in which the phonograph has transformed the conditions of listening to music, the nature of recorded sound and its underlying discourses have not been subjected to the same degree of analysis.”<sup>6</sup> Sound archives remain uninvestigated by the general public, professional musician, historian or scholar.<sup>7</sup> Timothy Day, in his book *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History*, argues that a comprehensive study of recordings is not possible until much more information is unearthed and analyzed concerning the

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<sup>4</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 3.

<sup>5</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), ix.

<sup>6</sup> Symes, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Day, 232.

intellectual history, economic forces, creation of markets and the aesthetics of recorded music.<sup>8</sup> There is no doubt that addressing discs as sources containing historical information, and the contexts within which they were recorded, will prompt new questions and understanding about musical performances and the nature of musical experiences in our culture today.

The majority of previous scholarship concerning the history of the phonograph begins with the twentieth century after the creation of “highbrow” music labels and after an opposition had become established between these recordings and “lowbrow” music. Recent scholarship has begun to explore popular music heard in the phonograph parlors<sup>9</sup> during the 1890s and this music’s influence on the developing industry. Viewing the development of “classical” recordings as a possible backlash against popular music, these studies have discussed little else concerning art music from the corresponding time period. This dissertation will help fill this gap in our understanding of the recording era.

The time frame for this study begins appropriately enough in the year 1877. On December 24 of that year, Edison applied for the first patent for a “phonograph or speaking machine” with the United States Patent Office. It was awarded on February 19, 1878.<sup>10</sup> I will end this study in 1913, arguing that the recording industry’s practices had become firmly established by this year. For instance, in 1912 Victor spent an unprecedented 1.5 million dollars on advertisements.<sup>11</sup> Having such resources suggests that Victor realized a large income from its record sales and believed that still greater

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<sup>8</sup> Day, ix.

<sup>9</sup> Defined as penny arcades and nickelodeons. For a discussion of “phonograph parlor” music, see Kenney, 24-28.

<sup>10</sup> For a facsimile of this application, see Oliver Read and Walter L. Welch, *From Tin Foil To Stereo: Evolution of the Phonograph* (Second Edition. Indianapolis, IN: Howard W. Sams & Co., Inc., 1976), 7-9.

<sup>11</sup> Kenney, 52.

revenues could be created. In the same year, Victor first published the *Victor Book of Opera: Stories of Seventy Grand Operas with Three Hundred Illustrations & Descriptions of Seven Hundred Victor Opera Records*, a catalogue of Victor records complete with plot summaries and illustrations depicting the greatest opera stars, in costume.<sup>12</sup> The very next year (1913), Victor expanded this book to include “one hundred operas with five hundred illustrations and descriptions of one thousand Victor opera records.”<sup>13</sup> Editions of this book proved extremely successful, and it continued to be published until 1929.<sup>14</sup> In 1913, Victor catalogues added additional musical genres including piano and symphonic music. They also began publication of a second book titled *What We Hear in Music: A Laboratory Course of Study in Music History and Appreciation* that included discussions of instrumental music together with opera.<sup>15</sup> This year also marked the first complete symphonies offered for sale in England.<sup>16</sup> Although several more years would pass before a record collector in the United States could purchase Beethoven’s entire Fifth Symphony, the amount of financial resources committed by the Victor Company suggest a successful industry, albeit one capable of realizing still greater economic returns.

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<sup>12</sup> *Victor Book of the Opera: Stories of Seventy Grand Operas with Three Hundred Illustrations & Descriptions of Seven Hundred Victor Opera Records* (Camden, NJ: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1912).

<sup>13</sup> *Victor Book of the Opera: Stories of One Hundred Grand Operas with Five Hundred Illustrations & Descriptions of One Thousand Victor Opera Records* (Revised Edition. Camden, NJ: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1913).

<sup>14</sup> Harvith and Harvith, 2. This is the year of the October stock market crash, which probably contributed to the brief pause in publication.

<sup>15</sup> Anne Shaw Faulkner, *What We Hear in Music: A Laboratory Course of Study in Music History and Appreciation for Four Years of High School, Academy, College, Music Club or Home Study* (Camden, NJ: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1913). As it did with its book on opera, Victor frequently updated and republished this book to include additional Victor recordings.

<sup>16</sup> See Harvith and Harvith, 3; and Harold C. Schonberg, “A Half Century of Orchestra Recording,” *Musical Courier* 127, no 6 (December 1945): 7. These “first” symphonies are Beethoven’s Fifth and Sixth Symphonies.



## Overview of Chapters

Chapter 2, “Edison’s Misplaced Purpose: Personal Record Making Creates a Novelty Item,” argues that the phonograph was not successful as a dictation machine, designed primarily as a labor-saving device for businessmen. The consumer recording feature was actually a hindrance to the large-scale success of the machine. People did not enjoy hearing their own voices “play back,” and they did not see much purpose in making personal records. Therefore, the machine was viewed initially as a novelty item or modern marvel, capable of little more than demonstrating scientific advancement, and without practical applications. With Edison’s emphasis on the spoken voice and the recording apparatus, the early phonograph had little connection with music, and was an invention with a misplaced purpose. Ultimately, the phonograph would need to be redefined as a parlor instrument, capable of saving time for housewives by providing pre-recorded music that promised to bring culture, quality entertainment, education and social status into the home, but this is a later chapter.

The second half of chapter 2 recalls the story of the nickelodeons and penny arcades as the first alternative use for the phonograph. Here, the industry began focusing on the playback potential of the machine, redefining the phonograph as an entertainment device. For a nickel, a person could now hear the latest march, popular song, famous whistler or minstrel show excerpt. Placed in public spaces with other novelty items, coin-operated phonographs were able to create a fledgling market, but ultimately were insufficient to sustain a stable industry. The short-lived popularity of the “coin-op” phonograph taught companies that success could be had with a simpler machine, one that only replayed music. This created a need for pre-recorded cylinders, along with

catalogues—continuously updated with new recordings—that encouraged people to spend more money after the purchase of the initial talking machine and records. The industry realized that long-term success could be had only after an in-home recording culture could be created and maintained.

Chapter 3, “The Parlor: Women’s Place of Power,” discusses the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century relevant middle-class ideology of the parlor, emphasizing that women completely controlled its contents and activities, and its use as a locus for music in the home. Such power included many social responsibilities that required much time and effort. The musical activities, often viewed as a moral imperative, were chief among these responsibilities that took place in the home. These included performing (singing and playing the piano or parlor organ) on a regular basis for the rest of the family, performing at social gatherings in the parlor for neighbors and friends, and providing a musical education that was also morally uplifting for the children in the home. All of these music activities, along with the other parlor responsibilities, required many hours of preparation.

The chapter provides a brief history of advertising practices in the United States between 1877 and 1913, documenting that women were the primary consumers of items for the home. Women found themselves increasingly the target of advertisements by the turn of the century since it was believed that they made 85% of the purchases for the home.<sup>17</sup> In 1911, Herbert Casson, a pioneer in the field of early advertising, recognized women as one of the two most obvious targets, the other being farmers.<sup>18</sup> One 1894 ad in

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<sup>17</sup> Bob Batchelor, *The 1900s* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 57.

<sup>18</sup> Casson argued that the most frequent cause of failure was when advertisers failed to target these groups, opting instead for the vague “this-is-for-nobody-in-particular” approach. Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising*

*Ladies World* noted that women can't vote, can't sit on juries, can't put down riots, but they do purchase over 80% of all articles used by the family and the household; the ad includes pictures of elegantly dressed women.<sup>19</sup> Since women were primarily responsible for the maintenance of parlor life, it is not surprising that they were responsible for making the majority of purchases for the home. With this responsibility came the control of the family's income. Women were given their husband's pay and were expected to purchase everything needed including essentials such as food, clothing, wood or coal, and later heating oil and gas, as well as "non-essentials" such as books, periodicals, sheet music, musical instruments and talking machines.

Therefore, advertisements for just about everything utilized rhetoric thought to appeal directly to Victorian women. For example, advertisements often promised to make life easier for the woman who purchased and used the particular product promoted. Advertisements for food products such as canned beans or instant Jell-O, devices such as sewing machines, and kitchen appliances promised to save her time, energy and money. Many advertisements also promised to bring culture, education and social status into the home, promising to aid women in their moral responsibilities, simply through the ownership of the particular item. Soaps, parlor organs and pianos, periodicals and books all claimed to aid in the creation and maintenance of an acceptable social status for the family. Another promise of the ads was their products' ability to provide aid and comfort. Such democratizing rhetoric appealed directly to the sense of mission that Victorian Americans created for themselves, that all people have the ability to achieve

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*Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 285.

<sup>19</sup> Laird, 286.

success in business, home life and social status. Such success was manifested in the home through the acquisition of items representing abundance.

In order to create an in-home market for the phonograph, companies needed to redefine Edison's invention as a machine appropriate to the parlor, one that women in particular would find non-threatening and even necessary to sustain a culturally rich environment. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 describe this transformation. Chapter 4, "The 'Feminized' Phonograph: A Quality Item at a Bargain Price," demonstrates how the industry redefined Edison's invention as a cost-effective alternative to the piano and the parlor organ. It promised to save women money, costing only \$10 instead of the \$125 needed for the piano or the \$57 needed for a parlor organ. Directing its appeal to women, the phonograph industry adopted much of the rhetoric of art music, promising to provide culture in the form of opera arias and musical education from the "best" and "most famous" singers.

Chapter 5, "Perfected Phonograph: Replacement for Practice in the Parlor," explores how the industry redesigned the looks of the talking machine to be more than a musical instrument and made it into a piece of decorative furniture appropriate to the parlor, beginning with the Victor company's Victrola first sold in 1906. Although much more expensive, the Victrola promised to bring even more culture into the home with its refined furniture styles, allowing individuals to display their purchase in the parlor along with the many other fine items symbolizing abundance and class.

Chapter 6, "'The Best Friend of a Hostess is the Victrola': Early Talking Machines Marketed as Labor-Saving Devices," describes how the talking machine was also marketed as a labor-saving device for women, promising to free many hours

previously needed for piano practice, and allowing women to present music in the home without the expenditure of time, energy and financial resources required to purchase and learn to play the piano. Now a person could simply buy the desired disc and the particular singer would sing for the family whenever the woman desired. Instant music was available at one's fingertips.

Chapter 7, "Popular Music that is Also Good for You: Opera Arias Are a Successful Recorded Genre," explores the early phonograph's reliance on opera as a popular genre in the United States. Drawing on the earlier heart-song tradition, the repertoire of the "best" music performed by the famous opera singers consisted of opera arias that already held popular appeal. Many arias that were recorded had already been familiar in the home through sheet music arrangements for piano and voice. Amateur musicians, the majority of whom were female, readily performed these popular titles for friends and family members in the parlor, influenced by the recital tradition of the popular female stars beginning with Jenny Lind. Before the advent of recordings, many people were denied access to hearing the famous singers. But these same voices and titles on disc provided everyone—even the least-skilled home musicians—with access to "the greatest stars." Recorded opera arias thus were seen as promoting the democratic ideals of American society.

The chapter notes the heavy use of particular singers in the recording catalogues; it also raises the question of what attracted the buyers: "Is it that voice? Or is it that name?" Although Enrico Caruso was the first opera singer awarded a recording contract, the industry quickly realized that if they were to sell large quantities of recordings, they

needed to put the names and faces of women on the discs and cylinders that contained operatic performances.

The chapter also discusses the “prima-donna” complex prevalent among young women of the time. Voice study remained an important part of young women’s education, and many articles appeared in popular magazines describing the success of famous singers, offering advice to young women who wished to study voice and providing lists of teachers with whom one should hope to study. Success on the opera stage meant popularity, glamour and adoring fans, much like the rock-star phenomenon and popular television show *American Idol* in the early twenty-first century. While some women who studied voice may have dreamt of such adulation, they were all reminded of the usefulness of their music education as preparation for the business of home-making. In fact, a 1913 article in *Etude* magazine estimated that 95 percent of all lessons were taught to students who intended to use their skills solely in the home.<sup>20</sup>

This chapter examines in detail the rhetoric used in a Victor advertising campaign in *Musical America* between 1905 and 1913. These advertisements are distinctive for their consistent use of famous female opera singers and their photos and text suggesting that a “superior voice lesson” from these same stars could be had on the Victor Red Seal Record; the recordings were not to be viewed as mere entertainment but rather as recorded voice lessons. The superiority of the phonograph-based “lesson” (performance) was said to be its repeatability, its relatively low cost and its access to the best singers (and hence the best teachers). Being able to study every nuance of the professional singer over and over again along with the promise of learning to reproduce a performance by a particular singer with one’s own voice, all for much less than studying with an actual

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<sup>20</sup> Mary M. Schmitz, “Recitals in the Homes of Pupils,” *Etude* 31, no. 10 (1913): 757.

teacher, made women desire to own these recordings. These “lessons” could also be taken at the “student’s” convenience, and even paused if necessary.

Although there were men who studied voice and Victor did use some famous male singers in this campaign, America’s fascination with the prima donna, the lead female opera role, provided a social demand that encouraged Victor to target the aspiring female singer. These records were marketed to teach the woman how to sing better. The early phonograph industry’s decision to view women as a consumer group and to establish at least one marketing campaign directed primarily at them was part of its goal of creating an “in-home use” culture for its “talking machine.” Women, viewed in the social ideology as protectors and preservers of private life, were targeted by the industry advertisers as a means to ensure the success of the talking machine for the home market.

### **Advertising Myths for the Phonograph**

The majority of these chapters (chapters 2-8) make extensive use of phonograph advertisements from popular-music and women’s magazines of the early twentieth century. Many of the ideals set forth in the writings of the founders of this country—such as vague concepts of liberty, independence and equality—were extrapolated and incorporated by the budding record industry into their early advertisements, creating, encouraging and sustaining a market for recordings with the promise of providing culture in the home. As a discourse between a young industry and a budding consumer market, the images and words of these ads reveal the “fables of abundance,” the changing myths associated with Edison’s invention along with the inferred responses of consumers that caused these changes. The phonograph’s ultimate success in the home was inextricably

connected to the American myths emphasized in the pages of these popular magazines, even forcing the inventor to change his stated purposes for it.

This nation has long suffered from an inferiority complex concerning music and the arts. Many believed the “New World” lacked a folk culture, unique language or unique artistic genre.<sup>21</sup> As a result, Americans speculated greatly on their national identity, trying to invent a nation that was unique and at the same time could compete on a world stage. Although lacking a strong artistic history, this new American life was in between reality and ideal or fact and shared dreams and beliefs that in many ways emulated those of the early Greek and Roman republics.<sup>22</sup> The belief that all people were created equal in the eyes of government prompted the American Revolution and later, the Civil War of the United States. There was a strong sense of mission among the earliest immigrants who came on to these shores—to incorporate the classless ideals “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness”—but this mission was without a history to draw on. Americans strove to find their way onto the world stage through invention. Many inventions now associated with the industrialized world are attributed to Americans (although none were the sole originator of the ideas that brought the invention to fruition), such as Robert Fulton’s steam-boat, James Watt’s steam-engine, George Stephenson’s locomotive-engine, Eli Whitney’s cotton gin, Alexander Bell’s telephone and Edison’s electric light, megaphone, quadruplex telegraphy and the phonograph.<sup>23</sup>

In spite of these “scientific” achievements, Europeans were quick to remind American citizens that their ability to create art was of an inferior order in relation to the

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<sup>21</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, “Introduction,” in *Introduction to American Studies*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperly (New York: Longman, 1998), 7.

<sup>22</sup> Bradbury, 2.

<sup>23</sup> E.E. Hale, ed., *Lights of Two Centuries* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1887), 515-603.



rest of the modern world, and criticize their attempts at theatre, opera and visual art. By the turn of the twentieth century, little had changed. Americans were still trying to establish an “American” school of composition and educate their “musically vulgar” public in the merits of the “best music.”

Perhaps this European reaction was a backlash against the utopian image associated with America. Europeans had dreamed about a new world long before Columbus found the shores of the American continent in 1492. *Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (1356), a late medieval fantastic work with immense appeal in Western Europe, references an imaginative world. Sir Thomas Moore constructs a myth of utopia in 1516, suggesting an ideal climate; soft, gentle and temperate air; the urban environment a planned and aesthetically pleasing city in accordance with nature; a society guided by a free, compulsory education for children; daily lectures for adults; and free minds exercised at town meetings through which government took place. Even Plato speculated about a utopia in “Atlantis,” the lost city.<sup>24</sup> The concept of abundance available to every citizen was a central theme in all versions of mythical paradise on earth.

After the “new” land was found by Columbus, additional myths found their way into the rhetoric associated with the American continent. For example, Sir Humphrey Gilbert produced *Discourse of a Discovery for a New Passage to Cataia* (1566) that promised a place for religious dissidents and the poor of England.<sup>25</sup> America was viewed as a refuge by the Puritans, who viewed the “New World” as a Zion or New Jerusalem. John Cotton delivered his farewell sermon in 1630, using 2 Samuel 7:10 from the Old

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<sup>24</sup> Ellman Crasnow and Philip Haffenden, “New FoundeLand,” in *Introduction to American Studies*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperly (New York: Longman, 1998), 24.

<sup>25</sup> Crasnow and Haffenden, 24-5.

Testament to argue that the new land was appointed by God for his people (Cotton's congregation).<sup>26</sup> "The enduring myth of an earthly paradise melded material abundance with the spiritual abundance of salvation, celebrating eternal ease in a nurturant land of plenty."<sup>27</sup>

Although vague and generic by design, these "American myths" helped create inroads for the in-home acceptance of the phonograph. Individuals aspired to these democratic ideals through the appreciation of "high culture," and that is precisely what was promised to the consumer of recordings in these early advertisements. As Alexis de Toqueville suggested, America is more than America, it also was a laboratory for modern ideas, processes, experiences and the workings of modern society and history.<sup>28</sup> William Howland Kenney states, "To argue that the Phonograph has had this or that particular uniform influence, whether it be the redemption of a musically vulgar nation through recorded European concert hall music or the desecration of a purer musical vision by commercialization, oversimplifies the historical experience of the phonograph. More important, such blanket criticisms have been made at the expense of any understanding of the actual processes by which recorded music has been made."<sup>29</sup> Although Americans increasingly welcomed the phonograph into their parlors, a development widely touted as the best means to help America become a truly musical nation, the process of reinvention and adaptation that Edison's machine was forced to go through is an important part of the early phonograph history.

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<sup>26</sup> Crasnow and Haffenden, 32.

<sup>27</sup> Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance: A Cultural History of Advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 17-18.

<sup>28</sup> Bradbury, 19.

<sup>29</sup> Kenney, xiv.

This process of change can be traced through early phonograph advertisements.

A cultural historian, Kenneth L. Ames, has written,

One way to gain access to those concealed or unarticulated motivations is to examine pictorial sources from the period, particularly advertising. Designed to sell products, advertising images of the nineteenth century generally appealed to and endorsed the values of mainstream America. Profit lay in giving society what it wanted, not trying to reform it. Advertising exploited the shared fictions of Victorian America.<sup>30</sup>

Particularly in the West, “advertisements have acquired an iconic significance.” They are more than inanimate symbols; they have combined rhetoric with pictures that promote and maintain a belief in the abilities of society to create an abundance of ideas, products, wealth and health for people to share and consume. An essential element of a utopian earthly paradise, “fables of abundance,” can be traced through the classical myths mentioned above, writings in the Talmud, Elizabethan reports about the New World and on into modern advertising.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the most profound advertising myths of the twentieth century were utilized by the early phonograph industry, and parallel practices are found in the early ads manufacturers of food products such as Spam, invented in 1937 and sold by the Hormel food company. From humble beginnings, Spam had to fight negative folklore that suggested it was made from the lowest forms of meat including hoofs and pig snouts, instead of pork shoulder and actual ham. Its early unpopularity was increased by the extensive use of canned ham (often called Spam) as a “K-ration” issued to soldiers of the United States and their allies during World War II and the Korean conflict. Hormel foods established an advertising campaign that appealed directly to Americans with limited

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<sup>30</sup> Kenneth L Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 160.

<sup>31</sup> Lears, 2-3, 18.

means, promising to provide “abundance” with a balanced meal full of vitamins at a cheap price that made people (particularly husbands) happy when it was served for dinner.

Following a very successful campaign, Spam can now be found all around the globe and is no longer limited to soldiers who need an alternative food source, but is consumed by many different people including millionaires, race car drivers, famous poets, artists, writers, scientists and newspaper columnists. The Fly by Night Club in Alaska boasts a menu made up entirely of Spam. Hawaii has developed a Spam sushi (known as Spam Musubi) so popular among the island locals that the state health department had to compromise state regulations, which forbade delis and convenience stores to sell perishable meat at room temperature, so that Spam Musubis could be left at room temperature for up to 4 hours.<sup>32</sup> Moe Tucker, the famous punk rock drummer of Velvet Underground, wrote a song titled “Spam Again” that appears on her solo album, *Life in Exile after Abdication*.<sup>33</sup> Carolyn Wyman, in her book *SPAM, A Biography*, states that Spam became not just a concept but an entire culture worthy of book-length discussion.<sup>34</sup> “Because it’s so well known and so old, there’s hardly an aspect of American life that hasn’t been touched by it.”<sup>35</sup>

These remarks parallel those made by scholars concerning the impact of recorded sound on our global culture today. Furthermore, the early struggles of Spam to become a

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<sup>32</sup> Carolyn Wyman, *Spam, A Biography: The Amazing True Story of America’s “Miracle Meat”* (New York: A Harvest Original, Harcourt Brace & Company, 1999), 46. The problem surrounds the effects of refrigeration on rice.

<sup>33</sup> Wyman, 97.

<sup>34</sup> Wyman, vi.

<sup>35</sup> Wyman, viii.

success in the home—a part of “cultured” society—mirror the more complicated struggle to create an in-home culture for the phonograph at the turn of the twentieth century.

Many advertisements were disseminated through the popular household magazines, which transitioned from the arbiter of elite culture into a vehicle for middle-class identity and consumerism; as such, these are essential source material for understanding the culture that surrounded and shaped the mass market for many products, including the early sound recordings.<sup>36</sup> Cyrus H.N. Curtis, creator of *Ladies Home Journal* and owner of *Saturday Evening Post*, encouraged magazine publishing through paid advertising that allowed a purchase price as low as a nickel for the *Post* in 1897. In 1885, prior to Curtis’s advertising transformation, monthly magazines cost at least 35 cents; there were only four, each with circulations around one hundred thousand. By 1905, with the help of advertising, the number of monthly magazines greatly increased with an average cost of 10 to 15 cents per copy and a total circulation of 5.5 million. These new affordable prices allowed many Americans to purchase and enjoy something that previously was beyond their means.<sup>37</sup>

Phonograph advertising drew on already existing belief systems about music and was articulated in articles found in magazines and books. Symes observes that, “This [advertising] reality told and sold the ‘truth’ about the power of the disc. It is an integral part of the culture of the phonograph, and it neither stands apart from nor rises above the phonograph—it is as much a part of its ‘physicality’ as its actual machinery.”<sup>38</sup> By examining these advertisements, we can discern how the populations were being

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<sup>36</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, “Introduction: American Homes and American Scholars,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 160.

<sup>37</sup> Schlereth, 160.

<sup>38</sup> Symes, 6.

persuaded, and how the phonograph was changed, redefined, or reinvented in the minds of middle-class Americans.

The advertisements are essential original source materials for this study. Access to them, however, is difficult. Many women's magazines were considered "ephemeral" and were discarded. The collections of early magazines that do exist are often bound together, and the covers and advertising sections have been removed.<sup>39</sup> Finding a complete unmutated run of any particular magazine from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even on microfilm, is difficult. I was not able to locate intact copies for every magazine title used in this dissertation; however, I found a large majority of issues relevant to the topic even when a complete run was unavailable. The music magazine titles examined for this paper include *Musical America*, *Musical Courier*, *Musician* and *Etude*. The women's magazine titles examined include *McClure's*, *Cosmopolitan*, *American Magazine*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Life*, *Ladies Home Journal* and *Saturday Evening Post*.

### **History and Use of Terminology**

This dissertation carefully uses terms referring to recordings and the machines that make and play them, differentiating between particular meanings rather than using them interchangeably. The term "phonograph," perhaps the most common, was coined by Charles Cros and Thomas Edison, who incorporated its use as a descriptive title for a "speaking machine" when the patent for this invention was filed on December 24,

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<sup>39</sup> Beetham mentions a similar fate with regard to Victorian magazines in England. Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman, eds., *Victorian Women's Magazines: An Anthology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 2.

1877.<sup>40</sup> A few months later, this same device was hailed by *Scientific American* as the first machine that could store up and repeat at will the human voice; it was the first “talking machine.”<sup>41</sup>

Contrary to later usage, the term “phonograph” from the outset was not a generic term referring to any “talking machine.” It was used to denote an Edison machine that could actually make a record. Two other Edison terms that quickly fell into disuse were the “phonogram,” the record made by the phonograph; and the “graphophone,” the machine or instrument used to play back the phonogram.<sup>42</sup> Since the usage of these latter two terms was not sustained by the corporations, it was not long before strain occurred with the definition of “phonograph.” By 1900, the Edison “Gem” phonograph was the only instrument offered by Edison’s company that did not record or shave records. It could only play them back. Therefore, the term “phonograph” ceased to define a recording machine, and instead denoted a machine made by Edison’s company.

Emile Berliner, inventor of the flat-disc process and Eldridge Johnson’s business partner, subsequently coined the term “gramophone” (initially spelled grammophone) since Edison forbade his use of the term phonograph. However, gramophone—simply phonogram transposed—was also opposed by Edison, who filed a legal injunction against Berliner’s use of the term. The success of the injunction only limited the use of this word in the United States and did not apply to England,<sup>43</sup> but it accomplished several things. First, it allowed Berliner to use this term in relation to his flat-disc players—which could only play back records—in England. As a result, it became common practice to use

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<sup>40</sup> Symes, 19; and Read and Welch, 6-10.

<sup>41</sup> Read and Welch, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Symes, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Symes, 19.

gramophone as a generic term referencing all talking machines in Europe, whereas in the United States “phonograph” was the most commonly used term. Second, Berliner was required to use the more generic term “talking machine” for his flat-disc players in the United States, a term that eventually rivaled “phonograph” in popularity and increasingly referenced all machines not made by Edison’s company that could play records. At least through the 1920s, “phonograph” referred only to cylinder-playing machines, where “gramophone,” when it was used, distinguished the flat-disc players. Certainly, at the turn of the twentieth century, these terms were not interchangeable. Even today, the record player is generally referred to by the term “gramophone” in England and by “phonograph” in the United States.<sup>44</sup>

Both words mean “sound writing,” and convey the idea of a machine able to represent speech. The term “phonograph” was actually used to describe a type of short hand before it was used by Edison (see chapter 2). For that reason, Edison thought the generic term “talking machine” less desirable.<sup>45</sup> Since Berliner and Johnson were restricted to its use for their instruments, Johnson developed the term “Victrola” for their new wooden cabinet machines first sold in 1906. He hoped the public would take to the name in much the same way they had previously taken to “phonograph” and even “talking machine.” It clearly denoted the name of the company who supplied them (Victor), allowing him rightfully to claim complete ownership of all wooden cabinet machines. The name did catch on, although it was never as ubiquitous as, for example, all hand-held cameras being referred to as Kodaks.<sup>46</sup> Despite these distinctions in early

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<sup>44</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 194n1.

<sup>45</sup> Symes, 20.

<sup>46</sup> Symes, 19.



terminology, modern scholars in the United States have tended to use “phonograph” generically.<sup>47</sup>

The term “art music” also needs a brief explanation. A new idea during the first half of the nineteenth-century, “art music” suggested a fundamental difference—an elevation of certain music—that later affected every aspect of America’s musical life.<sup>48</sup> No longer was music simply “utilitarian” or “fun.” It was now possible for music to be more than entertainment. If it was inspirational, contained the potential to elevate listeners, appealed to the “ethical side of humanity,” or contained a sacred quality even if it was instrumental or abstract, then it was “good for you,” it was “art music.”<sup>49</sup> The term “classical” music is used in this paper to reflect record-industry and consumer perceptions and understandings of “art music,” which were reinforced with certain “high brow” record labels. The industry retained all of the ambiguities and generalities of the late-nineteenth-century understanding of “art music.”

Art music’s attributes allowed for broad interpretation and practice; the vague definition was applied to a wide range of music. If an arrangement emulated “high art” in any way, then it was considered art music by those who attended the concerts, purchased the sheet music and, later, acquired the recordings on “classical” labels. For example, piano arrangements of popular tunes and hymns were often included under this rubric, as were symphonic arrangements of tunes originally composed for the musical

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<sup>47</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 194n1.

<sup>48</sup> Michael Broyles, *‘Music of the Highest Class’: Elitism and Populism in Antebellum Boston* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1. By the second half of the century, this notion had spread generally throughout society. See Michael Broyles, “Art Music from 1860-1920,” in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, edited by David Nichols (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 214.

<sup>49</sup> Broyles, “Art Music,” 214.

theater. In other words, the “art music” and “classical” music distinctions had less to do with composer and more to do with performing forces and performance style.

The recording industry decided to capitalize on the moral distinctions associated with art music and set similar elevated and purposefully vague parameters for some of its “classical” recordings. In 1903, Victor Talking Machine Company first offered its still famous Red Seal records for sale in the United States.<sup>50</sup> These early records consisted primarily of the “greatest opera stars,” “magnificent voice[s],” “renowned stars,” and “high class artists” singing mainly truncated opera arias, and to a lesser extent popular hymns, musical or operetta excerpts and other short songs celebrated as “great compositions,” “classical,” “higher things,” “musical gems,” “expressive and stirring arias,” and (among a long list of other terms) “high class.”<sup>51</sup> The Victor Red Seal Record was very successful and proved that broad moral distinctions in music and performer or performance style (in contrast with musicology’s long-standing distinctions based on composer or genre) could successfully support the creation of a new record label.

The constellation approach of this dissertation is somewhat unique within the larger field of musicology. However, approaching the topic of American music, or music in the United States from a combination of perspectives, including cultural studies and American studies, in addition to the music studies is not so unusual. I believe there is no better way to make the point that early phonograph companies were selling culture than by utilizing advertising history and the advertisements themselves as primary source material. Although somewhat foreign to previous musicological studies, the eclectic

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<sup>50</sup> Kenney, 50.

<sup>51</sup> These words are taken from a Victor Red Seal Record advertisement campaign in *Musical America*, 1905-1913.

approach in the following pages will create connections between our field and other social sciences.

## CHAPTER 2. EDISON'S MISPLACED PURPOSE: PERSONAL RECORD MAKING CREATES A NOVELTY ITEM

Edison believed that the strength of his phonograph invention was imbedded in its ability to record the human speaking voice. Such an ability would give all individuals the ability to preserve history by creating personal records. Whether these records were a verbal reproduction of handwritten notes for the stenographer, or the archived voices of family members used to remember loved ones who had passed away, Edison believed his invention would attract global attention.

At the same time, the United States suffered from an inferiority complex concerning the arts. Whether it was painting, poetry, literature or music composition, America needed to establish a national school of art, to find or “invent” a history, having a developed democratic mission without a recognized folk culture, unique language or artistic genres to draw on.<sup>1</sup> Such thinking was encouraged by European intellectuals whose favorite amusement at the turn of the twentieth century was “demonstrating that the American is the product of a distinctly inferior order of the dust of the earth.”<sup>2</sup> But with America’s high ideals and rugged individualism, citizens tackled the task of creating a unique civilization that could stand on its own in a new industrialized world while at the same time constantly drawing on European influences. The rise of industry in the latter

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperly, eds, *Introduction to American Studies* (New York: Longman, 1998), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Zultan Roman, “Music in Turn-of-the-Century America: A View from the ‘Old World,’” *American Music* 7, No. 3 (1989): 315.

half of the nineteenth century opened many new possibilities in this country to that end.<sup>3</sup> Many new inventions and discoveries were made such as the electric light bulb, hand held cameras, the telegraph, the telephone, the linotype, the automobile, the cash register and of course, the phonograph.<sup>4</sup>

It can be said that many of these inventions, if not entirely the product of America, were at least refined by Americans who sought to create a place for the United States on the world stage. Furthermore, the many inventions from the second half of the nineteenth century as well as the democratic myths surrounding industry itself, all claimed to provide the means for people to find a better existence in this world.

### **The Phonograph as Novelty Item**

With the promise to provide moral strength for the family, higher social status, education and of course, good quality music, the phonograph became an important vehicle through which the majority of Americans could attain a better life. However, the phonograph did not initially claim to provide Americans with access to these Victorian myths. Beginning its existence in 1877 simply as a speech recorder, Edison saw the phonograph primarily as a dictation machine and possibly a type of prerecorded telegraph when used in conjunction with the telephone. Considered unimportant for daily life by the majority of Americans who initially came in contact with the machine, the phonograph was quickly labeled a novelty item. But the invention of the phonograph is

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<sup>3</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 10.

<sup>4</sup> Of the items listed, Reeves suggests that major developments such as the telephone, automobile, linotype, electric light, cash register and phonograph accompanied a change in the way American people lived and worked. Between 1880 and 1900, censuses found that the number of people living in urban communities rose from 28% to 40%, and there was a huge growth in the iron, steel, mining, and lumber industries requiring millions of laborers. Pamela Reeves, *Ellis Island: Gateway to the American Dream* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2001), 16.

bigger than Edison's machine. In order to escape the novelty item label, during its first twenty-five years of existence the phonograph was continuously reinvented and redefined. Although technological refinements are part of this continuous change, the history is not simply wrapped up in the transition from cylinder to disc recordings as some have suggested.<sup>5</sup> Instead, it includes many ideas that came into being around the advent of this machine.<sup>6</sup> Its purpose also underwent dramatic changes, first as Edison's business tool dependent on the recording feature of the invention to a form of lowbrow musical entertainment in the arcades and finally emerging as a parlor instrument that focused on the playback feature, capable of providing every American with high brow music that brought with it upward class mobility and proper status that was sought after by Victorian Americans.

This chapter explains the lengthy transition of the phonograph's purpose from primarily the recording of spoken word to the playback of prerecorded music, dispelling the notion that the phonograph was an instant success. Instead, the invention was initially seen by its consumers and investors (and reluctantly, eventually by the inventor himself) as a novelty item and as such, completely inappropriate for the typical American family's home. Although the evolution of the talking machine is partly retold here, special attention will be given to the invention's early novelty item status and the resulting struggle to become the "musical instrument" that remains in various formats in our homes today.

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<sup>5</sup> Mark Goble, "Beautiful Circuits: The Mediated Life in American, 1900-1940" (Ph.D. diss., Stanford University, 2002), 7. Technological advancement is the never ending story of the record industry that continues to this day. It is no surprise to us that the early invention was also plagued with format wars.

<sup>6</sup> Symes, 7.

In July of 1877, Edison had been thinking about the possibility of recording phone messages on a machine that could be played back at a later time, thinking of such an apparatus as a type of telegraph. There were four problems recognized by the inventor that needed to be overcome.

One, the most pressing, a speaker for the telephone; two, a copying machine based on the electromographic principle; three, the technology and the devices for autographic telegraph, to be used for transmitting facsimiles of drawings and of handwriting; and four, how to employ the telephone in Western Union operations.<sup>7</sup>

There was no concern with the reproduction of music, only transmission of speech. In August of that same year, Edison labeled a speech recorder he had drawn in his notebook a “phonograph,” something that looked remarkably like a telegraph recorder.<sup>8</sup> By December of that year, Edison had taken out the first patents on a voice recording apparatus. In a list of eleven uses for his invention, Edison states that, “the main utility of the phonograph...being for the purpose of letter-writing and other forms of dictation, the design is made with a view to its utility for that purpose.”<sup>9</sup> On April 29, 1878, the *New York Sun* called Edison the “Inventor of the Age” due to his invention of the phonograph. The *Sun* further stated that Edison astonished the world with his “talking machine.” Prior to this year, Edison had remained a minor figure in the public mind associated only with Bell’s telephone.<sup>10</sup>

In 1888, the North American Phonograph Company, headed by the Philadelphia investor Jesse Lippincott, began manufacturing and marketing the phonograph as a

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<sup>7</sup> Robert Conot, *A Streak of Luck: The Life and Legend of Thomas Alva Edison* (New York: Seaview Books, 1979), 97. Reproduced in Dave Laing, “A Voice Without a Face: Popular Music and the Phonograph in the 1890s,” *Popular Music* 10, no. 1 (1991): 3.

<sup>8</sup> Paul Israel, *Edison: A Life of Invention* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1998), 144.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in John Harvith and Susan Edwards Harvith, Eds, *Edison, Musicians, and the Phonograph: A Century in Retrospect*, (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987) 1.

<sup>10</sup> Israel, 142.

replacement for the stenographer after purchasing Edison's patents.<sup>11</sup> No thought had been given to its possible entertainment purposes, evidenced by the advertising rhetoric and its high prices, making it available only to businesses who thought money, time and labor could eventually be saved through its purchase.<sup>12</sup> Early advertisements reinforced these potential attributes suggesting that in reference to the phonograph "you can talk faster than to a stenographer and your typewriter can transcribe more quickly than from stenographic notes, not being obliged to look at the notes and find the place."<sup>13</sup> A list of ten "advantages of the phonograph for commercial work" is provided by the National Phonograph Company in a 1900 publication. They are as follows.

1. Speed. You may dictate as rapidly as you please, and are never asked to repeat.
2. Convenience. You dictate alone at any hour that may suit you.
3. Saving of Operator's Time. During the dictation, instead of receiving notes, the operator can be employed upon other work. Aside from this, the operator can make much better speed in typewriting from the Phonograph, than from shorthand notes.
4. Accuracy. The Phonograph can only repeat what has been said to it.
5. Independence. It is easy to replace a typewriter operator, but a good stenographer is hard to find.
6. Economy. The saving in your own and in your operator's time, will more than pay for a Phonograph in less than a year.
7. Tirelessness. The Phonograph is always ready for work.
8. Simplicity. The method is simple. No time need be lost in learning it, by either dictator or transcriber. You can commence work at once.
9. Control. The Phonograph is always perfectly under the control of both dictator and transcriber. The former cannot dictate too fast for the latter.

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<sup>11</sup> By 1892, the firm was in desperate financial straits. In 1893, Edison, the firm's chief creditor, had taken over the North American Phonograph Company.

<sup>12</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It: Being a Short History of Its Invention and Development Containing Helpful Hints and Plain Talks As To Its Care and Use, Etc.* (1900; reprint, New York: Allen Koenigsberg, 1971), 29.

<sup>13</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 30. The idea of saving business men labor most likely grew out of Edison's personal experience and desire. Rev. E.E. Hale states "He [Edison] had been about the country a good deal, learning something everywhere, reading a good deal, inventing one thing or another, sometimes a scheme in telegraphy, sometimes a labor-saving machine (to save himself labor)." Rev. E.E. Hale, ed., *Lights of Two Centuries* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1887), 590.



10. Progressiveness. The largest and most progressive business houses in the country are using Phonographs, and enthusiastically indorse [sic] them.<sup>14</sup>

First promoted in the 1880s, advertisements for “Dictaphones” all promulgated similar rhetoric set forth in the above 1900 publication.<sup>15</sup> Although similar advertisements can be found well into the twentieth century, Dave Laing states that “For a variety of technical and economic reasons, it was not a success.”<sup>16</sup> Even though the Dictaphone was ultimately unable to create a self sustaining market, the reasoning advocated in the surviving advertisements and the National Phonograph Company’s 1900 publication must have challenged the continued usefulness of dictation to a specialized human being (the stenographer). In 1890, the main issue discussed at the first convention of the National Phonograph Association did not consider possible entertainment or musical value, but instead focused on whether the phonograph’s use in the business world would threaten the job security of stenographers.<sup>17</sup> In light of the above claims, the inability of cylinders and phonographs to sustain constant office use should also be questioned. Stenographers, seeing the machine as a threat to their jobs may have sabotaged them.<sup>18</sup>

The primary use of the phonograph as a dictation machine emphasized its ability to record the speaking voice. Even the *New York Sun* praised Edison for his “talking

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<sup>14</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 125-26.

<sup>15</sup> See a later advertising campaign for the Dictaphone found in the *Saturday Evening Post*, between 1912 and 1913. 185, no. 5 (August 3, 1912): 37; 185, no. 12 (September 28, 1912): 36; 185, no. 23 (December 7, 1912): 46; 185, no. 25 (December 21, 1912): 38; 185, no. 27 (January 4, 1913): 35; 185, no. 29 (January 18, 1913): 38; 185, no. 33 (February 15, 1913): 53; 185, no. 36 (March 8, 1913): 64; 185, no. 40 (April 5, 1913): 87; 186, no. 6 (August 9, 1913): 43; and 186, no. 10 (September 6, 1913): 53.

<sup>16</sup> Laing, 5.

<sup>17</sup> Holly Kruse, “Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space,” *Stanford Humanities Review* 3, Autumn (1993), 2.

<sup>18</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 24.

machine,” a phrase that Victor would later utilize as part of a powerful marketing campaign, but which at this point reinforced Edison’s restricted vision for his invention. It is hard for us today to comprehend the phonograph before the advent of mass produced prerecorded records. We have difficulty with the notion that the recording industry did not find immediate and overwhelming success. Yet, Edison’s restricted view of the uses for his invention proved less than desirable and he was unable to establish a sustained market. Some authors have avoided these early years or been tempted to tell the story of technological advancements that finally resulted in a perfected 78 rpm flat disc. But when we realize that Edison focused primarily on his invention’s ability to record speech for later reproduction and its use in the business world, we begin to comprehend why the early industry struggled to find and create a market.

Although some success can be attributed to Edison’s early machine and its use as a vocal recorder (consider the *New York Sun* article mentioned above), for most people, the phonograph represented a mostly useless item representing little more than scientific achievement in an increasingly scientific world. The ability to hear a voice “play back” from a machine attracted audiences at fairs, but no daily applications could be attached to it. Therefore, it was viewed primarily as a novelty item.

A book published in 1887, *Lights of Two Centuries*, helps place the phonograph in its proper early context. This book includes five different chapters titled “Artists and Sculptors,” “Prose Writers,” “Composers,” “Poets” and “Inventors,” each describing different categories. Within each chapter the life and accomplishments of a number of different people (all men) are described. Edison is included in the chapter on “Inventors,” along with James Watt (1736-1819), George Stephenson (1781-1848),

Robert Fulton (1765-1815), Eli Whitney (1765-1825), Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-92), the Mongolfiers brothers (1740-1810 and 1745-1799), Henry Bessemer (1813-98) and Alexander Graham Bell (1847-1922). What is immediately obvious is that in contrast to all of these other entries, Edison is the only inventor who is known for multiple inventions, a point the author makes in the book.<sup>19</sup> Edison is given credit for inventing the telephone, electric light, system of quadruplex telegraphy, phonograph and megaphone in this book. Of the inventions in this list, it is the first two that receive the most praise, called the two most favorite symbols of our nineteenth century.<sup>20</sup>

The majority of inventions mentioned in this chapter were designed for large scale public or industrial use, including Watt's steam engine, Stephenson's locomotive, Fulton's steam boat and Whitney's cotton gin. Of all the inventions mentioned in this chapter, the only one that found immediate success in the home (according to the author) was Bell's telephone.<sup>21</sup> The fact that Edison's invention is not included alongside Bell's invention may surprise us, but understanding that the overwhelming majority of inventions, mentioned in *Lights of Two Centuries*, never intended to have an in-home use helps provide an appropriate context within which to view the phonograph. Such a context also provides insight into Edison's choices concerning the primary purposes and reasons for his invention, to be a labor saver in the business world through the elimination of the stenographer.

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<sup>19</sup> Hale, 587.

<sup>20</sup> Hale, 587.

<sup>21</sup> Hale, 602. "...telephonic communication became almost at once an everyday thing."

Images of these inventions and other technological achievements were abundant in advertisements and sheet music covers from the turn of the century.<sup>22</sup> A frontispiece for a 1903 “Guide to Health” booklet promoting Dr. King’s consumption medicine utilizes many symbols of progress.<sup>23</sup> The combined reaper and thresher, submarine, locomotive, automobile outfitted with electric lights, phonograph and player piano, telegraph and telephone exchange all appear under the heading “Greatest Discoveries of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.” Meant to represent the progress and abundance promised in the twentieth century, many of these items were actually invented in the nineteenth century. Placed among these recognizable inventions is Dr. King’s consumption medication (also invented in the 1880s) touted as the “greatest [invention] of all for saving human life.” In the ad, all of the inventions are shown to be utilized in public places. The reaper and thresher, submarine, locomotive and automobile are obviously used outside of the home in wide open spaces. The telegraph and telephone exchange is represented rather than the use of a single telephone in the home. Even the image of people listening to the phonograph and player piano is possibly a public parlor. But if this does represent an in-home function, doubtful with the accompanying images, the inclusion of many different people still suggests a public social gathering.

*Lights of Two Centuries* makes abundantly clear that the phonograph, while an interesting invention, even a famous invention, at the same time, was a lesser known one when compared to the electric light and the telephone.<sup>24</sup> This fact is reinforced by figure 2.1, a cartoon published in *Musical America* on January 19, 1907, with an elderly man

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<sup>22</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>23</sup> Laird, 131.

<sup>24</sup> Hale, 592.

trying to speak into the ear tubes of a “coin-op” phonograph thinking it a telephone. The author of *Lights of Two Centuries* allows for the possibility that the future phonograph may find a more practical use, but for the immediate future, it remains a novelty item (notice the label “novelty exhibition” in reference to the phonograph in figure 2.1 below).<sup>25</sup> Many laughed at the invention and thought it a mere toy, not even capable of Edison’s primary goals for his machine.<sup>26</sup> Alexander Graham Bell, who thought he missed his chance at inventing the phonograph, called Edison’s invention a highly interesting and ingenious toy in the spring of 1878.<sup>27</sup>



Figure 2.1: Cartoon published in *Musical America*, 5, no. 10 (January 19, 1907): 16

<sup>25</sup> Hale, 587. See also Barbara Engh, “After ‘His Master’s Voice’: Post-Phonographic Auralty” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1997), 4; Kruse, 2; Michael Scott, *The Record of Singing: Volume I, to 1914*. Illustrated by the Stuart-Liff Collection (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 1; And Alexander Boyden Magoun, “Shaping the Sound of Music: The Evolution of the Phonographic Record, 1877-1950” (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Maryland, 2000), 44; for modern authors who also recognize the phonograph’s early status as novelty item.

<sup>26</sup> Symes, 39; Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 47; Scott, 1.

<sup>27</sup> Magoun, 59.

The novelty item label led many to interpret the phonograph as one without purpose, certainly without a daily application in the lives of Victorian Americans. For some, as early as 1877, the phonograph, along with the telephone became household words, a fact confirmed by the *New York Sun's* assertions concerning the inventor and invention mentioned earlier.<sup>28</sup> However, for most people, a modern, daily use for the phonograph remained unknown a decade after its invention, the year *Lights of Two Centuries* was published. The final statements regarding the phonograph in this book are as follows, “Whatever may be the outcome of the future, it need hardly be said that as yet the phonograph has failed to make itself useful in any broad sense, and it would not be surprising if there were numbers of people in this country, not to say abroad, who had never heard of such an invention.”<sup>29</sup>

The musical possibilities for the early phonograph remained almost non-existent or mentioned only in a list of mostly speech-only possibilities. Michael Scott, author of *The Record of Singing*, a multi-volume publication on the history of vocal recordings, states in the introduction of his first volume that the phonograph invention was not a response to any musical prompting.<sup>30</sup> The word phonograph or gramophone literally means “sound writing” in the Greek and has a history that predates Edison’s invention.<sup>31</sup> Phonography was the term that applied to a system of phonetic shorthand invented by Sir Isaac Pitman (1813-97) in 1837.<sup>32</sup> Used primarily as a system of note taking and the archiving of official proceedings, the use of phonography or phonographic writing was

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<sup>28</sup> Hale, 593.

<sup>29</sup> Hale, 594.

<sup>30</sup> Scott, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Engh, 6; Laing, 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., by arrangement with Random House Value Publishing, Inc.: n.p., n.d.) 1457.

encouraged throughout the second half of the nineteenth century.<sup>33</sup> No doubt a system of shorthand employed by stenographers, the name phonograph becomes relevant for Edison's invention. Referring to a form of written communication that recorded historical events, the early use of the word had little to do with music. However, at least some earlier nineteenth century musical associations were made with the term. In 1863, phonography was used by the piano player industry (a cousin to the later phonograph industry) to describe certain principles of their new instrument.

But even the concept of recorded sound, an idea that has been contemplated throughout the ages, focused on the recording or archiving of the human speaking voice. For example, as early as the Eighteenth-Egyptian dynasty, B.C. 1490, the statue of Memnon at Thebes was said to speak and sing at sunrise.<sup>34</sup> In Medieval Europe, Gerber, a German monk, built a head that supposedly could speak, inspired by the speaking head of Orpheus. Even modern history includes examples of speech recording devices. In 1860, Josef Faber built a talking man complete with flexible lips, tongue of rubber, and ivory reed for vocal chords that was operated by a keyboard. This talking man, whether it worked or not, was a hundred times more complicated in design than Edison's phonograph.<sup>35</sup>

Others wrote about the possibility of recording speech without putting their theories into practice. John Wilkins (d. 1672), Bishop of Chester, states in his treatise, "Mathematic Magick" (1651), "some have thought it possible to preserve the voice, or any words spoken in a hollow trunk or pipe, so when this pipe is rightly opened the words

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<sup>33</sup> See three articles published in *The Pittsfield Sun* describing phonographic writing; "Pursuit of Knowledge," XLVII, Issue 2443 (July 15, 1847) 1; "Phonographic Writing," LI, Issue 2609 (September 19, 1850) 3; "Washington, Dec. 30," LVI, Issue 2885 (January 3, 1856) 3.

<sup>34</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 11-12.

<sup>35</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 12-14.

will come out of it in the same order wherein they were spoken.” The French poet and philosopher Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-1655) wrote two satirical accounts of fantastic voyages, one to the moon and the other to the sun. Both were published posthumously. In one of these writings, “Histoire Comique en Voyage dans la Lune,” written in 1649 but not published until 1656, Cyrano describes two fictional races that live on the moon, one of which speaks through books with voices of those both alive and dead and heard through “ear tubes.”<sup>36</sup>

The “password” of the time period was “communications.”<sup>37</sup> According to Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver in their *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, communication is “all of the procedures by which one mind may affect another.” The authors state that this includes not only written and oral speech, but also “music, the pictorial arts, the theatre, the ballet, and in fact all human behavior.”<sup>38</sup> It is easy for us today to include music as a form of communication just as we embrace recordings as primarily musical mediums. But understanding that the early phonograph was a product of a budding communication age clarifies reasons behind its early limited focus on the speaking voice. During this time period, machines built for communication focused only on brief messages meant to communicate short concrete thoughts from one party to another. As a communication machine, the phonograph was not initially viewed as a musical apparatus. This thought becomes increasingly compelling when we consider that the phonograph later redefined itself as a musical instrument in order to expand its

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<sup>36</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 15-17.

<sup>37</sup> Goble, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Claude E. Shannon and Warren Weaver, *The Mathematical Theory of Communication*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press 1949) 95.



use in the modern world. No longer a machine, it became capable of communicating larger and more abstract thoughts, specifically musical excerpts.<sup>39</sup>

Machines for communication included not only the phonograph, but also the telegraph, megaphone and telephone. Like the early phonograph, the importance of these other three inventions was seen in their ability to increase the effectiveness of communication by creating a relatively exact facsimile of the original message.<sup>40</sup> The culture of communication relies heavily on facsimile, an element of invention stressed first with the photograph and later with the phonograph. Facsimile fostered complete preservation, allowing replication without end, and allowed a range of cultural forms to be privatized and embodied.<sup>41</sup>

In 1888, Kodak created the first hand-held camera, increasing the ranks of amateur photographers. Thus the popularity of creating and looking at snapshot albums developed at the same time.<sup>42</sup> The snapshot allowed many people visual access to foreign places in the world that were otherwise unavailable to them. Photographs of national parks, natural phenomena and foreign cities provided a means of satiating Victorian American's interest in seeing, knowing and describing the world, activity that allowed them to feel at home with foreign places, and demonstrate cosmopolitan learning. Such desire can be traced back to the popular eighteenth-century travel journals

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<sup>39</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recordings* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004). In this book, Symes argues that the book, another medium capable of communicating through "art," is an appropriate precursor to the phonograph. Although this is obvious once the phonograph becomes a "musical instrument," this comparison is problematic in relation to the early years of the phonograph industry.

<sup>40</sup> Even the megaphone, used to amplify the human voice, can be seen as creating a facsimile of the original speech.

<sup>41</sup> Symes, 1.

<sup>42</sup> Donna R. Braden, "'The Family that Plays Together Stays Together': Family Pastimes and Indoor Amusements, 1890-1930," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 154.

that provided descriptions and engravings of different places around the world.<sup>43</sup> The acceptance and absorption of the photograph into the normal existence of Victorian America led to the virtual annihilation, or at least compression, of time and space.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps for the first time, through the use of technology in the home, people could go on mini vacations to distant worlds, or better remember family members who had passed away, all without leaving their parlor.

With the rhetoric of archiving and preserving in mind in relation to the word phonograph, it was not much of a jump for individuals to view a recording for Edison's invention as an acoustic daguerreotype.<sup>45</sup> The aural record promised to be as everlasting as either a picture or written documentation could allow. Even Edison's original list of ideas included the belief that individuals would want to add audio recordings of family members to the many photographs, hair wreaths and family bibles collected by Victorian Americans in order to make the family circle more complete. But even with this possible in-home use, people continued to view the phonograph as a novelty item. The connection between the photograph and the phonograph record continued as the market for commercial music recordings was created. The article "Evolution of the Talking Machine," published in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1905, states, "Those simple lines happen to be a photograph of a song by Melba."<sup>46</sup>

But we are getting ahead of ourselves. One additional drawback to the success of Edison's early invention must be explored in order to better comprehend people's inability to absorb it into everyday life. Again, Edison's purposes relied on the recording

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<sup>43</sup> Kathryn Grover, ed., *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (United States: The Strong Museum, 1992), 114.

<sup>44</sup> Symes, 12.

<sup>45</sup> Symes, 11.

<sup>46</sup> "Evolution of the Talking Machine," *Saturday Evening Post* 178, no. 24 (1905): 1.

feature of the phonograph.<sup>47</sup> Yet early responses to the machine demonstrated that people were disturbed to hear their own voices played back to them. The voice was produced without its original source and lacked body or presence.<sup>48</sup> Some attached an unholy character to this early recording feature and likened it to a French spiritualist séance. The lyric poet Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926) refers to the playback of home recordings as “primal sound.” Such notions were hard to shake, even as musical recordings became increasingly popular in the beginning of the twentieth century. When describing the event of a homemade phonograph as late as 1919, Rilke states that the “effect was always overwhelming,” although imperfect and at times failing altogether, the recording “lost nothing by repetition.” Even Adorno’s “primordial affect” was attributed to the recording feature of the phonograph.<sup>49</sup>

Edison’s unwillingness to redefine his invention is well documented.<sup>50</sup> One 1913 article demonstrates the extent of the inventor’s stubbornness. The author Allan L. Benson clearly articulates that the “best musical talent” conceded to Edison’s judgment from a fear of losing their jobs or reputations.<sup>51</sup> No one dared disagree with the inventor concerning musical issues. According to this same article, Edison demonstrated his ignorance of music by complaining that there was no scientific basis for it. He argued that music was handicapped due to its lack of definite terms by which time may be indicated. Anyone should be able to play a piece in precisely the time that the composer

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<sup>47</sup> In the early years, the term “Phonograph” implied a machine that could record onto blank wax cylinders. The later machines that could only play back recorded cylinders were referred to as “Gramophones.” Later, these distinctions become blurred as additional titles for the phonograph became common, such as Victor’s “Talking Machine.”

<sup>48</sup> Engh, 14.

<sup>49</sup> Engh, 15.

<sup>50</sup> Kenney, 44.

<sup>51</sup> Allan L. Benson, “Edison’s Dream of New Music,” *Cosmopolitan* 54, no. 6 (1913): 797.

intended it should be played. This would allow one to render music perfectly.<sup>52</sup> The idea of musical perfection being limited to precise time constraints must have suggested musical uses for the phonograph to Edison. But by the time he finally gave in to the entertainment possibilities and an in-home market, Edison was simply reacting to his competitors in the recording industry.

As is evidenced by his own notes, even after Edison decided to approach the entertainment possibilities for his invention, he demanded total artistic control over what music was recorded and who sang for the Edison. The 1912 trial sheets—notes handwritten by Edison while listening to various famous opera singers perform—are transcribed by Ray Wiles.<sup>53</sup> His comments are often negative, sometimes ambivalent and seldom positive, and reflect his belief that famous singers were not any better than other trained singers who did not achieve the same level of success. Edison demanded complete artistic control over which voices were recorded and marketed on Edison cylinders and discs. His ability to appreciate singers is suspect. Perhaps due to his severely limited hearing, Edison offered very negative feedback after hearing and recording a number of eminent singers between 1910 and 1912.<sup>54</sup>

Of fourteen different singers, he simply discarded half with comments such as “Don’t care for him” (Giovanni Albanese), “Singer no good” (Eduardo de Bury) or “Rotten. Never use his voice” (Heinrich Hensel). Of the other seven singers, the feedback for the majority was mediocre at best and included such statements as “Some opera perverts have probably got educated to this type of voice. The tune pulls him

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<sup>52</sup> Benson, 797-98.

<sup>53</sup> Transcribed by Ray Wile, “Thomas Edison on Opera Singers: Excerpts from the 1912 Trial Sheets,” at [www.mainspringpress.com/edison\\_opera.html](http://www.mainspringpress.com/edison_opera.html), Last accessed on December 19, 2006.

<sup>54</sup> [www.mainspringpress.com/edison\\_opera.html](http://www.mainspringpress.com/edison_opera.html).

through” (Giovanni Polese) or “Not as good as Chalmers” (Giovanni Polese). Only one singer received an overwhelmingly positive review. Of Giovanni Martinelli’s voice, Edison said, “Good tenor has some tremolo and guttural sounds but his high beats Caruso. He is a far better singer than Caruso is now.” As a result, Edison refused to pay high salaries for famous names, recording instead mostly unknown singers who commanded much lower incomes.

Edison’s stubbornness did have some foundation in his own early efforts. He did try to adapt the phonograph for in-home use two times early on, only to abandon his efforts after realizing there was nothing simple about its adaptation.<sup>55</sup> As early as November 23, 1877, the inventor did foresee the phonograph as a mundane fixture in the home, added to dolls, animal figures and model steam engines. Between December 1877 and November 1878, Edison offered the “parlor speaking phonograph” for \$10. After 1878, he stopped focusing resources on the phonograph for seven years, convinced it contained no commercial value. Profits in 1878 were only \$4,450, and in 1880 profits dropped to a mere \$479.<sup>56</sup> As if to reinforce his earlier decision to abandon an in-home adaptation, in 1886, a model of the phonograph manufactured by Volta Group gained support from congressional and court reporters, who viewed the device as a labor saver, cutting one step of transcription out of the labor-intensive process of stenography.<sup>57</sup> In spite of Edison’s opposition, the phonograph industry explored the use of the phonograph as a vehicle for entertainment.

Edison may have been a brilliant inventor, but he obviously lacked musical and business instincts, which limited the success of his phonograph over other talking

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<sup>55</sup> Magoun, 23, 40.

<sup>56</sup> Magoun, 51-53.

<sup>57</sup> Magoun, 71.

machines. But his inability to understand the future of the new industrialized world was exemplified in other ways as well. In a 1911 article published in *Cosmopolitan*, Edison inaccurately argued for a bleak gold future since human beings would no doubt find a way to manufacture it.<sup>58</sup> Steel would no longer be used for skyscrapers, being replaced with cement. Instead, the metal would be used for book covers, book pages and furniture. Edison stated that a book of 40,000 pages constructed of nickel would be 2 inches thick, weigh only one pound and cost \$1.25 to make with his current process. The cost and material would produce something that would last forever and provide real culture for the masses. “What a library might be placed between two steel covers and sold for perhaps two dollars!”<sup>59</sup> Concerning furniture, Edison argued that babies of the next generation would not even know what wooden furniture was.<sup>60</sup> He argues further that there would never be another great war due to the invention of the battery and submarine.<sup>61</sup> He predicted an end to poverty in 100 years.<sup>62</sup> He argued that the bumblebee was the key to air travel providing a means for air ships to ascend straight up into the air with rapid wing movement. The current airplane design would be discarded and bumblebee fliers would take people 100 miles or more per hour.<sup>63</sup> Finally, Edison argued that the seamstress was almost obsolete, wondering why we should make a woman do what a machine can do?<sup>64</sup> However, in this same article, Edison did make some accurate predictions. He saw that electricity produced from water would replace

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<sup>58</sup> Thomas A. Edison and Allan L. Benson, “The Wonderful World Ahead of Us: Some Startling Prophecies of the Future as Described,” *Cosmopolitan* 50, no. 3 (1911), 296.

<sup>59</sup> Edison and Benson, 299.

<sup>60</sup> Edison and Benson, 300.

<sup>61</sup> Edison and Benson, 305.

<sup>62</sup> Edison and Benson, 306.

<sup>63</sup> Edison and Benson, 298. Although the concept of a bumblebee flier could have been realized with the helicopter, it has not replaced the airplane, which can travel much quicker and carry many more people.

<sup>64</sup> Edison and Benson, 303.

the steam engine, proclaimed eventual perfection for the telephone, and that metal machinery would rival the human brain itself.<sup>65</sup>

Edison's self imposed restraint restricted the success of the early phonograph as an everyday tool useful to Americans. Contrary to many historical narratives composed during the second half of the twentieth century, the phonograph industry struggled to survive in its early years. Difficult for us to understand today in our mediated culture complete with large music record libraries, the reasons for this failure are found in Edison's obsession with the recording feature of his invention. His stubbornness forced the continued promotion of the phonograph primarily as a dictation machine. Such a machine retained applications limited to the business world and as such continued to be viewed as a novelty item by the majority of individuals who came in contact with Edison's invention. Even the possibility of archiving family members' voices to place alongside their photos appealed little to Victorian Americans who seemed obsessed with the preservation of the memory of deceased loved ones. They simply were not comfortable with the ability to record their own voices, believing it somehow unnatural, unholy or subhuman in its character. The office dictaphone business, whether Edison liked it or not, proved to be a major disappointment. As such, the industry began transforming the phonograph into a vehicle for entertainment largely without the help of its inventor.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Edison and Benson, 299 and 302 respectively. The metal machinery that replaces the brain could be realized in the home computer.

<sup>66</sup> Kenney, 24.

### The Public's Embrace of the Playback Feature

Although Edison took out his first patents for a recording apparatus in December 1877, a quarter of a century was to elapse before the gramophone came of age—on that April day in 1902 when Enrico Caruso took the lift to the third floor of the Grand Hotel in Milan, to a private drawing-room which had been rigged out as a recording studio, and there, in the space of two hours, left records of ten operatic arias. In hindsight they seem twenty-five wasted years, a history of lost opportunities.<sup>67</sup>

The above quote suggests that the twenty-five years between Edison's invention and Caruso's first recording session were stagnant ones for the phonograph industry in terms of idea development. Calling them "wasted years" with "lost opportunities" is to neglect a deeper understanding of the obstacles and transformations needed to create the desire that placed Caruso into that makeshift recording studio. The market for the phonograph had to be created, constructed and maintained.<sup>68</sup> This took time as ideas surrounding the potential uses for the recording apparatus were invented and reinvented by individuals surrounding Edison's machine. The first part of this chapter details the assumptions, limitations and definitions under which the inventor operated, and why the resulting phonograph was not a machine with any desirable or practical in-home uses. As a result, the entrepreneurs began to redefine Edison's machine as a vehicle providing entertainment in the form of prerecorded cylinders without Edison's help.

Edison was opposed to the primary use of his machine as a vehicle of entertainment, but as inventor he represented only one of three groups (including entrepreneurs and consumers) who acted, reacted and negotiated based on rationales constructed from their assumptions, beliefs and experiences concerning the nature of improvement related to the phonograph. These groups acted to create and recreate the

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<sup>67</sup> Scott, 1.

<sup>68</sup> Keith Negus, *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 31.



record, its market and its culture. Complicating matters for Edison further, Alexander Magoun recognizes many different individuals acted as “inventor” alongside Edison, such as mechanics, engineers, recordists, chemists and physicists, each with their own ideas and beliefs.<sup>69</sup> Entrepreneurs—investors, manufacturers, executives, marketers, advertisers, distributors, dealers and middlemen—made and sold the product. Consumers bought records, used records, and performers decided if they wanted to associate themselves with the quality of reproduction in return for a larger invisible audience.

Although “phonograph” was a household word, it was through the coin-operated machine that the majority of Americans first came into actual contact with Edison’s invention.<sup>70</sup> It was Louis Glass, general manager of North American Phonograph Company’s west coast subsidiary, the Pacific Phonograph Company, who took the first financially successful step towards entertainment for the phonograph. He placed two coin-operated cylinder machines in the Palais Royale Saloon in San Francisco on November 23, 1889. By placing a nickel into the coin slot, an individual could hear a rendition of some popular song through a pair of listening tubes. By May of 1890 (six months later) Glass had earned \$1000 in nickels.<sup>71</sup> Glass reported on this success at the 1890 convention of local phonograph companies, emphasizing the money to be made and the low maintenance costs. Soon other companies followed North American, including the Columbia Phonograph Company and the Ohio Phonograph Company (also an affiliate of North American), establishing an entertainment market in different locales.

As the popularity of “coin-ops” grew, managers and owners of hotels, restaurants and saloons offered space rent free for the placement of the automatic phonographs, since

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<sup>69</sup> Magoun, 2-3.

<sup>70</sup> Kenney, 24.

<sup>71</sup> Kenney, 25; Magoun, 83.

they helped attract the public into their establishments. Such was their popularity that “coin machine entrepreneurs hired young men to make the rounds of the machines daily, repairing broken ones, replacing worn-out cylinders, removing the variety of foreign objects—slugs, foreign currency, gum, pebbles—all too often discovered in the machines.”<sup>72</sup> The now fledgling recording companies tried to increase the revenue earned by creating their own phonograph parlors or “arcades,” which they owned and operated. Providing an entire room full of machines, each with a different offering, the industry could realize more than a nickel from each client who wished to experience the recording phenomenon. Even Edison’s company, with the inventor’s severe reservations, recognized the financial payoff and opened its own parlor in New York City’s union square. According to Edison’s company, during the 1890s, few people spent less than 10¢ and often 25¢ or more.<sup>73</sup> It was these arcades that helped Edison realize that the public’s interest in his machine was in “frozen music” and not as a speech recorder.<sup>74</sup>

By 1900, seven years after Edison assumed control, North American made available two similar coin slot phonographs for investors, the Edison “M” Coin Slot Phonograph and the Edison “M” Concert Coin Slot Phonograph (see figure 2.2 on page 49). Similar in appearance, both sported an oak cabinet with glass covering the operating components. North American boasted, “These machines when placed in a store, hotel, or place of amusement usually prove a source of great profit to their fortunate owner.”<sup>75</sup>

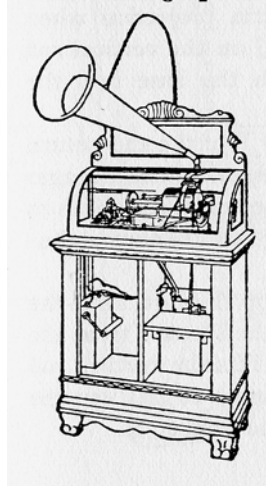
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<sup>72</sup> Kenney, 25.

<sup>73</sup> Kenney, 26.

<sup>74</sup> Symes, 22.

<sup>75</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 103.



**Figure 2.2: Edison “M” Concert Coin Slot Phonograph**

The industry chose to go out of its way to associate the phonograph and the new entertainment of listening to short popular songs and other recordings with the glamour and electrical excitement of the swiftly approaching twentieth century. But the new-found entertainment value did not alleviate the phonograph of the novelty item status; in fact, the nickelodeons and arcades relied on their novelty quality in order to attract the public and convince individuals to put a nickel into the coin slot. A 1900 North American publication stated of their coin-operated models, “As a novelty, the Edison Concert Coin Slot Phonograph is the most attractive and wonderful musical and talking machine ever put before the public.”<sup>76</sup>

But the “coin-op” presented the phonograph industry with a new problem, the association with “low-brow” entertainment. The brightly lit phonograph parlors, nickelodeons and penny arcades may have offered entertainment that was a brief reprieve from the hardships of modern life in the city, but there was nothing serious, beneficial, educational or morally uplifting about them. As such, investors were reluctant to

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<sup>76</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 105-6.

abandon the business tool altogether in favor of this musical entertainment in spite of the financial gain promised.<sup>77</sup> Victorian Americans championed a better society gained through proper education and moral entertainment, the very things the parlor phonograph could not provide. In fact, the Edison National Phonograph Company refused to service their coin-operated machines once they were sold and placed for public use.<sup>78</sup> Much phonograph rhetoric reminded the public to take the phonograph seriously, that one should use machines, in order to record for posterity, elevating the use of Edison's machine above the banal entertainment found in the phonograph parlors.<sup>79</sup> These early recordings for the most part were treated as embarrassments by the early recording industry, and although a certain amount of temporary wealth was gained, the industry sought a different use, one that promised to be lucrative and at the same time offer culturally significant meaning to the public.

By 1892, the North American Phonograph Company was in desperate financial straits.<sup>80</sup> The phonograph needed to find, develop and market applications that would elevate the phonograph above the status of a novelty item.<sup>81</sup> To escape the exploitation on the basis of scientific wonder alone, the phonograph companies defined the talking machine as a musical instrument for the home. This instrument was capable of supplying the household with entertainment, but not just the lowbrow entertainment of the phonograph parlors and nickelodeons. It could also provide music that was "good for you," while at the same time bringing the performances of famous singers into the home

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<sup>77</sup> Magoun, 86.

<sup>78</sup> Kenney, 27.

<sup>79</sup> Day, 47.

<sup>80</sup> Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, *Phonographica: The Early History of Recorded Sound Observed* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2004), 14.

<sup>81</sup> Magoun, 44.

on repeatable recordings. You could own these voices, using them as an education aiding in your own voice training, or command them to sing for yourself and guests whenever you wanted to enjoy them. The ability to create such a market promised to sustain the new recording industry for many years. Even Edison admitted a rising interest in in-home use for his invention. In June of 1893 (the same year he took over the company), he confided to his secretary that “one of the greatest fields for the phonograph was in the household for reproducing all that is best in oratory and music...”<sup>82</sup>

“Between 1894 and 1922, inventors, entrepreneurs, and consumers reconstructed the phonograph record as a primary form of entertainment in the households of the American middle-class.”<sup>83</sup> Falling prices and a selection of recordings (discs and cylinders) available for parlor phonographs made in-home use feasible.<sup>84</sup> In 1899, Edison presented the public with his “Gem” phonograph, a machine that was incapable of making recordings and could only play back pre-recorded records. “This machine came as a revelation to the phonograph world; as an example of what could be accomplished in small compass and for a small price.”<sup>85</sup> The cheapest of the early machines, the “Gem” boasted a phenomenal sales record in the first few months after it was “brought out.”<sup>86</sup>

As the chief providers of music in the home, it was women who recognized the potential of the phonograph to provide moral entertainment, education and social status through prerecorded music. Furthermore, it gave women a source of instant music, or

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<sup>82</sup> Conot, 312-13.

<sup>83</sup> Magoun, 122,

<sup>84</sup> Mark Katz, “Making America More Musical Through the Phonograph, 1900-1930,” *American Music* 16, no. 4 (1998): 453.

<sup>85</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 36.

<sup>86</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 36, 44, 46.

music on tap (like water and electricity), that promised to save them time and money over learning to play musical instruments as the primary source of music in the home.<sup>87</sup> Even with the lower costs and availability of records for in-home use, it was the users themselves, once they were identified, that ultimately transformed recording to meet the needs, desires, and goals of the average American.<sup>88</sup>

Although Edison began to accept the use of the phonograph in the home for playing prerecorded music, he still fought to persuade the American people of the merits of the recording capability. In the North American Phonograph publication of 1900 that is referenced throughout this half of the chapter, only one model (“Gem”) was limited to playing back prerecorded cylinders. The remaining seven models (not including the coin operated models) could all record as well. The same publication included reprints of six articles, four of which utilized the recording feature of the phonograph. The self explanatory titles are as follows, “How We Gave a Phonograph Party,” “The Secret of making Phonograph Records,” “The Phonograph as an Aid to Language Study” and “The Phonograph as an Aid to the Arts of Stenography and Typewriting.”

“How We Gave a Phonograph Party” is particularly interesting. Two roommates, both women, one a high school math teacher and the other a kindergarten teacher, decided to give a phonograph party, which promised to be “the newest and most delightful thing out.”<sup>89</sup> The seven-page article, illustrated throughout with drawings, describes the details of the phonograph party. Ideally, two phonographs should be used, one for recording and one for play-back. A little preparation and planning are needed to

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<sup>87</sup> Symes, 3.

<sup>88</sup> Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 12.

<sup>89</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It*, 145.

send out carefully constructed invitations that ask individuals to bring various instruments along with their voices. Throughout the evening, each person in turn should be given the time to make a record, and then have it played back. After solo performances, several choral pieces should be recorded. Finally, refreshments should be prepared and served. Edison hoped to create an in-home phonograph culture that focused on recording rather than playing-back with the help of this propaganda piece, even as late as 1900. Once again, Edison's stubbornness kept his company from leading the way for the phonograph into the home. Instead, two other companies, Columbia and Victor, both of whom focused on the sale of prerecorded records, led the way for the budding recording industry. Giving consumers what they wanted helped Americans to welcome the phonograph into their parlors at the turn of the twentieth century.

### **CHAPTER 3. THE PARLOR: WOMEN'S PLACE OF POWER**

Americans had to discover and accept an everyday use for the phonograph if it was ever to become something other than a novelty item. The fledgling industry had to create this use and then help Americans discover it through vigorous marketing strategy. The previous chapter shows that the majority of Americans failed to respond to Edison's projected uses for his machine as a dictation tool or for recording family members' voices. As a result, investors and rivals shifted the emphasis from the recording function to focus instead on improving and marketing the playback function, emphasizing the phonograph's ability to reproduce previously recorded music. But where would this new music machine be used and who would put it there? This chapter explores the answers to these two questions, investigating how the phonograph was transformed from a business invention to a novelty item examined at the local arcade by men, to a household item meant specifically for the Victorian American parlor and purchased primarily by women.

In order to understand this transformation, we must first understand the parlor at the turn of the twentieth century as a place in the home where women were in complete control of both the contents and activities, including music. Next, we will see how the feminine responsibilities in the home were exploited by the industry in their advertising campaigns, which promised that the phonograph (like other products) would help enhance culture and education in the home. Finally, this chapter will explain how women



were specifically profiled by the industry and became the target of the advertising campaigns.

### **Enabling a Moral Imperative: Idealized Environment**

In the mid-nineteenth century, public and private spaces were often set apart from each other. The working-class family's home was viewed as a sanctuary from everyday public life.<sup>1</sup> Yet social norms required that families be able to provide some forms of social entertainment in the home. Entertaining guests was an opportunity for the family, and particularly the women, to create and retain a level of social status by demonstrating a certain amount of proficiency with art, music, the developing social sciences (such as history or ancient philosophy) and technological advancement. So that such entertainment would not invade the private life of the household, a separate room was needed for this purpose: the parlor, set apart from the utilitarian space coveted for everyday living. The parlor is a story of tens of thousands of middle-class American families who devoted their financial and emotional resources to create rooms that none of them needed, strictly speaking, and some seemed rarely to have used.<sup>2</sup> Yet the importance of the parlor can not be underestimated since even small, moderately priced homes had one. Popular magazines as well as house plan books targeting people of little money and emphasized the importance of setting aside domestic space for the purposes of the parlor.<sup>3</sup> For Victorian Americans, the parlor, or parlor life, embodied the most important aspects of Victorian life.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine Grier, *Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988).

<sup>2</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, vii.

<sup>3</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 71.

<sup>4</sup> Cheri Y. Gay, *Victorian Style: Classic Homes of North America* (Philadelphia: Courage Books, 2002), 29.

Victorian America found a model for the middle-class parlor in the grand houses of the period, which often contained many single-purpose spaces such as a music room, a drawing room, and a sitting room. Since middle-class families could maintain only one parlor at great financial sacrifice, a single multi-purpose room sufficed. This room was not intended for everyday living and often had special furnishings not designed to withstand frequent use. Complaints deploring the waste of space and money began soon after the parlor became a conventional part of middle-class home construction.<sup>5</sup> Yet the parlor continued to flourish well into the 1920s and 1930s and ultimately remains with us today as the living room.<sup>6</sup>

The purpose of the Victorian parlor in America was to provide a comfortable setting for “social ceremonies” and the display of cherished possessions, through which the middle-class family strove to demonstrate personal excellence that reflected upper-class tastes and individual cultivation.<sup>7</sup> These cherished contents purchased for the parlor were symbols that expressed a family’s supposed affluence and increased their social status. As such, “parlor making families” contributed to “a rapidly commercializing world in which readily available goods manifest core cultural ideals that were supposedly timeless and beyond the reach of transient consumer tastes.”<sup>8</sup> Many of the symbolic

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<sup>5</sup> Katherine C. Grier, “The Decline of the Memory Palace: The Parlor after 1890,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 51. For additional information on the parlor, see two essay collections, Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling, eds, *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995); and Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth, eds., *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994).

<sup>6</sup> Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 49. By 1910, many furnishing magazines began promoting the “living room” as a simplified version of the parlor. The living room continued to fill many social needs, but allowed the family a space for increasingly more utilitarian purposes as well.

<sup>7</sup> Grier, “Decline of Memory Palace,” 54. See also, Robert Lewis, “Domestic Theater: Parlor Entertainment As Spectacle, 1840-1880,” in *Ceremonies and Spectacles: Performing American Culture*, edited by Teresa Alves, Teresa Cid and Heinz Ickstadt (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 2000), 49.

<sup>8</sup> Gay, 29; and Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, vii.

items found in the parlor were long ascribed to women and included well-tended house plants, needlework, furniture (such as center tables, stylized chairs, pianos), family hair wreaths in glass frames, photo albums, and large family Bibles with decorative covers. These items were meant to create a place for the family history within the house's social center.<sup>9</sup> Other symbolic items found in the parlor included musical instruments, books, art prints, sheet music, and of course, the phonograph. In contrast to items placed outside of the home—which were viewed by outsiders as superficial, meaningless or even misleading—the items found inside the home spoke of the character of the inhabitants and allowed them to be known intimately to visitors.<sup>10</sup> It was the responsibility of the woman of the house to select items of cultural value and sentimental worth for display in the parlor and arrange these items artistically to advance the household's moral and intellectual standing and cultural pretensions.<sup>11</sup>

The proliferation of these symbolic material goods represented civilized progress and reflected the idea that anyone can learn (or perhaps purchase) culture, a growing American democratic ideal.<sup>12</sup> Although the term “anyone” included the majority of Americans, it was limited to the middling of America, a transatlantic culture of the industrializing nineteenth century known as Victorianism.<sup>13</sup> For the first time, this section of the population had money that allowed the purchase of items beyond the basic necessities. Each symbol was to be acquainted with “higher” learning, which made the individuals more fully human because they became engaged with civilization in a deeper

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<sup>9</sup> Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 53.

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth L. Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 7.

<sup>11</sup> Lewis, 49.

<sup>12</sup> Jessica H. Foy, “The Home Set to Music,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 68.

<sup>13</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, viii.

way.<sup>14</sup> Each had a purpose to serve in fulfilling the web of ideas that surrounded the parlor and the home. Popular art prints, sheet music, advice literature and fiction all attest to the concreteness of the ideal of a single family residence, separated from its neighbors by a green strip or by the fields of a farm.<sup>15</sup>

The parlor was to be a “comfortable theatre” where the family could present its refined public face at controlled social gatherings. *The Century Dictionary* defined the parlor in 1890 as “a room in a private house set apart for the conversational entertainment of guests; a reception room; a drawing room... in the United States, where the word ‘drawing room’ is little used. Parlor is the general term for the room used for the reception of guests.”<sup>16</sup> It was to retain the identity of the family sitting room as it also was to serve more public and formulaic uses.<sup>17</sup> *Godey’s Lady’s Book* offered functional reflections of life in the parlor: It describes a fictional account, “The sofa, three easy chairs and other lounges are not sufficient to seat all the group; ‘but Anna had so many fine engravings and photographs upon her walls, and there was such a store of pretty knick-knacks scattered about, that no one was at a loss’ until additional chairs arrived.”<sup>18</sup> The stage aspect is beautifully depicted in Eastman Johnson’s painting *Not at Home* (c. 1872-1880). The painting illustrates a woman fleeing up the stairs to avoid an encounter with an unseen caller. The private quarters up the stairs provided an escape or time

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<sup>14</sup> Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 57.

<sup>15</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 4, 9.

<sup>16</sup> Quoted in Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 70. Even as late as 1922, the Parlor continued to be a separate room—the “best room” in the home—utilized for the reception of guests and “corresponding to the drawing-room in the more pretentious dwellings. See W.T. Harris, editor, *Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language: Based on the International Dictionary of 1890 and 1900* (Revised Edition. Springfield, MA: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1922), 1569.

<sup>17</sup> Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in John G. Blair, “The Emergence of An American Mentality: The Cultural Work of Antebellum Stage Entertainments,” in *Ceremonies and Spectacles: Performing American Culture*, edited by Teresa Alves, Teresa Cid and Heinz Ickstadt (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 2000), 68.

“offstage,” away from the stresses that accompany entertaining, socializing, and formal living.<sup>19</sup>

The appearance of comfort was at odds with the many items that represented culture in the parlor, and the resulting tension was the object of considerable debate until the end of the nineteenth century. Both culture and comfort were desired in the parlor, yet the public debate over comfort often expressed an ambivalent attitude about the increasing number of consumer goods that actually made dwellings into places where time could be spent in a pleasurable physical state. Much rhetoric from advice columns argued that *comfort* was much more than ease—it was distinctly a middle-class state of mind that neither elites with aristocratic tendencies nor consumers enslaved to novelties could understand. Culture was developed, expressed, and maintained in the parlor with the consumer goods described above. “The ideal parlor of culture presented a family’s cultivated façade but the ideal parlor of comfort at once discounted the value of that appearance.”<sup>20</sup>

The dichotomy of culture-versus-comfort was illustrated by the importance of the hearth in the parlor even after heating stoves or basement furnaces became standard.<sup>21</sup> The hearth represented a happy family life, a symbol appropriate to the parlor even after modern invention made it obsolete. Advertisements for these new inventions did not blanket the popular magazines like other objects for the home. Instead, images already abounded of extended families congregating around the fireplace complete with roaring fire.<sup>22</sup> The arts reflected the image: in 1867, Sidney Lanier (1842-81), a poet and

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<sup>19</sup> Ames, 42.

<sup>20</sup> See Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 54; and Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, viii-3.

<sup>21</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 72.

<sup>22</sup> Ames, 89.

lecturer of English literature at Johns Hopkins University, stated that a good fire and music make a home out of a household.<sup>23</sup> Even as more families installed basement furnaces, the importance of the hearth as the center of family display remained.

Women, more precisely housewives, were the “priestess and minister of this family state.”<sup>24</sup> As such, they navigated the household through the culture-versus-comfort dilemma. Considered the more cultivated sex and given the job of managing the affairs of the parlor, women were to create proper expressions of the domestic ideal.<sup>25</sup> Since this expression took place primarily within the parlor, they retained complete control over its management, purchasing all of the items displayed, cleaning and maintaining the room and educating other family members with proper parlor activities. The largest circulating publications imply that, “although men provided the means of each family’s material existence, women set the tone of that existence.”<sup>26</sup> Harriet Beecher Stowe argues that the home is the new impersonation of women. The selection and arrangement of possessions found within personified the nature of the woman who ran the household. In fact, Thomas Schlereth suggests that the Victorian parlor was the one place where the woman of the house was in complete control of its content and conduct as well as culture and comfort.<sup>27</sup> Defined by the woman, the Victorian family

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<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 62. See also Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 114.

<sup>24</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 8. Quoted from Harriet Beecher Stowe, *We and Our Neighbors* (New York: J.B. Ford and Company, 1875), 152.

<sup>25</sup> Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 53, 56.

<sup>26</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 6. Grier makes this point by referencing Lydia Sigourney, *Letters to Mother* (1838); Harriet Beecher Stowe’s works; and Sarah Josepha Hale, editor of *Godey’s Lady’s Book*.

<sup>27</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, “Introduction: American Homes and American Scholars,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 15.

can only be understood through her role as mistress of the house. Furthermore, the middle-class woman of the nineteenth century defined herself with these roles.<sup>28</sup>

Running the parlor required much time, money and refined management skills. Women sought the aid of domestic account books to help them create and sustain a satisfactory parlor experience. Popular magazines encouraged women to view “keeping house” as a business and as such, suggested certain business practices including keeping accurate books and viewing savings—money not needed for “essential” items such as food, clothing, and rent—as “profit.” This “profit” was then used to purchase items for the parlor not previously available to the family. Among the most expensive in 1897 was the piano, available for \$125 through Sears; parlor organs cost \$57.<sup>29</sup> Piles of sheet music (for the piano), busts of composers, small carefully placed instruments were all symbols of culture and abundance commonly found in the parlors and well within the financial means of the typical middle-class American.<sup>30</sup>

Home entertainment took place in the parlor. By promoting moral attributes, great pains were made to justify this entertainment as a legitimate aspect of Victorian comfort. Quality pastimes promised to provide an education or to foster moral appreciation for the arts among the children of the household. Families were encouraged by literature and advertisements to play together for the sake of the children, on the theory that group activities encouraged stronger family ties.<sup>31</sup> In the last quarter of the

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<sup>28</sup> Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie-Mellon University Press, 1975), 144.

<sup>29</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 66.

<sup>30</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 68. See also Craig H. Roell, “The Piano in the American Home,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 86.

<sup>31</sup> Donna R. Braden. “‘The Family That Plays Together Stays Together’: Family Pastimes and Indoor Amusements, 1890-1930,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*,

nineteenth century, formal games played in the parlor, including theatricals and *tableaux vivants*, became standard social activities.<sup>32</sup>

These performances were not impromptu; social norms required the use of scenery, costumes and lighting. Announcements and printed invitations were prepared and distributed ahead of the event. There was a need to demonstrate perfection in one's learning to close friends and neighbors, and many books meant to help perfect these performances were published.<sup>33</sup> As early as the 1820s, many parlors provided a stage with the help of "double parlors," two rooms that were separated by double doors. The doors could be opened, increasing the size of the parlor and providing a stage. Less wealthy families who could not afford a double parlor were encouraged to improvise. Stowe, in her book *The American Women's Home*, gave instructions for a moveable screen to create a separate stage area.<sup>34</sup> Besides theatrical performances, other visual entertainment included the wheel of life or zoetrope, a round device that created the semblance of motion from a number of still slides while revolving; magic lanterns, adapted from a lecture aid, and stereoscopes that provided pictures of distant lands, national parks, geological and archeological sites also in the form of pictures or slides.<sup>35</sup> Between 1854 and 1920, companies had produced between 3 and 4 million negatives for the stereoscope and related stereograph. All of these items lent themselves to support the

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edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 146-48.

<sup>32</sup> Braden, 150.

<sup>33</sup> Lewis, 53.

<sup>34</sup> Lewis, 52.

<sup>35</sup> Lewis, 54; and Braden, 154.



Victorian family's commitment to improving society by perfecting the moral character through the acquisition of knowledge about the world around it.<sup>36</sup>

Musical activities including piano, organ and voice recitals, and later phonograph concerts also became standard home amusements in the parlor. Music, considered part of high culture and learning, was not only regarded as valuable entertainment but also as a vehicle for reinforcing the notion of the home as a refuge, necessary to sustain family life. It was "elevating and delightful recreation," physically and morally uplifting, capable of rescuing the distraught from the increasingly industrialized world.<sup>37</sup> Music-making was "a soothing, harmonizing influence" and made the home "more agreeable, restraining rebellion and discontent. It promotes cheerfulness: girls are happier and boys more ready to stay at home."<sup>38</sup> "Classical" music in particular was admired as an upper-class taste with naturally uplifting and moral qualities, and was thought to contain artistic merit that anyone could learn. Classical music was considered a symbol of culture, and an individual's ability to appreciate it became a tool for evaluating one's thoughts and tastes.

Making music in the home helped create a sanctuary from everyday life. Many etiquette books of the day suggest that music "carefully played" compels listening and aids conversation, that it soothes the troubles of work so that the husband or brother may be made almost domestic by its cheerful notes.<sup>39</sup> As the expectations to hear music in the parlor increased, the responsibility grew to provide quality performances. The time and

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<sup>36</sup> Kathryn Grover, ed., *Hard at Play: Leisure in America, 1840-1940* (United States: The Strong Museum, 1992), 112-114.

<sup>37</sup> Roell, 85-86. And Foy, "Home Set to Music," 62.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis, 55. Quoted from "Music at Home," *Musical World and Times* 8 (April 15, 1854): 171.

<sup>39</sup> Roell, 90. Examples of etiquette books are *The Ladies' and Gentlemen's Etiquette Book* (New York, 1879); and *Sensible Etiquette and Good Manners of the Best Society* (New York, 1882).

resources needed to practice, prepare, and perform music separated women from those who were able to enjoy music.<sup>40</sup> The sanctuary they created was for husbands, children and guests and seen as a necessary component for households that contributed to society.

An advertisement in *McClure's Magazine* from 1908 (see figure 3.1 on page 65) illustrates this point beautifully. It presents two scenarios and asks the question “Which is the Trained Man’s Home?” The drawing that first catches our eye, the one placed higher on the page, reveals a man in shirt sleeves reading and a woman washing clothes close by; to help make the point, the light for the small room is provided by a simple oil lamp placed on the work table. The second drawing offers a strong contrast to the first: The woman is playing the piano; she no longer shares a central focus with the man but is in the background of a much larger room; and a shaded and more ornate lamp (presumably electric) sits on the table. Yet the activity of the man remains unchanged: he is still reading.<sup>41</sup>

The answer to the question in the advertisement stimulated desire for the product. How does one create a “trained man’s home” and raise their social class? Through education, of course! The language in the advertisement suggests that a bigger salary could be earned with the help of the “International Correspondence Schools.” Although it is presumably the man who will attend this school and receive training, the advertisement only shows the woman changing her activities. With the creation of wealth, money could be available for instruments, lessons, and sheet music. It is assumed

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<sup>40</sup> Braden, 154-55. Further evidence of a connection between live parlor music and entertainment can be found in the many jokes relating to amateur pianists found in *Musical America* under its “It is to Laugh” column. Frequently, a woman who thought she could play the piano or sing was referenced in a negative light. Furthermore, Mary Elizabeth Wilson Sherwood states in “Home Amusements” (1881) that the practice is not home amusement but home torture. She longingly asks, “If only a person could learn to play or sing without those first noises.”

<sup>41</sup> Foy discusses the same advertisement in “The Home Set to Music,” 64. She found it in the October, 1908 edition of *Putnam's and the Reader Magazine*.

that the woman would be willing to add to her daily activities the practice needed to perfect piano playing.<sup>42</sup>



**Figure 3.1: Advertisement for the International Correspondence Schools from the advertisement section in McClure's, 32, no. 1 (1908): 41**

Women dominated the ranks of amateur musicians and populated concert audiences well into the twentieth century just as they directed all activities in the parlor. Those who played and studied musical instruments as well as those who taught and promoted music appreciation were primarily female. With women's support and encouragement for the arts, Americans were able to establish a rich musical life in many cities across the nation. An article published in *Musical America* in 1910 reproduces the 1901 experience of an unnamed "German singer of note":

<sup>42</sup> Roell, 86.

Such enthusiasm as I witnessed I would never believe possible had I not seen it with my own eyes. I was told abroad that there was no love for music in American, but after a journey of 7,500 miles I wish to go on record disputing this statement... In every city that I visited I found a fine music hall, sometimes a clubhouse, in which to sing. There were few vacant seats, and such audiences! Young girls with braids down their backs, looking as if they had just come out of the high school; debutantes, fresh eyed, rosy cheeked; young and old matrons, women of all kinds, most of them well dressed, all of them intelligent and enthusiastic. As I saw this in town after town I was amazed. Where in Europe could such a succession of audiences be gathered?

At each concert I met the women who were guiding the destinies of the club, many of whom were as familiar with every movement in music as I am myself, many of whom have traveled extensively in studying music... As long as these women feel as they do and continue to grow in the musical world, and nothing will stop her musical progress. In some cities the men had imbibed their enthusiasm.<sup>43</sup>

Even in the most conservative families, women were allowed to participate in music within the home, giving concerts and preparing short plays or opera scenes for friends. For example, in the 1830s, Samuel Ward, who had undergone a religious reconversion, forbade his daughters from attending the theatre, opera, or fashionable balls; however, in the home, the local Episcopal minister encouraged all of these activities.<sup>44</sup>

Many American Victorian magazines encouraged women to study music and be musical. They also encouraged certain types of household chores, such as bread making, that would strengthen appropriate muscles for music making.<sup>45</sup> Victorian Americans viewed music as “the most spiritual of the arts,” “medicine for the souls” and a “natural possession” of mothers, sisters, and daughters.<sup>46</sup> Music, along with all of the fine arts,

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<sup>43</sup> C.A., “Women—The Potent Influence in Our Musical Life,” *Musical America* 12, no. 22 (October 8, 1910): 3. Also quoted in Linda Whitesitt, “The Role of Women Impresarios in American Concert Life, 1871-1933,” *American Music* 7, no. 2 (1989): 159-160.

<sup>44</sup> Lewis, 48.

<sup>45</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 65.

<sup>46</sup> Roell, 86, 88.

stood at the apex of human achievement, followed by the decorative arts, artifacts of technology, exhibits from other lands (the more exotic, the better), products of agriculture and specimens of natural history.<sup>47</sup> In fact, there was such a close connection between women and music that even as late as 1929, *Etude* magazine calls them the “twin souls of civilization.”<sup>48</sup>

Although this statement lauds musical respect for the responsibilities of women and places them on a social pedestal, their role was steeped with requirement and responsibility. Walter Damrosch posits that unlike all other countries, the musical development in America has been fostered “almost exclusively by women.”<sup>49</sup> The same *Musical America* article referenced above states that without women, there would be little love for music or musical life in America.

Working with an enthusiasm so ardent in the warmth of its advocacy that all intelligent and observing foreigners are amazed by it, one hundred thousand women in American homes are spreading the gospel of music far and wide in this country.

Through their unselfish and indefatigable efforts, often made at the expense of large sacrifice of time and money, a musical foundation is being built that nothing can topple over...<sup>50</sup>

The active interest which women of all classes take in music in America is phenomenal and leads one to believe that without their tremendous energy and colossal work there would be little music life or love of music in America.<sup>51</sup>

Since music was viewed as the apex of human achievement in America, and since there was no music without women, the “twin souls” mentioned in *Etude* were actually

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<sup>47</sup> Grier, “Decline of the Memory Palace,” 59.

<sup>48</sup> “Woman and Music: Twin Souls of Civilization,” *Etude* 47, no. 11 (1929): 793.

<sup>49</sup> Walter Damrosch, *My Musical Life* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1930), 323.

<sup>50</sup> C. A., 3. Quoted in Whitesitt, 175n3.

<sup>51</sup> C. A., 4. Quoted in Whitesitt, 175n3.

inseparable, intertwined supports necessary for civilization to thrive. If the woman of the household failed in her social duties then civilization would also fail.<sup>52</sup>

Given the social significance attached to music in the Victorian home, instruments found a natural place among the many culturally symbolic items displayed within the parlor. There was a belief that any instrument could enhance at least in some way the musical environment and thus the culture of the home.<sup>53</sup> A wide variety of instruments found their way into the market including banjos, guitars, harps, accordions, harmonicas, mandolins, and zithers.<sup>54</sup> But some instruments were more important than others. As its name implies, the parlor organ was a distinctly Victorian musical instrument, popular between 1840 and 1890.<sup>55</sup> Although Victorian America had increasing financial resources, budgets were still limited and the parlor organ's price—less than half the cost of a piano—meant it could be purchased more easily by a greater number of Americans. Furthermore, the organ took up a third less space than a square piano, an important consideration in the multipurpose parlor. Finally, the organ brought sacred connotations into the parlor, reminding people of church.<sup>56</sup> The parlor organ and piano (and later the talking machine) also fulfilled symbolic roles as furniture. Both plain and highly decorated models of each instrument could be purchased. Obviously more expensive, the additional decorations further reflected the taste, financial sacrifice and artistic refinement of the woman of the house, a point examined more fully in the next chapter.

Striving to place itself at the center of the family gathering, the talking machine adopted the symbolism surrounding parlor instruments, forcing the piano, organ and

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<sup>52</sup> "Women and Music," 793.

<sup>53</sup> Foy, "Home Set to Music," 67.

<sup>54</sup> Foy, "Home Set to Music," 66.

<sup>55</sup> Ames, 150.

<sup>56</sup> Ames, 155.

other instruments out of the picture. Furthermore, women had to accept and purchase the talking machine, and place it at the center of the family, if this instrument was to establish itself in the home.

Only the female was expected to play the parlor instruments and as such musical display was a feminine accomplishment. Many advertisements show a woman playing a parlor instrument or operating a talking machine. Sitting and listening to the performance, the rest of the family often surrounded the woman, and some religious symbol could be found in the background. For example, in one advertisement by Mason & Hamlin Church for their chapel and parlor organs, a church steeple is visible through the parlor window.<sup>57</sup>

Music was used to provide an education for the children within the home.<sup>58</sup> The music taught to children reinforced family tastes and set a proper moral tone. Not just any music would do; one had to be taught good music. Women could purchase kazoos, parlor bells, and toy instruments to enhance even in some small way the musical and cultural environment of the home.<sup>59</sup> Later, records promising educational material in the form of prerecorded music purportedly provided similar learning experiences. Popular magazines promoted musical education in the home. In 1869, *Atlantic Monthly Magazine* ran an article insisting that parlor music could be improved if it was critically reviewed.<sup>60</sup> Such a statement implies the music was in need of improvement and therefore there was always room for further education. By 1913, *Etude* magazine

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<sup>57</sup> Ames, 168. For a similar ad involving the nuclear family (husband and children), see Ames, 175.

<sup>58</sup> Foy, "Home Set to Music," 63.

<sup>59</sup> Foy, "Home Set to Music," 67.

<sup>60</sup> Foy, "Home set to Music," 67.

estimated 95 percent of all lessons were taught to students who intended to use their skills solely in the home.<sup>61</sup>

Women sought consolation in their responsibilities through uplifting rhetoric, suggesting that their pursuit of musical excellence was a morally worthwhile pursuit. Many believed that by aspiring to beauty through music, one aspired heavenward.<sup>62</sup> In *The American Woman's Home*, by Catherine Beecher and Harriet Beecher Stowe, 1869, music is described as “an elevating and delightful recreation physically and morally uplifting and necessary to sustain family life.”<sup>63</sup> Women held on to the notion that music had the power to uplift and transform, to improve one’s sense of character and wellbeing. Fulfilling their social responsibilities of providing music and education in the parlor was a moral imperative. With the use of religious undertones, women were able to find and sustain purpose in their lives.

### **“Advertising Progress”: Creating a Market for Female Shoppers**

Why, particularly when only a handful of companies held the patents limiting competition, did the young phonograph industry make radical changes? After twenty-five years, the young industry discovered that consumers simply wanted pre-recorded music, not better sound or the ability to record themselves for posterity or entertainment purposes. Instead, they wanted a particular genre of music, specifically opera arias made popular through sheet music sales and the recital performing tradition, and at the same time associated with high social status.<sup>64</sup> For this commodity, the industry discovered

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<sup>61</sup> Mary M. Schmitz, “Recitals in the Homes of Pupils,” *Etude* 31, no. 10 (1913): 757.

<sup>62</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 66.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted in Roell, 87.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander Bayden Magoun, “Shaping the Sound of Music: The Evolution of the Phonographic Record, 1877-1950” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2000), 10-13.



that people (primarily women) were willing to part with limited resources set aside for musical enjoyment. “In order to make the phonograph acceptable, manufacturers, advertisers and consumers had to redefine the machine, visually, culturally, and acoustically.”<sup>65</sup> They had to transform the phonograph from a novelty item into a musical instrument that appealed to Victorian Americans’ parlor sensibilities.

Before such a transformation could take place, the industry had to overcome certain “fixed prejudices.” Many who claimed to be arbiters of high culture professed to find nothing of merit in the talking machine.<sup>66</sup> By the 1890s, Edison’s invention was a medium of popular culture, most often experienced at arcades and nickelodeons across the country. The industry had to work hard if it was to transform this novelty item into a “high class musical instrument” with the ability to “play” high-class music.<sup>67</sup> Doing so promised to maximize sales, helping to create a new in-home market and overcome bitter criticism concerning its previous low-brow associations.

But how was industry able to make these changes and then communicate them to the growing buying public? Keith Negus argues that much economic discussion from a political perspective leaves us with an image of the powerful music industry owners exercising an almost omnipotent control over the practices of musicians and the choices of consumers. However, he points out that this is a false impression,<sup>68</sup> particularly in the early years of the recording industry. Instead, the redefinition process for the talking machine was a response to the pervading culture and the industry’s desire to create an

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<sup>65</sup> Emily Thompson, “Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison Phonograph in America, 1877-1925,” *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (1995): 140.

<sup>66</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 44.

<sup>67</sup> Kenney, 45.

<sup>68</sup> Keith Negus, *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 15.

object useful and saleable to the majority of Americans. Inventors, entrepreneurs, and consumers all acted, reacted, and negotiated with one another based on the rationales constructed from their assumptions, beliefs, and experiences regarding improvements in “modern” life.<sup>69</sup> Negus posits that the record business does not manipulate the public so much as feel its pulse.<sup>70</sup> Thus, the early manufacturers created expensive national advertising campaigns that mimicked earlier campaigns for a plethora of different in-home products ranging from pianos to soap, reflecting changes the industry hoped to make in the minds of Americans regarding the phonograph.

Advertisements preached appropriate symbolism for specific objects, relieving the stress created by potentially pointless accumulation of these objects. The majority of these meanings were remarkably similar as they all promised to provide access to culture, education and upward social mobility to the Victorian American. The growing commercialization of objects played an important role in solving the culture-versus-comfort dilemma. “The processes of commercialization—the creation of a national framework of distribution, marketing, consumer credit, and sales—” made these items and accompanying meanings available to the whole of American society. “Such commercialization moved symbolic values throughout the culture, inviting broader participation in already established conceptions.”<sup>71</sup>

In order to resonate with the public, the recording industry’s appropriated common advertising rhetoric that reflected the symbolic meanings and democratic ideals of a compassionate liberty, the spirit of enterprise and the right to amass wealth and

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<sup>69</sup> Magoun, 2.

<sup>70</sup> Negus, 18.

<sup>71</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 9.

power.<sup>72</sup> This belief provided the means to purchase appropriate items that elevated an individual's social status. But how did advertisers get people to spend their money on consumer goods? People could not want to buy what they did not know existed or did not perceive as a need.<sup>73</sup> It became the responsibility of advertisers to make consumers believe that buying a particular product would change their life, making it more comfortable without sacrificing culture. The product must be an avenue of expressing oneself or modeling new kinds of relationships. The individual had to perceive the possibility of economic and social mobility.<sup>74</sup>

Modern advertising was just coming of age around 1900, after previously serving as merely an information conduit.<sup>75</sup> "Advertisements prior to the Civil War generally heralded the increased availability of traditional goods like spices, shoes, and textiles."<sup>76</sup> They did not have to create demand for goods that were viewed as necessary items. Advertising utilized what has become known as the "hard sell approach" to promote these goods. The sales pitch was always tied to a concrete reality that focused on the product, a sales event, or price.<sup>77</sup> For example, if people needed crackers, then advertising served as a means of communicating where crackers could be purchased and for how much. The advertisement did not create the need or desire to purchase crackers and no brand loyalty was promoted. As a result, by today's standards most

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<sup>72</sup> Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton, eds., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 28.

<sup>73</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 31.

<sup>74</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 24.

<sup>75</sup> David Blanke, *The 1910s* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 47; and Bob Batchelor, *The 1900s* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 66.

<sup>76</sup> Laird, 3.

<sup>77</sup> Blanke, 69.

advertisements were small. They utilized only a couple of inches on the page, contained very little white space and always placed the product at the center of the pitch.

However, when both merchants and manufacturers began to promote new types of goods such as the sewing machine and the phonograph “for which no ready demand existed,”<sup>78</sup> viewed as novelties, these products needed a new approach; advertising had to create a demand and acceptance. The newer approach, known as the “soft sell” approach, avoided the mention of specific information about the product. Photos of people or actors were used to represent how consumers wanted to be seen, not how they appeared in reality. The actors replaced the product at the center of the pitch; they encouraged consumers to purchase items based on the amount of personal prestige they promised to bring into the home.<sup>79</sup> The size of advertisements grew, some even occupying two full pages in magazines. In the larger format, the amount of white space increased over the earlier hard-sell approach to advertising. After about 1870, in order to convince Americans to spend money, companies dramatically increased the amount of their advertising and by 1900, more advertisements had adopted democratic rhetoric that promised progress in middle-class American homes.<sup>80</sup>

The typical “person” or actor featured in these new advertisements was an ideal woman known as “The Gibson Girl,” popular between 1890 and the first World War, and created by Charles Dana Gibson. She was “an elegant, graceful, romanticized female of the age.”<sup>81</sup> An ideal “new woman,” it was assumed that Gibson’s girl had a college education, was self supporting (or employed), did not marry young, was cautious of

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<sup>78</sup> Laird, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Blanke, 69.

<sup>80</sup> Laird, 6.

<sup>81</sup> Batchelor, 91.

women's empowerment, played tennis, rode bicycles, made men swoon and dressed simpler, in a long skirt and blouse. Illustrations that depict her with a man always display a level of self confidence for her, while the men are depicted with sadness, knowing they could never have her.<sup>82</sup> Her likeness was often depicted in advertisements doing the very activities that set her up as an ideal woman. She promoted the very products women who wanted to be like her needed. The influence of Gibson's depiction of femininity was summed up in the *New York World*, "As soon as the world saw Gibson's ideal it bowed down in adoration, saying: 'Lo, at last the typical American girl.' Not only did the susceptible American men acknowledge her their queen, but the girls themselves held her as their own portrait."<sup>83</sup>

Advertisements projected a modernized American society.<sup>84</sup> Symbols of technological achievement such as electricity, clocks, trains, steamships, mercantile buildings, and factories abounded.<sup>85</sup> By the 1910s, advertising had developed into an industry of its own with professionals including agents, copy writers and artists whose job was to lead the consumer to interpret a product in a particular way.<sup>86</sup> As advertising increased, it became indispensable to industry and necessary to make a profit.<sup>87</sup>

With the hard-sell approach common prior to the Civil War, most advertisements were in local newspapers, but the newer, more exciting and stylized approach explored several different arenas.<sup>88</sup> Some popular ones included jingles on streetcars that changed

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<sup>82</sup> Batchelor, 92.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted in Batchelor, 93.

<sup>84</sup> Blanke, 48.

<sup>85</sup> Laird, 2.

<sup>86</sup> Negus, 23.

<sup>87</sup> Batchelor, 51.

<sup>88</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 183.

weekly and had the public clamoring for the next installment.<sup>89</sup> Household auction catalogues demonstrated beautifully planned parlors complete with the proper furnishings at discounted prices. Parlors in public spaces such as photographers' studios, hotels, and steamboat and railroad lines also provided a means for displaying items for sale.<sup>90</sup> The mail order catalogue, similar to the auction catalogues, pictured rooms with furnishings to purchase. The Sears catalogue of 1897 listed "parlor furniture" for sale, guiding individuals who had any question as to what was appropriate for this room.<sup>91</sup> As the quantity of consumer goods increased, outlets to purchase them increased as well.<sup>92</sup> New "Model Rooms" in department stores such as Wanamaker's and Macy's were placed on display for housewives to visit.<sup>93</sup> In the 1890s, extensive illustrations of parlors also appeared in popular household magazines and journals.<sup>94</sup>

Before the 1870s, few magazines carried advertisements. However, within ten years, magazines were distributing ads throughout their pages rather than concealing them in one section at the beginning or the end of the publication.<sup>95</sup> Publishers discovered that by doing so, the large, sometimes colored ads, made the pages of their publications more attractive. Some of the earliest magazines to incorporate this change were *Ladies Home Journal* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, both published by the Curtis Publishing Company. By the turn of the century, popular household magazines and journals were one of the most important venues for advertisers.<sup>96</sup> The magazines brought

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<sup>89</sup> Batchelor, 64.

<sup>90</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 28-9.

<sup>91</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 48.

<sup>92</sup> Batchelor, 56.

<sup>93</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 26.

<sup>94</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 26.

<sup>95</sup> Laird, 220.

<sup>96</sup> Margaret Beetham and Kay Boardman, eds., *Victorian Women's Magazines: An Anthology* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 1.

the advertisements into the home and allowed the audiences to read them at leisure. So popular were magazines that some families included their cost as an itemized expense in the family budget, along with other important items such as food, fuel and clothes.<sup>97</sup> So effective was this medium that keyed advertisements appeared around 1900. Keying advertisements was the practice of introducing slight alterations to ads in certain regions in order to track in what parts of the country people were responding most favorably to the products.<sup>98</sup>

Cyrus H.N. Curtis, creator of *Ladies Home Journal* and owner of *The Saturday Evening Post* (purchased in 1897), promoted reduced cost for his magazines, encouraging the publishers to rely on advertising payments from which to realize a profit and to sustain production costs. This practice had been avoided because it was considered a crass business move. But Curtis realized that the American magazine as a genre was no longer the cultural arbiter of the elite. The changes that resulted from his encouragement turned the magazine into a vehicle for middle-class identity and consumerism, exactly what the people wanted and thought they needed.<sup>99</sup> In 1904 the Curtis publishing company boasted of a home circulation of one million for *The Ladies Home Journal*. In a circulation statement published in *The Post*, the publishers argue that with this circulation, many advertisements would reach five million people. “If each of them made but one purchase of you in a year, it would mean over 15,000 orders a day, which would keep most establishments rather busy.”<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> For example, see “How Other Folks Live, When \$1200 a Year is More Than Enough: The Actual Experiences of Five Families,” *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 10 (1912): 21.

<sup>98</sup> Laird, 285.

<sup>99</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 160.

<sup>100</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 177, no. 5 (July, 30): n.p. Circulation statement found in the front of this issue.

Magazines sought and found a national audience at the end of the nineteenth century. The majority fit into three broad categories: those that focus on specific topics, such as the many popular music periodicals of the time including *Musical America*, *Musician* and *Etude*; those showcasing literary and artistic works such as *The Saturday Evening Post*; and those focusing on “gossipy” news such as *Ladies Home Journal*, *McClure’s*, *Good Housekeeping* and *Life*, making current events accessible to a larger audience.<sup>101</sup>

Most magazines that found a national audience aimed their contents at middle-class housewives. As its name implies, *Ladies Home Journal* reassured homemakers in the properness of their traditional roles. It included serialized fiction by new writers, inexpensive house plans by Frank Lloyd Wright, and special departments like “Ruth Ashmore’s Side Talks With Girls.”<sup>102</sup> *McClure’s* and *Good Housekeeping* were similar in many respects. Since the majority of amateur musicians were women, the popular music magazines also catered to a primarily female audience. Even the magazines that ostensibly catered to the whole family such as *The Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* carried advertisements that assumed a female readership.

The phonograph companies realized their need of advertising in this medium if they were to successfully redefine the talking machine for in-home use. Victor was slightly ahead of its major competitors, Edison and Columbia, in this regard. As early as 1899, Victor’s predecessor, The Consolidated Talking Machine Company, began placing advertisements in *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly* (later *American Magazine*), *McClure’s*, *Muncey’s Magazine* and *Cosmopolitan*. Victor committed \$2500 for one

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<sup>101</sup> For descriptions of the three types, see Blanke, 50-51.

<sup>102</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian American*, 186.



month of magazine advertising using the “His Master’s Voice” slogan.<sup>103</sup> Victor’s first two-page ads appeared in *The Saturday Evening Post* on November 19, 1904. By the 1910s, Victor was the seventy-fourth largest company in the United States in terms of assets, but among the top five spenders on national magazine advertising.<sup>104</sup> By 1912, no other company relied as heavily on advertising as Victor, whose annual budget surpassed 1.5 million dollars.<sup>105</sup>

The newer “soft-sell” style advertisements, which reflected the ideals of the advertisers, the consumers, and the manufacturers, are indispensable source material for this study. Pamela Walker Laird, in her book *Advertising Progress*, states,

Advertisements are the most public, and in many ways the most evocative, components of today and western marketing processes. They are important elements of our material culture as well as messages commissioned for marketing purposes. Because advertising has been a major conduit between businesses and the general population its history can help us look at the interrelations between business and the larger culture. In order to use advertisements as material history we must appreciate how complex and convoluted the relationships between advertising messages, their creators, and their audiences have been and remain. And although advertisements do not provide totally reliable materials for reconstructing their creators’ business and cultural attitudes and intentions they are richly resonant products of those attitudes, beliefs, and intentions.<sup>106</sup>

Regardless of the product, advertisers relied on three underlying themes at the turn of the century, all of which incorporate the idea of personal improvement as part of the democratic ideal. They were (1) to assist the individual in finding meaning in an increasingly complex world by providing significance to consumer goods, (2) to offer solutions to many of modern life’s problems in the form of consumer goods (a form of therapy), and (3) to create new standards of conduct or new moral codes demonstrated by

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<sup>103</sup> Magoun, 165.

<sup>104</sup> Magoun, 183.

<sup>105</sup> Kenney, 52.

<sup>106</sup> Laird, 8-9.

the ownership of certain consumer goods.<sup>107</sup> The advertisers were on a mission to reform the consumers' way of thinking, to express the progress of American civilization that focused on exceptional personal and national identity.<sup>108</sup> Yet at the same time, important elements for success were low cost and durability,<sup>109</sup> factors that ultimately allowed the majority of Americans to have access to the goods, and without which there could be no economic democratizing of the purchasing masses. Laird's premise in her book is that successful advertisements promoted these ideals, and she refers to such ads as a discourse of "Progress."

For example, soap advertisements had to convince individuals of the importance of personal hygiene, thus encouraging them to use more soap. Higher demands were placed on women who made their own soap using traditional home manufacturing, in an age where women's time was already limited. Rising soap consumption by the family threatened to increase the stress and time needed to manage the household. Soap advertisements offered a solution through new name-brand soaps that promised superior quality and quantity at a price everyone could afford.<sup>110</sup> One advertisement for "P. and G. soap" in *Good Housekeeping* promises to do the majority of the homemaker's work:

Ordinary laundry soaps cannot do satisfactory work unless the clothes are rubbed and boiled. You or the laundress must do this hard work while the soap merely helps. Washing with P. and G.-The White Naphtha Soap is another story. The minute you put the clothes to soak, it begins to work. It loosens the dirt the same as hard rubbing... They need no hard rubbing, no boiling... Until you try it you cannot imagine how much more P. and G.-The White Naphtha Soap does than ordinary soap nor how closely it resembles a laundress in the way it works for the housewife and in the quality of work it turns out.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> Blanke, 48-9.

<sup>108</sup> Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperly, eds., *Introduction to American Studies* (New York: Longman, 1998), 66; and Grier, *Culture and Comfort*, 1.

<sup>109</sup> Magoun, 4.

<sup>110</sup> Laird, 54.

<sup>111</sup> "P. and G.-The White Naphtha Soap," *Good Housekeeping* 55 (December, 1912): 23. "P. and G." are the initials of the manufacturing company, Procter and Gamble.

Furthermore, at five cents a bar, any housewife was tempted to see if this soap lived up to its promises.

Name brands became increasingly important in the 1880s. Prior to the Civil War, most consumer-directed products were generic goods such as food stuffs, textiles, shoes, iron products and so forth. Advertisers did not have to educate the public on consumption practices. Consumers knew what their needs were, and they were obvious to those who sold the products.<sup>112</sup> But by the 1880s, companies began to recognize power in a trademark over the generic name of the product.<sup>113</sup>

The new name-brand products were morally significant, promising to raise a household's cleanliness and self-respect. Consider an advertisement for "Sapolio" soap (figure 3.2 on page 82). Not only does it do what all soap does—clean, scour and polish—but it also "is in charge of the 'uplift work' in the community." Sapolio soap imparts its own spirit on the user, creates "self-respect" and "community interest," and does all of these things "without waste." Finally, as the advertisement suggests, Sapolio soap offers an "easy way" to respect in the community.

Scott paper towels became the only paper towels. "Kodak" was virtually synonymous with the term "camera" as (William) Wrigley became synonymous with chewing gum. Budweiser was always the "King of all Beers," served only at first-class cafes and restaurants. And the company NBC crackers (later Nabisco) was committed to low prices so everyone could afford them.<sup>114</sup> National brand advertisers constantly told

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<sup>112</sup> Laird, 23-4.

<sup>113</sup> Laird, 186.

<sup>114</sup> Batchelor, 56-66.

their constituents that by buying their products instead of another company's, consumers could join a special group, and millions of Americans eagerly joined.<sup>115</sup>



Figure 3.2: "Sapolio," *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December, 1912): 1

Name brand advertising did not limit itself to consumable goods. Piano and organ makers were also among the pioneers of advertising characterized by notions of progress

<sup>115</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 162-3.

and provided a mould for the phonograph companies to follow. “Piano makers pioneered strategies of advertising and selling that were characterized by a sense of cultural mission, strategies that imbue their products with notions of therapeutic fulfillment and Victorian morality. Specifically, such strategies impressed upon the buying public the efforts of the piano trade to extend the virtue of music to all people by making the art generally available.”<sup>116</sup> Like many other manufacturers, piano companies promoted the home, family, motherhood and morality. They made the claim that their instrument provided culture, fine art, and morality through music-making. Their product was distinctly feminized and restricted to those able to play,<sup>117</sup> a limitation that phonograph companies would exploit by redefining the talking machine as a musical instrument that anyone could play with perfect results every time, and moreover offering performances of the best music by the greatest musicians.

The phonograph industry drew on the advertising tactics not only of name-brand consumable goods, but also the piano and parlor organ companies. Victor was by far the most successful of the three early companies that sold talking machines and records. Utilizing trademark advertising, the Victor manufacturing company was able to distance its name from the talking machine (unlike Edison), incorporating instead “Nipper” the dog, with the popular slogan, “His Master’s Voice.” Introduced in 1900 and used consistently from 1909 on, “Nipper” became the most successful logo in the history of advertising, recognized around the world,<sup>118</sup> a fact that Victor reminded its consumers of in at least one of its many advertisements, “‘His Master’s Voice.’ The most famous

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<sup>116</sup> Roell, 101.

<sup>117</sup> Roell, 102.

<sup>118</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 29; and Barbara Engh, “After ‘His Master’s Voice’: Post-Phonographic Auralty” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1997), 8.

trademark in the world. It is on the horn, on the record, on the cabinet, of every genuine VICTOR.”<sup>119</sup>

It is worth noting that, in contrast to Victor, Edison did not realize the importance of distancing his name or the name of his company from the phonograph. In the face of competition he was so consumed with his invention that he remained absolutely convinced his name was sufficient for its promotion and sales. Instead of “His Master’s Voice,” advertisements for Edison’s phonograph promised that “they are made to reflect credit and to uphold the fame of the name that is behind them. Mr. Edison’s signature is on every phonograph; without it no other is genuine.”<sup>120</sup> This error of judgment on the part of Edison and his company helped lead to its final demise in 1929, a point we will explore further in chapter 5.

Between 1901 and 1925, F. Wallis Armstrong held Victor’s advertising account. All of Armstrong’s advertisements emphasized a system that blended technology and culture, promising superior workmanship for the machines and quality of the recordings, cultural advantages and prestige that came with ownership, and access to the best classical performers in Europe. Reminiscent of the soap advertisements discussed earlier, Victor’s ads promised a gift that kept on giving.<sup>121</sup> Victor’s advertisements assured its customers of its product’s excellence and consistency, shifting public perception of a product that had long been seen as a novelty or lower-class entertainment.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> *Cosmopolitan* 43, no. 6 (October, 1907): n.p.

<sup>120</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It: Being a Short History of Its Invention and Development Containing Also Directions Helpful Hints and Plain Talks As To Its Care and Use, Etc.* (1900; reprint, New York: Allen Koenigsberg, 1971), 41.

<sup>121</sup> Magoun, 180.

<sup>122</sup> Magoun, 181.

With the “progress” discourse so prevalent in the advertisements of all products after the turn of the twentieth century, the phonograph easily found a place of high value as a means of musical progress. Existing rhetoric and cultural ideals helped create the language for speaking and thinking about the phonograph.<sup>123</sup> We must recognize two widely held perceptions in the United States during the first decades of the century: “that classical music was a powerful cultural and moral force, and that Americans sadly lacked access to it, especially when compared to their European counterparts.”<sup>124</sup>

Contemporary advertising both reflected and reinforced the idea of the phonograph as culture bearer. A 1911 ad is typically direct. “Every home should have a Victor-Victrola because the Victor-Victrola... occupies a place of honor in homes of wealth and culture everywhere.” More subtle is a 1913 ad depicting a well dressed couple listening to their phonograph. The message is twofold. First, the mention of “exclusive talent” and “great masters” above the image of an elegant home connects good music with good living.<sup>125</sup>

In order to maintain the title of culture bearer, the industry had to reinforce and sustain the notion that the talking machine was a perfected musical instrument capable of providing “good music” otherwise unavailable. Advertisements actually considered a live performance—susceptible to many imperfections including the singer’s health, the seat in the concert hall or opera house, the high cost of tickets and distasteful repertoire to name a few problems—inferior to the “perfect” records played on a talking machine. An additional advantage over a live concert was the ability to repeat recordings limitless times, allowing individuals to learn every nuance of a particular piece of music. “The best seat in the house” was now in the parlor next to the talking machine. “All the music of all the world” was now available in your home. “The music you want” was now

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<sup>123</sup> Symes, 6.

<sup>124</sup> Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 449.

<sup>125</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 455.

available to you when you wanted it. Popular slogans referred to the Victor Talking Machine as “the ideal drawing room entertainer” as well as “the highest-class talking machine,” and that it served to “make your home more complete.”<sup>126</sup> Combined with low cost that created availability for many people, owning a Victor Talking Machine was a means of fulfilling the classic American belief that everyone can have the very best.<sup>127</sup>

Victor understood that people wanted to hear the stars, not just anyone singing.<sup>128</sup> A certain name promised perfection and prestige while others lacked the cultural refinement sought after for the home. Victor was quick to capitalize on this, using the faces of specific stars to sell records. By promising to contain accurate reproductions on the records with slogans such as “Both are Caruso,” or “Heifitz is actually Heifitz,” Victor maintained control over the growing phonograph market.<sup>129</sup> Again, Edison in particular fell behind due to his insistence on marketing an improved quality of sound to an audience that at first could not afford the resulting higher priced cylinder. By the time Edison developed his diamond disc—a more affordable record with cleaner and truer reproductions than Victor’s 78s—people preferred the famous recording stars of Victor and were not willing to sacrifice the name for better quality.<sup>130</sup>

Although advertisements after the Civil War encouraged people to buy products previously thought unnecessary for everyday life, profit ultimately lay in giving people what they wanted and not trying to create a desire where none previously existed.<sup>131</sup>

Therefore, underlying ad themes encouraged an emerging way of life that focused on

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<sup>126</sup> Symes, 27, 62; Engh, 21; and Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 57, respectively.

<sup>127</sup> One could buy a talking machine for as little as \$10. See Kenney, 28; and Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 67.

<sup>128</sup> Dave Laing, “A Voice Without a Face: Popular Music and the Phonograph in the 1890s,” *Popular Music* 10, no. 1 (1991): 5.

<sup>129</sup> Magoun, 199.

<sup>130</sup> Magoun, 125.

<sup>131</sup> Ames, 160.



saving time and/or improving the quality of life.<sup>132</sup> Advertisements for new name-brand products had to promise to provide hope and encouragement, part of the American democratic ideal, and therefore within women's domain of improving the quality of life in the home.<sup>133</sup> As the world continued to modernize, women became increasingly busy as they found themselves responsible for a growing number of activities in the home. Therefore, the idea of saving time or labor appealed directly to them. The quickest way to sell products was to first profile or decide what the shared fictions regarding Victorian women were, and then make that vision the target of the advertisements. Due to the use of time and labor-saving rhetoric in advertisements, coupled with the increasingly complicated reality facing women, they became the primary consumers of items purchased for the home.

In 1894, M. Georgia Ormond submitted an analysis of ten advertisements by "Feminine Eyes" for the advertising community in the periodical, *Inland Primer*. Drawing from the analysis, Ormond constructed a feminine profile suggesting that advertisers appeal to women's "delicate sensibilities" with beauty, occasional inoffensive humor, and constant bargains in order to sell their products.<sup>134</sup> Everywhere advertising images of women as good wives and daughters carrying out socially required skills in the home flourished (a version of "The Gibson Girl").<sup>135</sup> These activities evinced shared perceptions of Victorian standards and the products that made them possible. The female consumer became so important that her influence extended beyond the home. Corrine

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<sup>132</sup> Batchelor, 58.

<sup>133</sup> Bradbury suggests that hope and encouragement rhetoric was possibly used to profile women specifically. Bradbury, 55.

<sup>134</sup> Laird, 286. For stories of bargains, see Corinne Lowe, "Coaxing Women to Buy: Getting to the Heart of a Great Department Store," *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 28 (1911): 3-5, 26.

<sup>135</sup> Laird, 1.

Lowe, a contributor to the *Saturday Evening Post*, suggested in a 1911 article, “Coaxing Women to Buy: Getting to the Heart of a Great Department Store,” that etiquette books be enlarged to include proper introductions of a salesperson to a woman buyer.<sup>136</sup>

The department store during this time period succeeded by profiling women consumers and creating “departments” catering to their specific needs.<sup>137</sup> Wanamaker’s *Jubilee Year* history (1911) made clear that it was the woman who was responsible for purchasing and placing items in the home: “The woman who arranges a room charmingly, who dresses it to express her personality, or serves a dinner with grace; the man who binds a book in good taste, or turns out a chair that is a pleasure, or lays out a garden to give delight – all are artists in their own way.”<sup>138</sup> Society held roles appropriate for each sex: the woman, not the man, is responsible for creating, maintaining and performing in the home; the man creates physical objects (and wealth), and tames nature.

The growing department-store phenomenon incorporated the female oriented “bargain” as a major selling feature. Besides reinforcing the notion that the department store was designed primarily for women, Corrine Lowe posits in her article in the *Saturday Evening Post* that every salesperson she interviewed in each department mentioned the bargain they offered their shoppers. Examples were women’s \$35 suits available for \$25, and etchings in the art department that were “rather large for the price.”<sup>139</sup> The departments invariably placed the lower price at the beginning of their advertisements and then, often with a smaller font, reminded the consumer how to use the

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<sup>136</sup> Lowe, 3.

<sup>137</sup> Batchelor, 61.

<sup>138</sup> *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores: Jubilee Year 1861-1911* (John Wanamaker: n.p., 1911), 256.

<sup>139</sup> Lowe, 3-4.

item. In fact, many sales people admitted to Lowe that the ad did not work without headlining the cheap price.<sup>140</sup> The Victorian woman's endless search for quality reflected in the uplifting rhetoric of the advertisements, and their constant request for price cuts gave the department stores a key advantage over smaller independent stores that could not handle the volume necessary to produce lower costs. The prices Lowe encountered in the department stores were so low, she was surprised to learn that the "manufacturers" were actually making money.<sup>141</sup>

Women found themselves the target of the majority of urban advertising by the turn of the twentieth century, since it was believed that women made at least 85% of the purchases for the home.<sup>142</sup> In 1911, Herbert Casson, a pioneer in the field of early advertising, recognized women as one of the two most obvious targets, the other being farmers.<sup>143</sup> One 1894 ad in *Ladies World* noted that women can't vote, can't sit on juries, can't put down riots, but they do purchase over 80% of all articles used by the family and the household; the ad includes pictures of elegantly dressed women.<sup>144</sup>

In order to wield this economic power, middle-class women also gained access to the family income.<sup>145</sup> They controlled the majority of money brought into the home, including their husbands' pay. A 1904 advertisement in *McCall's* magazine reinforces this fact stating that women spent 90% of the family's income.

90% of the family income is expended by the women of a household. Every wife and mother at the head of a home holds the clasp of the family pocketbook. Want

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<sup>140</sup> Lowe, 4.

<sup>141</sup> Before long, women were considered better salespeople by managers and customers of Wanamaker's, and found themselves the dominant sex behind the sales counters. It was believed that "Women have more tact and accuracy than men." Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 146.

<sup>142</sup> Batchelor, 57.

<sup>143</sup> Casson argued that the most frequent cause of failure was when advertisers failed to target these groups, opting instead for the vague "this-is-for-nobody-in-particular" approach. Laird, 285.

<sup>144</sup> Laird, 286.

<sup>145</sup> Branca, 146.

to reach this woman behind the pocketbook? Three million of her kind read the advertising pages of McCall's Magazine. Six hundred thousand are paid subscribers.<sup>146</sup>

Middle-class women both needed and could increasingly afford the products of industrialization, such as canned or previously prepared foods, brand-name soap, manufactured furniture, sewing machines and eventually the phonographs and talking machines, items that upper-class women in their leisure did not need. In fact, analysts for the magazine *Delineator* concluded that the optimal targets of advertisements for household goods were women of families with a comfortable income (not too rich or too poor).<sup>147</sup> This economic control and the new role for women as the nation's primary shoppers were a major change in American home life between about 1880 and 1930.<sup>148</sup>

A series of six anonymous articles published in *Ladies Home Journal* between 1912 and 1913 and titled "How Other Folks Live" provide ample demonstration of the control women had over the family's finances. Each of the six articles carries an editor's explanation that the "actual experiences are related by the wife herself."<sup>149</sup> The articles report cumulative yearly totals of purchases by category from the account book pages such as food and other consumables, fuel (coal, wood and gas), rent, clothing, and doctor's bills (see table 3.1 on page 92). They relate how families lived on household

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<sup>146</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 140.

<sup>147</sup> Laird, 287.

<sup>148</sup> Schlereth, "Introduction: American Homes," 16. While the debate is ongoing concerning when the "consumer revolution" began (some date it as early as the 18<sup>th</sup> Century), it would not have succeeded without women.

<sup>149</sup> "How Other Folks Live: When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough, The Actual Experiences of Four Families," *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 9 (1912): 17-18, 78; "How Other Folks Live When \$1200 a Year is More Than Enough," *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 10 (1912): 21-22, 101; "How Other Folks Live When \$1000 a Year is More Than Enough: The Actual Experiences of Three Families," *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 11 (1912): 15, 82-83; "How Other Folks Live When \$15 a Week is More Than Enough: The Actual Experiences of Three Families," *Ladies Home Journal* 30, no.1 (1913): 22, 41; "How Other Folks Live: What Two Families Did on Less Than \$800 a Year," *Ladies Home Journal* 30, no. 2 (1912): 74; "How Other Folks Live: Experiences of Two Families on Less Than \$750 a Year," *Ladies Home Journal* 30, no. 3 (1912): 34.

incomes ranging from \$1500 to \$750.<sup>150</sup> The main difference between the two extremes was how much money each individual family was able to save. The more resourceful the woman was in stretching the income, the more money she was able to save for the purchase of “nonessential” items. Between 1900 and 1910, factory workers brought home between \$10 and \$15 a week, and thus \$750 was close to the mean annual income for Victorian American laborers and professionals.<sup>151</sup> In fact, one of the six articles, instead of indicating a total yearly amount like the other five, gives accounts of three different families that spend \$15 a week.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough,” 17.

<sup>151</sup> Batchelor, 58. Average yearly salaries of several other common professions in 1911 include public school teachers, \$507.00; lumber and wood workers, \$530.00; country ministers, \$573.00; boot and shoe workers, \$618.00; steel workers, \$630.00; railway employees, \$662.00; printers, \$667.00; clothing makers, \$669.00; city ministers, \$1092.00; and professors, \$1300.00 according to a picture found in “How Other Folks Live: When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough,” 17.

<sup>152</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$15 a Week is More Than Enough,” 22, 41. Many similar articles with “family budgets” can be found in other magazines during this time period. For example, see Martha B. Bruère, “What Is the Home For?” *Outlook* 99 (December 16, 1911): 911; and Martha B. Bruère, “Experiments in Spending: The Budgets of a California School-Teacher and a Massachusetts Clergyman,” *Women’s Home Companion* 38 (November, 1911): 14. The budgets for three different families found in these two articles is reproduced first in Daniel Horowitz, *The Morality of Spending: Attitudes Toward the Consumer Society in America, 1875-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 90-92; and again in Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 82-83.

**Table 3.1: Table of family expenses and savings from 1911. Compiled from a series of six articles titled, “How Other Folks Live,” published in Ladies Home Journal 29–30 (September 1912-March 1913)**

Annual Salary	Consumables		Fuel: Coal/Wood/Gas		Rent/Electric/Water/ Telephone		Clothing		Doctor Bills		“Income” [net savings]
	weekly	yearly	Weekly	yearly	weekly	yearly	weekly	yearly	weekly	yearly	yearly
\$1500	\$9.23	- \$480.00	\$1.42	- \$74.04	\$5.31	- \$276.00	\$2.31	- \$120	n.a.		\$240.00
\$1500	\$4.97	- \$258.48	\$1.89	- \$98.40	\$7.66	- \$398.40	[\$6.92	- \$360.00]	\$1.15	- \$60.00	[\$103.20]
\$1500	\$8.00	- \$416.00	\$1.50	- \$78.00	\$6.69	- \$348.00	\$3.48	- \$181.00	\$0.38	- \$20.00	\$96.00
\$1500	\$4.15	- \$216.00		\$2.08	- \$108.00		\$2.08	- \$108.00	\$0.77	- \$40.00	n.a.
\$1200	\$4.85	- \$252.20	\$1.50	- \$78.00	\$4.40	- \$228.80	n.a.		n.a.		\$533.00
\$1200	\$4.05	- \$210.09	\$0.92	- \$47.63	n.a.		\$3.54	- \$183.89	\$0.59	- \$30.00	[\$637.41]
\$1200	\$5.04	- \$262.00	\$1.27	- \$66.00	\$2.88	- \$150.00	n.a.		n.a.		\$370.85
\$1000	\$1.50	- \$78.00	\$1.50	- \$78.00	\$3.50	- \$182.00	n.a.		n.a.		\$250.00
\$1000	\$3.03	- \$157.46	\$1.27	- \$66.33	\$4.36	- \$226.18	\$1.68	- \$87.45	n.a.		\$346.96
\$1000	\$7.69	- \$400.00	\$1.92	- \$100.00	\$5.77	- \$300.00	\$2.88	- \$150.00	n.a.		\$50.00
\$800	\$5.00	- \$260.00	\$1.42	- \$74.00	\$0.13	- \$7.00	\$1.92	- \$100.00	\$0.48	- \$25.00	\$150.00
\$800	\$3.11	- \$162.00	\$5.66	- \$294.00	\$2.65	- \$138.00	n.a.		n.a.		[\$200.00]
[\$780]	\$3.92	- \$204.00	\$0.67	- \$35.00	\$3.91	- \$203.50	\$4.33	- \$225.00	\$0.29	- \$15.00	[\$97.50]
[\$780]	\$5.25	- \$273.00	\$1.75	- \$91.00	\$4.00	- \$208.00	\$2.00	- \$104.00	n.a.		\$52.00
[\$780]	\$3.85	- \$200.00	\$1.60	- \$83.00	\$1.57	- \$62.00	\$1.44	- \$75.00	\$0.77	- \$40.00	\$50.00
\$750	\$2.54	- \$132.24	\$1.00	- \$52.00	\$2.31	- \$120.00	\$0.96	- \$49.75	\$0.13	- \$7.01	\$70.00
\$750	\$4.20	- \$218.75	\$0.81	- \$41.90	\$1.48	- \$76.46	\$1.94	- \$100.84	n.a.		\$110.40

Table 3.1 compiles the data reported in the *Ladies Home Journal* articles into five categories of expenses that the majority of women viewed as essential purchases. For each category the women reported a weekly expense as well as a yearly one. At times, these items and amounts were clearly listed in the account-book excerpts photographically reproduced in the articles. Sometimes I constructed the dollar figure using the women's descriptions or extrapolating their sentiment of monthly expenses. The table indicates where no financial information was given for a particular item ("n.a."). The first and last columns indicate a yearly salary that was the basis for the article, and the respective "income" by which was meant annual net savings. Figures not explicitly stated in the article appear in brackets. For example, in the first column, the [\$780] yearly salaries are implied because the article specifies "\$15 a week."

These articles show that on an annual salary of \$750, even women in working-class families had money to spend beyond the basic necessities, and that they purchased vacations, books, and other "miscellaneous items." In fact, the more money a woman was able to save beyond the budgeted necessary items, the more she could put towards additional purchases for the home. The magazine suggested an income of \$900 to \$1000 for a family of five living in New York City to be "socially efficient."<sup>153</sup> This amount is consistent with the income earned by an average glassworker living in New York City during 1907 (\$1030), but may have suggested that other workers struggled since a factory laborer earned only \$489 this year and a seamstress (presumably women) made a mere \$260. Yet, even the more modest sums, according to the accompanying spending

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<sup>153</sup> "How Other Folks Live: When \$1200 a Year is More Than Enough," 21.

budgets, were enough to supply the needed “necessities” with some money left over for recreation.<sup>154</sup>

The Victor, “the instrument for everybody,” had a starting price of \$10 for the Victor talking machine, and up to \$125 for the more elaborate Victor-Victrola, the same cost as a piano.<sup>155</sup> The least amount of annual savings reported in these articles—\$50—was enough to purchase a moderately priced phonograph and several recordings. After the necessities have been purchased, one wife stated that the leftover amount is split between herself and her husband. Her husband must use his share of the “profit” to buy insurance and his clothes; the money retained by the woman is hers and she can do with it what she likes, “no questions asked.”<sup>156</sup> A 1919 study of stores in 67 different American cities found that women bought the phonograph more than twice as often as men, and, like all other purchases made for the home, were the primary decision makers when it came to phonograph related purchases.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, the women in these articles encourage wives to view their work in the home as a household business. Account books, popularized by the many magazines and advice books of the time, were used by the majority of women in these articles. In fact, one wife admitted keeping three different ones, one for the garden, one for poultry raised, and the standard one for the house.<sup>158</sup> One wife suggests that reviewing the books was a popular Saturday evening pastime for her and her husband.<sup>159</sup> The readers of these articles were encouraged to view extra money as “profit” instead of savings. Viewing

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<sup>154</sup> Louise Bolard More, *Wage-Earner's Budgets: A Study of Standards and Cost of Living in New York City* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1907), 133-34, 146. This information is reproduced with several charts in Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 80-81.

<sup>155</sup> From a Victor advertisement published in the *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 29 (1910): 34.

<sup>156</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$1200 a Year is More Than Enough,” 21.

<sup>157</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 58.

<sup>158</sup> “How Other Folks Live: What Two Families Did on Less Than \$750,” 34.

<sup>159</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$1200 a Year is More Than Enough,” 21.



household finances as a business meant turning from the “haphazard” way of keeping house to the “scientific way,” or keeping the home through “scientific management.” Many articles published in popular magazines provided advice on how to refine the business of housekeeping.<sup>160</sup> Doing so promised to make housekeeping interesting instead of “tiresome.”<sup>161</sup> The *Ladies Home Journal* series of articles suggested that scientific housekeeping saved money.<sup>162</sup>

The targeting of women as magazine readers was central in the shift towards a feminized market place.<sup>163</sup> Women, who had been largely ignored in antebellum journalism, were now courted as readers of the metropolitan press and the leading in-home journals. For example, in 1883, the *New York World* provided fashion news and beauty tips. In the late 1880s, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* featured women’s topics, child care and serialized novels.<sup>164</sup> By the 1890s, the majority of print media began to alter their appearance and content to appeal more directly to women.<sup>165</sup>

By the 1900s, the pages of *Cosmopolitan*, *Ladies Home Journal*, *McClure’s*, *Saturday Evening Post* and *Life* magazine were filled with advertisements that featured pictures of women who promoted products and the services they promised to provide. The products advertised included phonographs and talking machines.<sup>166</sup> Many magazines charged premium advertising rates. An advertisement on an inside page in

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<sup>160</sup> Julian Heath, “How Housewives Waste Money,” *Ladies Home Journal* 30, no. 2 (1913): 73, 82; and Mary Atherton, “How My Wife Made Our Home Over: As Told by the Husband,” *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 2 (February, 1912): 79.

<sup>161</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough,” 17.

<sup>162</sup> “How Other Folks Live: When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough,” 18. “We are able to do all this simply because I treat my household as a business proposition, the secret of my management being the precise division of our money for particular purposes.”

<sup>163</sup> Beetham and Boardman, eds., 1.

<sup>164</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 183.

<sup>165</sup> Laird, 220.

<sup>166</sup> Other instruments, such as the piano and parlor organ were advertised in print periodicals decades earlier than 1900.

1900 cost between \$250 and \$800. That same year, *Ladies Home Journal* commanded \$4000 for a rear-cover ad.<sup>167</sup> Many music magazines including *Musician*, *Musical America* and *Etude* incorporated similarly feminized ads for talking machines.

One campaign deserves to be mentioned here, although its significance will be further explained in subsequent chapters. *Musical America* ran a consistent, issue-after-issue advertising campaign by the Victor Talking Machine Company for Victor records beginning November 18, 1905 (the magazine's first issue since June 24, 1899), which featured pictures and quotations from famous opera stars. Of the 226 photos used between 1905 and the end of 1913, women performers appear 156 times (69%) while men appear only 70 times (31%).<sup>168</sup> As women by far out-represent men in this campaign, it is even more interesting that only fifteen different singers appeared in the ads, 11 women (73.3%) and 4 men (26.7%). These statistics will become even more relevant in Chapter V as we consider the importance of the performer on the record over the quality of the recording or the composer of the music. For an example of these advertisements, see figure 3.3 on page 97.

As a new machine of progress, the talking machine was an instrument that played itself, capable of eliminating the labor and time required to play the piano and thus creating additional time for the woman to pursue other aspects of housekeeping. It is this idea that we will explore further in the next chapter.

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<sup>167</sup> Laird, 222.

<sup>168</sup> The totals include each individual in group photographs.

**Lessons from Great Operatic Stars**



SEMBRICH

If you are fortunate, you may enjoy grand opera in New York a few times this winter. You can hear Melba, Emma Eames, Sembrich, Caruso, Plançon, and many other stars of both continents on

**Victor Red Seal Records**

and repeat their marvelous renditions of inspiring classics as often as you wish to study them.

Sembrich Records, 10 inch size, \$2.00 each.  
12 inch size, 3.00 each.

You will form a new idea of the Victor, the greatest musical instrument in the world, when you hear the newest **Victor Red Seal Records** at your music dealer's.

**Victor Talking Machine Company,**  
Camden, N. J.



Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

Figure 3.3: Victor advertisement from Musical America 5, no. 10 (1907): 18

## CHAPTER 4. THE “FEMINIZED” PHONOGRAPH: A QUALITY ITEM AT A BARGAIN PRICE

### Introduction

Music was seen as a way of protecting people from the stress and trials of everyday living. Victorian America believed that music had the power to uplift and transform, which meant it could improve one’s character and sense of well being. It was elevated in stature to the most transcendent of the arts. Therefore, music was something to study and cultivate in the home, not simply enjoy as a superior means of self development.<sup>1</sup> The previous chapter demonstrates that music in the home had traditionally been the province of women. Carried out primarily in the parlor, a room where women were in complete control of the contents and activities, music was viewed as a socializing and moralizing force. The ability to provide music in the home was considered a moral imperative, and the majority of amateur musicians were women due to this feminine domestic role. As women were the managers of family life, the age of the parlor is also known as the age of music making in the home.<sup>2</sup>

The previous chapter also explores women as the primary consumers for in-home purchases. The advent of recording, selling, and purchasing records for in-home use did

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica H. Foy, “The Home Set to Music,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 63; And Barbara Engh, “After ‘His Master’s Voice’: Post-Phonographic Auralty” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1997), 50.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Lewis, “Domestic Theater: Parlor Entertainment As Spectacle, 1840-1880,” in *Ceremonies and Spectacles: Performing American Culture*, edited by Teresa Alves, Teresa Cid and Heinz Ickstadt (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 2000), 55.

nothing to change these feminine domestic roles. Even as late as 1919, a study of sixty-seven American cities found that women were the primary purchasers of the phonograph.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter (along with chapters 5 and 6) discusses the phonograph as a “new instrument,” one that began life in the parlor as a technological wonder, but increasingly became a musical item without which no parlor could be complete. Like other items purchased for the home, the phonograph was primarily a feminine purchase viewed as an asset to women in their never ending quest to bring “better” music into the home for the edification of all family members. Specifically, this chapter explores how the phonograph sought to replace the piano (and player piano) and vocal performance as the center for music making in the home by offering both a cheaper alternative and better quality music than the previous in-home amateur recitals heard regularly in the parlor. After describing the growing need and desire for an alternative to these performances, this chapter explores advertisements for the Edison, Columbia and Duplex phonograph companies that promote the talking machine as a cheaper alternative. Often competing with each other, these three companies promised a better quality item for less money and free trial periods. This chapter then turns to Victor’s different advertising approaches. Victor chose to market “the world’s greatest singers” in order to sell their talking machines. Instead of promising bargain prices in these advertisements, Victor focused on the quality of singing (culture) that could replace the previously heard sounds in the parlor through the purchase of their Red Seal Label Records.

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<sup>3</sup> “Who Buys Phonographs?” *Sonora Bell* 2 (October 1919): 1-6. See Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 58.

### A Growing Desire for a Change in the Parlor

Chapter 3 discusses the piano and parlor organ as the center of entertainment and learning in the Victorian home.<sup>4</sup> By far the most expensive instrument one could own, the piano represented a commitment on the part of the family to the study and enjoyment of culture. Many families nationwide spent time around the piano, listening to music and singing along. A popular Victorian adage was, “A home is incomplete without a piano,” and at one time, there were more pianos in homes than bath tubs.<sup>5</sup>

Parlor organs were also popular instruments for the Victorian parlor, costing only half the price of the average piano and utilizing a third less floor space.<sup>6</sup> The organ was an elaborate piece of furniture as well as an instrument, complete with shelves, brackets, niches for displaying objects and sometimes a mirror.<sup>7</sup> Only the female knew how to play the organ or piano and having either one in the home displayed feminine accomplishment, culture and learning.<sup>8</sup>

Technological innovation and mass production made these instruments more widely available to consumers. Throughout the 1860s, 15,000 reed organs were produced annually.<sup>9</sup> By the 1890s, many upright pianos were being produced and purchased by Victorian Americans and singing with piano (or organ) accompaniment had

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<sup>4</sup> Craig H. Roell, “The Piano in the American Home,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 96.

<sup>5</sup> Roell, 85.

<sup>6</sup> Lewis, 55.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth L. Ames, *Death in the Dining Room and Other Tales of Victorian Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1992), 155.

<sup>8</sup> Ames, 163-64.

<sup>9</sup> Lewis, 55.

become a popular pastime.<sup>10</sup> Almost all homes in the United States contained an instrument and sheet music. Many etiquette books of the day encouraged the use of these instruments with rhetoric that suggested music “carefully played” compels listening, aids conversation, and soothes the troubles of work. Moreover, the husband and brother may be made almost domestic by its cheerfulness.<sup>11</sup> Music journals promulgated the ideal that studying music gave the woman a “little social accomplishment in society.”<sup>12</sup> The “true” study of music “would enrich her home and bring joy to her husband, her children, and her friends.”<sup>13</sup>

But such idealistic banter was tempered with the publication of much more realistic reactions to in-home playing. For example, Mary Elizabeth Sherwood, in “Home Amusements” (1881) states, “the practice is not home amusement, but home torture.” The author longingly wonders what in-home music would be like “if only a person could learn to play or sing [well] without those first noises.”<sup>14</sup> In 1912, the *Musical Courier* mentions the agonies of Susie’s and Jane’s parlor concerts.<sup>15</sup> The female amateur musician along with these parlor concerts were also the source of many jokes questioning their abilities. A number of these jokes were published (or republished) in *Musical America* under their “It is to Laugh” column. The following are two typical examples.

“My daughter is positively delighted with her new piano,” said Miss Nexdore;

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<sup>10</sup> Donna R. Braden, “‘The Family That Plays Together Stays Together’: Family Pastimes and Indoor Amusements, 1890-1930,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 155.

<sup>11</sup> Roell, 86, 90.

<sup>12</sup> “Why Ten Girls Studied Music,” *Etude* 20, no. 6 (1902): 208.

<sup>13</sup> “Why Ten Girls Studied Music,” 208.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Braden, 155.

<sup>15</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 54.

“she’s quite familiar, you know, with all the classical composers—” “Familiar?” exclaimed Mrs. Pepprey, “why she’s positively flippant.”<sup>16</sup>

In the days when piano lessons were thought a necessary part of a young woman’s education, without regard to aptitude, the head of a fashionable school in St. Petersburg asked Rubinstein how many hours a day her pupils should practice the piano. “None,” was the laconic response of the great pianist.<sup>17</sup>

In the first example, the name “Miss Nexdore” suggests that the majority of readers will relate first hand to the satirical situation. The “positively flippant” relationship with the classical composers is no doubt derived from the daughter’s supposed inability to accurately portray music on her new piano. The implication is that we all have a neighbor like “Nexdore” with a daughter who is incapable of playing the piano well, but who plays it nevertheless. The humor of the second example is found in Rubinstein’s supposed response to the question. The teacher does not wish to hear, or subject any other human beings to, the torture that is the practicing pupil.

Phonographs promised to eliminate this “home torture,” providing instead perfection in music playing without practice, as did other mechanical devices such as cylinder music boxes, disc music boxes and player pianos. All achieved a certain amount of success between the 1890s and 1930s, but none were as successful in creating, maintaining and sustaining an in-home culture for their machine as the phonograph industry.<sup>18</sup> However, player pianos, still properly a piano, paved the way for the phonograph, a brand new instrument, in the homes of Victorian Americans. By the 1880s, one out of every twenty homes in Britain contained a player piano.<sup>19</sup> The

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<sup>16</sup> “It Is To Laugh,” *Musical America* V, no. 20 (March 30, 1907): 13.

<sup>17</sup> “It is To Laugh,” *Musical America* VI, no. 20 (September 28, 1907): 21.

<sup>18</sup> Braden, 156.

<sup>19</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 61.



popularity of this mechanized instrument grew in this country as well. But the phonograph companies were quickly challenging the legitimacy of the piano as a parlor instrument.

Many department stores began carrying the phonograph around the turn of the twentieth century. Macy's opened a department in 1898 in order to sell both phonographs and pianos; however, pianos were quickly discontinued—leaving these instruments to individual dealers—but the department continued selling talking machines with success.<sup>20</sup> Other department stores also began selling the phonograph.

Wanamaker's makes no mention of talking machines in the text of its Jubilee year history (1911), but it does include photographs of the phonograph for sale in the Philadelphia and New York stores on the same page as pianos.<sup>21</sup> A picture of the auditorium in the Wanamaker's store in New York shows the orchestra pit outfitted with a talking machine while two grand pianos are displayed on the stage.<sup>22</sup> Wanamaker's created displays within individual rooms where the instruments could be displayed.<sup>23</sup> This tactic allowed the department store to demonstrate how a room (parlor) could be or should be furnished.

Macy's department store found the sale of talking machines to be very successful. In the *History of Macy's*, we learn that the store tried to undercut Victor's set price for its \$100 model by \$11, selling it for \$89 instead. Such a policy of undercutting prices was the general practice of Macy's during this time. In fact, they went to great lengths to ensure their ability to do so even if the suppliers refused to sell them products directly. The issue was not how much Macy's was willing to purchase the items for wholesale, but

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<sup>20</sup> Ralph M. Hower, *History of Macy's of New York 1858-1919: Chapters in the Evolution of the Department Store* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1946), 236.

<sup>21</sup> *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores: Jubilee Year 1861-1911* (John Wanamaker, 1911), ff 257.

<sup>22</sup> *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, ff 288.

<sup>23</sup> See *Golden Book of the Wanamaker Stores*, ff 256 and ff 288.

how much they in turn were willing to sell them for. Many products were simply not sold in the Macy's stores since its owners felt it more important to offer products for less to their growing clientele than succumb to the pressures of set prices by certain manufacturers.<sup>24</sup> Items not sold in the early years of Macy's for this reason included popular items such as Singer sewing machines. However, even though they were unable to set their own prices for the Victor and Columbia talking machines, Macy's decided to continue selling both anyway. This decision suggested that the overwhelming popularity of recordings created such a high demand that even Macy's, with its strict price undercutting policies, could not neglect it.<sup>25</sup>

An examination of images of the early phonograph prior to the 1890s will show that it began life as a prized possession that only a few could afford. Furthermore, it was considered a luxury item that few typical Americans felt the need to own. Considered a symbol of scientific advancement in an increasingly scientific age, the phonograph was respected and individuals sought to encounter it publicly at fairs or conventions and in the nickelodeons and penny arcades (see Chapter 2). But as an in-home market was created, images of the phonograph suggest it began to occupy "a pride of place" in more and more American parlors, but contained equal value with many other elements in the parlor. As this in-home market was sustained, the phonograph devolved into the background as it was considered an ordinary, even necessary part of the daily musical life in the parlor.<sup>26</sup>

Eldridge Johnson, founder of the Victor Talking Machine Company and Emile Berliner's business partner, stated that "The books may be few and the piano indifferent, but the

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<sup>24</sup> Hower, 356.

<sup>25</sup> Hower, 474. Unlike the Victor and Columbia models, Edison models were priced too high for Macy's and they were not sold until 1914, when they won the right in court to set their own prices. See page 357.

<sup>26</sup> Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, *Phonographica: The Early History of Recorded Sound Observed* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2004), 7.

average family realizes the need of both. The family also needs a good automatic instrument for reproducing the world's best music, as well as the popular jollities. Culture and joyousness alike require such an adjunct in every household."<sup>27</sup>

The success of an in-home market depended on the industry's ability to usurp the center stage from the piano in the parlor and place the phonograph on it instead. But how did the phonograph industry accomplish this? Ultimately Edison's invention had to cross a boundary between private and public life.<sup>28</sup> In doing so, the phonograph invaded a space traditionally under the control and care of women.<sup>29</sup> This was accomplished through marketing strategies that promoted the phonograph as a quality item, one that was cheaper than the piano (and even available for a free in-home trial) and provided individuals access to the greatest stars in their own home.

### **Lower Prices and Free Trials: The Edison, Columbia and Duplex Phonograph Companies**

As lower price lines of furniture and consumer credit became available, more families became parlor makers by purchasing culturally appropriate items for in-home use.<sup>30</sup> The phonograph quickly became affordable around the turn of the century with new models starting at five dollars. Furthermore, like the many other items purchased for the parlor and home—such as pianos, furniture, sewing machines, books and even groceries to name a few—the phonograph was offered by a number of fledgling

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<sup>27</sup> Alexander Bayden Magoun, "Shaping the Sound of Music: The Evolution of the Phonographic Record, 1877-1950" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2000), 179.

<sup>28</sup> Holly Kruse, "Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space," *Stanford Humanities Review* 3, Autumn (1993): 1.

<sup>29</sup> "A 1919 study of stores in sixty-seven American cities for example, found that women bought phonographs more than twice as often as men and, in general, were the primary decision makers when it came to phonograph purchases." Katz, *Capturing*, 58.

<sup>30</sup> Katherine C. Grier, *Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 212.

companies for free preview and low monthly payments. Consider the two advertisements in figure 4.1 below that appear side by side in April 1899 of *Cosmopolitan*. The one on the left advertises the Columbia Phonograph Company's Graphophone for sale for five dollars. Although when one reads beyond the headline, the individual must actually send ten dollars for the five dollar graphophone and will receive along with the machine "a dozen carefully selected Columbia Records, an investment that will pay a hundredfold in pleasure."



**THE GRAPHOPHONE**

**FIVE DOLLARS**

Will buy a Graphophone. Clockwork motor. Reproduces satisfactorily and delightfully musical and other records.

Send \$10 to our nearest office for a five dollar Graphophone and a dozen carefully selected Columbia Records, an investment that will pay a hundredfold in pleasure.

Graphophones of other models from \$10 up.

THE GRAPHOPHONE GRAND, the most marvelous development of the talking machine art. Reproductions louder than the original, and perfect in tone.

*Write for Catalogue.*

**Columbia Phonograph Co., Dept. B.**

New York, 121 & 125 Broadway.      St. Louis, 720-722 Olive St.  
Retail Branch: 1155, 1157, 1159 Broadway.      Chicago, 211 State St.  
Philadelphia, 1032 Chestnut St.      Washington, 919 Pennsylvania Av.  
Baltimore, 110 E. Baltimore St.      San Francisco, 723 Market St.  
Buffalo, 313 Main St.      Paris, 34 Boulevard des Italiens.

**FREE—A FINE GRAPHOPHONE**  
Furnishes an evening's amusement for the family.

**51 lbs. Best Granulated Sugar \$1.00**

This unequalled offer is a part of our great \$14.75 **Family Combination Grocery Order.**

**Send \$1.** with order.



This Graphophone sings as Melba; plays Sousa's and Gilmore's Operas, Marches and Orchestrations, delivers Orations, relates jokes—in short it is a whole show in itself.

Two records Free if cash accompanies the order. Send \$14.75 and receive the groceries, including 51 pounds best granulated sugar and the celebrated 1889 Graphophone; or send \$1, and the goods will be sent subject to examination. This is the list of groceries with the regular and cut prices compared:

Usual retail price	Usual retail price
51 lbs. best Granulated Sugar, \$2.55	5 lbs. Silver Glose Starch... .45
3 lbs. Mocha & Java Coffee... .99	2 lbs. Best Baking Powder... .30
12 Cakes Toilet Soap (10c size)... .50	1 qt. Bottle Best Blueing... .45
1 lb. Pure Ground Pepper... .30	1 lb. Ground Cinnamon... .40
10 lb. Fall White Fish, new and latest catch, wooden pail with ball and handle, 1.00	1 box Shoe Blacking... .05
10 bars Santa Claus Laundry Soap (none better)... .40	12 boxes Parlor Matches... .20
¼ lb. Whole Nutmegs... .35	1 lb. Pure Ground Mustard... .40
1 lb. cleaned English Currants... .11	1 pt. Bot. Triple Ammonia... .10
1 lb. Pure Ground Ginger... .40	10 lb. bag Best Table Salt... .12
3 lbs. Tea (any kind wanted)... 2.10	1 lb. best Shredded Coconut... .40
2 lbs. Rice (Japan)... .20	½ pt. Triple Extract Lemon... .30
1 box Enameline Stove Polish... .07	"      "      Vanilla... .10
2 lbs. Best Corn Starch... .47	1 lb. Best Quality Raisins... .10
1 lb. Pure Ground Cloves... .40	5 gal. Golden Drip Syrup... 2.00
	<b>\$16.30</b>

**Our Price with Graphophone \$14.75**

**AT OUR EXPENSE.** If the groceries are not as represented return them at our expense and we will refund your money and **YOU MAY KEEP THE GRAPHOPHONE. FREE** Our big catalogue of everything to eat, wear and use sent free.

**JOHN M. SMYTH COMPANY, 150-160 W. MADISON ST., CHICAGO.**  
Established 1867.

Figure 4.1: Two Graphophone advertisements published in *Cosmopolitan* 26, no. 6 (April 1899): n.p.

The second advertisement, on the right of figure 4.1 promises a free "fine Graphophone" from the John M. Smyth Company. This Chicago-based mail order company boasted of carrying "everything to eat, wear and use." In order to receive the

Graphophone free, the individual needed to purchase the list of groceries from the company at a discounted price of \$14.75 (this included the free phonograph). The interesting list of groceries contains dry goods, or goods that could be stored long term. The most expensive and largest item in the purchase list is “51 lbs. best granulated sugar,” costing \$2.55 according to the “usual retail price” and appearing in bold print and first in the grocery list. One could send cash or simply send one dollar and receive the groceries and Graphophone for examination. Upon inspection, if the groceries were found unacceptable, they could be returned for a complete refund. In either case, the Graphophone could be kept for free.

As the phonograph increasingly became a legitimate purchase for the home on its own, it ceased being an incentive for other in-home purchases. Phonograph companies wanted consumers to purchase records, talking machines, gramophones and phonographs based on the machine’s merit. Beginning in 1905, Edison, Columbia and less popular companies such as Duplex encouraged individuals to “try” their machines by promoting free trial periods.

Edison began offering this free trial as early as October, 1905 with an advertisement in *Cosmopolitan* that quoted the inventor as saying, “I want to see a phonograph in every American home.” The ad offers a “Genuine Edison” for “Free Trial” The inventor’s words continue, “Try it in your home, play the beautiful Edison records, and if then you don’t care to keep the instrument, send it back at our expense. That’s all.” After the trial period, if one decided to keep the phonograph, they could pay as little as “\$2.00 A MONTH for five months.” The more expensive models would

require “larger installments.” The advertisement breaks down the cost for the reader stating that “A nickel to a dime saved a day will buy a genuine Edison.”

Such a daily price reflects the purchasing habits of many Americans beginning in the 1890s and was very much in line with other daily purchases made.<sup>31</sup> The first five-cent nickel was issued by the Treasury department no later than 1883 and became a very popular coin. The postage rate was three cents.<sup>32</sup> The expenditures for a common glassworker, published in 1907, allowed \$3.00 a week for “drink” (or approximately 43 cents a day), 60 cents a week for “insurance” and 11 cents a week for “papers.” Union dues for the year were \$6.00. The same publication listed expenditures for a factory laborer in 1904 that allowed \$4.00 a week (or approximately 57 cents a day) for food.<sup>33</sup> According to the *Ladies Home Journal*, in 1911 a quart of milk cost approximately 6 cents; a pound of crackers, 6 ½ cents; a pound of rolled oats, 3 ½ cents; a single lemon, 3 cents; a pound of sugar, 6 ½ cents; and a pound of graham flour, 4 cents (see Chapter 3). More expensive items included figs and steak at approximately 20 cents a pound; eggs were 45 cents a dozen and butter cost 40 cents a pound.<sup>34</sup>

The nickelodeons and phonograph parlors of the 1890s offered a single selection for a nickel. This new coin bought “anything and everything.”<sup>35</sup> Vending machines sold nickel candy, playing cards, crackers, cookies, toys and chewing gum. Even nickel eateries, restaurants where everything cost a nickel, flourished at this time. The “nickel empire” was nowhere more evident than in the five-and-ten cent stores of Woolworth and

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<sup>31</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 79.

<sup>32</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 81.

<sup>33</sup> Reproduced in Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 80-81; from Louise Bolard More, *Wage-Earner's Budgets: A Study of Standards and Cost of Living in New York City* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1907), 133-34, 146.

<sup>34</sup> Series of articles titled “How other Folks Live,” *Ladies Home Journal* 29-30 (September 1912-March 1913).

<sup>35</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 83.

his imitators.<sup>36</sup> Providing a personal phonograph for this daily cost—one that could repeat the record whenever you wanted and play limitless musical excerpts in your own home—was considered a bargain and certainly affordable to the majority of middle-class Americans.

Of course, this “bargain” was the important idea of Edison’s advertisement. Consider the article “Coaxing Women to Buy: Getting to the Heart of a Great Department Store” by Corinne Lowe (discussed at length in Chapter 3 on page 87). In this article, the author determines it is the “bargain” that is the “heart” of the department store’s success. Women, the primary consumers of goods for the home, needed encouragement to part with money that was strictly allocated for particular purchases. In every department within these large stores, a bargain was offered to entice women to part with their money and to convince them of having received a deal. The low monthly charge of two dollars (or a nickel to a dime a day), which was to be received only after a free trial, promised both bargain and deal to women who came in contact with the Edison advertisement.

The supposedly personal desire to see a phonograph in every American home was utilized extensively by Edison to explain his “FREE TRIAL” offer. In other advertisements, additional reasoning was offered that explained the phonograph on credit offer. Some ads stated that once friends of the individual receiving the loaned instrument hear it, they will also want one. The implication is that by receiving the free trial offer, the individual helped Edison sell his new models to other people in the community who have yet to hear them (see the “My Purpose” heading in the advertisement in figure 4.2 on page 110). Additional rhetoric not seen in the 1905 advertisement include “He [Edison] has worked and studied over it constantly until today it is a perfect musical

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<sup>36</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 85.

instrument.” A sketch of Edison himself along with one of his machines dominates the page leaving no doubt in the mind of the readers which machine is being promoted.

Regardless of the final price, Edison advertisements require a minimum of \$2.00 a month in payment and offer up to 12 records as part of the deal.<sup>37</sup>



**Let Me LEND You**  
this new style  
**EDISON**  
Phonograph  
Without Charge  
AMBEROL records  
included  
F. K. BABSON  
Edison Phonograph  
Distributor

**Mr. Edison says:**  
"I want to see a Phonograph in every American Home."  
For the Phonograph, as you may know, is the wizard's hobby and pet. He has worked and studied over it constantly until today it is a perfect musical instrument.

**FREE LOAN!** This Latest Style Edison Phonograph, the perfected model from the great Edison factory, on an absolutely free loan. I want you to see for yourself the wonderful performances of which the splendid new style Edison is capable—with its Amberol records!

**REMEMBER:** I do not ask you to pay us one cent. I want to lend you this superb new Edison phonograph absolutely free, and I only ask that you will invite a few of your friends to share with you a free concert of the finest music. Read my great free loan offer:

**My Offer:** I will send you a genuine Edison Standard Phonograph, with our Parlor Grand Equipment added, and I will allow this phonograph to remain in your home while you and your friends enjoy all its varied entertainment—without charging you one cent. You may then return the outfit at my expense without having incurred any obligations whatsoever.  
F. K. BABSON.

**My Purpose:** I know when your friends once hear a genuine New Style Edison with its perfect tone reproduction, they will want one. If they do not buy at once—they will send at some future time.  
We cannot allow one cent discount from our rock-bottom price on the Edison. But I would like you to tell your friends of our surprising offer, either for cash in full or for only \$2 to \$3.50 a month, without interest on deferred payments.

**Lots of Fun With an EDISON PHONOGRAPH** Fun for the children, fun for the young folks, fun for the old folks, lots of fun and entertainment for every member of your family.

**When you hear** the stirring music of the world's greatest military bands, the popular "rag-time" stunts, the monologist's bit, the side-splitting minstrel jokes, the old love songs and the best sacred music, you are impressed and delighted!

**Think what an influence** for good is heard in your home! Think what an opportunity it is to be able to hear the world's greatest singers in grand opera roles! Think what an ever ready resource of entertainment and pleasure for your friends and guests is this instrument which talks and sings and plays right in your own home!

**You ought to allow** your own family this pleasure, especially when you can do so without one cent of expense. I not only offer but consider it a privilege to lend you such a source of enjoyment. The latest style Edison Standard Phonograph with our Parlor Grand Equipment added which I offer to lend you free is so different from the squeaking, scratching, rasping talking machines you have heard before that I want to familiarize everyone with its charm, its simplicity, its perfect mechanism, and its tone quality.

**Free Loan:** And there is no better way to familiarize everyone with this perfect outfit than to lend it to the readers of this magazine. All I ask in return for the loan is that you invite some of your friends to hear the Genuine Edison Phonograph.

**Send for a Catalog** You can enjoy a Phonograph in your own home free. And you can ship it back at my expense. Send for free catalog. Sign the coupon or write us now. Don't wait.

**F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Distributor**  
Edison Block, Suite 4014, Chicago, Ill.

**Edison Catalog FREE** Now I want to send you at once our FREE Edison catalog and list of 1,500 Edison Gold-Moulded Records, so you can pick out just the machine and records which you would like to borrow on my free loan plan. Sign the coupon in the corner.

**CUT OR TEAR OFF ON THIS LINE**  
Send letter or post-card if you wish, but coupon will do. Write now.  
Sign the Coupon now.  
F. K. BABSON, Edison Phonograph Distributor  
Edison Block, Suite 4014, CHICAGO, ILL.  
Write me and I will send you my Edison Catalog and list of records, all free of charge.  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_

Figure 4.2: Edison advertisement from Saturday Evening Post 181, no. 43 (April 17, 1909): 63

Many additional advertisements by both Edison and Columbia rely on the free trial offer to convince magazine readers to purchase their machines. Both companies

<sup>37</sup> For other examples of Edison advertisements utilizing the quote "I want to see a phonograph in every American home," see *Cosmopolitan* 39, no. 6 (October 1905): n.p.; 40, no. 6 (April 1906): n.p.; 41, no. 6 (October 1906): n.p.; And 42, no. 6 (April 1907): n.p.



suggest that their machines are the best. In a 1907 *Cosmopolitan* advertisement, Columbia offers their Columbia Graphophones on credit. “The World’s Most Perfect Talking Machine Offered to any Home in America on Small Monthly Payments.” The “Free Trial to Anyone—Anywhere” could be had for “\$1.50 per month,” an even better deal since it undercut Edison’s \$2.00 a month charge.<sup>38</sup> The advertisement further claims that “The Columbia Graphophone is the standard talking machine of the world...” The ad contains an illustration of Uncle Sam sitting in a chair with his arms folded, thoughtfully listening to a Graphophone.

Later Columbia advertisements emphasized their “double-disc records,” which offered two music selections, one on each side of a single disc. These “double-disc” records could be purchased for a nickel more than the Victor Red Seal records.<sup>39</sup> Two advertisements thought to be an improvement over Edison, offer between one record with two selections, eight records with sixteen selections and thirteen records with twenty-six selections in conjunction with the purchase of a Columbia model “Eclipse” or Grafonola “Favorite.”<sup>40</sup> Both of these ads offered Columbia machines on credit and utilized two pages in the magazine, which contrasted sharply with the partial page ads that promoted the purchase of Edison’s machines on credit.

Duplex, one of the smaller phonograph companies founded in 1906, sold its machines solely on credit purchase through the direct-mail market.<sup>41</sup> The company relied on the image of its machine, which contained two reproducing horns (see figure 4.3 on

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<sup>38</sup> *Cosmopolitan* 43, no. 6 (October 1907): n.p.

<sup>39</sup> “Victor Record Sales (1901-1941),” [www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html](http://www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html), last accessed on December 19, 2006.

<sup>40</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 11 (September 14, 1912): 44-45; And 185, no. 33 (February 15, 1913): 42-43.

<sup>41</sup> Fabrizio and Paul, 119. The Duplex company operated between 1906 and 1909 when they were sued in patent court by Victor and lost its legal battle. However, between 1909 and 1913, Mr. C.Q. DeFrance was able to continue selling Duplex items, having ended up in possession of all Duplex parts and inventory.

page 113). The many ads that proliferate for the Duplex between 1906 and 1907 boast of “double volume of sound” due to “two vibrating diaphragms to reproduce the sound,” “two horns to amplify and multiply all the sound from **both** sides of **both** diaphragms,” “no tension spring and no swing arm to cause harsh, discordant, mechanical sounds,” and “consequently, the Duplex produces a sweeter tone and greater volume of music than any other phonograph and is absolutely free from all metallic sounds.”<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, it saves the consumer “70%” over other machines, costing \$29.85.<sup>43</sup> Another popular advertisement for the Duplex boasts that it is “The Greatest of Musical Inventions—the Two-Horn.” One significant change in rhetoric is the claim that “It is the one phonograph that gives you all the sound vibrations correctly and accurately reproduced. The Duplex gets **all** the volume of music; other phonographs get but half.” This change to “**all** the volume” over “double volume” of the previous ad implies that there are no more improvements to be made over the Duplex system.<sup>44</sup>

“Improvements” so easily seen by the consumer—such as the incorporation of two horns and two diaphragms, along with pragmatic explanations for those changes—provided a strong argument for the perfection claimed by the Duplex Company regarding its machines. A clear illustration of the Duplex with its two horns along with the statement “Save ALL the DEALERS’ 70% PROFIT” placed in a white box within the

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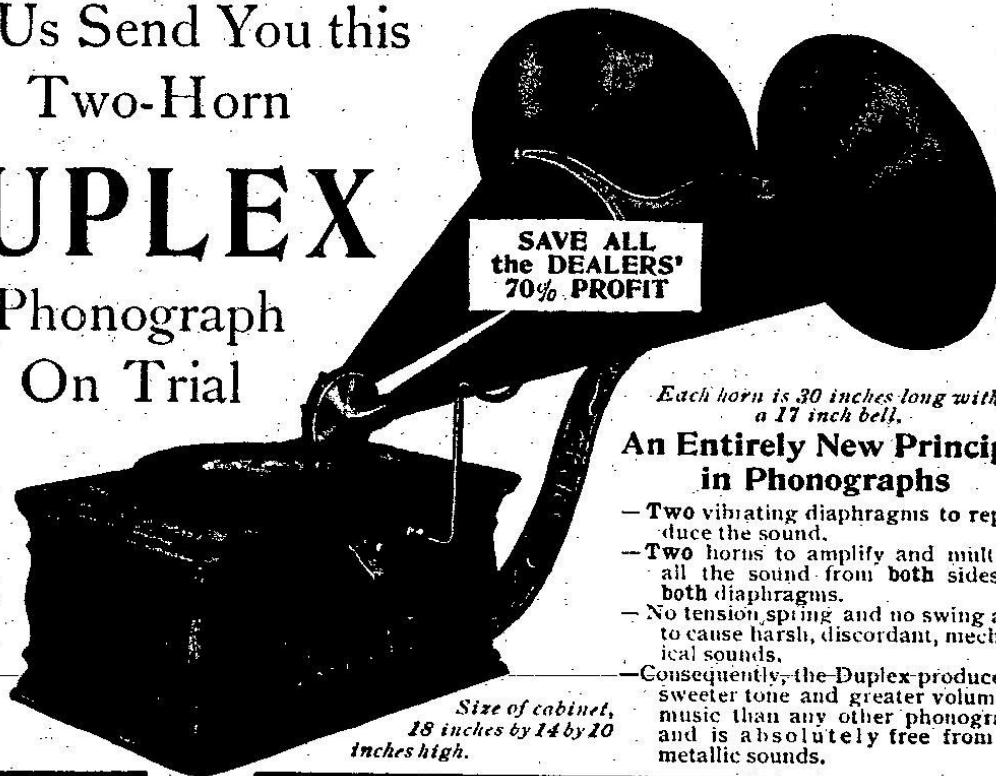
<sup>42</sup> Other examples of figure 4.3 include *Saturday Evening Post* 178, no. 45 (May 5, 1906): 27; 179, no. 11 (September 15, 1906): 20; *Ladies Home Journal* 23, no. 10 (September 1906): 47; 23, no. 12 (November 1906): 83; *Cosmopolitan* 40, no. 6 (April 1906): n.p.; And 41, no. 6 (October 1906): n.p.

<sup>43</sup> Although there were plenty of cheaper and more expensive models, a number of 1906 Victor advertisements show the Victor VI model priced at \$100. See *Ladies Home Journal* 23, no. 6 (May, 1906): 59; *Saturday Evening Post* 178, no. 38 (March 17, 1906): n.p.; and *Saturday Evening Post* 179; no. 24 (December 15, 1906): rear cover.

<sup>44</sup> Examples of this advertisement can be found in *Saturday Evening Post* 179, no. 30 (January 26, 1907): 29; 179, no. 32 (February 9, 1907): 27; 179, no. 34 (February 23, 1907): 24; *Cosmopolitan* 42, no. 6 (April 1907): n.p.; And 43, no. 6 (October 1907): n.p.

Let Us Send You this  
Two-Horn  
**DUPLEX**  
Phonograph  
On Trial

Direct  
from  
our  
Factory  
to your  
own  
Home.



*Each horn is 30 inches long with  
a 17 inch bell.*

**An Entirely New Principle  
in Phonographs**

- Two vibrating diaphragms to reproduce the sound.
- Two horns to amplify and multiply all the sound from both sides of both diaphragms.
- No tension spring and no swing arm to cause harsh, discordant, mechanical sounds.
- Consequently, the Duplex produces a sweeter tone and greater volume of music than any other phonograph and is absolutely free from all metallic sounds.

**Double Volume of Sound.**

**T**HE Duplex is the first and the only phonograph to collect the vibrations and get all the sound from both sides of the diaphragm. Because the reproducer or sound box of the Duplex has two vibrating diaphragms and two horns (as you see) to amplify the sound from both sides of both diaphragms. The Duplex, therefore, gives you all the music produced — with any other you lose one-half.

Compare the volume of sound produced by it with the volume of any other — no matter what its price — and judge for yourself.

**Purer, Sweeter Tone.**

But that is not all, by any means. For the Duplex Phonograph not only produces more music — a greater volume — but the tone is clearer, sweeter, purer and more nearly like the original than is produced by any other mechanical means.

By using two diaphragms in the Duplex we are able to dispense entirely with all springs in the reproducer.

The tension spring used in the old style reproducers to jerk the diaphragm back into position each time it vibrates, by its jerking pull roughens the fine wave groove in the record, and that causes the squeaking, squawking, harsh, metallic sound that sets your teeth on edge when you hear the old style phonograph. In the Duplex the wave grooves of the record remain perfectly smooth — there is nothing to roughen them — and the result is an exact reproduction of the original sound.

**Direct From the Factory.**

We ask the privilege of proving to you that the Duplex gives a double volume of music, of purer, sweeter tone than any other phonograph made. We want to prove it at our expense. We ask you to let us send you one at our expense — under an arrangement mutually satisfactory — for use in your home one week.

Write today for catalog and full particulars of our FREE trial offer. You'll never regret it. Please address

**The Duplex Phonograph Co., 143 Patterson St., Kalamazoo, Mich.**

Invite your neighbors and musical friends to hear it and if they do not pronounce it better — in volume and in tone — than the best old style phonograph, return it at once at our expense! That's a fair offer but it isn't all. We save you in the price exactly \$70.15 — because we save you all the jobbers', middlemen's and dealers' profits. We sell it to you at actual factory price. Sold through dealers the Duplex would cost you at least \$100 — and it would be a bargain at that. Bought direct from our factory it costs you (one profit added) only

**\$29.85**

And you get a seven days' trial in your own home — and under no obligation to keep it if you are not satisfied. You run no risk, for this advertisement could not appear in this magazine if we did not carry out our promises.

**Music In Your Home.**

With the Duplex Phonograph you can enjoy a delightful selection of songs, poems, piano, banjo, guitar, or violin music, short stories, anecdotes or dialect pieces, all reproduced by the marvelous two horned Duplex with the faultless fidelity of an instantaneous photograph. You can bring to your family and friends, in all their original beauty, the priceless genius of musical art, the classic performances of famous artists like Paderewski, D'Albert, Raoul Pugno, and Jan Kubelik.

Or, you can listen, entranced, to the magic notes of melody fresh from the throat of a Patti, Melba, or Calve, and the great dramatic tenors, Caruso and Tamagno.

And, best of all, you can hear once more, the voice of dear old Joe Jefferson as, with matchless pathos he delivers the lines of Rip Van Winkle so familiar to a former generation.

With every "Duplex" we give, Free, Six 7-inch Records, or Three 10-inch Records.

Figure 4.3: Duplex advertisement in Saturday Evening Post 179, no. 15 (October 13, 1906): 32

two horns of the Duplex, promise consumers a quality item at a bargain price...exactly what they were always looking for. To make consumers even more certain of a deal, Duplex offered several records for free with the purchase of the instrument. “WITH EVERY ‘DUPLEX’ WE SEND, FREE, SIX 7-INCH OR THREE 10-INCH RECORDS” is clearly placed at the end of the advertisement. This was another contrast to Columbia and Edison advertisements, which offered a certain number of records along with their machines as a packaged deal. The number of records received changed the final purchase price. Although the company was short lived due to legal battles, their advertising campaign was successful. They were able to publish a brochure of testimonials “from Actual Users of the Only Two-Horned Phonograph.” One such testimonial by Mr. Wm. Thompson, mayor of Kalamazoo and general manager of the Kalamazoo Stove company is as follows.

Gentlemen: Prejudice is the greatest barrier to our happiness that I know of... I became really prejudiced against any machine that made “so-called” music... But my! how time and experience does change us: we have used the “Duplex” Phonograph long enough to consider it “one of the family,” and its tone and clearness makes real melodious music...<sup>45</sup>

Many other in-home products were offered for a free trial as well. Seeking to establish the talking machines in the home alongside these other in-home products, the budding phonograph companies mimicked the advertisements that promoted free in-home trials. In 1899, Sears, Roebuck and Company offered “THE BURDICK” sewing machine free for three months trial. The strengths of the advertisement, like the phonograph ads above, are threefold (see figure 4.4 on page 116). First, the words “**SEND NO MONEY,**” set apart in large boldface type and underlined are placed in the

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<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Fabrizio and Paul, 120.

top, left-hand corner of the advertisement. Beyond illustrations of the machine itself, this is the first text to catch our eye. Immediately the reader understands there is no financial commitment and is encouraged to read the small printed text that follows. Once ordered, the machine would be shipped to the nearest freight depot for inspection. “If found perfectly satisfactory, exactly as represented, equal to machines others sell as high as \$60.00, and THE GREATEST BARGAIN YOU EVER HEARD OF, pay your freight agent Our Special Offer Price, \$15.50 and freight charges.” At this point, the owner was given three months to try the machine in-home and decide if they wanted to keep it or not. If not, then the money was returned.

Second, The Burdick claimed to be a quality machine that other companies tried to mimic. Therefore, one should “**BEWARE OF IMITATIONS.**” Many improvements to the sewing machine made this one a quality item constructed of “THE BEST MATERIALS MONEY COULD BUY.” Finally, the advertisement suggests that store keepers sell similar machines for between \$40.00 and \$60.00. Therefore, purchasing this quality machine from Sears saves the consumer \$25.00 to \$40.00, a true bargain.

So successful were advertisements that focused on free trial periods, and which promoted huge savings while also providing quality, that they continued to be employed by other industries as well as the phonograph companies. A 1907 advertisement for a “Self-working” washing machine headlined the phrase “Send no Money. Use it a Month FREE.” As an added bonus, the freight charges were paid for by the distributor (See figure 6.4 on page 177). This advertisement is equally interesting due to the labor-saving rhetoric it employs and will be discussed at greater length in chapter 6.

**SEND NO MONEY** WITH YOUR ORDER, cut this ad. out and send to us, and we will send you **OUR HIGH GRADE DROP CABINET BURDICK SEWING MACHINE** by freight C. O. D. subject to examination. You can examine it at your nearest freight depot and if found perfectly satisfactory, exactly as represented, equal to machines others sell as high as \$60.00, and THE GREATEST BARGAIN YOU EVER HEARD OF, pay your freight agent **Our Special Offer Price, \$15.50** and freight charges. The machine weighs 120 lbs. and the freight will average 75 cents for each 500 miles. **GIVE IT THREE MONTHS' TRIAL** in your own home, and we will return your \$15.50 any day you are not satisfied. We sell different makes and grades of Sewing Machines at \$8.50, \$10.00, \$11.00, \$12.00 and up, all fully described in Our Free Sewing Machine Catalogue, but \$15.50 for this **DROP DESK CABINET BURDICK** is the greatest value ever offered by any house.

**BEWARE OF IMITATIONS** by unknown concerns who copy our advertisements, offering unknown machines under various names, with various inducements. Write some friend in Chicago and learn who are **RELIABLE AND WHO ARE NOT.**

**THE BURDICK** Has every **MODERN IMPROVEMENT; EVERY GOOD POINT OF EVERY HIGH GRADE MACHINE MADE, WITH THE DEFECTS OF NONE.** MADE BY THE BEST MAKER IN AMERICA FROM **SOLID QUARTER SAWED OAK** DROP DESK CABINET, PLANO POLISHED. One illustration shows machine closed, (head dropping from sight) to be used as a center table, stand or desk; the other opens with full length table and head in place for sewing. Four fancy drawers, latest 1899 skeleton frame, carved, paneled, embossed and decorated cabinet finish, finest nickel drawer pulls, rests on 4 casters, ball bearing adjustable treadle, genuine Smyth iron stand. Finest large High Arm head, positive four motion feed, self threading vibrating shuttle, automatic bobbin winder, adjustable bearings, patent tension liberator, improved loose wheel, adjustable presser foot, improved shuttle carrier, patent needle bar, patent dress guard, head is handsomely decorated and ornamented and beautifully **NICKEL TRIMMED.** Every known attachment is furnished and our Free Instruction Book tells just how anyone can run it and do either plain or any kind of fancy work. A **20-YEAR BINDING GUARANTEE** is sent with every machine. **IT COSTS YOU NOTHING** to see and examine this machine, compare it with those your store-keeper sells at \$40.00 to \$60.00, and then if convinced you are saving \$25.00 to \$40.00, pay your freight agent the \$15.50. **WE TO RETURN YOUR \$15.50** if at any time within three months you say you are not satisfied. **ORDER TODAY. DON'T DELAY.**

Address, **SEARS, ROEBUCK & CO. (Inc.) Chicago, Ill.**



Figure 4.4: "The Burdick" advertisement in *Cosmopolitan* 26, no. 6 (April 1899): n.p.

Additional examples are found in the advertisement section of a 1912 issue of *Good Housekeeping* (see figure 4.5 on page 117). Even though the final price was only three dollars, one could still have a Delco electric toaster "On Ten Days Free Trial" if the amount was prepaid. Right next to the Delco advertisement is another for the Sweeper-Vac with a headline boasting "The Original Vacuum Carpet Sweeper." Again, a free trial was offered, this time without prepayment, to encourage individuals to try this new sweeper that did not require electricity. "We offer a Free Trial, no matter where you live. No electricity needed. Simply write to us and either say, 'I wish to see the Sweeper-Vac,' or 'Please send further information.' We will do the rest."

**YOU ASK**  
that a  
**Xmas Gift be**  
**Serviceable**  
**Distinctive**  
**Attractive**



**Delco** **ELECTRIC TOASTER**

gives constant pleasure and practical service every day to the grateful owner. Makes a charming addition to the dining table. Most economical in maintenance cost, using only about half the current required by an upright toaster. Can be attached to any electric light socket.

Also used for heating water, chafing dish, popping corn and many other things.

To enable you to appreciate the many advantages a Delco Electric Toaster offer as a gift, we will send you one prepaid

**On Ten Days' Free Trial**

if it does not meet every requirement send it back at our expense. Satisfaction guaranteed or money refunded. Price only \$3.00.

On sale at your dealers or Electric Light Co. Manufactured by the makers of the Delco Three Heat Iron.

**DIAMOND ELECTRIC CO.**  
20 Frederick Street, Binghamton, N. Y.  
*Indorsed by Good Housekeeping Institute*

**The Original**  
**Vacuum**  
**Carpet Sweeper**



Looks somewhat like the ordinary carpet sweeper as to size, operation and cost— but

**Differs**

since the Sweeper-Vac removes every particle of dust, dirt and threads by the refreshing air-process and raises no dust.

**SWEeper-Vac**

Refuse imitations. Our basic patent No. 996810 is the reason.

We offer a Free Trial, no matter where you live. No electricity needed. Simply write us and either say, "I wish to see the Sweeper-Vac," or "Please send further information." We will do the rest.

**PNEUVAC COMPANY**  
417 Blake Bldg. Boston, Mass.  
*Agents Wanted. Avoid Imitations*

Figure 4.5: Advertisements from Good Housekeeping 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 80b

Unlike Edison, Columbia or the majority of other household products on the market, Victor did not rely on the credit tactic for the sale of their talking machines and records. Although Edison dominated the early phonograph market (manufacturing 7,633,142 records and 113,151 machines in 1903 compared with Victor, which sold 1,966,036 records and 40,601 machines the same year), his company along with Victor and Columbia suffered from the Banker's Panic of 1907. Edison sales dropped 30% in 1908, while Victor's dropped 40%.<sup>46</sup> Edison chose to rely more heavily on the tactics

<sup>46</sup> Leonard DeGraaf, "Confronting the Mass Market: Thomas Edison and the Entertainment Phonograph," *Business and Economic History* 24, no. 1 (1995): 90.

described above, avoiding the use of star images or famous voices on his records through this uncertain time.<sup>47</sup> As a result, he never recovered from this economic set back.

### **“The World’s *Greatest Singers!*”: The Victor Talking Machine Company**

In strong contrast to the other companies, Victor chose to create and rely on their “stars,” placing them at the center of their advertisements instead of a picture of Elderidge R. Johnson or his business partner, Emile Berliner (Edison placed his own photo on many of his advertisements). The majority of these stars were famous opera singers who recorded “exclusively for the Victor.” Such stars include Adelina Patti, Nellie Melba, Geraldine Farrar and of course, Enrico Caruso. But in 1905, another star was the Victor itself having again won first prize “over all other talking machines” at the Lewis & Clark Portland Exposition.

The Victor Talking Machines and Records were awarded the Gold Medal which is the first prize and the highest award over all other talking machines at the Lewis & Clark Portland Exposition, confirming the award of the First Prize at the St. Louis and Buffalo Expositions. Three Straight First Prizes. Buffalo 1901, St. Louis 1904. Portland 1905. Can this leave any possible doubt in your mind as to which talking machine is the best?<sup>48</sup>

By placing the now famous logo of “Nipper” the dog listening to a Victor Talking Machine at the center of the advertisement, Victor made consumers aware of the awards it had won, claiming third party support for its supremacy over all other talking machines and recordings.

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<sup>47</sup> Even as late as 1912, Edison stated in a memorandum, “We care nothing for the reputation of the artists singers or instrumentalists.” “All that we desire is that the voice shall be as perfect as possible.”

<sup>48</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 178, no. 25 (December 16, 1905): rear cover; And *Ladies Home Journal* 23, no. 2 (January 1906): n.p. A similar advertisement can also be found in *Cosmopolitan* 38, no. 6 (October 1904): n.p.



Victor heavily promoted its use of the “greatest singers” to entice people to buy Victor records and machines. Very straight forward rhetoric claimed over and over again “The world’s best artists make records only for the Victor.”<sup>49</sup> “The world’s *greatest* singers! The greatest tenors; the greatest sopranos; the greatest contraltos; the greatest baritones; the greatest bassos. Not *among* the greatest, but *the* greatest of all nationalities.” “These famous artists universally acknowledged *the* greatest, and commanding the highest salaries—make records *only for the Victor* because *only the Victor* brings out their voices as clear and true as life itself.”<sup>50</sup> Many advertisements went a step further and suggested that since these artists recorded only for the Victor, they endorsed this talking machine as the best reproducing “Instrument” on the market (see figure 4.6 on page 120<sup>51</sup>). Under a large portrait of the many famous Victor recording artists dressed in opera costumes is the caption in large, bold letters, “Why do these great artists all make records only for the Victor?” The advertisement suggests this is a rhetorical question. The only reason is because the Victor is the best. Signing exclusive contracts with Victor for large sums of money was supposed to be irrelevant (or at least unknown to the consumer). Instead, when these famous singers “*all* make records exclusively for the Victor, it is not only a splendid tribute to the high musical qualities of the Victor, but the most conclusive proof of its all around superiority.” The advertisement includes a challenge to consumers, encouraging them to go and hear these famous singers at the nearest record dealer. The advertisement promises that “You’ll be astonished at the wonderful results secured by the new Victor recording process of

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<sup>49</sup> *Musician* 18, no. 1 (January 1913): 65.

<sup>50</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 28, no. 2 (January 15, 1911): rear cover; *Life* 56, no. 1463 (November 10, 1910): 804-05; *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 21 (November 20, 1909): 46.

<sup>51</sup> Another advertisement that uses almost the same language is found in *Saturday Evening Post* 181, no. 42 (April 17, 1909): rear cover.

recording.” Of course, since these artists only record for Victor, you can only hear them on Victor recordings.



Caruso Melba Schumann-Heink McCormack Martin Tetrzzini Sembrich Calvé Gadski Eames Homer Scotti Farrar Journet

## Why do these great artists all make records only for the Victor?

If only a few of the world's greatest artists made records exclusively for the Victor, it might signify little. But when such famous singers as Caruso, Calvé, Dalmores, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Ger-ville-Réache, Homer, Journet, Martin, McCormack, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrzzini, Wither'spoon and Zerola *all* make records exclusively for the Victor, it is not only a splendid tribute to the high musical qualities of the Victor, but the most conclusive proof of its all-around superiority.

Hearing is believing—go to-day to the nearest Victor dealer's and hear these famous artists sing their greatest arias. You'll be astonished at the wonderful results secured by the new Victor process of recording.

**Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.**  
 Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors  
 To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records

And be sure to hear the  
**Victor-Victrola**



NEW VICTOR RECORDS ARE ON SALE AT ALL DEALERS ON THE 28TH OF EACH MONTH

Figure 4.6: Victor-Victrola advertisement in Life 55, no. 1470 (December 29, 1910): 1121

Another advertisement used by Victor as late as 1911 again reinforces the idea that “the world’s greatest opera stars” record only for Victor. Surrounded with the faces of many of these singers, this fact is used to support the now “self-evident” truth that “Victor is the one instrument” (see below).

As the world’s greatest opera stars make records only for the Victor, it is self evident they consider the Victor the only instrument that does full justice to their magnificent voices.

And as the Victor reproduces the actual living voices of these famous artists in all their power, sweetness and purity, it is self evident the Victor is the one instrument to provide you not only the gems of opera but the best music and entertainment of every kind.

Whether you want grand opera or the latest song “hits”, or Vaudeville, or minstrel show, or sacred music, or band selections—whatever you want—you get it at its best only on the Victor.<sup>52</sup>

Victor did not limit their opera promotions with the use of “famous opera stars,” or “the best singers.” They were also the first to promote entire opera recordings available for purchase. For example, a 1906 advertisement in the *Saturday Evening Post* states, “The Victor company announces the production of Verdi’s Masterpiece , “Il Trovatore”, complete from the opening chorus to the finale of the last act, by the principals, chorus and orchestra of the La Scala Theatre, Milan, Italy.” In 1912, the *Post* carried another advertisement announcing that the entire opera *Faust* was available to own on Victor records. Furthermore, *Faust* was promoted as “The Great Opera,” encouraging those budding collectors that this was a collection worth having. Since the length of individual recordings remained limited, a great number of records were needed to encompass the “entire” opera, all sold individually.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>52</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 42 (April 15, 1911): rear cover.

<sup>53</sup> In a Victor catalogue for May, 1912, 54 different records were available for *Trovatore* (few were different recordings of the same aria or chorus) and 60 different records were available for *Faust*. Sizes and recording times varied between 10 inch and 12 inch discs.

There is no one “world’s greatest” novel, or picture, or drama. There would be many strong rivals for such an honor. But in the fields of opera there is one overwhelmingly popular favorite—not only so judged by the public but also held in affection by the singers themselves.


It is hardly necessary to tell you that this opera is Gounod’s Faust. And you can easily account for its popularity. The story is dramatic and supremely interesting; the arias are frequent, noble and memorable; the concerted numbers sonorous and thrilling; and the whole opera moves along a stream whose melody catches at one’s heart and whose harmony is human and engaging.

And what a wealth of talent its cast calls for! Of the principle roles, it is difficult to say which is the most important. Each singer has a chance to deliver passages of supreme power and lyric beauty. It is now possible to own Victor Records of this entire opera,—the orchestral (including ballet) embellishments as well as the singing. No significant music has been omitted. What a treasure to have *all* of this opera in your home to command!<sup>54</sup>

Although not nearly as common, another type of advertisement deserves mention here. One further attempt to align itself synonymously with the best opera had to offer can be seen in a 1909 advertisement (see figure 4.7 on page 123). Here Victor not only lists all of the famous opera recording artists that record only for the Victor down its left hand side, but it also includes illustrations of the world’s greatest opera houses including La Scala, Milan; Metropolitan, New York; Grand Opera, Paris; Royal Opera, Berlin; Manhattan, New York; and Covent Garden, London. The Advertisement claims that the Victor is “The greatest opera house of all.” With its help, you can bring all of these houses into you own “for you to enjoy at your leisure.”

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<sup>54</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 7 (July 1912): 48. The Victor catalogue for May, 1912 includes this note, “The Complete opera of Faust has been recorded by the Victor, with the exception of a few unimportant bits which are not interesting without the action.” *Victor Records* (Montreal: Berliner Gram-o-phone Company Limited, May, 1912), 81.



# Victor

The greatest opera house of all—the *Victor*.

You don't have to go to Milan, London, Paris, Berlin, or New York to hear the masterpieces of opera sung by the world's most famous artists.

They're all combined in the *Victor*, which brings their magnificent voices right into your home for you to enjoy at your pleasure.

Go to-day to the nearest *Victor* dealer's—he will gladly play grand opera or any other Victor music you want to hear.

There's a *Victor* for YOU—\$10 to \$250. Easy payments, if desired.

**Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.**

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal  
Canadian Distributors.



LA SCALA MILAN

METROPOLITAN NEW YORK

GRAND OPERA PARIS

ROYAL OPERA BERLIN

COVENT GARDEN LONDON

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN NEW YORK

To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records

A complete list of new Victor Records for April will be found in the April number of Munsey's, Scribner's, McClure's, Century, Everybody's and May Cosmopolitan.

Figure 4.7: Victor advertisement in Ladies Home Journal 26, no. 5 (April 1909): 75

To reinforce these “realities,” Victor spent up to 8.2% of its annual cash flow on newspaper and magazine advertisements. Victor utilized a flat disc that was more durable and allowed between four and seven minutes of recorded music instead of the two minute, fragile Edison cylinder.<sup>55</sup> There is plenty of anecdotal evidence that suggests Victor’s ability to sell famous faces was successful. A number of Edison dealers complained about the lack of recognizable Edison artists. Other dealers complained that Edison saw no vision for the future of his company without recognizable artists. In 1927, another dealer claimed that he could not sell any Edison equipment and instead was required to provide his Edison owners with an attachment so that they could listen to the records of other manufacturers.<sup>56</sup> In 1921, Edison sent out a survey requesting a list of “favorite tunes” from Edison owners (form 4562). Edison stated “I want to record them for you, if they have not already been recorded.” Although many did as Edison requested, a great many others crossed out “tunes” and inserted the word “stars” in its place. Individuals then proceeded to list the famous stars of Victor (and Columbia) asking Edison to record them. Others simply complained of the lack of stars on Edison records. Many listed their favorite operas instead of a “tune” as Edison requested.<sup>57</sup>

Eventually, Columbia and Edison questioned Victor’s claim that all of the World’s greatest singers recorded only for Victor. In a 1908 double page advertisement in *McClure’s*, Columbia claimed that “Four of the Five Great Tenors of the World Sing for the Columbia.” In obvious response to Victor’s Caruso records, Columbia claimed to

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<sup>55</sup> DeGraaf, 92.

<sup>56</sup> DeGraaf, 93.

<sup>57</sup> School of Music Library at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. Holdings of 2,644 surviving surveys sent out in 1921 by Edison Incorporated. 20,000 were originally distributed through the mail.

have the other four tenors sing for them (Bonci, Zenatello, Bassi and Anselmi).

Alongside this claim is an advertisement for Columbia's "Double-Disc Records" for 65 cents, which "Fit any Disc Machine [such as Victor] and Double Its Value" (see figure 4.8 below). Other advertisements for Columbia were modeled on the Victor ads that promoted the wealth of exclusive stars, such as figure 4.6 (page 120). Incorporating a double page layout, Columbia also included a large illustration of many recording stars in opera costume that could be found on Columbia records.<sup>58</sup>

**COLUMBIA**  
**DOUBLE-DISC RECORDS - 65 cents**  
 Fit any Disc Machine and Double Its Value

If you have never played a Columbia record on your machine, ask the nearest Columbia dealer to let you listen to a Columbia Double-Disc. No slightest flaw on either side—and every combination of two records has been so carefully worked out that you will find on the two sides of the one Columbia Double-Disc record, the two selections that you would naturally take from your record cabinet together. We guarantee you a better record on each side of the new Columbia Double-Disc than you have ever bought at the old price, under any name, for the single record—better in surface, tone and durability. Get the Columbia Double-Disc Catalog. Be sure you see a Columbia dealer—or write us direct.

(FRONT) (BACK)

Music on both sides!  
 Two records at a single price!

**COLUMBIA INDESTRUCTIBLE CYLINDER RECORDS**  
 Fit any Cylinder Machine and Last Forever—35c.

They won't break no matter how roughly they are used; they won't wear out no matter how long they are played. On any machine with any reproducer, their tone is better than that of any other cylinder record—but with the special Extra-Tension reproducer, which we provide to fit any make of cylinder machine, their tone is far purer, clearer, and more brilliant than that of any other cylinder record made.

If your dealer cannot yet demonstrate the Columbia Indestructible Cylinder Record, send us 25 cents and we will send you by return mail, postpaid, a sample record.

**COLUMBIA INDESTRUCTIBLE CYLINDER RECORD**

**COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, GEN'L. Tribune Bldg., NEW YORK**  
 STORES OR DEALERS IN ALL CITIES  
 MAIN STORES: 35 West 42d Street, New York; 28 Wabash Avenue, Chicago; 103 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco.  
 HEADQUARTERS FOR CANADA: 107 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ont.  
 JOBBERS WANTED: Exclusive Columbia jobbing rights open in choice territory.

**BONCI** **ZENATELLO** **BASSI** **ANSELMINI**

**Four of the Five Great Tenors of the World Sing for the Columbia**

Records by Bonci, the incomparable, supreme in vocal art; Anselmi, "the tenor of the golden tone;" Zenatello, the favorite of two continents; Bassi, the impassionate and infallible, are listed exclusively in the Fonotipia Series of Columbia Double-Disc Grand Opera Records.

(FRONT) (BACK)

Music on both sides!  
 Two records at a single price!

In addition we issue records by eleven of the twenty great sopranoes of the world; twelve of the world's fourteen most famous contraltos, and five of the seven greatest basses of the operatic stage.

It is hardly fair to call Columbia Grand Opera Records reproductions; they are the most truly living, vibrating, expressionful, unchanged. Get a catalog.

**COLUMBIA**  
 GRAND OPERA RECORDS—FONOTIPIA SERIES—\$2.50

**COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH COMPANY, GEN'L. Tribune Bldg., NEW YORK**  
 STORES OR DEALERS IN ALL CITIES  
 MAIN STORES: 35 West 42d Street, New York; 28 Wabash Avenue, Chicago; 103 Van Ness Avenue, San Francisco.  
 HEADQUARTERS FOR CANADA: 107 Yonge Street, Toronto, Ont.  
 DEALERS WANTED—Exclusive selling rights given where we are not properly represented.

Figure 4.8: Columbia advertisement in McClure's 32, no. 2 (December 1908): 28-29

<sup>58</sup> Saturday Evening Post 185, no. 50 (June 14, 1913): 27-28.

It is curious that Victor would choose to emphasize advertisements that focused on opera and opera stars and find them so successful when only 15.5% of total record sales between 1903 (when the Red Seal Label was first released) and 1913 were the Red Seal Label.<sup>59</sup> Yet in spite of this, consumers were convinced of Victor's superiority at least in part due to the inclusion of famous names in the advertising campaigns, even if they did not purchase the specific records or singers advertised.

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<sup>59</sup> Based on data analyzed from an exhibit filed with the U.S. Dist. Court, S.D. of N.Y., January 26, 1943, and titled, "Victor Record Sales (1901-1941)," [www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html](http://www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html), last accessed on December 19, 2006.



## CHAPTER 5. PERFECTED PHONOGRAPH: REPLACEMENT FOR PRACTICE IN THE PARLOR

### Perfected Musical Instrument

With the background established in Chapter 4, we can see why the phonograph became a regular item in the parlor. Women—the primary consumers for in-home products—were offered a quality machine for a cheap price. But advertisements for early phonographs and recordings also marketed the talking machines as “perfect musical instruments” and perfect pieces of furniture.<sup>1</sup> Going beyond issues of cost, this chapter is divided into two sections, discussing each of these marketing strategies in turn, and why women found such messages attractive.

A good musical instrument in the very least must sound. One Victor ad proclaims, “Hear the Victor” (see Figure 5.1 on page 128). Proclaiming “perfection,” this advertisement also features a talking machine. The use of a large horn, which engulfs the entire “instrument” was not only necessary to reproduce the sound, but reminded the consumer of other instruments (primarily brass instruments) that also contained an exposed horn. Not only was the talking machine seen as an item to add to the music instrument collection in the parlor, its accompanying records provided the consumer with the ability to “own” a particular performance.<sup>2</sup> Large collections of sheet

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<sup>1</sup> Two examples include a Victor ad from *Musician*, Vol. XV (March 1910): 209 and (July, 1910): 495.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine C. Grier, “The Decline of the Memory Palace: The Parlor after 1890,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth

music were also displayed in the parlor and provided the owner with the scores needed to reproduce the music in a personal performance. However, the record provided the owner not only with music, but also an instant interpretation of a famous singer, without the need of practice or training, and could be repeated indefinitely without effort. Records, particularly Victor records, provided a means of collecting famous voices along with the culture those voices embodied.



We want you to know this wonderful musical instrument as we know it; to hear it and realize as we do the height of perfection it has reached in recent years; to enjoy with us and the thousands upon thousands of Victor owners, the world's best music, played as you have never heard it before.

You owe it to yourself to hear the Victor. Go today to the nearest Victor dealer's, and he will gladly play—without obligation—any Victor music you want to hear.

**And be sure to hear the Victrola**

Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.

Dealers throughout the U. S. and Canada

To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records

**New Victor Records are on sale at all dealers on the 28th of each month**



Figure 5.1: Victor advertisement from *Musician*, Vol. XV (July, 1910) 495

(Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 58. “Rooms were sites for certain kinds of conventionalized cultural information, which families could own in the form of possessions.”

Seeking to replace the piano in the parlor, the budding recording industry sought to market its machine as a cheaper alternative. As we can see from the advertisement in figure 5.1, a good quality talking machine could be had for \$32.50. There were cheaper as well as more expensive models, but this was a far cry from \$125.00, the standard price for a piano during this time period.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the piano required additional expense in the form of sheet music collections, tuning and repairs and lessons, as well as a dedication of time expected primarily from women in the household, all of which was eliminated with a talking machine.

But simply providing a machine that took on certain physical qualities of an instrument at a reduced price was not enough. The budding recording industry needed to “educate” the public, teaching them that this cheaper price still afforded a quality musical instrument, and was therefore a bargain over the piano. In fact, all three of the major phonograph companies, Edison, Columbia and Victor, claimed to have accomplished a perfected status for their “Instruments,” although Victor, with its large advertising budget, released many more advertisements than their two main competitors.

Several tactics were used to gain the “perfected instrument” status. One such tactic of ads for the phonograph was to show the multi-generation family clustered together around the phonograph much the same way that they clustered together around

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<sup>3</sup> Jessica H. Foy, “The Home Set to Music,” in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 66. The “Echophone,” another company that was ultimately sued out of business by Victor for patent abuse, was one of the first to offer models for as little as five dollars. They claimed in their advertisements that phonographs were not in every household because they cost too much--\$40 to \$200. See Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, *Phonographica: The Early History of Recorded Sound Observed* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd., 2004), 35.

the parlor organ and piano in other advertisements.<sup>4</sup> As we saw in the department store, another tactic was to display the talking machines along with other instruments in showrooms that resembled an in-home parlor. One advertising postcard from between 1911-1913 clearly displays talking machines along with other instruments. The picture is captioned, “A Model Music House ‘Harthorn’s’ Long Beach, CAL.” “S.V.& D.H. HARTHORN, Pianos.” “HARTHORN & BRODERSEN, TALKING MACHINES.” “I.L.A. BRODERSEN, SHEET MUSIC.”<sup>5</sup> But the most significant advertising tactic was simply telling people repeatedly in the many advertisements that the phonograph was a perfect instrument.

Edison promised that “You get in an Edison Phonograph a perfect instrument, one embodying every improvement which Edison has derived.”<sup>6</sup> The ad claims this perfection is due to “The volume of sound,” “The Amberol Records,” “The Reproducing Point,” and the unique Edison feature, “Home Record Making.”<sup>7</sup> But all three companies claimed that their instrument was the best due to special features or unique recording practices. In a later advertisement, Edison tried to silence his opponents (see figure 5.2 on page 131). “Mr. Edison *Announces* The Final Perfection of the Phonograph *as a Real Musical Instrument of the Highest Type.*” The advertisement states further that “This new instrument is the result of many years of experiment and investigation by Mr. Edison.” The strength of the ad is to be found in the fact that Mr. Edison himself, as opposed to a company or collection of individuals or anyone other than the inventor of

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<sup>4</sup> Such ads promoted the phonograph’s ability to bridge the generation gap, bringing the family closer together. Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 73.

<sup>5</sup> Reproduced in Fabrizio and Paul, 117.

<sup>6</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 44 (April 29, 1911): 28.

<sup>7</sup> Even as late as 1911 when this advertisement was published, Edison continued to display his ignorance regarding the consumer public. They did not want to hear their own voices “reproduced” back to them. Using such capability as an argument for superiority over other brands was wasted print.

the phonograph, made the upgrades. Two specific designs are promoted, “The Diamond and the Disc” and the “Special Motor.”

**Mr. Edison Announces  
The Final Perfection of  
the Phonograph as a  
Real Musical Instrument  
of the Highest Type**

**T**HIS new instrument is the result of many years of experiment and investigation by Mr. Edison. All mechanical timbre is eliminated. All sounds are recorded and reproduced with absolute fidelity to the original, and every shade of volume and overtone is preserved. The tone is superb. This instrument opens to music lovers for the first time the great store of fine music which heretofore has been impossible of reproduction.

**The Diamond and the Disc**

Changeable needles or points are not used. The reproducing point which traverses the record is a genuine diamond, permanently mounted; it is never changed and never wears. The records are in a disc form, of a material which is new in chemistry and of so great hardness as to permit the reproduction of the myriad of faint overtones which alone give quality to music. These records are truly indestructible. The method of recording these new Edison records is also new, and the processes of manufacture are unique and new in every detail.

**Special Motor**

The mechanism of this new instrument is powerful, and is governed as accurately as a chronometer in order that the pitch shall at all times be accurately reproduced. Several thousands of these new Edison Diamond Disc instruments have already been shipped from the factory to music dealers throughout the United States and Canada. Go and hear the records—you will be surprised.

*Write for booklet illustrating and describing  
the different models*



**Thomas A. Edison**  
INCORPORATED

20 Lakeside Avenue      Orange, New Jersey



The new principles and methods embodied in the Edison Diamond Disc have also been applied to the well known Edison Cylinder Phonograph, and the new Cylinder instruments are now on exhibition by Edison Dealers.

Figure 5.2: Advertisement in McClure's 42, no. 2 (December 1913): 226

Columbia tried similar tactics as Edison, promising “The Last Word in Instruments of Music” with their Columbia Grand—a grafonola (a line of talking machines that was a reaction to Victor’s Victrola) that had a similar shape as a grand piano. The ad states,

The Columbia “Grand” is the result of our definite intention to produce, once and for all, the one musical instrument that must be accepted without question as the incomparable ideal. In musical possibilities, in design, and in equipment the Columbia “Grand” reaches a point where comparison with “talking machines” ceases to be possible.<sup>8</sup>

Perhaps seeking to gain credibility with the unique shape of the “Grand,” and a definite reaction to Victor with the mention of “talking machines,” the biggest flaw of this ad is the headlined price of “\$500.” Although some individuals certainly were attracted to this high price and piano shape, the majority of Americans would have found this instrument too expensive and unnecessary regardless of how idealistic or incomparable to other machines it claimed to be. Even advertisements for the Victor-Victrola, some of which cost as much as the Columbia Grand, did not showcase the high prices for the more elaborate machines portrayed in the ad.

But even without this one flaw, neither Columbia nor Edison chose to compete with Victor’s large advertising budget, which allowed them to promote many variations on the theme of “perfected instrument.” Early on, Victor chose to promote its talking machine as perfect. Unlike the other companies, it also tried to place itself into the position of a neutral third party by using testimonials of famous musicians in their advertisements. For example, in a 1901 Victor advertisement, Sousa “the march king” is quoted as saying “Your ‘Victor’ and ‘Monarch’ Records are all right.” This quote is then followed by a reproduction of his signature, “John Philip Sousa.” The ad then strengthens this statement with...

A Talking Machine so perfect as often to be mistaken for the original band, orchestra or singer is what we claim for the “VICTOR.” Consider for one moment what this means. If you believe it to be true, you should at once take steps to reap the personal benefit from this wonderful instrument. If you doubt it, we will take pleasure in forwarding you a “Victor” on approval. You will find the

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<sup>8</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 29 (January 18, 1913): rear cover.

VICTOR Talking Machine in the home of many music lovers, who have previously scorned the talking machine on account of its mechanical imperfections.<sup>9</sup>

Victor used singers to promote their products as well. In an advertisement published in *Musical America*, Victor used the face of the famous opera singer Schumann-Heink to sell records. She is quoted as saying, “I consider the Victor Records mirrors of the human voice, and the best vocal instructor of the day. They reproduce the art of the singer so accurately that no point of beauty and no fault escapes detection.”<sup>10</sup> Similar claims were employed regularly. Another popular ad asks, “Which is Which? You think you can tell the difference between hearing grand-opera artists sing and hearing their beautiful voices on the *Victor*. But can you?”<sup>11</sup> Another similar ad simply states “Why, that is the real thing—you can’t tell it from the actual human voice!”<sup>12</sup>

Other claims for the talking machine used in Victor advertisements include, “All instruments in One and the Best One—the Victor,” and “The musical instrument for everybody.”<sup>13</sup> For its Victrola models—first sold in 1906—Victor more explicitly claimed superiority with the statements, “The first and only instrument of its kind. No other musical instrument possesses the clear, beautiful, mellow tone-quality of the Victor-Victrola,” “The most complete of all musical instruments,” and “Only life itself can compare with the Victrola. It is the newest and greatest of all musical instruments. It

<sup>9</sup> *Cosmopolitan* 31, no. 6 (October 1901): n.p.

<sup>10</sup> *Musical America* 9, no. 20 (March 27, 1909): 31.

<sup>11</sup> Advertisements utilizing this rhetoric were published in numerous magazines including, *McClure’s* 32, no. 4 (February 1909): 18-19; *Life* 52, no. 1354 (October 8, 1908): 395; and *Saturday Evening Post* 181, no. 6 (August 8, 1908): rear page.

<sup>12</sup> Advertisements utilizing this rhetoric were published in numerous magazines including, *McClure’s* 32, no. 5 (March 1909): 18-19; *Life* 53, no. 1372 (February 11, 1909): 205; And *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 3 (February 1909): 46.

<sup>13</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 24, no. 2 (January 1907): rear cover; and *Life* 55, no. 1420 (January 13, 1910): 81 respectively.

marks the highest point of perfection ever reached in any musical instrument.”<sup>14</sup> Tapping into the moral perceptions relating to the consumption of “good music,” another advertisement claimed that “If you love good music, and want to hear it as you have never heard it before—with a beauty and expression of tone entirely new—be sure to hear the Victrola.”<sup>15</sup>

Figure 5.3 on page 135—an advertisement for the Victor-Victrola published in *Etude* magazine—is typical of phonograph ads of this type and deserves close attention. Illustrated with a Victrola in the top left hand corner, this ad states, “Victrola: The most wonderful musical instrument the world has ever known.” This is quite a claim for an invention that was primarily a business tool ten years earlier. But the ad continues, also claiming that “The *Victrola* is the first and only instrument of its kind. It is not simply a cabinet containing another instrument, but is a complete instrument in itself—specifically designed and constructed, and embodying new and exclusive patented features.” Although the costs for the Victrola XVI displayed in this ad (between \$200 and \$250 depending on wood choice) may have been prohibitive for many Americans, Victor reminds the reader that prior to this “greatest step forward made in any musical instrument for many a day,” the previous great step was “the advent of the Victor.” Unlike the Columbia advertisement discussed above, which only mentioned the high cost of the “Grand” grafonola, in addition to the cost of the Victrola XVI displayed here, this Victor ad also clearly articulates that lower priced machines could be purchased. “Write

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<sup>14</sup> Advertisements utilizing this rhetoric were published in numerous magazines. The first statement can be found in *McClure's* 30, no. 5 (March 1908): 17; *McClure's* 30, no. 6 (April, 1908): 17; *McClure's* 33, no. 1 (May 1909): 18-19; and *Life* 53, no. 1386 (May 20, 1909): 671. The second statement can be found in *Life* 54, no. 1407 (October 14, 1909): 505; and *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 13 (September 25, 1909): rear cover.

<sup>15</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 38 (March 19, 1910): rear cover.



# Victrola



## VICTROLA XVI

Circassian walnut \$250  
 Quartered oak, - \$200  
 Mahogany, - - \$200

Music made loud or soft  
 by opening or closing the small  
 doors.

Contains albums for 150  
 records and drawer for access-  
 ories.

The most wonderful  
 musical instrument the  
 world has ever known.

"Wonderful indeed!" you'll say after hearing the *Victrola*, for this new instrument is the greatest step forward made in any musical instrument for many a day—since the advent of the Victor.

The *Victrola* is the first and only instrument of its kind. It is not simply a cabinet containing another instrument, but is a complete instrument in itself—specially designed and constructed, and embodying new and exclusive patented features.

A handsome cabinet to outward appearances, graceful in design and beautiful in its simplicity. But what a world of melody it gives forth! And what a wonderfully pure and mellow tone! Never before were the great masterpieces of music—all the splendid Victor music—played so sweetly and perfectly.

"Where does the music come from?" you ask. Beneath the lid of the *Victrola* is a turntable on which the Victor Record is placed. From there the tone-waves are carried through the tapering arm down to the sounding board surface which amplifies and reflects them. And the melody floats out from behind the small doors which can be regulated to make the music loud or soft at will.

This then is the *Victrola*—the most wonderful of all musical instruments. But you can't know how wonderful it really is until you hear it, for the *Victrola* has a tone-quality such as is possessed by no other instrument.

Hear the *Victrola* today at the nearest Victor dealer's—he will gladly play it for you. Look for the Victor Dog on the inside of the lid.

Write to us for complete catalogues of the *Victrola*, the *Victor*—large range of styles, \$10, \$25, \$32.50, \$40, \$50, \$60, \$100—and of over 3000 *Victor Records*.

**Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.**

Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors.

To get best results, use only Victor Needles on Victor Records.



A complete list of new Victor Records for July will be found in the July number of *Munsey's* and August *Cosmopolitan*.

Figure 5.3: Victrola advertisement published in *Etude* 27, no. 7 (July 1909): 497

to us for complete catalogues of the *Victrola*, the Victor—large range of styles, \$10, \$25, \$32.50, \$40, \$50, \$60, \$100—and of over 3000 *Victor Records*.”

The phonograph companies were successful in recreating their machines into the image of a quality instrument. Therefore, a new instrument was brought into the home, along with music not previously performed in the parlor due to its overly complicated nature.<sup>16</sup> In the 1890s, images of Americans singing around the parlor organ or piano abound. By 1915, Americans instead found themselves dancing around the phonograph or sitting and listening to records.<sup>17</sup> By the second decade, phonograph sales mushroomed as people enjoyed hearing the music they wanted whenever they wanted, right in their own home.<sup>18</sup>

But the acceptance of the phonograph as an instrument in the home was met with some resistance. The displacement of the piano due to price caused considerable concern among musicians.<sup>19</sup> There was a fear that talking machines would dumb-down the quality of or even eliminate music-making in the home. C.L. Graves warned of the eradication of the amateur musician, suggesting that the phonograph would change the United States from a nation of music performers into a nation of music listeners.<sup>20</sup> Even Sousa, who allowed his band to make recordings, and who offered statements for use in Victor advertising, feared for the nation that listened to recordings rather than attended live performances. In a 1906 congressional hearing, Sousa had testified that many

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<sup>16</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 72.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 193.

<sup>18</sup> Donna R. Braden, “‘The Family That Plays Together Stays Together’: Family Pastimes and Indoor Amusements, 1890-1930,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 156.

<sup>19</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 35.

<sup>20</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 72.

Americans had stopped singing and making music themselves—a trend that could ruin artistic development of music in this country. He was afraid of consumption without participation.<sup>21</sup> Like other musicians, he viewed the phonograph as a cheap distraction from “high-cultured” music.<sup>22</sup> Others said they perceived the phonograph as a threat to motherhood, replacing the lullaby with canned music.<sup>23</sup> Some music shops simply refused to sell phonographs, promoting instead those classical musicians who feared that the phonograph would undermine their art.<sup>24</sup>

Such sentiment among some musicians provoked at least a little reaction. An article published in 1913 in *Musical Courier*, titled “Machine Made Music” consists of a discussion of “mechanical instruments.” The author suggests that the manufacturers of player pianos and talking machines would write in response to the criticism above and state that their mechanical devices were never considered perfect substitutes for great pianists, if they could find the time to write. This is an extremely problematic statement considering the use of advertising rhetoric declaring excellence described earlier in this chapter. Nevertheless, as evidence for this claim made on behalf of the manufacturers, the author states,

As for the good influence of the player piano and the talking machine we need only record the fact that we personally know of six persons from one small town who traveled sixty-five miles and back to hear Sousa’s Band play some of the works they had become interested in merely by learning them on mechanical instruments. This may not mean much to the professional musician. As an indication of the influence of the mechanical instrument on the musical culture of the people in general it is very important.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Crawford, *A History: America’s Musical Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 469.

<sup>22</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 57.

<sup>23</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 76.

<sup>24</sup> Symes, 36.

<sup>25</sup> “Machine Made Music,” *Musical Courier* 67, no. 9 (August 27, 1913): 21.

In the “Letters to Teachers” column in *Etude* magazine, Mathews responds to one teacher by promoting the use of a “good self player.” With the aid of both a copy of the score and the “roll” of music for the player piano, the student could “learn the piece.” In this context, learning simply meant the ability to recognize and appreciate the musical work when heard in performance. It did not mean developing the ability to play it on the piano.

It is important to note that the above examples actually play into Graves’s fears regarding amateur music-making. The six persons mentioned above attend a live performance, not to hear music they themselves learned to play, but instead to hear music introduced to them through a recording. No amateur music-making is involved. Finally, the author of the article suggests that those who judge these mechanical instruments are those who have not properly studied an instrument in the first place.<sup>26</sup> Similarly, another author from this time period, W. Dayton Wegfarth, thought the phonograph would be America’s salvation because “The great army of employed men and women, who, for sundry reasons, are unable to attend operatic performances and orchestral concerts, are afforded the opportunity to advance their knowledge in the field of melody and to satisfy a craving, inherent in many of them, for more worthwhile music than is commonly found out of green street pianos.”<sup>27</sup>

Around the turn of the twentieth century, phonograph concerts—concerts of recorded music given in the parlor—began to grow in popularity, replacing the traditional

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<sup>26</sup> The book *Grand Opera with a Victrola*, first published in 1915, provided piano reductions of works commonly available on disc. We will discuss this book at greater length in Chapter 7, but it is evidence of some interest in performing the pieces first heard on disc. Albert E. Wier, ed., *Grand Opera With A Victrola: Containing the Complete Stories and Most Popular Songs of the Great Operas* New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1915, 1916.

<sup>27</sup> Holly Kruse, “Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space,” *Stanford Humanities Review* 3, Autumn (1993), 9. Quoted from W. Dayton Wegfarth, “The Talking Machine as Public Educator,” *Lippincott’s* (May 1911) 629.

vocal and piano recitals that had been such a popular pastime for Victorian Americans. Stimulated by a growing culture of imitation where individuals were increasingly fascinated by reproductions of all sorts (photograph, player-piano and music-box), these “concerts” reaffirmed the status of “perfected instrument” for the talking machines and were meant to mimic and improve on a live performance in many ways.<sup>28</sup> Proper attire was required for these concerts and carefully constructed programs that announced the singer on the individual records, the piece of music recorded, the order the records would be played and the record numbers, were common.<sup>29</sup> The benefits of the phonograph over a live performance lay in the elimination of the “agonies of Susie’s and Jane’s” concerts. Instead, they were replaced with famous singers who would sing perfectly rendered arias at the homeowner’s command. The lack of musical training became irrelevant to the consumption of music.<sup>30</sup>

A number of publications illustrate the popularity of these phonograph concerts. The overwhelming majority of them reinforce the use of prerecorded music rather than the use of Edison’s in-home recording machines. One advertisement for Victor that doubled as an article reinforced the concept of the phonograph concert. Titled “The Concert Hour with the Victor,” this ad includes a sample program (figure 5.4 on page 140). In addition to the Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin, and selections from the Victor Light Opera company, additional pieces appear on this program with connections to art music, such as Nevin’s *The Rosary*. To the right of the advertisement title is an illustration that clearly shows two couples and a child, elegantly dressed and grouped

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<sup>28</sup> Emily Thompson, “Machines, Music, and the Quest for Fidelity: Marketing the Edison Phonograph in America, 1877-1925,” *Musical Quarterly* 79, no. 1 (1995): 160.

<sup>29</sup> Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 57-8.

<sup>30</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 72.

around a talking machine on a table. Another Victor ad headlines, “Only Victor Owners Can Command this Performance.”<sup>31</sup> Many Edison ads also promote phonograph concerts with headlines such as “Play this next, Mother!” “Encore,” and “A theatre party whenever you want it on the Edison Phonograph—a whole season’s entertainment in an evening.”<sup>32</sup>

### A Victor Home Concert

PROGRAM—PART I

1. **Bavarian Yodel, “The Waterfall”**  
—MACDONOUGH AND WATSON  
(Victor Double-faced Record 16120. Ten-inch, 75 cents)
2. **Perpetuum Mobile (Suite No. 3—op. 34, No. 5)—Solo for violin. Ries**  
—JAN KUBELIK  
(Victor Red Seal Record 74257. Twelve-inch, \$1.50)
3. **Bridal Chorus from Lohengrin. Wagner**  
—VICTOR OPERA CHORUS  
(Victor Single-faced Record 31846. Twelve-inch, \$1)

PART II

4. **The Rosary. Nevin** —ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK  
(Victor Red Seal Record 88108. Twelve-inch, \$3)
5. **Sweet and Low. Tennyson** —VICTOR BRASS QUARTET  
(Victor Double-faced Record 16382. Ten-inch, 75 cents)
6. **Gems from “A Runaway Girl.” Monckton-Caryll**  
—VICTOR LIGHT OPERA CO.  
(Victor Single-faced Record 31845. Twelve-inch, \$1)
7. **Auld Lang Syne. Burns** —WESTMINSTER CHIMES  
(Victor Double-faced Record 16390. Ten-inch, 75 cents)

Figure 5.4: Partial advertisement from *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 3 (March 1912): 80

The majority of rhetoric available promoted the listening of prerecorded music at these concerts. One exception is the article “How We Gave a Phonograph Party” reprinted in *The Phonograph and How to Use It* published in 1900 by Edison’s company. Edison uses this article to try and convince the readers of the superiority of his machines due to the recording apparatus. The author describes the party as a collection of musicians making in-home recordings. Obviously an advertisement ploy, many other aspects of the phonograph party are in line with the production of popular phonograph

<sup>31</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 1 (January 1912): 56.

<sup>32</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 2 (February 1912): 34; 29, no. 3 (March 1912): 35; and 29, no. 4 (April 1912): 40 respectively.

concerts. Invitations were still sent inviting people to attend.<sup>33</sup> Drawings illustrating the concert show people dressed in proper attire. Listening was an essential part of this party, since each record made was played back to the audience. Finally, each recording was rated by those in attendance. Although this article is a clear example of Edison's misunderstanding concerning the growing consumer base for his invention, it still reinforces typical concert behavior for the use of the phonograph in the home.

Regardless of what the phonograph industry claimed, it was difficult to mistake the phonograph concert for a live performance. The record offered its own sound, underlined by the "scratch" of the friction between the steel needle and the mineral grains in the disc.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, recordings allowed music to be heard in private. It allowed a nocturne to be heard in the morning. It placed the musical discretion in the hands of the individual. It became possible to hear music rarely or never heard in public. In short, recordings created an audience for music literally unheard of before 1877.<sup>35</sup> The phonograph recreated the country, transforming it from a nation of music performers to a nation of music listeners.<sup>36</sup>

Further evidence that the phonograph was successful in its self-defining process as an instrument can be found in its role as music provider to the U.S. troops during World War I. Although slightly outside the parameters of this dissertation, it is important to note that on the western front, soldiers were able to create a temporary home away

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<sup>33</sup> *Phonograph and How to Use It: Being a Short History of Its Invention and Development Containing Also Directions Helpful Hints and Plain Talks As To Its Care and Use, Etc.*, 1900 (Reprint. New York: Allen Koenigsberg, 1971), 146.

<sup>34</sup> Alexander Boyden Magoun, "Shaping the Sound of Music: The Evolution of the Phonographic Record, 1877-1950" (Ph.D. dissertation: University of Maryland, 2000), 21.

<sup>35</sup> Symes, 3.

<sup>36</sup> Foy, "Music Set to Music," 72.

from home with the aid of portable phonographs.<sup>37</sup> Good music, talking machines and pianos were considered essential to WWI, second only to food and munitions. In fact, Charles S. Whitman, governor of New York congratulated the piano industry's efforts to get good music over to our boys.<sup>38</sup> Many images of men in uniform listening to talking machines also survive. One vintage poster clearly articulated that the Victor was performing a valuable national service. The poster was illustrated with a somewhat idealist camp setting, complete with uniformed young men sitting, lounging and even standing around a camp fire and a Victor talking machine. The machine is clearly outfitted with a record. The Victor logo is in the bottom left hand corner and the poster is captioned, "Victor Records Delight the Soldier Boys."<sup>39</sup> Similarly, the September 1917 Columbia record supplement cover included the illustration of a soldier, standing at attention with rifle while saluting.

The technology surrounding the phonograph also allowed men, traditionally without applied musical abilities, to become involved with the "music making" in the home. It was primarily men who used the phonograph in the trenches on the Western Front. The use of machines was not a threat to traditional masculinity of the day. The piano industry recognized this reality as an opportunity to promote player pianos that allowed anyone to play music skillfully without effort. The Aeolian company at the turn of the twentieth-century promoted automatic pianos as easy to play, allowing men to participate in "music making" more fully.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kruse, 13.

<sup>38</sup> Craig H. Roell, "The Piano in the American Home," in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 94.

<sup>39</sup> Reproduced from the *Johnson Victrola Museum of the Delaware State Museums* in Fabrizio and Paul, 131.

<sup>40</sup> Roell, 102. Heavy use of democracy rhetoric also found its way into the advertisements.



It was not long before the phonograph became a part of ordinary life in the home. Many images surrounding the end of the first decade of the twentieth century depict scenes of everyday life with the phonograph in the background.<sup>41</sup> No longer was it considered a prized new possession of Victorian America, nor did it continue to occupy a place of pride within the home. Instead, it became an ordinary, even necessary addition to the musical life of the home. One popular parlor image was incorporated by Edison in order to sell phonographs, that of the large hearth and fireside. The Edison Fireside Phonograph was first introduced for sale in 1909. Some advertisements promoting this model phonograph show the popular multi-generational family sitting together around a roaring fire while listening to records on this machine. However, Edison was not the first to incorporate this imagery into his advertisements. The Victor company, while not incorporating the image into a model name, did show a man and woman sitting together in front of a lit fireplace while listening to a Victor talking machine as early as September 28, 1906. The caption of the ad, found in the *Saturday Evening Post*, simply says, “Victor. The voice by the fireside.” As was Victor’s custom, the remainder of the ad reminds the reader of the various different artists who “sing” for Victor and can be reproduced “in your home.”<sup>42</sup> Another advertisement for the Victor simply states “Victor. The Fireside Theatre,” while forgoing any fire imagery. Instead, the Victor I is at the center of the ad along with its \$25 price.<sup>43</sup>

The majority of Edison ads promoting his “Fireside” model also forgo the fire and hearth imagery and focus instead on his invention, along with the common explanation

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<sup>41</sup> Fabrizio and Paul, 7.

<sup>42</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 179, no. 13 (September 28, 1906): rear cover.

<sup>43</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 181, no. 16 (October 17, 1908): 32. Christmas advertisements for the Victor regularly incorporate a fireplace along with a Victor Talking Machine.

concerning its superiority over other machines. One of the earlier ads, published in *Saturday Evening Post*, July 24, 1909, states “The Fireside is a new Edison Phonograph costing only \$22.00 and playing both Standard and Amberol Records.” The Amberol record was also a newer invention by Edison, with which he claimed to have created a much improved reproduced sound and at the same time provided a longer recording time. “Amberol Records are the longest-playing and the most perfect Records made.” The “Fireside” must have been attractive, as it allowed individuals to play their old collection of standard recordings, while at the same time purchase and play the newer recording format. “A beautiful Phonograph at \$22 (\$28.60 in Canada) makes the wealth of music now on Standard and Amberol Records available in every home. Ask to hear the ‘Fireside.’ If there is no dealer near you, write us for information and our booklet: ‘The Edison Phonograph and the Home.’”<sup>44</sup>

Certainly the ability to reproduce music with famous voices was appealing to those purchasing any type of talking machine. No matter what the piano companies claimed for their reproducing instruments, they could not claim to do this. But player pianos rose in importance during the same time period as phonographs. By 1920, 60% of all pianos sold were player pianos.<sup>45</sup> Certainly not the same thing without famous voices, the player piano still boasted of being able to reproduce specific interpretations of music

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<sup>44</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 4 (July 24, 1909): 23. Other advertisements for the “Fireside” utilize Victor Herbert’s exclusive recording agreements with Edison to emphasize the supposed supremacy of the “fireside” model. For example, “This means that the music on the Records is going to be better and more popular, that Victor Herbert will write some of it and that his orchestra will play some of it exclusively for Edison Standard and Amberol Records, and the Victor Herbert looks upon the Phonograph as the natural method of distributing good music around the country, just as a writer would use a book.” *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 13 (September 25, 1909): 51; and *Cosmopolitan* 47, no. 6 (November 1909): n.p. Note, a couple of the advertisements that offered Edison machines to the public on credit discussed above were offering the “Fireside” model *Cosmopolitan* 51, no. 6 (November 1911): n.p; and 53, no. 6 (November 1912): 120j.

<sup>45</sup> Roell, 102.

by some famous pianists and composers of their own work. Further reaction by the piano industry to the growing popularity of talking machines can be seen in the many advertisements that began mimicking the rhetoric and even faces employed by the phonograph companies.<sup>46</sup> For example, a large double-page advertisement for the Angelus player-piano in *Cosmopolitan* (1911) claimed in bold face type that “Caruso Buys an Angelus—the only player-piano he has ever bought.”<sup>47</sup> Photos of Caruso dressed in opera costume adorn the advertisement, much the same way as they adorn the many Victor record advertisements. The Angelus advertisement continues by first claiming its superiority over other player-pianos, suggesting that Caruso’s choice to buy an Angelus is “one of the most important events in the modern history of music,” and suggests its superiority over Victor’s records since the singer “purchased” the player piano. It was not “given” to him. Below is an excerpt from this ad.

Signor Caruso made this choice after satisfying himself that no other instrument among the many player-pianos on the market possessed equal flexibility of control or the same marvelous facility of expression for accompanying the human voice in all its work, from the simplest ballad to the most exacting operatic “aria.” In its artistic significance, Signor Caruso’s selection of the ANGELUS is one of the most important events in the modern history of music.

There is a vast difference in an artist being *given* an instrument, or being paid to use a particular make for advertising purposes, and his voluntarily coming forward to purchase the instrument he knows to be the best.

The action of Caruso, the world’s greatest singer, should serve as a guide to those contemplating the purchase of a player-piano.

Like the phonograph, the piano industry claimed that the player-piano was the ideal or perfected instrument. Figure 5.5 on page 146, an advertisement in *Life* (1904) for the Angelus claims that it is the ideal instrument do to its ability to allow “*any one* to become an *artistic performer*.” The latest feature is “THE PHRASING LEVER.” The

<sup>46</sup> A 1925 survey found that more families had phonographs than pianos. Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 69.

<sup>47</sup> *Cosmopolitan* 51, no. 6 (November 1911): 132-33.

accompanying illustration shows a woman sitting at the Angelus in front of a concert grand piano in the pose of performance while a gentleman looks on from the side of the room. Other advertisements for the Angelus include a man singing instead of listening.<sup>48</sup>

**The Ideal Instrument** Ever since we built the first piano-player put on the market, our aim has been *not* to make a perfected *automatic* piano-playing machine—we designed The Angelus as an instrument which would enable *any one* to become an *artistic performer*.

¶ The Angelus and The Angelus Orchestral, which contains sweetly voiced organ reeds, cannot be successfully imitated because they are protected by important, exclusive patents. It is, however, the latest and greatest feature of these instruments,

**THE PHRASING LEVER**

which gives a finished grace to the performer's playing.

¶ By the simple devices of The Angelus, which are controlled by the lightest touch of the fingers, the performer may bring out the melody while subduing the accompaniment, accelerate or retard any passage or part of the composition, accent a note or notes, produce legato or staccato effects. Each Angelus music-roll is so plainly marked that the performer must get most satisfactory results.

¶ If you care for piano music send us your name, and we will mail free an interesting book describing The Angelus and its marvelous *Phrasing Lever*.

**WILCOX & WHITE CO., SOLE MAKERS**  
 Established 1876      Agents Everywhere      Meriden, Conn., U.S.A.

Figure 5.5: Advertisement for the Angelus, *Life* 43, no. 1110 (February 4, 1904): 105

Other advertisements sought to directly address the horrible sounds of practice often heard in the home and a frequent complaint in the literature. The Aeolian Company claimed that their player-piano (and not others) could make boys and girls “*want to learn*

<sup>48</sup> *Life* 43, no. 1114 (March 3, 1904): 203.

to play.” The ability to entice children to practice lies in the Aeolian’s ability to bring “music” to the children, not simply a practice schedule. The text of the advertisement is reproduced below.

Addressed particularly to mothers who find it hard to make their boys and girls practice.

You want your children to learn to play. That was one reason you bought your piano. It will be worth a great deal to them later to learn to play *now*. But to learn, they must practice hours and hours. Practicing is hard work. And yours is the hardest part—getting them to practice.

Does your boy *hate* to practice when the other boys are going fishing or skating or *anything* more interesting than finger exercises?

Does your little girl have to be coaxed all the way to the piano stool? or scolded?

Does she watch the clock and stop on the dot?

We know of one small boy who found a way to make the piano stool squeak—and he squeaked it regularly to relieve his pent-up feelings. That shows how much music was in his soul—those days. He’s sorry now.

Have you ever made music so attractive to your children that they *wanted* to learn?

They don’t know what *music is*—they only know what *practicing is*.

What your boys and girls need is *music*. Music is so good that they *want to learn to play*. Just such music as the Pianola-Piano would bring into your home.

You need a genuine PIANOLA Player-piano to fill your home with such good music that the boys and girls will learn to love *music* and to want it. Yes, you all need a Pianola-Piano—but especially your children who are learning to play.

Be sure it is a genuine PIANOLA Player-piano—not just *a* player-piano.

“Pianola” does not mean player-piano. It is the name of *one particular* player-piano.

There is a vast difference as you will readily understand when you hear the genuine PIANOLA Player-piano.

The Metrostyle and the Themodist are two exclusive features of the genuine PIANOLA Player-piano. Since it is these which make the *real* music, you can see how important they are if you want the little folks to hear the right *kind* of music and to learn the right *way* to play.

Even an inexpensive genuine PIANOLA Player-piano—some cost as little as \$550—gives you these things that the very highest priced among other player-pianos cannot.<sup>49</sup>

Other connections between the phonograph and the player piano lie in their ability to bring music from all over the world into your home. An advertisement for the Reginapiano (a piano constructed by the Regina music box company) in *Ladies Home*

<sup>49</sup> *Good Housekeeping Magazine* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 13.

*Journal* (1906) claims “the Reginaphone will bring into your home all the music the world now knows. With it you and every member of the family can become accomplished players without the talent or tedious years of practice” (see figure 5.6 below)<sup>50</sup>

## Can You Play a Piano?

ARE you able to render at any moment a dark melody or a Hungarian rhapsody; the hit of the latest musical comedy or selections from any grand opera, according to the wishes of your guests or your family or your own inclination? You could if you had a



of perfect player mechanism and high-grade piano. As a piano for skilled players it offers everything that a musician desires; as a means of enabling the untaught to play anything that has been written in piano music its appeal is universal. Though mechanical, it expresses the music that is in you. It does the work, but it leaves to you the pleasure of putting your own interpretation into it. Go to the Regina dealer in your city and hear the Reginapiano. Hearing is convincing. In the meantime let us send you a booklet telling all about it, what it does, how it is made and what it costs.

### Reginapiano

The Reginapiano will bring into your home all the music the world now knows. With it you and every member of the family can become accomplished players without talent or tedious years of practice. The Reginapiano is a combination

**THE REGINA CO.**  
RAHWAY, N. J.

Makers of Regina Music Boxes, Regina Chime Clocks and Reginaphones

New York Salesrooms: Broadway and 17th St. Chicago, Ill.: 259 Wabash Ave.

The VICTOR COMPANY  
announces the  
production of  
Verdi's Master-  
piece, "Il Trovatore",  
complete from the  
opening chorus to the finale of the  
last act, by the principals, chorus  
and orchestra of the La Scala  
Theatre, Milan, Italy.

Now on sale at all leading Music Houses  
and Talking Machine dealers, full score in  
20 Records, \$21.00, or single selections as  
per catalogue.

THE VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.  
British Columbia Co. U. Mexico: Canadian Distributors



FILL OUT - CUT OFF - MAIL TODAY  
Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J.  
Give name, address, and telephone number  
of the store and tell the number of  
records you want.

Figure 5.6: Side by side advertisement for Reginapiano and Victor company’s recording of “Il Trovatore” in *Ladies Home Journal* 24, no. 1 (December 1906): 61

Another advertisement for the Pianola Piano found in *Musical America* (1911), claims that it is “The Piano Student’s Greatest Aid To Music Study.” Furthermore, it claims to be “The ONLY Player-Piano Which Teaches You the Music While You Play

<sup>50</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 24, no. 1 (December 1906): 61.

It.”<sup>51</sup> Such teaching rhetoric mimics that found in many talking machine advertisements, particularly the Victor ads found in *Musical America*. Finally, many of the advertisements for player-pianos were placed on the same page, or facing page as a phonograph advertisement as is evidenced by figure 5.6 (page 148).

### **Perfecting Musical Furniture**

The phonograph industry was successful in redefining its product as a musical instrument. More than that, it was also able to sell the idea that it was a perfected instrument for the home. This perfection was due in part to the low price (when compared to the piano and parlor organ), and the ability to receive it on a system of credit or free trial (like the piano) and allow the woman to become involved with the leisure of music listening in the home while still fulfilling her moral imperatives of providing music for the family and for social gatherings (something the piano could not do). All of these advertising strategies helped to create a substantial in-home market for the phonograph and talking machines.

The industry also realized the importance of stylized furniture for the parlor. Items such as center tables, window draperies, matching chairs, musical instruments—all items commonly found in the parlor by the turn of the twentieth century—were meant to illustrate knowledge of the world’s learning and high culture. The popular music corner of the parlor is an example of this. Prints of famous paintings hung in the parlor were meant to be focal points of discussion. The more elaborate the possessions, the more evidence there was of civilization in the home. The contents of the parlor became a

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<sup>51</sup> *Musical America* 14, no. 23 (October 14, 1911): 10.

medium for expressing a family's position in a web of values. "We are whatever our possessions claim us to be."<sup>52</sup>

The ability to mass produce certain "styles" of furniture encouraged formality in the parlor. The piano also began to be affected. Certain furniture styles were applied to it as well, so consumers could incorporate it with stylistic consistency into a parlor suite. In other words, this instrument was treated more as a piece of furniture. Its actual use was diminishing due to lack of musical training and the growing popularity of the phonograph (and player piano), but associations with culture persisted.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, the phonograph, already established as a musical instrument (and no longer a machine) could be further defined as an item appropriate for the home as a piece of furniture.

### **Victor's Victor-Victrola**

The Victor Talking Machine Company was generally the first to adopt and adapt advertising trends for use in the phonograph market. As such, they were the first to transform the phonograph into a piece of furniture.<sup>54</sup> In 1906, Victor released their Victor-Victrola, a talking machine that incorporated a large wooden cabinet to conceal the horn and disc components of the machine. While not abandoning the rhetoric relating the machine to a perfected instrument, magazines with primarily women readership from this time period, including *Ladies Home Journal*, *Vanity Fair*, *McClure's* and *Good Housekeeping* to name a few, began printing advertisements that emphasized the new decorative qualities of the phonograph.<sup>55</sup> The enclosure of the "mechanical looking

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<sup>52</sup> Grier, "The Decline of the Memory Palace," 54.

<sup>53</sup> Foy, "Home Set to Music," 80. Pianos, phonographs, and later radios were all housed in wooden cabinets that could be purchased in similar styles.

<sup>54</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 192; and Symes, 25.

<sup>55</sup> Kruse, 11.



thing” allowed the phonograph to more easily blend into the domestic environment.<sup>56</sup>

“To overcome the objections of many women who refused to have such a contraption in their homes, engineers designed a phonograph that would be accepted like a piano, as a piece of stylish furniture.”<sup>57</sup>

While not abandoning the rhetoric surrounding the musical quality of the Victor “instruments” (such as “perfected” instrument and superior tone of the Victrola), new comments such as, “The handsome cabinet is another evidence of the ability of the Victor company to maintain its supremacy in the artistic excellence of its instruments as well as in their musical superiority” and “A handsome cabinet to outward appearances, graceful in design and beautiful in simplicity” provides attention towards the construction of a hardwood cabinet that conceals the very visual elements that make the talking machine a musical instrument (the horn and record).<sup>58</sup> One campaign in particular promotes the “new and elegant setting” that the Victrola creates (see figure 5.7 on page 152). The elegance is due to the fact that “the horn and all moving parts are entirely concealed in a handsome mahogany cabinet...” The cabinet of the Victrola further functions as record storage containing “...albums for 150 records and drawer for accessories.”<sup>59</sup> In fact—unlike its two major competitors—every single Victor-Victrola advertisement through the end of 1913 (when this study ceases) promotes the different types of wood available for a particular model.

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<sup>56</sup> Magoun, 195; and Mark Katz, “Making America More Musical Through the Phonograph, 1900-1930,” *American Music* 16, no. 4 (1998): 453. The industry responded to the demand for phonographs that looked more like furniture than machines, often meaning that the horns disappeared enclosed within cabinets. Katz, *Capturing*, 54.

<sup>57</sup> Schlereth, *Victorian America*, 192-93.

<sup>58</sup> *McClure's* 41, no. 6 (October 1913): 150-51; and *Life* 53, no. 1386 (May 20, 1909): 671 respectively.

<sup>59</sup> Similar ads can be found in *McClure's* 30, no. 5 (March 1908): 17; *McClure's* 30, no. 6 (April 1908): 17; and *Saturday Evening Post* 181, no. 38 (March 20, 1909): rear cover.

**\$200**

**Victor-Victrola**

A new style Victor

All the refined entertainment which only the Victor can supply, in a new and elegant setting.

The horn and all moving parts are entirely concealed in a handsome mahogany cabinet, and the music is made loud or soft by opening or closing the small doors.

The cabinet contains albums for 150 records and drawer for accessories. All metal parts heavily gold-plated.

The most complete of all musical instruments.

Hear the Victor-Victrola at any music-house or talking-machine merchant's. Write to us for descriptive booklet.

VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO., Camden, N. J.

Figure 5.7: Victrola advertisement in McClure's 30, no. 4 (February, 1908): 17

Several other common advertisement campaigns for the Victor-Victrola deserve mention. Both are reactions to Edison and Columbia ads that promote their own versions of the Victrola. The first states “You might be able to build a cabinet that outwardly would resemble a Victor-Victrola. You might even copy the inside construction and details if they were not protected by patents. But there is no copying the superior Victor-Victrola tone-quality.” The implication—reinforced by the headline, “Tone. That’s where the Victor-Victrola is pre-eminent”—is that the Victor design results in an even better instrument. To buy a piece of furniture from another company may give you some nice wood, but an inferior sound (see figure 5.8 on page 154). “That represents years of patient experiment—with various woods, with different proportions, with numerous vibratory surfaces—and it is simply astonishing how slight a variation in size, in shape, in position, seriously affects the tone quality.”<sup>60</sup>

Another campaign also continued to promote the musical instrument rhetoric common in the phonograph ads. However, the “newness” of these machines is not in the tone quality of these machines. Instead the newness is in physical design resulting in a “more beautiful,” “more artistic,” and “more complete” Victrola that is available to the consumer with “no increase in price.”<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Similar ads, some of which incorporate two pages, can also be found in *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 3 (September 1912): 18-19; *Life* 55, no. 1424 (February 10, 1910): 231; *Life* 60, no. 1558 (September 5, 1912): 1744; *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 32 (February 5, 1910): 52; *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 7 (August 13, 1910): 34; *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 8 (August 24, 1912): 24-25; *Musician* 15 (May 1910): 353; and *Cosmopolitan* 50, no. 6 (May 1911): 46-47.

<sup>61</sup> The “Three new styles” were the Victor-Victrola X, XI, XIV, all available in Mahogany or oak. Examples of this advertisement can be found in *Life* 60, no. 1563 (October 10, 1912): 1943; *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 11 (November 1912): 98; and *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 12 (September 21, 1912): rear cover.

# Tone

**That's where the Victor-Victrola is pre-eminent.**

You might be able to build a cabinet that outwardly would resemble a Victor-Victrola. You might even copy the inside construction and details, if they were not protected by patents. But there is no copying the superior Victor-Victrola tone-quality.

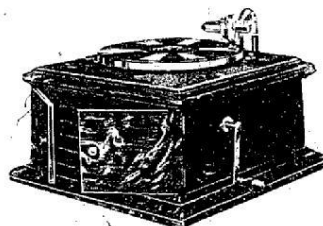
That represents years of patient experiment—with various woods, with different proportions, with numerous vibratory surfaces—and it is simply astonishing how slight a variation in size, in shape, in position, seriously affects the tone quality.

No, the Victor-Victrola tone can't be equaled! Even though the eye could take in every detail of construction, there is still that same indescribable "something" which makes the Stradivarius supreme among violins, which gives to the Victor-Victrola the wonderfully sweet, clear and mellow tone that has established this instrument as pre-eminent in tone quality.

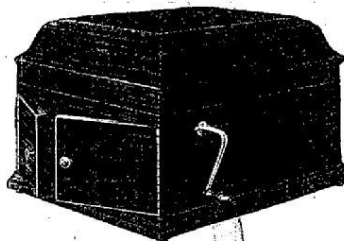
Hear the Victor-Victrola today at the nearest Victor dealer's—you'll spend a delightful half-hour and come away with a greater love for music and a more thorough appreciation of this superb instrument.

**Victor Talking Machine Co.**  
Camden, N. J., U. S. A.  
Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal  
Canadian Distributors.

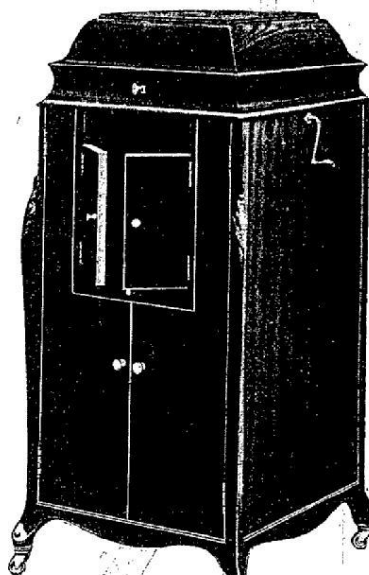
Always use Victor Machines with Victor Records and Victor Needles—the combination. There is no other way to get the unequalled Victor tone.



**Victor-Victrola VI, \$25**  
Oak



**Victor-Victrola IX, \$50**  
Mahogany or oak



**Victor-Victrola XVI, \$200**  
Mahogany or quartered oak  
Other styles \$15 to \$150

# Victor-Victrola

New Victor Records are on sale at all dealers on the 28th of each month

Figure 5.8: Victrola advertisement in *Life* 60, no. 1559 (September 12, 1912): 1751

Victor sought to give its Victrola added prestige as an instrument/furniture worthy of the White House. An advertisement simply captioned “A corner of the Music Room in the White House” shows a typical Victrola in an elaborate “music room,” decorated with large plants, chandelier, thick draperies, and other pieces of fine furniture. Serving to place the Victrola into a very prestigious parlor (that of the President of the United States) as both a musical instrument (in the music room of the White House) and a piece of fine furniture worthy of display.<sup>62</sup> Couple the prestige created in this advertisement with others that promoted Victrolas with low prices. One ad headlines “\$15 for this genuine Victor-Victrola.” Although only a table top model—and therefore less of a piece of furniture—it boasted “...the same high quality and standard of excellence so well established and recognized in all products of the Victor Company.” The low cost along with standardized rhetoric used to describe all Victrolas (regardless of size, wood choice, or model) provide typical Americans with the same quality item found in the White House, for as little as fifteen dollars (see figure 5.9 on page 156).

Victor’s entire “Victrola” campaign was based on the Aeolian piano company’s “pianola” campaign. In response to the “mechanical instrument” market, Aeolian created its “pianola,” a device that could be attached to a regular piano in order to make it play previously saved music selections. The pianola was not a player piano, but an attachment that contained eighty-eight “fingers,” each of which lined up to a key on the piano. The device was promoted as superior to a player piano due to its capability of “playing” a regular piano. No doubt trying to create a similar elevated status for its cabinet machines,

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<sup>62</sup> Examples of this advertisement can be found in *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 13 (September 24, 1910): rear cover; *Life* 56, no. 1454 (September 8, 1910): 416; and *Ladies Home Journal* 78, no. 8 (April 15, 1911): rear cover.

Victor chose the same ending, “ola,” attached to the company’s name to create the name of its new line of machines.<sup>63</sup>

# \$15 for this genuine Victor-Victrola

**Victor-Victrola IV, \$15**  
Equipped with all the latest Victor improvements, including Exhibition sound box, tapering arm, “gover-neck”, ten-inch horn and concealed sound-amplifying features.

Other styles of  
the Victor-Victrola  
\$50, \$75, \$100, \$150,  
\$200, \$250  
Victrola \$10 to \$100



The fact that this instrument bears the famous Victor trademark and is a *genuine* Victor-Victrola guarantees to you the same high quality and standard of excellence so well established and recognized in all products of the Victor Company.

There is no reason on earth why you should hesitate another moment in placing this greatest of all musical instruments in your home. All we ask is that you go to any music store and hear this new Victor-Victrola.



Figure 5.9: Victrola advertisement found in Saturday Evening Post 184, no. 13 (September 23, 1911):

64

The promotion of the Victrola as more than a musical instrument and a piece of quality wood furniture brought added success to the Victor company. However, in the

<sup>63</sup> Magoun, 198.

early years, sales were somewhat disappointing, selling only 506 Victrolas in the final months of 1906 (the year of its release) and 3,559 in 1907. Neither number is very extraordinary considering the sale of 76,036 and an additional 98,686 horn type machines in 1906 and 1907 respectively.<sup>64</sup> In contrast to these early sales figures, by 1911 Victor was selling three times as many Victrolas as exposed horns. In 1917, the Victrola reached its height of popularity with 564,000 machines being sold versus 6,600 of the exposed horn style talking machines.<sup>65</sup>

### **Columbia's Grafonola**

In spite of the successful advertising, Eldridge Johnson suffered from an inability to recognize the public's preference for low, wide models. Until 1921, Victor only manufactured the high hump-back style along with several table-top models.<sup>66</sup> This error of judgment gave Columbia complete initial access to a market totally unexploited by Victor. Both Edison and Columbia quickly responded with their own versions of cabinet style machines (the Amberola and Grafonola respectively), but Columbia quickly created and exploited the wide "table" model neglected by Victor.<sup>67</sup> Although many advertisements survive promoting Columbia Grafonolas simply as musical instruments—neglecting use of the low, wide model and neglecting to mention the wood construction or any furniture use in the advertising rhetoric—other early ads explicitly claim furniture status for their machines.

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<sup>64</sup> Leonard DeGraaf, "Confronting the Mass Market: Thomas Edison and the Entertainment Phonograph," *Business and Economic History* 24, no. 1 (1995): 91; and Magoun, 198.

<sup>65</sup> Magoun, 198.

<sup>66</sup> Kruse, 4. Likewise, Johnson refused to allow radios to be incorporated.

<sup>67</sup> Columbia introduced the Grafonola in June 1907. Magoun, 198.

Some of these advertisements clearly depict several similar low, wide models while excluding any of the Columbia high, hump-back style machines (see figure 5.10 on page 159). The machines shown in the ad take preeminence over the musicians illustrated in the top left hand corner. Unlike the Victrola “cabinet style,” these machines are also desks and tables. The Regent Grafonola incorporates record storage into the machine, but separates it into two different cabinet spaces, separated to allow for a chair to be placed underneath the machine (like a desk). Other machines, such as the Regent Junior Grafonola and the Baby Regent Grafonola simply do away with the cabinet space all together, taking on the image and utilitarian use of a table.<sup>68</sup>

Other early advertisements simply state that the Columbia “Regent” models in fact double as a piece of furniture. For example, “The Columbia Grafonola “Regent” (combination mahogany library table and hornless Graphophone)” and “Mahogany library table combined with a hornless Graphophone” are two such statements. Columbia was ahead of both Victor and Edison in its clear furniture labels for its machines. However, these last two quotes were used in conjunction with the illustration of a famous singer and name who promoted Columbia recordings. A definite reaction to Victor’s common use of their exclusive recording contracts with other famous stars, Columbia reacts not only with their own recordings of great voices, but also with a machine that doubles as a practical piece of furniture.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Another example of a similar advertisement can be found in *Life* 59, no. 1526 (January 25, 1912): 197.

<sup>69</sup> These quotes are found in two advertisements, *Life* 57, no. 1476 (February 9, 1911): 319; and *Life* 57, no. 1479 (March 2, 1911): 472 respectively. The famous singers are Alice Nielsen in the first and Lina Cavalieri in the second.



*The* **Columbia**  
Phonograph Company (exclusively) presents:

7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18

1 David Bispham  
2 Lillian Nordica  
3 Alice Nielsen  
4 Ellison Van Hoose  
5 Kitty Cheatham  
6 Reed Miller  
7 Xavier Scharwenka  
8 Ruth Vincent  
9 Margaret Keyes  
10 Mary Garden  
11 Olive Fremstad  
12 Josef Hofmann  
13 Bernice de Pasquali  
14 Jose Mardones  
15 Rosa Olitzka  
16 Carolina White  
17 Cecil Fanning  
18 Alex. Heinemann

SEVEN THOUSAND Columbia dealers are prepared to play for you any Double-Disc Record listed in our 200-page catalog, on any of the Columbia Graphophones or Grafonolas (\$17.50 to \$200). But you must go to a Columbia dealer.

Columbia Grafonola  
"Baby Regent" \$199

Columbia Grafonola  
"Regent Junior," \$159

Columbia Grafonola  
"Regent" \$200

ONLY the Columbia dealer can supply you with records by these best known artists of the concert stage, and only a Columbia dealer can show you the Grafonola "Regent"—the one incomparable musical instrument.

COLUMBIA PHONOGRAPH CO., Gen'l  
Box 270 Tribune Bldg., New York Toronto, McKinnon Bldg.  
London: Earlfield, S. W. Mexico City: 1, A Calle de Lopez No. 7

Figure 5.10: Advertisement found in *Life* 59, no. 1531 (February 29, 1912): 456

Columbia promoted its "Regent" machines equally as a piece of furniture and a musical instrument, something Victor was reluctant to do during the first decades of the twentieth century. Two examples follow.

The "Regent" Grafonola is a complete table for every-day use in exactly the same degree as it is a complete musical instrument of unexampled versatility, matchless tonal qualities and unequalled durability—the complete instrument ready at any and all times equally for business service or musical entertainment. Wherever people of refinement congregate, the field of entertainment and utility of he

Grafonola “Regent” is practically unlimited—in the living room, the music room, the library, and in the rooms of clubs and lodges.<sup>70</sup>

The Columbia Grafonola “Regent”... is a complete library or living-room table for everyday use, combined with a complete musical instrument of matchless tonal qualities. It is built of the finest genuine mahogany (and can be furnished in other woods, to order).<sup>71</sup>

To further emphasize its use as a library table, the “Regent” is displayed with a reading lamp. The Regent is illustrated in these ads as quiet, without music pouring forth from its sound shutters.

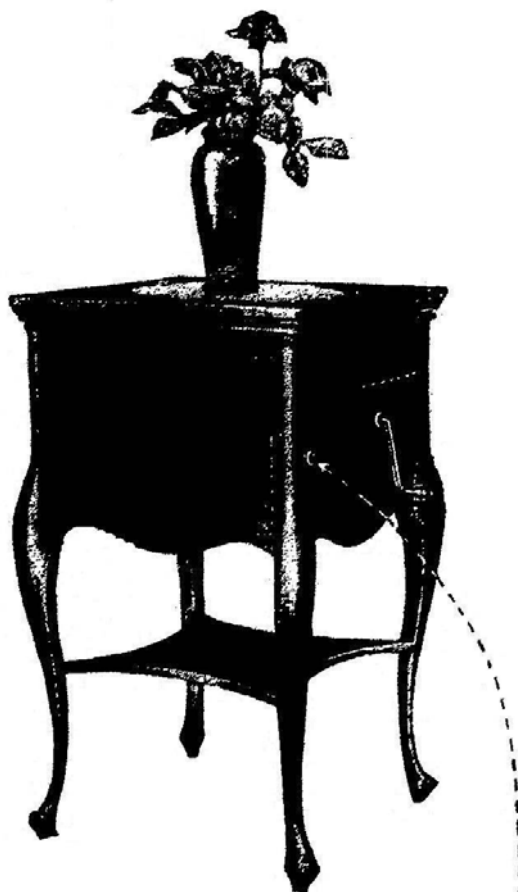
In contrast to these ads, are those for the Columbia “Princess” Grafonola. Unlike the quiet Regent models, this model (along with many others) is consistently illustrated with waves of music pouring through its “tone-shutters.” Many lines strongly reminiscent of the Guidonian music staff, complete with musical notation that strikingly resembles Columbia’s double sixteenth note trademark, are meant to depict the musical sound waves. However, the “Princess,” unlike other models including the “Regent,” is first and foremost a piece of furniture often shown with a vase of cut flowers and serving as a small table (see figure 5.11 on page 161). Although often claiming the “latest advance in instruments of sound reproduction” with its “tone-control shutters,”—a new Columbia feature that replaced the “less sightly, less convenient and less efficient hinged doors—the “Princess” model was first a “beautiful mahogany table, serviceable as such in every way.” Almost as an after thought, this model is also “always ready to provide

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<sup>70</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 30 (January 22, 1910): 48.

<sup>71</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 183, no. 18 (October 29, 1910): Rear Cover.

music of any class you desire.”<sup>72</sup> But as a table, it could be placed and utilized in any room of the house, something difficult to do with a mere musical instrument.<sup>73</sup>



With lid and tone-shutters closed—a completely concealed musical instrument, serving as a handsome small table.

The tone-shutters are opened or closed by turning this little knob.

Figure 5.11: Partial advertisement from *Saturday Evening Post* 184, no. 45 (May 4, 1912): 54-55

<sup>72</sup> *Life* 60, no. 1557 (August 29, 1912): 74.

<sup>73</sup> Examples of these advertisements are found in *Life* 59, no. 1544 (May 30, 1912): 71; and *Saturday Evening Post* 184, no. 45 (May 4, 1912): 54-55.

### Edison's Amberola

Even Edison—who trusted the American people to buy his phonographs and not those produced by his competitors due to the fact that he as the inventor thought they were the best—was forced to compete in this furniture market. The result was the Edison “Amberola.” Like much of the rhetoric concerning “perfected instrument” that already existed in a number of phonograph advertisements, Edison first and foremost continued to claim this title for his new machines.

This strategy was not unlike Victor's claims of superior tone quality for its Victrolas. However, like Columbia, Edison did not consistently point out the use of cabinet quality or wooden construction. Unlike Columbia, he was not able to tap into or develop an exclusive angle within this new enclosed phonograph market, either with a unique style (such as Columbia's low, wide grafonolas) or with unique rhetorical claims or marketing strategy. As a result, the surviving furniture promotions seem warmed over in their claims after Victor's and Columbia's advertising campaigns. In some ads, the Amberola was “a masterpiece of cabinet work.”<sup>74</sup> In others, “The Amberola A New Edison Phonograph converted into a most attractive piece of furniture, charmingly simple in design, with the horn removed from sight—built in as a part of the cabinet!”<sup>75</sup> The only unique feature of the Edison Cabinet models was the Cylinder machines—models that were designed to play the Cylinder Phonographs and Blue Amberol cylinder records.<sup>76</sup> As the flat disc continued to grow in popularity, providing more stability for the early industry, Edison's refusal to retire this format continued to work against him and his phonograph company.

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<sup>74</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 182, no. 33 (February 19, 1910): rear cover.

<sup>75</sup> *McClure's* 42, no. 2 (December 1913): 226.

<sup>76</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 186, no. 22 (November 29, 1913): 46.

### Other Music Furniture

Marketing the phonograph as a piece of furniture spurred industrial growth for other companies as well. The Regina Music Box Company created its own talking machine market due to the stylized furniture trend, just as the Duplex phonograph company discussed earlier in this chapter was created, marketed and maintained due to the consumer's desire to purchase items for credit and through the mail. The Reginaphone was first sold in 1907 as a combination music box and talking machine. Relying very much on the company's fame as a music box manufacturer, the company suggested that instead of buying two different machines for two different types of music, simply buy the Reginaphone. Consider the advertising statement below for the Reginaphone.

While the music box has always been good, the phonograph has become popular. Many people buy a Regina Music Box for one kind of music, and a talking machine for another. This is a mistake, because you can get in the Reginaphone all of the good qualities of the Regina Music Box plus all of the good qualities of the talking machines and some very special good qualities that none have. The Reginaphone is run by the Regina Music Box motor, which runs longer, more evenly and is stronger than the motors put in ordinary talking machines. Then it looks better, is a finer piece of cabinetwork, and finally, you always have the Regina Music Box, which many like better than the phonograph.<sup>77</sup>

While recognizing the popularity of the phonograph, the Regina company pushed a machine that could play both music box discs as well as phonograph recordings. Furthermore, the music box motor was superior due to its abilities to run longer, smoother and stronger than a phonograph motor. The majority of advertisements for Regina claimed that the company was "Queen of Music Makers" and that "the name 'Regina' has never been attached to an instrument which was not *first*, mechanically

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<sup>77</sup> *Life* 50, no. 1310 (December 5, 1907): 21.

perfect, *second*, a real entertainer, and *third*, a good musical instrument.”<sup>78</sup> Reminding the public of its other superior mechanical musical instruments must have also reminded consumers that the first humpback style cabinet machines were in fact music boxes. The initial Victrolas, Grafonolas and Amberolas all modeled the earlier Reginas, a fact not missed on the music box company. Due to its successful music boxes, the Regina company sought a market share in a variety of other mechanical instruments. In addition to the phonograph combo described above, the Regina company also manufactured grandfather clocks and player pianos, which could also be played as a regular piano.<sup>79</sup>

Note that all of the items offered for sale by Regina not only provided music, but were also considered a piece of furniture. The effective establishment of the phonograph as a piece of fine furniture can be measured in part by the fact that in the mid-teens, Johnson’s Wax was incorporating the image of a housewife polishing her phonograph in its advertisements and listing the phonograph alongside other sorts of “fine furniture” that benefit from their product.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, new furniture was constructed to accommodate the growing in-home recording culture and corresponding record collections beyond the cabinet and table style instruments.

Pooley record cabinets provided a cabinet designed explicitly for record storage. Serving no other purpose, Pooley cabinets usurped already limited space and their availability suggests the growing importance of record collecting and phonographs in the home. Various models were made available, each holding a different number of disc records. All of the cabinets boasted of a unique filing system that allowed the owner to

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<sup>78</sup> Examples of these claims can be found in the following advertisements, *Ladies Home Journal* 25, no. 1 (December 1907): 71; and *McClure’s* 30, no. 1 (November 1907): 93.

<sup>79</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 180, no. 21 (November 23, 1907): 24-5.

<sup>80</sup> Kruse, 12.

keep track of their recordings while at the same time protecting the records from warping and breakage. Many advertisements stated that “It is harder to misfile than to file correctly with the “Pooley.”<sup>81</sup> “Entire freedom from all trouble and annoyance in locating and filing disc talking machine records, with insurance against damaged records—these, in a nutshell, are the advantages of the “Pooley” Cabinet.”<sup>82</sup> The cabinet is often shown in advertisements with a table top Victrola style talking machine placed on top. The actual cabinet strongly resembles the hump-back style phonograph popular during this time—even more so with the addition of a machine on top (see figure 5.12 on page 166). At a price of \$25, along with an additional \$15—the cost of a cheap Victrola table-top model (see figure 5.9 on page 156)—or a total cost of \$40 was a cheaper alternative for the Victor-Victrola XVI, which cost \$200 (see figure 5.8 on page 154).

The record cabinet provided record storage in much the same way as music cabinets provided music storage. Promises to protect and file records, utilized in the Pooley ads, mimicked the same promises made for the Tindale music cabinets. “Save your music from wear and tear—and keep it so that every piece is **always** where you can find it **immediately**.”<sup>83</sup> Interestingly enough, the Tindale Cabinet Company also began selling cabinets for record storage as well. Like some Pooley cabinets, many of the Tindales also provided a place for any table top phonograph. Often advertising both cabinets together, Tindale claimed that “you don’t have to HUNT for you music or

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<sup>81</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 15 (October 12, 1912): 50.

<sup>82</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 19 (November 9, 1912): 51.

<sup>83</sup> *Musician* 17, no. 7 (July, 1912): 495. See also advertisements found in *Musician* 17, no. 11 (November, 1912): 785; and 17, no. 12 (December, 1912): 872.

Records—you simply go and GET the selection you want, if your Music and Records are kept in the efficient **TINDALE WAY**.”<sup>84</sup>

# THE POOLEY Record Cabinet

No trouble finding your favorite records—no misfiling—no scratched, warped or broken records.

The Pooley Filing System puts an end to the annoyances found in the old-fashioned methods of filing disc talking machine records. With the Pooley Cabinet, each active record has a separate compartment. By moving the slide and pressing a lever, any desired record is instantly at hand.

Pooley Cabinets are beautifully finished in mahogany, weathered oak or golden oak, and are inexpensive, ranging from **\$18 to \$60**. They fit any type of machine. Let your dealer show you the many advantages of the "Pooley."

**Complete  
Catalog  
Mailed  
on  
Request**



**\$25 Cabinet (freight extra)**  
Showing a popular talking machine.

**The Pooley Furniture Co.**  
1620-40 Indiana  
Avenue,  
Philadelphia,  
Pa.



**T**O locate any desired record, move indicator to number.



**P**RESS the lever and the desired record is projected forward.

Figure 5.12: Pooley Record Cabinet advertisement in *Saturday Evening Post* 185, no. 17 (October 26, 1912): 61

By the second decade of the twentieth century, a revolution in the phonograph industry had taken place. Dealers could not keep the Victrolas in stock in spite of the

<sup>84</sup> *Etude* 33, no. 10 (October, 1915): 751.



increasingly hefty price tags. As the phonograph became increasingly defined as a piece of furniture, the demand for more elaborate models emerged. By 1910, Columbia offered its expensive Queen Anne edition machine. Special order Victrolas, complete with mother-of-pearl inlays, were made available for \$750. A new company in 1915, Sonora introduced their “Supreme” model for \$1000. Aeolian, a piano manufacturer entered the phonograph market with its Vocalion Art model costing \$2000. This price was far above even most pianos. Even Edison advertised a Gothic model phonograph that cost \$3000. By 1917, Victor offered forty-six different models to choose from.<sup>85</sup>

The trend to increasingly view phonographs as furniture, allowing them to blend into the home environment with greater ease, is coupled with more explicit rhetoric in advertisements and articles of the leading in-home journals. The availability of higher priced phonograph models that double as furniture on the market suggest that the industry was able to create stability through the use of such rhetoric.<sup>86</sup> Although it is hard to know how many of these elaborate, higher-priced models were sold (many survive today in private collections and antique stores), the popularity of the phonograph increased as it became more than an instrument.

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<sup>85</sup> Kruse, 11.

<sup>86</sup> For example, Katz references “The Phonograph as a Decorative Element in the Home,” *Country Life* 33 (March 1918): 108-9; and Eleanor Hayden, “Phonograph as Art Furniture,” *International Studio* 78 (1923): 249-57; as evidence of the public’s demand that the industry supply them with models that looked like furniture. Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 54.

## **CHAPTER 6. “THE BEST FRIEND OF A HOSTESS IS THE VICTROLA”: EARLY TALKING MACHINES AS LABOR-SAVING DEVICES**

This chapter explores how the phonograph was marketed as a labor-saving device, filling a social and cultural need for a practical in-home music product, and supplanting vocal and piano performance in the home. The chapter analyzes the messages prevalent in advertisements from popular women’s magazines and music journals of the time, discussing their relationship between the phonograph and other labor-saving products and the gendered relationships that they implied.

### **The Need for Practical In-Home Products**

Women were the chief arbiters of every aspect of home life including finances, culture, education, entertainment and social display of the family. This included the provision of meals, a clean home and musical performances among other things.<sup>1</sup> Such social responsibilities became increasingly difficult for women to fulfill. A growing industrialized society created many new jobs that women filled. As they entered the workforce, women retained all of their responsibilities in the home. The growing prepared food and brand name soap industries (among others) recognized an opportunity to make the life of women a little easier, promising in their advertisements to eliminate time spent in the kitchen preparing food and the amount of time cleaning, while at the

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<sup>1</sup> Many articles published in the popular women’s journals utilized throughout this study reinforce these responsibilities.

same time enabling women to continue to provide culture in the home.<sup>2</sup> Women welcomed the increasing number of commercial products that promised to aid in their duties. They both needed and could afford these technological advances. One could argue that if the middle-class woman had not been so receptive to the technological innovations from this time period, the process of modernization could not have progressed as rapidly as it did.<sup>3</sup>

By 1890, modernization was having its effect on society. Once feared advances in technology were now producing practical new devices.<sup>4</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, businesses offered a growing number of commercial products to serve women's needs. New machines for sewing fabrics, washing clothes, cleaning floors and performing music all invaded the home sanctuary. In addition to cheap prices and credit purchases (items sent to the homes for a free examination period) these products and machines promised to eliminate or alleviate a certain amount of work. Cook books provided women with the resources needed to utilize new prepared foods and recreate fantastic meals.<sup>5</sup> And talking machines provided instant music. Advertisers linked packaging and product presentation to an emerging life-style which increasingly focused

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<sup>2</sup> In the 1870s, a new method of canning under steam pressure was developed. This reduced the heating time required, produced a safe product, and made possible the commercial production of canned goods. This enabled the housewife to simply buy what she previously "put up" in her own jars at home. Bunny Crumpacker, *The Old-Time Brand-Name Cookbook: Recipes, Illustrations, and Advice from the Early Kitchens of America's Most Trusted Food Makers* (Reprint. New York: Abradale Press, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 2006), xxiii.

<sup>3</sup> Patricia Branca, *Silent Sisterhood: Middle Class Women in the Victorian Home* (Pittsburgh: Carnegie-Mellon University Press, 1975), 150. The upper class did not need such advances to make their life easier.

<sup>4</sup> Jessica H. Foy, "The Home Set to Music," in *The Arts and the American Home, 1890-1930*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Karal Ann Marling (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 70.

<sup>5</sup> *The Boston Cooking School Cook Book*, by Fannie Merritt Farmer was first published in 1896. This was the first cook book that provided recipes with exactly measured ingredients, eliminating the guess work that resulted from "a dash of this," "a piece of that" or "a pad of butter." Farmer believed that any dish could be reproduced in any kitchen if cooking was viewed as a precise art. Crumpacker, xxvii.

on saving time and improving the quality of life.<sup>6</sup> The majority of advertising faces were feminine images as women became the prime targets of ads. Images of good wives and daughters were always offered a path to a better world through consumption of a particular product.<sup>7</sup> Success was found in a particular industry's ability to create a utilitarian purpose for its machines, or to elevate its product from a gadget (or novelty item) to an actual labor-saving device.<sup>8</sup>

### **Advertisements for Prepared Food and Cleaning Products**

Prepared foods, or food that women could prepare in “a minute” became increasingly popular as the culture demanded that more of the woman's time be spent away from the home each day. For example, Jell-O invaded many Victorian American Kitchens. It was invented in the 1890s and touted by the Genessee Pure Food Company of LeRoy, New York, almost from its inception as America's “most quick and easy” dessert.<sup>9</sup> Jell-O could be “prepared instantly” or “made in a minute, and no skill or experience is required.” “Simply add boiling water and set to cool.”<sup>10</sup> Recipes for every imaginable dish incorporated Jell-O.<sup>11</sup> One ad in particular was illustrated with a woman serving her husband a Jell-O mould. The caption, “I'm Not Much of a Cook, Hubby...” lies in bold letters below the picture (see figure 6.1 on page 171). As a dessert, the ad claims Jell-O is the finest. It is pure, wholesome, near perfection and “hits the spot.” As a quick food

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<sup>6</sup> Bob Batchelor, *The 1900s* (Westport, CN: Greenwood Press, 2002), 58.

<sup>7</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 154.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas J. Schlereth, *Victorian America: Transformations in Everyday Life, 1876-1915* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 1991), 164.

<sup>10</sup> Examples of these advertisements are found in *Cosmopolitan* 42, no. 6 (April 1907): n.p.; and *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 4 (March 1909): 80.

<sup>11</sup> Crumacker, xxiii.

item, Jell-O comes to the aid of the young housekeeper, not needing to be cooked, saves her time in preparation and eliminating the need of “experimenting” and saves her husband’s “digestion and good nature” by providing a quality food item. “The ‘beauty of it’ is that women who cannot cook can make as good a dessert as the best cook, for Jell-O doesn’t have to be cooked.” In the bottom right-hand corner, Elizabeth King, otherwise known as the “Jell-O Girl,” dances on a box of the product.



### “I’m Not Much of a Cook, Hubby,”

“but here’s what I did with Jell-O. Could any *cook* make anything finer than that, and won’t that hit the spot?”

Of course no cook could make anything finer. The “beauty of it” is that women who cannot cook can make as good desserts as the best cook, for

## JELL-O

doesn’t have to be cooked. The young housekeeper who *must* prepare the meals herself and uses Jell-O, is saved much experimenting at the expense of her husband’s digestion and good nature.

She is always sure of a good dessert for him anyway.

In purity and wholesomeness Jell-O is as near perfection as science and skill can make it, and nothing else so surely hits the spot in the appetite that is pleading to be hit.

There are seven Jell-O flavors: Strawberry, Raspberry, Lemon, Orange, Cherry, Peach, Chocolate.

10 cents each at any grocer’s.

**If you will write and ask us for it we will send you the splendid recipe book, “DESSERTS OF THE WORLD,” illustrated in ten colors and gold.**

**THE GENESEE PURE FOOD CO.,**

Le Roy, N. Y., and Bridgeburg, Can.



The name JELL-O is on every package in big red letters. If it isn’t there, it isn’t JELL-O.

The Guarantee on page 22 is important to every reader

Figure 6.1: Jell-O advertisement in *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 14


This culture of saving time, while still providing a superior presentation parallels the phonograph rhetoric, which promised “perfect” performances anytime the housewife wanted. No preparation was needed and perfection was had every time. Other brands utilized similar rhetoric. “‘Minute’ Gelatine” incorporates speedy preparation in its name. Instead of utilizing a young girl, “‘Minute’ Gelatine incorporates an image of a minute man statue, complete with musket in hand. It is “The Prize Dessert” and “the standard gelatine everywhere.” “It comes *measured* ready for use.”<sup>12</sup> Broman-gelon, the “original” “jelly” dessert also reinforces that “A package Bromangelon—a pint of hot water—time to congeal...” is all you need for a family dessert.<sup>13</sup>

Another advertisement, this one for Van Camp’s Pork and Beans, claimed to be the new crusaders for women by providing delicious beans superior in taste and quality over not only other brands, but also those made at home and taking many hours to prepare (see figure 6.2 on page 173). Traditionally, baking beans required an entire day of preparation. Eliminating this precondition, Van Camp’s beans were ready in one minute saving women much precious time. The result, “Every month, this army of labor-savers gathers thousands of new recruits. And the consumption of beans, since this movement began, has multiplied many times over.”

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<sup>12</sup> *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 23, no. 11 (October 1906): 62.



**The New Crusaders—  
Shorter Hours for Women**

A million housewives, in the past few years, have ceased to bake their beans.

Each of them saves—fully fifty times a year—all of those hours of sorting, boiling and baking required to prepare this dish.

The sum of that saving, multiplied by a million, mounts into eons of time. Probably this movement has already added a thousand centuries to the leisure of womankind.

And each of these housewives has delicious meals ready to serve in a minute. She is ready for any emergency.

But that isn't all. Factory-baked beans, as they are baked by Van Camp, are immeasurably better than home-baked beans. They are far more digestible; they do not ferment and form gas.

They are baked in steam ovens, heated to 245 degrees. They are baked in small parcels, so the full heat goes through.

Not half the beans in the home baking dish get half as much heat as we apply to Van Camp's. And heat alone can break up the particles so the digestive juices can act.

Then Van Camp's are baked without crisping—baked without bursting the skins. That cannot be done in dry heat.

Van Camp's come from the ovens nut-like, mealy and whole, despite the terrific heat. They are never mushy and broken, never soggy, never crisped.

The tomato sauce is baked with the beans—baked into each bean—so we get a delicious blend.

Van Camp's come to you with all the freshness and savor of beans direct from the oven.

You can serve them cold in a minute, or hot in ten minutes. You can always carry a dozen meals on hand.

And the meals consist of Nature's choicest food, prepared in the ideal way. Beans are 23 per cent nitrogenous, 84 per cent nutriment. They are richer than beef in food value, though they don't cost a third as much. They can be served in a myriad ways.

Every month, this army of labor-savers gathers thousands of new recruits. And the consumption of beans, since this movement began, has multiplied many times over.

**“The National Dish”** **Van Camp's** **“The National Dish”**  
BAKED WITH TOMATO SAUCE **PORK AND BEANS**

You can easily prove that no other ready-baked beans are nearly so good as Van Camp's. One reason lies in our process—the final result of 49 years of experience.

Another lies in materials. We pay for our dry beans four times what some beans would cost. We pick out by hand, from the choicest Michigan beans, the whitest, ripest and plumpest. And they are all of one size, so they all bake alike.

We make our tomato sauce from whole, vine-ripened tomatoes. Not from tomatoes ripened in shipment—not of scraps from a canning factory. Ordinary tomato sauce sells for one-fifth what we spend to make ours.

Van Camp's Beans command the largest sale in the world. That's because housewives in general have learned that no other brand can compare with them.

Three sizes: 10, 15 and 20 cents per can (94)

**Van Camp Packing Company** Established 1861 **Indianapolis, Ind.**

Figure 6.2: Van Camp's advertisement in Saturday Evening Post 183, no. 16 (October 15, 1910): 2

Such promises were not limited to the laborious process of baking beans at home or instant desserts. Ads for new breakfast drinks (such as instant coffee or Postum), fish flakes and even prepared desserts (such as Nabisco sugar wafers) all claimed to be “MADE IN A SECOND,”<sup>14</sup> saving time, trouble and money<sup>15</sup> while still affording

<sup>14</sup> Advertisement for Instant Postum, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 17. Advertisement for Instant Coffee, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 57.

comfort to family members and gracious hospitality to guests.<sup>16</sup> Even Gold Metal Flour promised to create an “Easy to Bake” kitchen, and “*Armour’s* ‘Simon Pure’ Leaf Lard” to create delicacies “easily, quickly and economically.”<sup>17</sup> In 1898, John T. Torrence developed condensed soup—resulting in the Joseph P. Campbell company of Camden, New Jersey—which instantly provided soup for meals.<sup>18</sup>

Many different soap and cleaning agents on the market also claimed to aid the woman in performing and completing household duties. Pearline laundry soap claimed to be “First and Best Aid to WOMEN who MUST do Washing and Cleaning.” P and G laundry soap (discussed at length in Chapter 3) stated that their soap worked so well, that it was “Not merely soap but—the laundress too.” “The minute you put the clothes to soak, it begins to work. It loosens the dirt the same as hard rubbing, but with this difference... *It* does the hard work. *You* merely help.” One Sapolio soap advertisement stated that its claim to do “the work” was “not all talk.” Utilizing a bar of soap with a talking machine horn emanating from its top, this ad proclaimed that Sapolio “cleans,” “scours” and “polishes.” O-Cedar Mop Polish was “the time and labor saver” allowing hardwood floors to be cleaned “without backbreaking stooping or bending.” O-Cedar Mop Polish “produces high, hard luster without hard rubbing.” It was “easy” to “clean and polish” silverware with Electro Silicon. “Pots and Pans Quickly and Easily Scoured and Polished” with Old Dutch Cleaner.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Two advertisements for “Burnham & Morrill Fish Flakes,” *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 24; and *Ladies Home Journal* 30, no. 2 (February 1913): 82.

<sup>16</sup> Nabisco ad, *Saturday Evening Post* 179, no. 29 (January 19, 1907): n.p.

<sup>17</sup> Gold Metal Flour ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): Inside front cover. *Armour’s* ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 9.

<sup>18</sup> Crumacker, xxiii.

<sup>19</sup> Pearline ad, *Cosmopolitan* 38, no. 6 (April 1905): n.p. P and G soap ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 23. Sapolio soap ad, *Cosmopolitan* 44, no. 6 (May, 1908): n.p.; O-Cedar Mop Polish ad,



### Advertisements for Machines and Furniture

Advertisements for items such as kitchen cook stoves, washing and sewing machines, new styled furniture and the phonograph reveal more than casual connections between machines and new musical devices. Ads so proliferated that they were lampooned by cartoonists. Consider for example the 1907 depiction of the “Pianola-Stove” pictured in figure 6.3 below on page 176. The ability to cook and make music on the same device is a humorous comment on the needs of the harried home maker. The constant pursuit of high culture and social standing in the home required assistance. Households with available disposable income could hire someone to do the daily chores, such as cooking, sewing or laundry. The majority of families who also desired culture, but could not afford to pay for help, sought other means. This cartoon speaks to the need for new in-home devices, in this case a music machine that could help women solve the so-called SERVANT PROBLEM, or desire for help in the home. Furthermore, this depiction suggests to the reader other music machines, such as the Pianola piano playing device and the Victrola, Grafonola and Amberola talking machines.

Many new actual devices and furniture were also offered. “A Trouble-Saving Stove” offered “NEW PERFECTION” in cooking. Designed only for preparing food and not heating, “A Trouble-Saving Stove” relieved the kitchen of excess heat and inconvenience, replacing it with “a comfortable and handy room for housework.” Hoosier Cabinets “Save Miles of Steps for Her Tired Feet” by placing all kitchen utensils together in a convenient cabinet. “Wear-Ever’ Aluminum Utensils” “brighten your kitchen and lighten your labor.” National Carpet Sweepers offered “a present for years of

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*Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 44. Electro Silicon ad, *Cosmopolitan* 41, no. 6 (October 1906): n.p. Old Dutch Cleanser ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 11.

lighter daily housework, because it runs so easily,” while Duntley Pneumatic Cleaners promised efficiency, ease and quickness. 35,000 women have tried this machine and have been convinced. The Hurley Washer machine reduced not only the amount of time needed to wash clothes, but also the cost.<sup>20</sup>



Figure 6.3: Cartoon in *Musical America* 7, no. 7 (December 28, 1907): 23

Washing machines were commonly referenced along with sewing machines as dramatic labor-saving machines.<sup>21</sup> Consider the advertisement in figure 6.4 on page 177—also discussed earlier in chapter 4—from the *Saturday Evening Post*. Clearly headlined is “Wash-Day Troubles Ended by a ‘Self-Working’ Washer.” Two different illustrations depict life before and after the “Self-Working” Washer entered the home.

<sup>20</sup> Trouble Saving Stove ad, *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 7 (June 1909): 49. Hoosier Cabinet ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 37. Wear-Ever Utensil ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 20-1. National Sweeper ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 28. Duntley Pneumatic Cleaner ad, *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 65. Hurley Washer Machine ad, *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 10 (September 1909): 78.

<sup>21</sup> The washing machine is directly called a “labor saver” in the article, “How Other Folks Live When \$1500 a Year is More Than Enough: The Actual Experiences of Four Families.” *Ladies Home Journal* 29, no. 9 (1912): 18.

“The ‘1900 Self Working Washer’ does all the drudgery.” More than that, “You don’t have to tend this washer. It doesn’t need anything but mere watching. It works itself. No rubbing—no drudgery—no work for you.”

Wash=Day Troubles <sup>Ended</sup> by a “Self-Working” Washer



Send no Money.  
Use It a Month  
**FREE**  
We Pay the Freight



Anything familiar about this picture? Pleasant sight — isn't it? Cook going on "short notice"—housemaid refusing to stay "another minute," or, perhaps it's "the wash-lady," getting out in a hurry and leaving part of the clothes in the tub and the rest on the floor.

Do you find it hard to keep good servants because of the troubles of wash-day?

Do you have to put your washing out, or have a washwoman in, because your girl will not do such work?

Do you have to keep a girl for no other reason than that you are not strong enough to do your own washings?

Do you depend on laundries?

If so, glance at the picture on the right, where the turning of a water faucet is the hardest work connected with the week's washing.

The "1900 Self-Working Washer" does all the drudgery.

Water pressure, or an ordinary electric light current (alternating or direct), will work this washer and do a big week's washing at a cost of 2 to 4 cents for the work.

All that is necessary to start the work is to turn a water faucet or an electric light key. Then you do nothing more.

And, as soon as a tubful of clothes is washed, a twist of your fingers switches power to the wringer to wring the clothes out.

You don't have to tend this washer. It doesn't need anything but mere watching. It works itself.

**No rubbing—no drudgery—no work for you.** Only a twist of your fingers to start or stop the washer, or switch the power to the wringer.

All the rest is done by the water, or the electricity and the "Self-Working Washer."

And the "Self-Working Washer" saves its cost over, and over, and over again in washwomen's wages, lowered laundry bills and lessened wear and tear on all your washables.

The "Self-Working Washer" is an great an innovation to washing as automobiles are to locomotion—making mechanical power do the work human or animal force had to do before.

For the "1900 Self-Working Washer" will wash the finest lincos, lawns and laces and get them spotlessly clean, without breaking a thread.

There is nothing about this washer that can wear out your clothes, nor tear them; no seams nor fray edges; pull off buttons nor loose them.

And the "1900 Self-Working Washer" will wash bed blankets, comfortable, carpets, rugs, and get them as clean as clean can be.

**To prove this, use a "1900 Self-Working Washer" one full month FREE.**

We will send one to any responsible party and prepay all freight. Send us no money.

You can use it for four weeks' washings, and then, if you don't find it all we claim—if you don't see how it will save its own cost—save wear and tear on all your house linen and washable clothes—save time and trouble and servant worries—just return the washer at my expense and the matter will be closed.

**The trial costs you not a penny.**

We make this offer because we know the "1900 Self-Working Washer" will do all we say—and save all we say. And, if you keep the washer, you can, if you wish, pay for it out of what it saves for you. Pay us by the week or by the month (out yourself) until the washer is paid for. Write for our catalog today. Your request will bring you our illustrated washer book by return mail. Let a "1900 Self-Working Washer" solve your Wash-Day Troubles—keep your servants contented—save your laundry bills—and save your clothes. Address, 1900 Washer Company, 304 Henry St., Binghamton, N. Y. Or if you live in Canada, write my Canadian Branch, 377 Yonge St., Toronto, Ontario.

Figure 6.4: Advertisement in Saturday Evening Post 179, no. 39 (March 30, 1907): 33

One of the first important examples of technological advances that were brought into the home was the sewing machine, marketed primarily as a labor-saving device for women. Middle-class women eagerly sought out this invention in order to make their lives easier. Advertisements for the sewing machine promised to accomplish the task of sewing in the home in less time than the traditional and long valued method of hand-sewing. This machine was “A Health Preserver. A Time and Labor Saver. An Economical Friend.” Images of women using or displaying a particular model adorn the majority of these advertisements. The ad campaigns also displayed direct connections between sewing and music.

When the electric motor machine was released, it was promoted as “the best gift to every woman who sews,” as well as “the greatest invention for the women’s benefit since that of the sewing machine itself—an invention that means **more** in the saving of time and strength—the protection of health.”<sup>22</sup> Many sewing primers, designed for use in homes and schools, often included popular melodies with new texts that encouraged sewing in the home. These songs—new texts set to popular tunes—were “designed to awaken enthusiasm in what may sometimes seem to the child a prosaic subject; at the same time they embody rules and suggestions which will be of use in later life.”<sup>23</sup> Some of these song titles include, “The Patchwork Quilt,” “Stitching with thread and needle,” “The Stitches in Time,” “Sing and Sew” and “The Little Home Seamstress.”<sup>24</sup> As early as February of 1880, a new American periodical appeared titled, *Musical and Sewing Machine Gazette: Devoted to the Piano, Organ and Sewing Machine Trades* (this was just one of several forerunners to the *Musical Courier*, which first appeared in 1883).

This machine was invented exclusively for women to use. Recollections of Robert Vance Stewart regarding the house he grew up in during the 1910s and 1920s include items found in the kitchen. A room completely dedicated to the activities of women included not one, but two sewing machines.<sup>25</sup> Ironically, the only association with a man found in regards to the sewing machine was Santa Claus, depicted in advertisements published close to Christmas time (see figure 6.5 on page 180). Still a gift meant exclusively for women, in fact, “[f]or any Woman who sews, the ideal gift is a

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<sup>22</sup> Examples of advertisements of this type are found in *Good Housekeeping*, 55, no. 6 (December 1912): 76; and *Ladies Home Journal* 27, no. 1 (December 1909): 24.

<sup>23</sup> Louise J. Kirkwood, arr., *Illustrated Sewing Primer with Songs and Music* (New York: American Book Company, 1881), 5.

<sup>24</sup> Kirkwood, 28; 37; 50; 56; and 57 respectively.

<sup>25</sup> Katherine C. Grier, *Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1998), 220.

sewing machine.” Instead of a woman pictured with the machine, Santa Claus is shown lifting this ideal gift. The Standard Rotary machine promises “**years of pleasure and superior work**” for the woman and “Perfect Satisfaction In Giving” for the one who chooses to make it a gift. Interestingly enough, the advertisement includes an explanation of the superior qualities of the Standard, information that would mean nothing to a man with no knowledge of the sewing machine. Also, the advertisement appears in *Ladies Home Journal*, a magazine with primarily women readership. So this ad is still meant to entice a female audience.

In spite of such positive rhetoric employed to sell the sewing machine, there were negative reactions as some lamented this device would destroy the long valued skill of hand sewing. It is interesting that similar complaints were made regarding the talking machine as some professional musicians lamented that “canned music” was replacing the sung lullaby, and thus destroying motherhood. Sousa also predicted the end of the active pursuit of music in this country because the phonograph was a cheap distraction from “high cultured” music.<sup>26</sup> But nevertheless, middle-class women were very attracted to the sewing machine (and later the phonograph) as they increasingly recognized its ability to simplify their life.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 57.

<sup>27</sup> Branca, 150.



Figure 6.5: Advertisement for Standard Rotary in Ladies Home Journal 23, no. 12 (November 1906):

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Some early phonograph companies attached advertisements for various talking machines on to packages of sewing machine needles.<sup>28</sup> Even the physical design of the earliest phonograph models resembled the sewing machine. Both were placed on a desk or table and operated with a treadle.<sup>29</sup> Although other technology for the phonograph

<sup>28</sup> Reproduced in Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, *Phonographica: The Early History of Recorded Sound Observed* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2004), 60.

<sup>29</sup> Parlor organs were also operated with a treadle device. Phonographs and sewing machines used a mono pedal where the organ used a bi pedal; however, an additional relationship can still be drawn between a musical instrument and a musical machine. I wish to thank Michael Broyles and Deane Root for revealing this connection to me.

quickly became available, including battery operated models and hand cranked models, the treadle version appealed to women by providing instantly recognizable operating procedures for an otherwise brand new and unfamiliar technological device.

### **Advertisements for Talking Machines**

With increasing expectations placed on women, the phonograph industry also saw opportunities in marketing their machines as a labor-saving device in addition to the many other claims made for talking machines. Like the many items now available to aid in housekeeping, the phonograph could offer women more time to complete other responsibilities and participate in leisure activities with the rest of the family. As such, the phonograph found another avenue into the homes and hearts of the American people. As a utilitarian device—in addition to a perfect instrument and fine piece of furniture—the phonograph was able to escape the novelty item label and take on crucial labor-saving roles in the home.

One article published in the journal *Musician* in 1913, acknowledges the talking machine along with the player piano as “boons to the folks at home,” due to their ability to relieve some of the performing pressures placed on women.

If the daughter of the house studied piano-playing [and] she was not as ready to make music for father as she should have been, [n]ow he can do his own playing. The effect may be a little crude, but he does the best he can, and he may learn to do better, and he learns the music. Perhaps another daughter was not ready to sing for father when she was asked. He can now insert a record and hear what he wants, an artist of the first rank or a favorite vaudeville singer.<sup>30</sup>

Another ad stressing the talking machine’s ability to entertain—this one for the Decca Company—states,

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<sup>30</sup> “Music in the Home,” *Musician* 18, no. 5 (1913): 312.

[The Decca's] activities have not been confined to the home to which it belongs – and would you mind bringing your Decca with you,' ...is a request that has often accompanied the invitation to a small dance...the Decca takes the place of the piano, for very often the piano is not in the room where the dance is to take place, or it may be that there is not a pianist available.<sup>31</sup>

As the primary providers of music at home, women became increasingly aware of their inability to enjoy music in the absence of a phonograph. Eliminating the need of a pianist freed all members of the household to participate in recreational activities together.

Many advertisements for the Edison Phonograph company claim to alleviate all the trials and worries of women at the day's end. "After a day's work is done, after the children are put to bed—what then for an hour of brightness and cheer to put out of mind the little trials and worries of the day?"<sup>32</sup>

The concept of labor saver was not first applied to the in-home version of the phonograph. Edison invented his machine to be a labor-saving device for business men, specifically for himself. "He [Edison] had been about the country a good deal, learning something every-where, reading a good deal, inventing one thing or another, sometimes a scheme in telegraphy, sometimes a labor-saving machine"<sup>33</sup> But as we saw in Chapter 2, its application as a business machine was misplaced. Individuals could not accept a machine that recorded their own voices as a form of entertainment, or a significant labor-saver for the business world. But women quickly realized the wealth of relief they could experience with the aid of pre-recorded music in the home.

Phonograph advertisements increasingly focused on women as the primary consumer who made all purchases for the home. Edison in particular realized this truth

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<sup>31</sup> A 1914 British advertisement quoted in Holly Kruse, "Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space," *Stanford Humanities Review* 3, Autumn (1993), 6.

<sup>32</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 4 (March 1909): 24.

<sup>33</sup> Rev. E.E. Hale, ed., *Light of Two Centuries* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1887), 590.



and in a number of his phonograph ads, he offered a book free to every woman, which addressed the moral imperative of providing music for the household.

If you have a home full of lively youngsters with their friends, some grown-up children, and a husband, for whose amusement and entertainment in the home you feel a certain responsibility, then we have a book intended for you particularly. This book tells what the Edison Phonograph is, what it does, how little it costs, and suggests ways in which the Phonograph adds to the pleasure of every one within your home.

This book is copiously illustrated by leading artists. It will be sent free, on request, to the mistress of every home, or any other reader of THE LADIES' HOME JOURNAL.<sup>34</sup>

Another point made by phonograph advertisements is the ability of these machines to keep men at home in the evening.

Keep 'him' at home. Make the home a formidable competitor of the club, the office, the theatre,--all places men like because there is something going on. The **Edison Improved Phonograph** will give "him" his kind of music.<sup>35</sup>

Again, the language clearly addresses women and promises to solve one of their problems, how to keep the husband at home in the evening. To do so was the desire and responsibility of every housewife, a difficult social demand since most women lacked the skill required to compete with the greatest singers. One such advertisement (figure 6.6 on page 184) shows a silhouette of a man dressed in evening clothes, literally tied to his home.

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<sup>34</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 27, no. 3 (February 1910): 24.

<sup>35</sup> *Ladies Home Journal* 23, no. 11 (October 1906): 62.



**W**HEN a man leaves home in the evening it is because he seeks amusement. The best way to keep him home is to give him the amusement there. Make home a competitor of downtown, the club, the café, the theatre and the concert hall. No one thing will furnish so much amusement for so many people, so many times, and in so many ways as the Edison Phonograph.

Talk about versatility! If you had a brass band on tap and several leading concert hall singers on salary, and two or three funny men to crack jokes, and a beautiful soprano to sing ballads, you could not give the same amount of varied entertainment that the Edison Phonograph gives by simply changing records.

You can hear the whole program at some nearby store in your town.

We will be glad to send free to any one who asks an interesting illustrated book showing the great variety of entertainment to be had with the Edison Phonograph.

**National Phonograph Company**  
11 Lakeside Ave., Orange, N. J.

Figure 6.6: Edison advertisement from Saturday Evening Post 179, no. 30 (January 26, 1907): 24

Even with the phonograph's ability to provide entertainment for everyone, middle class ideology continued to view music as an essential socializing and moralizing force, and women continued to bear the domestic role of providing it in the home. As such, the phonograph promised to be an even greater aid to the hostess when it came to matters of entertaining guests (see figure 6.7 on page 186). Even as the phonograph became increasingly common in American households, it remained a spectacle for an assembled

company.<sup>36</sup> Frequently used by the Victor Talking Machine Company, this advertisement states that ‘The best friend of a hostess is the Victrola.’ The ad is adorned with a large illustration of many people in black tie and formal evening attire. They are gathered together in a large, luxuriously decorated parlor. The Victrola is in the center of the room. The large entryway, adorned with a double panel curtain, is filled with famous opera stars dressed in opera costume, who recorded exclusively for the Victor Company. The many people dressed for a concert sit around the outside of the room.

The rhetoric of the advertisement promises that “the hostess who has a Victrola never need worry about how the evening will go.” With the aid of this instrument, there would be no awkward moments amongst the guests and no tiring “general conversation.” Furthermore, no preparation for the evening’s entertainment would be required by the women of the house. No piano practice, no vocal singing and no worry about how well the entertainment would be perceived. Yet even without careful planning, the home of the hostess would be filled with the sounds of the greatest opera singers. According to the ad, all of this was possible simply by owning a Victrola.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Robert Lewis, “Domestic Theater: Parlor Entertainment As Spectacle, 1840-1880,” in *Ceremonies and Spectacles: Performing American Culture*, edited by Teresa Alves, Teresa Cid and Heinz Ickstadt (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 2000), 55.

<sup>37</sup> This same advertisement can also be found in *Collier's* 4 (October 1913).



**The best friend of a hostess is the Victrola**

The hostess who has a Victrola never need worry about how the evening will "go".  
 Is there an awkward moment after the guests leave the dinner table? A Victrola will "break the ice".  
 Do the young people get tired of general conversation? A Victrola will furnish the latest dance music and set their feet to sliding.  
 Does someone mention a melody from the latest opera? Let us try it on the Victrola.  
 Always there is the Victrola—the treasure house of entertainment in reserve—never obtrusive but always ready.  
 Is your home like this? It might be—so easily.  
 There are Victors and Victrolas in great variety of styles from \$10 to \$500, and any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly demonstrate them to you.

**Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.**  
Herlihy Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors



Figure 6.7: Victrola advertisement found in *Life* 62, no. 1610 (September 4, 1913): 412

A four-page article titled "The Wonder of it," published in the advertisement section of *Cosmopolitan* in 1906, attempts to explain how the talking machine could be both a "wonder" and at the same time a "common thing." Part of its explanation compares the talking machine to the piano. Although the piano is a wonderful thing, it is

left “leagues in the rear” when compared to the voices on the Victor recordings. In spite of the wonder, it is simple and more like life than “any piece of mechanism ever invented.” The talking machine serves the in-home interests of the woman by being a simple, yet wonderful instrument, better than the piano and perfected without the time and labor-intensive practice required for singing or playing the piano.

A piano is a great piece of mechanism, a noble instrument of music, but the wonder attaching to the simple little Victor Talking Machine and record leaves the piano leagues in the rear when it comes to human, artistic and mechanical interest. It baffles the reason of the most learned and yet it is as simple as A, B, C. It is more like life than any piece of mechanism ever invented.<sup>38</sup>

Before World War I, women retained the traditional responsibilities in the home even as they took on additional responsibilities that created for them a more stressful reality.<sup>39</sup> No doubt seen as an aid and labor-saving device by women, the phonograph was able to bring technology into the home by providing instant music for the household without the practice and expense needed for the piano.<sup>40</sup> It granted women additional time to spend completing other required tasks around the home as well as additional time to spend enjoying quality musical entertainment in the form of prerecorded discs along with the rest of the family. Greatly alleviating the amount of everyday stress for women, the phonograph was increasingly able to assume an indispensable role in the home, creating a firmly ensconced place in the daily life of the majority of Americans. These factors led the mechanical reproduction of previously recorded music to become an essential part of the American middle-class home.

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<sup>38</sup> “The Wonder of It,” *Cosmopolitan* 41, no. 6 (October 1906): n.p.

<sup>39</sup> Branca, 144.

<sup>40</sup> Foy, “Home Set to Music,” 63.

## **CHAPTER 7. POPULAR MUSIC THAT IS ALSO GOOD FOR YOU: OPERA ARIAS ARE A SUCCESSFUL RECORDED GENRE**

### **Introduction**

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first focuses on how opera was both a popular and “classical” genre of music, and how the early industry capitalized on this often ambiguous dual role. The second section discusses both the importance of the recording star in selling records to American consumers, and the importance of the prima donna in teaching American women music.

Looking at common belief systems surrounding the term “democracy,” popular performance traditions and collections of popular songs from the turn of the twentieth century, the first section describes the “democratic” role of opera in the United States: how and why it was viewed as popular music and, at the same time, music that was morally and culturally good. Even before the advent of sound recordings, opera arias were programmed as part of popular recital performances in the United States. Although some entrepreneurs and music critics at the turn of the twentieth century assigned a newer, elite status to the performance of complete operas, the majority of Americans continued to view opera excerpts as part of a popular song tradition that provided not only quality entertainment, but also an education that was morally and socially uplifting. According to Victorian-American ideology, opera was a “democratizing force,” which

proved that social mobility was possible and everyone who learned to appreciate culture could attain an elevated social standing for themselves and their families.

The second section describes the ability of early phonograph companies to capitalize on these commonly held beliefs, using the names and images of individual singers, particularly those of famous women, to sell opera records. Recording companies relied on the importance of Prima Donnas—the female solo singers on stage—presenting them in their advertising campaigns as both performers and teachers. Discs were marketed as providing the greatest opera singers, who sang the greatest compositions and always performed on command for anyone who bought the new recordings. Furthermore, these famous stars also “taught” listeners how to render the most brilliant passages of grand opera accurately by providing repeatable lessons for a fraction of the cost required to study in an actual voice studio.

For those individuals who could not sing and had no intention of learning, the budding industry also redefined the meaning of musicianship to include individuals who were simply able to appreciate quality music and talk intelligently about it. This led early recording companies to publish a number of books intended to foster the appreciation of music with the aid of pre-recorded discs in the formal classroom as well as the home. Through these marketing strategies, talking machine companies claimed to make opera even more accessible to Americans. With their new opera aria recordings, culture became instantly available and a permanent addition to the in-home musical life of American families.

## Opera: Democratic Music

### Democratic Ideology Described

By the second half of the nineteenth century, most Americans embraced a democratic ideology, believing that individual economic progress was possible and that accumulating wealth aided in upward social mobility.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, artistic appreciation was associated with gentility and could be taught to anyone, making individuals more fully human by engaging them in civilization in a deeper way.<sup>2</sup> Many etiquette books, popular education and women's magazines of the day promulgated these beliefs. Although simplified, idealized and even somewhat misunderstood, the myths surrounding Victorian Democracy harken back to the earliest political discussions of the country. Particularly, they are linked to the concept of compassionate liberty, which was a spirit of enterprise and belief that individuals had the right to amass wealth and power for themselves. This entrepreneurial approach was ideally tempered by Thomas Jefferson's concept of "moral freedom," which promotes a greater love for one's neighbor and country over the desire to create and preserve personal wealth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Katherine C. Grier, *Culture & Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850-1930* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1988), 99.

<sup>2</sup> Katherine C. Grier, "Decline of the Memory Palace: The Parlor after 1890," in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 57.

<sup>3</sup> Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Steven M. Tipton. Eds., *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 29-31. Jefferson's "moral freedom" was diametrically opposed to John Winthrop's "natural liberty," which was a freedom to do whatever one wanted. Although supposedly tempered by Christian charity, such a belief did not confront individuals devoid of the six principles laid out in Winthrop's famous sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity." These six principles are the community delighting in each other, making the conditions of others our own, rejoicing together, mourning together, laboring and suffering together and always viewing individuals as members of the same body. Jefferson responded with his "moral freedom" concept, first set forth by Aristotle, later reworked by his student Plato in *The Republic* and by Tertullian, the early Christian thinker. These philosophers removed social responsibility of the individual from service to God, and suggested instead a duty to the state. In recent times, such a view was apparent in the famous quote by President John F. Kennedy, "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country."



This thinking led Jefferson to conclude that the farmer (landowner) should be the primary candidate for political office, who would represent the people for only a short time before returning to his agrarian life. Later thinkers such as Walt Whitman found the limited application of Jefferson's farmer politician problematic. Expanding it, Whitman promoted the notion that true freedom was freedom to express oneself verbally and artistically. He therefore made political life more broadly available to all individuals—not just land owners—but also writers, philosophers, poets and preachers.<sup>4</sup>

Such democratic beliefs led to the use of the term “middle class,” which emerged during the last decades of the nineteenth century. Although earlier expressions, such as “middling interest,” “middling rank” and “middling condition” all existed prior to the use of the term middle class, this new phrase was meant to describe the majority of Americans as a group without equilibrium, but on the rise, always aspiring to new levels of affluence and progress. It was believed that this process of escalation would eventually include everyone at the top social levels of society.<sup>5</sup>

It is from these concepts that the rather generic democratic ideology of the second half of the nineteenth century evolved, becoming an American ideal that suggested all members of society should have equal access to the highest forms of economic progress and human culture.<sup>6</sup> At the turn of the twentieth century, advertisements for many products promised to aid individuals in accomplishing these democratic goals for themselves and their families. The early talking machine advertisements were no

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<sup>4</sup> Bellah, 34.

<sup>5</sup> Bellah, 119.

<sup>6</sup> Mark Katz, “Making America More Musical Through the Phonograph, 1900-1930,” *American Music* 16, no. 4 (1998), 449.

exception to this rule and recording companies sought to create and maintain a connection between the use of their product and the furtherance of democratic freedoms.

Consider the advertising strategy in the Budweiser beer advertisement in figure 7.1 on page 193. The statue of liberty is pictured in conjunction with a bottle of Budweiser. Having nothing to do with beer or its consumption, the headline states “Of All Human Blessings Personal Liberty Is Prized the Highest.” The connection between beer and personal liberty was found between Americans who “established the fame of BUDWEISER” and also upheld democratic ideals primarily through their ingredient choices. The “quality, purity, mildness and exclusive Saazer Hop Flavor” contribute to the superiority of this beer allowing it to stand “above all other bottled beers as the Statue of Liberty towers above the sky line of New York harbor.” In much the same way as the Statue of Liberty (the largest statue in the world according to the ad) is a symbol of liberty, Budweiser is also meant to represent and be a product of this liberty: anyone in American can create something of quality; furthermore, anyone can partake of this liberty by purchasing and consuming Budweiser beer.

Like this consumable product, music was part of a growing culture that was broadly accessible, promoting the “common man” and therefore being pro-American. The idea that opera arias appealed to the public during the second half of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century did not lesson their stature or supposed artistic quality by those Americans who chose to consume this genre. Opera was understood as music that was good for you and at the same time popular, which is precisely what made it so democratic for Victorian American advertising. Opera performances provided a

pleasant, enjoyable and lightweight diversion.<sup>7</sup> Yet opera appreciation was something to aspire to, proving that anyone with the right education could be taught to appreciate culture, and thus move into the upper levels of society.

Of All Human Blessings  
**Personal Liberty Is Prized  
 the Highest**

**EVERY AMERICAN** would sacrifice his fortune and his life to perpetuate the freedom guaranteed by the Constitution of the United States. Americans holding such ideals have built the name and established the fame of **BUDWEISER**. For 57 years its quality, purity, mildness and exclusive Saazer Hop Flavor have stood above all other bottled beers as the Statue of Liberty towers above the sky line of New York harbor. Its sales exceed any other beer by millions of bottles.

**ANHEUSER - BUSCH**  
 ST. LOUIS

Distributors in all  
 principal cities

**Budweiser**  
 First—Everywhere

STATUE OF LIBERTY  
 This statue, the largest in the world, represents the Goddess of Liberty holding aloft a torch with which she enlightens the world. It was designed by Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi and was presented to the United States by the people of France.

Bottled with Crowns only at the home plant in St. Louis

Figure 7.1: Budweiser advertisement from Life 62, no. 1622 (November 27, 1913): 929

Opera's dual ability to offer a moral education and quality entertainment parallels the ambiguity that surrounded the art music distinction. Michael Broyles describes this

<sup>7</sup> Preston, 75-6, 305-7.

idea—new in the second half of the nineteenth century in the United States—in his article, “Art Music from 1860 to 1920.”<sup>8</sup> Art music was fundamentally different from “other” music. It was more than entertainment, providing inspiration while elevating the listener. It appealed to the ethical side of humanity. It was considered sacred, even if it was secular, instrumental or abstract. It was intangible, but most of all, “It was moral, it was good, it was good for you. Such music was called art music.”<sup>9</sup> Broyles points out that the distinctions between art music and other music were not always clear, and in practice often broader than the characteristics described above. Even music that was more popular, like opera, or took a middle ground (i.e. piano arrangement), could still emulate high art in some limited ways.<sup>10</sup>

Some contemporaries tried to surround opera with an elite status, suggesting that this type of staged music was only understandable and enjoyable by a select few. Particularly in New York, high ticket prices attached to certain venues served as a means of limiting the type of audience.<sup>11</sup> But “anti-elitism” also quickly and clearly asserted itself in this country, and a larger audience of “common people” established control over the select few. Many immigrants had brought their love of opera with them to this country. Others desperately sought to understand opera in order to create a national appreciation of culture similar to that of Europeans. But regardless of how genuine the people’s love of opera was, they did appreciate the social mobility attached to it.

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Broyles, “Art Music from 1860 to 1920,” in *The Cambridge History of American Music*, edited by David Nicholls (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 214-254.

<sup>9</sup> Broyles, “Art Music,” 214.

<sup>10</sup> Broyles, “Art Music,” 215. See also W.K. McNeil, introduction to *Heart Songs Dear to the American People and by them Contributed in the Search for Treasured Songs Initiated by the National Magazine*, compiled by Joe Mitchell Chapple (1909; reprint, with an introduction by W.K. McNeil, Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Company, Inc., 1997), [ii-iii].

<sup>11</sup> Preston, 110-1.

Anti-elitism in relation to opera can be traced back to its English counterpart in the eighteenth century. Noted authors and scholars Joseph Addison, Richard Steele and Jonathan Swift all mocked opera audiences, claiming that the music's frivolity destroyed the words of the story. Although this cynical concept is meant to bring opera down to a lower, more common level, opera became part of domestic music making in the United States as early as the eighteenth century and was pursued as a sign of genteel aspiration.<sup>12</sup> As in Europe, opera was used not only by the elite, but also by Victorian Americans as popular entertainment.

In the United States, this anti-elitism was a belief that rich opera goers were uneducated, selfish and rude, and in short, not real music lovers. Such sentiment overwhelmed the rhetoric found in the "Potiphar Papers" (1853), an early social commentary on those from the "upper class" who frequently attended staged opera.<sup>13</sup> Later cartoons published in popular magazines and newspapers also provide negative commentary on the rich opera patron. Consider the cartoon titled "Rules of Etiquette for the Opera," published in *Musical America* in 1908 (figure 7.2 on page 196). The appeal of this cartoon is the cynical perspective representing the individuals who occupy the expensive seats at the opera. There are six illustrations; the first five offer sardonic "rules" to be followed while attending the opera as a member of the elite crowd.

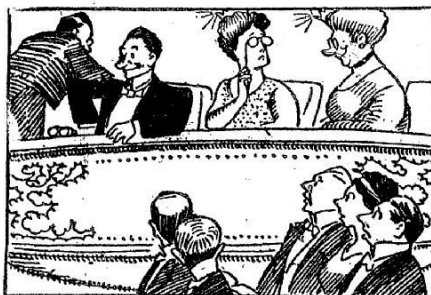
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<sup>12</sup> Karen Ahlquist, "Mrs. Potiphar at the Opera: Satire, Idealism, and Culture Authority in Post-Civil War New York," in *Music and Culture in America, 1861-1918*, edited by Michael Saffle (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1998), 31-2. For more on life in the Victorian music halls of London, and the "anti-music hall" backlash, see Tracy C. Davis, "The Moral Sense of the Majorities: Indecency and Vigilance in Late-Victorian Music Halls," *Popular Music* 10, no. 1 (1991): 39-52.

<sup>13</sup> Ahlquist, "Mrs. Potiphar," 40.

## Rules of Etiquette for the Opera

(From the Chicago Tribune)



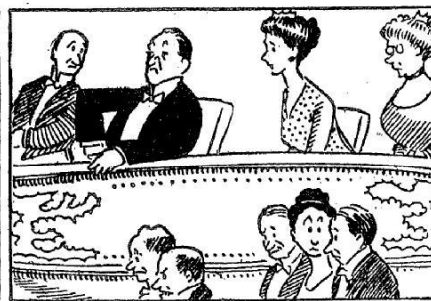
Arrive late and take your seat ostentatiously. Calmly survey the house and remark in a ringing voice that there seems to be a very ordinary lot of people present. You will thus impress people with a sense of your importance.



Keep up a running fire of comment during the solos, passing blithely from topic to topic until you have exhausted them. If the *hoi polloi* glares at you, merely smile pityingly at them, for they know no better.



If you see friends in another part of the house, wave your arms gracefully in token of recognition and tell the dress-circle how well you think "Gladys" is looking. It will please the audience if you thus take them into your confidence.



Yawn ostentatiously once in a while in order that the common people may infer that you have attended grand opera so often that it has become a bore. Tell those around you how much better the opera was done at the Grand Opéra in Paris. You will thus get a reputation as a savant.



Tell a few sprightly anecdotes about prominent singers who have met you, and confide in those within fifty feet of your seat that Caruso doesn't seem to be in as good form as he was formerly.



By following these simple instructions you will be enabled to create a pleasant diversion for those on the stage and break up the tedium of those who came to hear the music.

Figure 7.2: Cartoon in *Musical America* 9, no. 4 (December 5, 1908): 19

The first rule is to make all aware of your presence by arriving late, taking your seat “ostentatiously,” and remarking “in a ringing voice that there seems to be a very ordinary lot of people present.” The result is to impress others with your importance. Secondly, talk during all the solos. “If the *hoi polloi* glares at you, merely smile pityingly at them, for they know no better.” Thirdly, wave your arms in recognition of friends in another part of the house. Then comment to the “dress circle how well you think ‘Gladys’ is looking.” Next, yawn in order to give the impression to “the common people” that you have attended “grand opera so often it has become a bore.” In conjunction with this rule, tell others around you how much better the production was in Paris. “You will thus get a reputation as a savant.” Finally, “Tell a few sprightly anecdotes about prominent singers who have met you, and confide in those within fifty feet of your seat that Caruso doesn’t seem to be in as good form as he was formerly.” The final illustration, in contrast to the first five, is from the perspective of those on stage. The result of following these rules is to provide a diversion from the opera for those on stage and “break up the tedium of those who came to hear the music.”

Audible discussions during opera performances must have been frequent. Other satirical commentary is found in the same magazine not only in the form of cartoons, but also as jokes. Consider the following from *Musical America*’s “It is to Laugh” column.

She—“Do you think my voice will ever be suitable for opera?”  
He—“Stage or Boxes?”<sup>14</sup>

### **Opera Arias Are Popular Music**

Not everyone appreciated opera or opera excerpts as good music, or anything other than a popular genre. In one article published in 1906 in *Musical America*, Father

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<sup>14</sup> *Musical America* 5, no. 17 (March 9, 1907): 23.

Smith declared that all opera was a fad just like bicycles and automobiles.<sup>15</sup> Although representing a minority view, Smith was most likely sympathetic to the growing number of musicians who took issue with the idea that opera—instead of instrumental music—was the “highest expression of music.”<sup>16</sup>

As a popular art form firmly ensconced in American musical life, opera could not be controlled by the elite. Non-elite were needed to provide for the high costs of production, for opera to succeed financially. The Metropolitan Opera of New York was successful only after cheap seats were offered to the “common” folk. This allowed opera to be accessible to the majority of Americans, rendering it democratic and hence American.<sup>17</sup> Many wanted opera performed in English, creating a demand for both new Italian operas with libretti in both languages, and older operas performed in English translations.<sup>18</sup> The new operas became increasingly violent. It was said, not entirely facetiously, that the opera company’s treasury increased its wealth in accordance with the number of deaths clearly depicted on the stage (not simply alluded to). At the center of the repertoire was Verdi, specifically his operas *Rigoletto*, *Il trovatore* and *La traviata*.<sup>19</sup> Opera was no longer simply a drama with musical accompaniment, but it was a piece of music that told a story.<sup>20</sup> With access to staged opera, many people went to hear the same work many times, evaluating different performances of the same singers, as well as

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<sup>15</sup> “Is Opera Music or Art?” *Musical America* 5, no. 6 (June, 1906): 8.

<sup>16</sup> Karleton Hackett, “Future of Opera in America,” *Musician* 15, no. 2 (1910): 136.

<sup>17</sup> Ahlquist, “Mrs. Potiphar,” 43, 33-4.

<sup>18</sup> Elise K. Kirk, *American Opera* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 80.

<sup>19</sup> Karen Ahlquist, *Democracy at the Opera* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 161.

<sup>20</sup> Ahlquist, *Democracy*, 162.



comparing the voices of different singers who sang the same role. This led to a better understanding and increased enjoyment for more Americans.<sup>21</sup>

The most popular operas written after the mid-nineteenth century—particularly the later Italian operas of Verdi—included many simple melodic arias. Karen Ahlquist provides insights into some of the most popular of these arias in her book, *Democracy at the Opera*. For example, the aria “La donna e mobile” from Verdi’s *Rigoletto* is the high point of this opera. In fact, Ahlquist refers to it as the opera’s savior. In the context of the full opera, the duke’s character is understood as despicable; no one should really enjoy him, revel in his female conquests or rejoice in his ultimate ability to survive *Rigoletto*’s attempt at murder. But looking at his character out of context, or only through this aria, produces a different man. Taken on its own, “La donna e mobile” applauds the confidence of the man. The duke is a character who can overcome everything easily. This song is composed to be a hit on its own, and through its music the audience is seduced just as Gilda is seduced by the duke’s promises.<sup>22</sup> This aria, like many others, stood on its own as an enjoyable tune and not simply as part of a larger work.

Although Verdi’s operas were particularly popular, and attempts to fill the lower-price seats in the newer opera houses were somewhat successful, the perception continued that only the rich were able to attend grand opera regularly. At least some famous singers commented on this. Mary Garden, in an article published in *Good Housekeeping* as late as 1913, stated, “Opera is too expensive in this country. Prices of

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<sup>21</sup> Andrea Mariani, “The Cultural Significance of Opera in Nineteenth-Century America,” in *Ceremonies and Spectacles; Performing American Culture*, edited by Teresa Alves, Teresa Cid and Heinz Ickstadt (Amsterdam: Vu University Press, 2000), 85. The author suggests this phenomenon was not unlike the creation of cult movies in the late twentieth century.

<sup>22</sup> Ahlquist, *Democracy*, 163, 166.

seats must come down. Then people will go to the opera, learn the great modern music, learn to understand and love it—and then it will be played in the homes.”<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, many “average” people thought that individuals who did attend grand opera—instead of the recitals with programmed opera excerpts alongside other popular songs—did not understand or appreciate the performances. One 1910 article, published in *Musician*, states, “One reason why we in America have been somewhat backward is because of the lack of opera in its highest forms.”<sup>24</sup> This sentiment can be found in a number of satirical cartoons published in popular music journals. One such cartoon published in *Musical America* is titled “How Opening of the Opera Impressed a Cartoonist” (see figure 7.3 on page 201). As in figure 7.2 on page 196, the wealthy audience members are not there to enjoy the music. Not aware of what is happening on the stage, the well-dressed audience is more concerned with the famous person seated in the balcony.

During the westward expansion of the United States (after the Civil War), musical audiences grew as newly established towns built their own opera and recital halls. The transcontinental railroad and show business managers brought famous singers to these halls. The peace festival movement increased the popularity of the recital, opera aria and brass band traditions while low price seating in these halls assured that many people could have access to these live performances.<sup>25</sup>

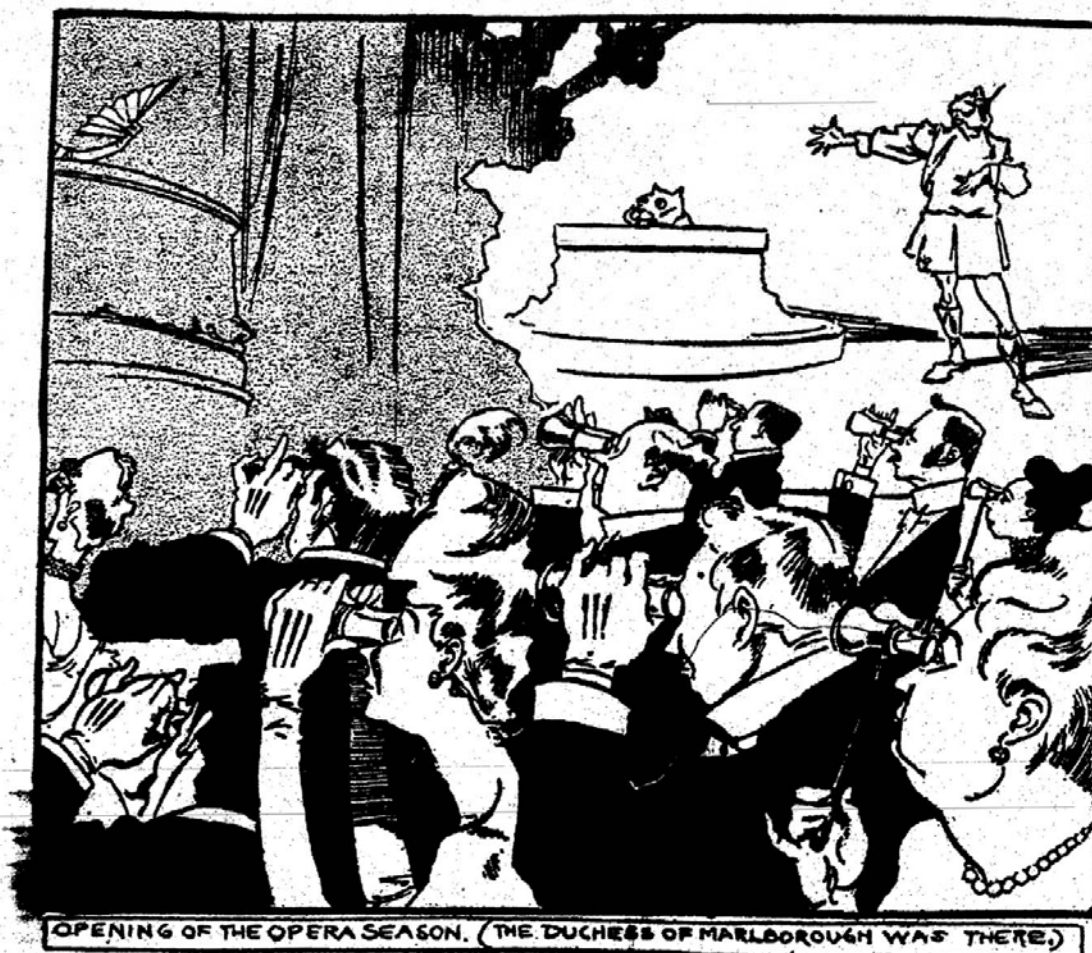
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<sup>23</sup> Mary Garden, “The American Girl and Music: A Candid Talk With Girls and Their Parents Concerning the Failure of Music in America and the Individual Girl’s Career,” *Good Housekeeping* 56, no. 2 (February, 1913): 169-70.

<sup>24</sup> Hackett, 136.

<sup>25</sup> Burton W. Peretti, “Democratic Leitmotifs in the American Reception of Wagner,” *19<sup>th</sup> Century Music* 13, no. 1 (1989): 31.

## HOW OPENING OF THE OPERA IMPRESSED A CARTOONIST.



OPENING OF THE OPERA SEASON. (THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH WAS THERE.)

—By Hy. Mayer in the *New York Times*.

Figure 7.3: Cartoon in *Musical America* 7, no. 1 (November 16, 1907): 8

The dissemination of opera as a popular genre in the United States during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was primarily accomplished by traveling female singers (prima donnas) who gave concerts throughout the country. These concerts included a number of opera arias and operas in brief (a collection of arias from a particular opera arranged for the soloist or for a female and male singer, but as a duet that still showcased the female voice) along with other popular tunes of the day. The majority of these concerts were influenced by the recital tradition, featuring famous singers rather

than instrumentalists.<sup>26</sup> The majority of these singers were women. The new audiences in the west expressed their approval in the same way they expressed it at plays or minstrel shows, with a great deal of whistling, stamping and yelling when they enjoyed the performance, and hissing, groaning, yelling and hurling vegetables (on occasion) when they disapproved. Applause was not reserved till the end of the song, but rather employed after any admired passage. Repeats, particularly when demanded by the audience, were granted.<sup>27</sup> Such an experience drew into question exactly how “high brow” these concerts were. In San Francisco, one French immigrant in 1851 noted in his journal that “Shrill whistles and savage yells” were common expressions of enjoyment in the theatre and “Most of the Frenchmen here cannot live on friendly terms with the Americans, whom they consider a savage, ignorant people.”<sup>28</sup>

Catherine Hayes, a visiting soprano to San Francisco, gave a series of seventeen “concerts in costume” in the San Francisco theatre between December 1852 and January 1853. No staging or scenery was used, but she appeared in costume appropriate for the character she portrayed. The concerts were made up primarily of ballads and operatic scenes, touted as “operas in brief.” Such brief operas included the popular titles *Barber of Seville*, *Daughter of the Regiment*, *Elixir of Love*, *Don Pasquale*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Norma* and *Sonnambula*. As the translated titles suggest, many were probably performed in English. In San Francisco, other instantly popular selections included “Ah! non giunge” and “Deh! con te” from Bellini’s *Norma*; “O luce di quest’

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<sup>26</sup> Bob Batchelor, *1900s* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2002), 175.

<sup>27</sup> George Martin, *Verdi at the Golden Gate: Opera and San Francisco in the Gold Rush Years* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1993), 33. See also Preston, 115-6.

<sup>28</sup> Quoted in Martin, 33.

anima” from Donizetti’s *Linda di Chamounix*; and “Spargi d’amor” from *Lucia di Lammermoor*.<sup>29</sup>

Even before the advent of in-home recordings, the name and face of a famous singer was enough to attract an audience. Jenny Lind was one of the most famous singers of her time.<sup>30</sup> Like Hayes, she performed many popular songs including hymn tunes, ballads, patriotic tunes and opera arias. P.T. Barnum brought Lind over to this country for a series of performances in 1850. Understanding the delight individuals took in hearing and seeing an internationally acclaimed female singer, he “distributed widely a biography of Lind emphasizing her international fame, her piety, character and philanthropy. Crowds who had not heard of her a few months before mobbed her upon arrival in New York. All of this extraordinary enthusiasm... had developed before Jenny Lind had sung a note in America.”<sup>31</sup>

Adelina Patti also recognized the marketing power in a name and used her own to promote a series of concert tours called “Patti’s farewell concerts,” which lasted forty years.<sup>32</sup> Consider the cartoon in figure 7.4 on page 204. Patti’s name appears along with many other popular performing and recording stars in a hypothetical program advertisement. Although ultimately meant to comment on the high prices paid for vaudeville theatre, this cartoon also takes a jab at Patti specifically, stating that this special appearance would be the “last time on earth” to hear her sing.

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<sup>29</sup> Martin, 42.

<sup>30</sup> She was considered to be one of the top ten famous opera singers of her time according to George P. Upton, “The Ten Most Famous Opera Singers of the Last Century,” *Etude* 30, no. 1 (January, 1912): 17-18.

<sup>31</sup> Mary Kupiec Cayton, “The Making of an American Prophet: Emerson, His Audiences, and the Rise of Culture Industry in Nineteenth-Century America,” *The American Historical Review* 92, no. 3 (1987): 615.

<sup>32</sup> Adolph Foerster, “Musical History in Pittsburgh,” *Musical Forecast* 4, no. 6 (1923): 3.

Another "Uplift" for Chicago Vaudeville

CONTINUOUSLY ADVANCING VAUDEVILLE

8.00 - **MME. MARCELLA SEMBRICH** AND HER COMPANY IN "ACROSS THE CONTINENT"

8.10 - **MME. EMMA CALVE** IN "45 MINUTES FROM CARMEN"

8.55 - **MME. EAMES** IN "THE ARTIST'S BRIDE"

9.00 - **MME. ERNESTINE SCHUMANN HEINK**  
IN THE BEAUTIFUL DOMESTIC SKETCH "THE MOTHER"

9.20 - **SPECIAL - ADELINA PATTI** (LAST TIME ON EARTH)  
HEAR HER SING "SISTER MARY JANE'S TOP NOTE!"

9.40 - **THE INTERNATIONAL QUARTETTE**  
**ENRICO CARUSO**      **SCOTTI**  
**LILLIAN NORRICK**    **LOUISE HOMER**

10.00 - **THE GREAT TABLOID "HAMLET"**

HAMLET - ROBERT MANTTELL  
LAERTES - E. H. SOTHERN  
GHOST - LOUIS JAMES  
ROSEGRANTZ - WILLIAM COLLIER  
GUILDENSTERN - JOHN DREW  
POLONIUS - W. H. CRANE  
HORATIO - WILLIAM GILLETTE  
FIRST GRAVE-DIGGER - NAT GOODWIN  
SECOND GRAVE-DIGGER - RAYMOND HITWICK  
QUEEN - SARAH BERNHARDT  
OPHELIA - JULIA MARLOWE

PLAYER QUEEN - ELEANORA DOSE  
FIRST PLAYER - DAVID WARFIELD  
SECOND PLAYER - GEO. M. CONAN

ASSISTED BY  
JAMES O'NEILL  
CHAUNCEY OLCOTT  
EZRA KENDALL  
WILLIAM HODGE  
VICTOR MOORE  
MONTGOMERY AND STONE

NEXT WEEK  
**MME. BOBBA**  
WELLIE THE BEAUTIFUL  
GLORIOUS MODEL

VAUDEVILLE OF THE FUTURE.  
The high prices being paid in vaudeville have induced a number of operatic and legitimate stars to contemplate that line of entertainment.—Theatrical Item.  
(From the Chicago Inter-Ocean.)

A Cartoonist's Idea of the Possible Vaudeville Bill-Board of the Future.—Well-Known Concert and Operatic Singers are Gradually Breaking Into the Ranks of Vaudevillians, a Tabloid Presentation of "Carmen" Being Presented Last Week.

Figure 7.4: Cartoon in Musical America 7, no. 1 (November 16, 1907): 9

By the turn of the twentieth century, thousands of dollars were being offered to famous opera stars for a single engagement. For example, Enrico Caruso commanded \$4,000 to appear in Paris and \$7,000 to appear in Argentina in the 1910s.<sup>33</sup> That many Americans were introduced to opera through arias alone or through partial or modified

<sup>33</sup> John Dizikes, *Opera in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 398.

performances that focused on individual performers raises the question of exactly what opera was to the typical Victorian American. Making this question more relevant is the fact that some Americans viewed Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas *HMS Pinafore* and *Pirates of Penzance* as part of the grand opera tradition. At the first production of *Penzance* in the United States, the orchestra threatened to strike, arguing that this was grand opera and they were entitled to higher pay for playing it.<sup>34</sup> *Penzance* was even included in the revised edition of Victor's *Victor Book of the Opera* (1913).

Many famous soprano singers perpetuated the connection between the opera arias they performed and the popular music tradition by singing famous songs as an encore at the end of their concerts. These singers would consistently close their recitals with the same song, establishing it as their trademark encore. For example, Jenny Lind was known for closing her concerts with the song "Home, Sweet Home."<sup>35</sup> The editors of the popular collection *Heart Songs Dear to the American People* included many of the encores made famous by popular female opera singers (see Table 7.1 on page 206). With the exception of Jenny Lind and singer Jessie Bartlet Davis, all these performers recorded opera arias extensively for the Victor Company. *Heart Songs*, published in 1909 by *National Magazine*, is intended to be a collection of music compiled by 20,000 people who sent their favorite songs along with stories explaining how these songs were interwoven with their lives, and is a response to the overwhelming success of the earlier

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<sup>34</sup> Dizikes, 204.

<sup>35</sup> Joe Mitchell Chapple, compiler, *Heart Songs Dear to the American People and by them Contributed in the Search for Treasured Songs Initiated by the National Magazine* (New York: World Syndicate Publishing Co., 1909) n.p.

undertaking to publish the most popular “prose and verse dear to the American people,” titled *Heart Throbs* and published in 1905.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 7.1: Singers’ photographs in Heart Songs**

<b>Name of the Photographed singer</b>	<b>“Popular encore” according to <i>Heart Songs</i></b>	<b>Page in <i>Heart Songs</i></b>
Emma Abbott	“Then You’ll Remember Me”	52
Jessie Bartlett Davis	“Robin Adair”	288
Emma Eames	“Dixie”	166
Geraldine Farrar	“Kathleen Mavourneen”	376
Johanna Gadschi	“Drink to Me Only with Thine Eyes”	105
Mary Garden	“Blue Bells of Scotland”	387
Maria Gay	“Castanets are Sounding”	178
Louise Homer	“Abide With Me”	447
Jenny Lind	“Home, Sweet Home”	374
Nellie Melba	“Annie Laurie”	301
Alice Nielsen	“Bonnie Eloise”	108
Lillian Nordica	“John Anderson, My Jo”	378
Adelina Patti	“Last Rose of Summer”	146
Ernestine Schumann-Heink	“Home to Our Mountains”	452
Marcella Sembrich	“Comin’ Thru the Rye”	113
Luisa Tetrazzini	“Bonnie Dundee”	80

The most popular arias, along with airs, songs and ballads were also frequently performed by the many brass bands. The militia band blossomed during the Civil War into a national patriotic movement and continued as a pastime that gradually faded in the twentieth century. These bands were bearers of a democratic music that strove to provide the audience with good arrangements of works originally written for orchestra. Patrick Gilmore and John Phillip Sousa offered polished performances as they toured the country.<sup>37</sup> The common repertoire can be divided into three broad categories: the first included quadrilles, gallops, waltzes; the second included transcriptions and

<sup>36</sup> Chapple, iii. In addition to *Heart Throbs* and *Heart Songs*, other projects undertaken by Chapple include *Heart Letters* (1912), *Heart Chord* (1915) and a Heart Throb series for movies. McNeil, [i].

<sup>37</sup> Richard Crawford, *A History: America’s Musical Life* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001), 455.



arrangements of art music, including opera selections and religious works; and the third included a number of miscellaneous pieces that do not fit into the first two.<sup>38</sup> Often playing in the same halls where musicals, vaudeville and operettas were performed, Sousa frequently began his concerts with a classical work such as an opera overture. A favorite was Wagner's *Flying Dutchman*. Sousa liked to keep both the audience as well as the band members on their toes, so each piece—with the exception of the last—was followed by one or two encores that were not part of the scheduled program and even the band members did not know what would be played next before Sousa called out the title.<sup>39</sup>

The band always traveled with at least one vocalist, usually a soprano, in order to sing the popular opera arias on the program. Believing that popular music could be used to help improve an individual's taste, Sousa purposely blended these selections with what he interpreted as good music.<sup>40</sup> With his desire to educate as well as entertain, Sousa felt the need to combine popular ballads and arias with other opera excerpts such as "Evening Star," "Preislied," "Bridal March" from *Lohengrin* and *The Spinning Song*.<sup>41</sup> Other favorites include Greig's *Peer Gynt Suite*, selections from Strauss's *Don Juan* and *Death and Transfiguration*, Debussy's *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun* and Bach's *Toccatina and Fugue in D minor*.<sup>42</sup>

Sousa rarely played a program without some opera by Wagner, who—according to Sousa—was a good instance of quality music being popular. No doubt thanks in part

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<sup>38</sup> Trevor Herbert, "The Repertory of a Victorian Provincial Brass Band," *Popular Music* 9, no. 1 (1990): 119.

<sup>39</sup> Crawford, *A History*, 459. See also, Paul Edmond Bierley, *The Incredible Band of John Philip Sousa* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 11.

<sup>40</sup> This was a popular sentiment among musicians at this time. Consider the article, "Popular Music May Lead to Better Music," *Etude* 5 27, no. 5 (1909): 340; and Bierley, 7-8.

<sup>41</sup> John Philip Sousa, "Music the American People Demand," *Etude* 28, no. 10 (October 1910): 650.

<sup>42</sup> Crawford, *A History*, 460; and Bierley, 4, 419-21.

to Sousa and his band, Wagner was now accessible to the masses, whereas he formerly was appreciated only by the most gifted of musicians.<sup>43</sup> Sousa's understanding of the American people was that they liked what they liked and could not be tricked into appreciating something for which they had no love. Therefore, according to Sousa, it was the performer's responsibility to educate the audience, providing them with excellent performances. If the people responded favorably, then the band succeeded. Also, American's loved an infinite variety of music, and the program must reflect this taste. Sousa stated, "they must have all kinds of music by all kinds of composers."<sup>44</sup>

According to Sousa, musical cultivation was more difficult here in the United States than in Europe due to the many different forms of entertainment that were competing for attention. His romantic view suggested that in Europe, people entertained themselves with the tavern, countryside picnics and visits to the theatre and countryside. In the United States, individuals were surrounded with new wealth that allowed them to go to baseball games and purchase and utilize the automobile. Both pastimes took the person away from "serious study of culture." The American life is different; where as the German citizen sits in his beer hall sipping beer and listening to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, an American listens to *Tristan und Isolde* while wondering how he will squeeze a "sea bath," roller coaster ride, a moving picture show and a multiple course dinner into the next hour. Real musical culture, according to Sousa, is people enjoying good music and being willing to pay well for it.<sup>45</sup> This sentiment was picked up by the recording companies who offered their pre-recorded products as a means of enjoying good music whenever it was convenient.

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<sup>43</sup> Sousa, 650.

<sup>44</sup> Sousa, 649; and Bierley, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Sousa, 649.

Although today we generally do not associate opera arias with the brass band tradition of the late nineteenth century, Sousa definitely viewed himself and his band as providers of both art music and entertainment. This view was successfully transmitted to at least some of his audience who accepted the selections offered at his concerts as good music. Furthermore, people accepted the martial accompaniments used for the early opera aria selections as normal. One joke from *Musical America's* "It is to laugh" Column sarcastically reinforces an early twentieth century connection between Sousa and art music.

Mr. Highsome—Your daughter plays classical music, does she not?  
 Mr. Stuckoyle—I don't know. My wife looks after all that. But I think she does. I've heard her say she could play every one of Sousa's marches with her eyes shut.<sup>46</sup>

Although Sousa would be disappointed with Mr. Stuckoyle's understanding of the "classical" tradition, this joke attests to the fact that marches were commonly performed alongside other works. The fact that it is the daughter who is supposed to play "classical" music, the wife who "looks after all that" and a man who is seriously mistaken about what constitutes "classical" music all help create an apt reflection of social expectations.

Early recording ensembles included primarily brass bands such as Sousa's U.S. Marine Band, Patrick Gilmore's Band, The Columbia Band and Isler's Band. Due to the technical limitations of the early recording apparatus, wind instruments recorded better than strings.<sup>47</sup> Therefore the first recorded operatic overtures and melodies included band accompaniments and interpretations. The popularity and traditional repertoire of these bands must have also contributed to their use in place of a proper orchestra. Similar

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<sup>46</sup> *Musical America* 9, no. 21 (April 3, 1909): 24.

<sup>47</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Recorded Music in American Life: The Phonograph and Popular Memory, 1890-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 29-30.

to band concert programs, early record catalogues show that military bands performed many different genres, including stirring marches along with dance music, light opera, opera and famous instrumental solos arranged to fit onto the discs. Once the recording companies began incorporating both sides of the flat disc (the double disc), many of the early opera recordings included a march selection on the reverse side. Popular songs, arias and marches included in this repertoire were much easier to place onto a recording with a two-minute, and later four-minute time restriction, than overtures and symphonic movements.

### **Songs as Commodities**

Selling music for in-home consumption was not a new idea for the budding recording industry to capitalize on. Although pre-recorded discs provided a new medium for storing music, the entire Victorian musical system produced songs meant to be commodities. People were charged to hear music performed “professionally.” The sheet music industry took advantage of the recital and concert tradition by promoting piano-vocal arrangements of the most popular songs for the home. Amateur musicians presented many in-home recitals of piano music and singing for family, friends and neighbors.<sup>48</sup> Amateur recitals at home emulated “professional” performances, programs, proper dress and adequate preparation. The result was an abundance of songs, tunes, hymns and opera aria arrangements compatible with amateur pianists and singers. The harmonic structures, strong melodies and choruses were very accessible for both in-home performer and audience. The end result in all genres of popular Victorian music—church music, concert music, opera, brass band, dance music, music-hall song and parlor

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<sup>48</sup> Charles Hamm, *Yesterdays: Popular Song In America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 76ff.

ballads—was a common emphasis on tunefulness and sentimentality.<sup>49</sup> Like the later recording companies, the Victorian music industry sold culture to the people by providing sheet music, musical instruments, music teachers, and music journals. Purchasing these commodities provided access to the greatest music sung by the greatest singers.

Victorian sheet music was commonly sold with a cover illustration depicting a famous singer or minstrel group who was known for singing the enclosed selection. Often these covers were used for several songs with the appropriate title checked in colored pencil by the dealer. Many of the singers depicted were female and before the twentieth century included such individuals as Jenny Lind (one of the most famous), “Mille Nilsson,” “Signora Pico,” “Miss Jennie Morton,” “Madame Anna Bishop” and “Miss Catharine Hayes.” The varied selections that appear on a particular title page reflect the plethora of genres that became a part of the Victorian parlor song tradition.<sup>50</sup>

For example, one title page that incorporated Mlle Nilsson and published by the Boston company Oliver Ditson & Company (1870) advertised eight different song titles sung by the soprano. An opera selection from Ambroise Thomas’s setting of “Hamlet” was simply titled “Grand Aria and Scena” (including the aria “Ballata d’Orfelia” later recorded by Nellie Melba, Maria Galvany and Giuseppina Huguet for Victor) and placed among other popular songs including the sentimental tune, “Why do I weep for thee,” Foster’s “Old folks at home,” and generic titles such as “The Roses,” “The Ball” and

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<sup>49</sup> John Baxendale, “‘...into Another Kind of Life in Which Anything Might Happen...’ Popular Music and Late Modernity, 1910-1930.” *Popular Music* 14, no. 2 (1995): 138-39.

<sup>50</sup> The author wishes to thank Kathy Miller-Haines, Associate Director of the Center for American Music, for pointing out particular pieces of sheet music in the collection illustrated with famous singers from the Victorian era in the United States. Her explanation regarding general practices employed by the sheet music industry, specifically the use of female singers on title pages, contributed to this project.

“Spring and Autumn.” All but one of the titles are listed without reference to composer or poet. The source, “Handel” follows the popular song title “Angels ever bright and fair.” The appearance of a name in quotes without further clarification may be somewhat misleading. Thomas’s opera selection is also listed with a similar notation—a name between quotation marks—but this time the larger work “Hamlet” is referred to, not the composer. The fact that all of these songs were “Sung by Mlle Nilsson” was the most important piece of information and the prime selling point conveyed to the consumers.

Similarly, sheet music collections from this time period published varied genres together in one volume. The title pages from these collections are particularly telling. For example, one collection published in 1882 clearly articulates on the title page that excerpts included are “sacred and secular,” “Carefully Selected From the Best Works,” and include “Songs, Hymns, Glees, Madrigals, Ballads, Sentences, Responses, Anthems, Chants, And Selections From Opera And Oratorio In Delightful Variety, Chosen Expressly For Their Eminent Fitness To Promote The Happiness Of Every Home.”<sup>51</sup> The editor’s introduction to this collection states that only “Gems” are included in this volume but at the same time...

A second distinctive feature of this book is its special adaptation to the wants of the home. This shrine of all that is holy and good will be made the happier and the brighter by the incoming of Treasury of Song as its familiar guest. So suitable is it for use at all times and by all persons, the old folks and the young alike, that it will make the fireside more than ever a delight, and the home-gathering a genuine festal time.<sup>52</sup>

Among other popular tunes, the collection includes aria selections by Donizetti, Bellini, Rossini, Flotow, and also Sullivan. All five of these composers were represented

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<sup>51</sup> D.H. Morrison, musical editor, *The Treasury of Song For the Home Circle: The Richest, Best Loved Gems; Sacred and Secular* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Brothers, Publishers, 1882).

<sup>52</sup> Morrison, [ii].

in the early recording catalogues of Victor as well as the first editions of the *Victor Book of the Opera*. The opera composer Balfe is frequently represented in this Victor collection. Some of the more popular titles include aria selections from his opera *The Bohemian Girl* (1843) such as “I dreamt that I dwelt in marble halls” (p. 184), “The heart bowed down” (p. 36) and “Then you’ll remember me” (p. 186).<sup>53</sup> The collection includes “Brief Biographies of Eminent Composers, Performers and Singers.”<sup>54</sup>

*Heart Songs*, briefly discussed earlier in this chapter, is one of the most well known song collections representing popular songs or songs “dear to the American people.”<sup>55</sup> Originally, people were requested to contribute music for this collection in ten different categories: patriotic and war songs, sea songs; lullabies and child songs; dancing songs; lilt and jigs; plantation and “negro” songs; sacred songs and hymns; love songs; songs from opera and operettas; popular concert songs and ballads; and college, school or fraternity songs. According to the foreword, the letters accompanying the submission of songs demonstrated the impossibility of placing a particular title into only one category. For this reason, the original idea of printing the book under the ten headings was abandoned.<sup>56</sup> However, these ten “classes” are retained for the “Classified Index.”

The fact that many individuals included opera aria titles in their submission of favorite tunes reinforces the notion that opera was in fact considered part of a popular

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<sup>53</sup> All three of these arias appear in a number of similar song collections as well as early Victor record catalogues and early editions of *The Victor Book of the Opera*.

<sup>54</sup> Balfe’s *Bohemian Girl* is particularly popular in these song collections. Although arias from other operas become increasingly common in the early twentieth century, even collections that minimized opera selections included selections by Balfe. For example, *Sweetest Melodies for the Home* (Philadelphia: American Book and Bible House, 1906), unlike the majority of collections, does not explicitly state that opera is included in the collection; however under the heading “The Nobler Sentiments” in the table of contents, Balfe’s aria “I Dreamt That I Dwelt in Marble Halls” is listed. Furthermore, biographies of the famous singers Melba (pp. 98-99), Nilsson (pp. 388-89), Nordica (pp. 168-69) and Patti (20-21) are included among those of famous composers. Three of these singers, Melba, Nordica and Patti, recorded opera arias extensively for the Victor company.

<sup>55</sup> McNeil, [iv].

<sup>56</sup> Chapple, iii.

tradition or genre of music. The forward to the book states that Verdi arias were favored overwhelmingly “around the world” and that Manrico’s tower scene “appeared to touch more hearts than any other aria sung behind American operatic footlights.” This particular song—known in English as “Ah I Have Sighed to Rest Thee” (Victor recorded three different early renditions of this song by Enrico Caruso on Victor 88121, Giorgio Malesci on Victor 16809 and Charles Dalmores on Victor 85123)<sup>57</sup>—and many others, appear in a number of similar collections from this time period with titles such as *Songs that Never Grow Old* (1913), *Our Favorite Songs* (1913) and *Love Songs the Whole World Sings* (1916).<sup>58</sup>

The two 1913 volumes, *Songs that Never Grow Old* and *Our Favorite Songs*, follow trends promulgated by *The Treasury of Song* and *Heart Songs* volumes. The 1913 volumes are collections of popular songs, including operatic arias. *Our Favorite Songs* includes “Patriotic, love, operatic, sacred, cradle and home songs, selected to meet the capabilities of the homesinger, and arranged to permit of most effective rendition.” *Songs that Never Grow Old* includes “Homes Songs, Love Songs, College Songs, Patriotic Songs, Sacred Songs, Operatic Songs.” Both collections include the popular Verdi aria, “Ah! I Have Sighed to Rest Me” from *Il Trovatore* along with several Balfe

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<sup>57</sup> *Victor Book of the Opera: Stories of One Hundred Operas with Five Hundred Illustrations and Descriptions of One Thousand Victor Opera Records*, (Camden: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1913) 452. The book notes that “This beautiful lyrical number is a delightful relief after so much that is forcible and dramatic,” 453. In addition to *The Victor Book of the Opera*, two Catalogues were viewed, one from May of 1912 and the other from May of 1917. The same three recordings are listed in both catalogues. The 1912 editions of Victor’s book of opera also list these three recordings.

<sup>58</sup> *Songs that Never Grown Old: A Complete Collection of all those Standard Songs Which Are Known and Loved by English-Speaking People the World Over Including Home Songs, Love Songs, College Songs, Patriotic Songs, Sacred Songs, Operatic Songs As well as the National and Home Songs of all the Principal Nations and Peoples* (New York: Syndicate Publishing Co., 1913); Thomas a Becket, compiler, *Our Favorite Songs: A Collection of the Well-Known Gems from Many Countries, Including Patriotic, Love, Operatic, Sacred, Cradle and Home Songs, Selected to Meet the Capabilities of the Home Singer, and Arranged to Permit of Most Effective Rendition* (New York: Syndicate Publishing Co., 1913); and Albert E. Weir, editor, *Love Songs the Whole World Sings: A Collection of Two Hundred New and Old Songs Dear to the People of All Nations* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1916).



arias from his opera *The Bohemian Girl* including “Heart Bowed Down,” “I Dreamt I Dwelt in Marble Halls” and “Then You’ll Remember Me.” Several Sullivan selections, promulgated as opera arias, are found in both volumes.

Finally, as in the *Heart Songs* volume, both collections utilize images of popular opera stars by incorporating their photographs. *Songs that Never Grow Old* includes photos of 51 different singers, 39 of whom recorded exclusively for the Victor company. Of the remaining twelve singers, five recorded for Columbia (see table 7.2 on page 217). Of these 51 singers, sixteen also appear in *Our Favorite Songs*. Of the sixteen singers in this volume, twelve recorded for the Victor company and three for Columbia. Unlike *Heart Songs*, both of these later volumes utilize male and female singers; *Heart Songs* incorporates photos of sixteen different female singers (see table 7.1 on page 206). However, both volumes use photographs of more women—ten women to six men in *Our Favorite Songs*, and 29 women to 22 men in *Songs that Never Grow Old*. Table 7.2 on page 217 provides an alphabetical list of the 51 singers from *Songs That Never Grow Old*, showing which are male and female, which also appear in *Our Favorite Songs*, and which recorded exclusively for a particular record label.

Collections containing only opera arias were also growing in popularity after the turn of the twentieth century. Perhaps a response to the acceptance of opera aria recordings, these collections recycled the most popular selections from the larger volumes like the ones discussed above. Often referred to as the “World’s Greatest Operas,” works such as Verdi’s *Aida* and *Il trovatore*, Balfe’s *Bohemian Girl*, Bizet’s *Carmen* and Wagner’s *Lohengrin* permeated these collections. After the turn of the twentieth century, additional titles also became popular, such as Gounod’s *Faust*,

Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Verdi's *Rigoletto* (specifically the duke's aria, "Women Is Fickle") and Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* (specifically the "Drinking Song").<sup>59</sup>

Early recording catalogues reflected the popular titles printed in these collections. Each of these titles mentioned above are also represented in a 1915 Victor publication, *Grand Opera with a Victrola*.<sup>60</sup> Again, this collection is meant to represent "the most popular music" from specific operas. Of course, each selection has been recorded by the Victor company and the record numbers, along with the famous singer who recorded them are listed for each selection. The context for each aria is also explained with a short synopsis of the events contained within the opera leading up to and following the song.

Albert E. Wier, also editor of *The Ideal Home Music Library*, "arranged for playing, singing and the selection of Victor Records" all of the arias in this volume. This collection is meant to guide the reader in four ways, to provide the "general idea of the plots of these great operas," to provide a translation of arias only recorded in a foreign language, to allow one to play and sing favorite operatic melodies and to act as a guide in the purchase of additional recordings.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> For example, see one of the many collections compiled and arranged by J. Bodewalt Lampe, *The Remick Collection of Selections from the Operas* (New York: Jerome H. Remick & Co., 1911). The contents are hailed to be from "The World's Greatest Operas." This collection contains selections from each opera mentioned above.

<sup>60</sup> Albert E. Wier, *Grand Opera With A Victrola: Containing the Most Complete Stories and Most Popular Songs of the Great Operas* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1915, 1916).

<sup>61</sup> Wier, [3].

Table 7.2: Singers represented in two 1913 song collections

<i>Artist in Songs that Never Grow Old</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Our Favorite Songs</i>	<i>Exclusive Label</i>
Abott, Bessie	F		Victor
Alda, Frances	F		Victor
Amato, Pasquale	M		Victor
Bassi, Amadeo	M		
Bonci, Alessandro	M	X	Columbia
Bori, Lucrecia	F		
Calve, Emma	F		Victor
Carmen-Melbis	F		
Caruso, Enrico	M	X	Victor
Cavalieri, Elda	F	X	Victor
Clement, Edmond	M		Victor
Constantino, Florencio	M		Victor
Dalmores, Charles	M	X	Victor
De Cisnero	F		
De Pasquali, Bernice	F		
De Seguarola, Perello	M		Victor
Destinn, Emmy	F	X	Victor
Eames, Emma	F		Victor
Farrar, Geraldine	F	X	Victor
Fornia, Rita	F		Victor
Fremstad, Olive	F	X	Columbia
Gadski, Johanna	F		Victor
Garden, Mary	F	X	Columbia
Gerville-Reache, Jeanne	F		Victor
Gilibert, Charles	M		Victor
Gluck, Alma	F		Victor
Goritz, Otto	M		Victor
Harrold, Orville	M		Columbia
Hempel, Frieda	F		Victor
Homer, Louise	F	X	Victor
Journet, Marcel	M		Victor
Martin, Ricardo	M		Victor
Matzenauer, Margarete	F		Victor
McCormack, John	M		Victor
Melba, Nellie	F	X	Victor
Nordica, Lillian	F		Columbia
Patti, Adelina	F		Victor
Plancon, Pol	M	X	Victor
Rappold, Marie	F		
Reiss, Albert	M		Victor
Renaud, Maurice	M		Victor
Ruffo, Titta	M	X	Victor
Sammarco, G. Mario	M		Victor
Schumann-Heink, Ernestine	F	X	Victor
Scotti, Antonio	M		Victor
Sembrich, Marcella	F		Victor
Slezak, Leo	M	X	Victor
Tetrazzini, Luisa	F	X	Victor
Teyte, Maggie	F	X	
Trentini, Emma	F		Victor
Witherspoon, Herbert	M		Victor

Other “Phonograph Song Books” were published during the first and second decades of the twentieth century. But connections between the early recording industry and the sheet music industry also lie with individually published selections of music. Famous singers and recording stars were also used to sell individual selections. For example, Geraldine Farrar—singer and actress of opera as well as Victor recording star—was used to promote some popular pieces of music in the rear advertisement for the song “On Sunday.” Under the caption “THE WORTH OF A SONG IS SHOWN BY THE ARTISTS WHO SING IT,” appears the following,

Geraldine Farrar says:

“I have used ‘A POOR FINISH’ and ‘ON SUNDAY’ in *all* my concerts with the *most delightful* effect, which effect is *perennially* the same for ‘HER DREAM’; each of them moves the *most conservative* audience to a *ripple of laughter!* I think the songs *delightfully piquant* and just needed to supplement the success of ‘HER DREAM.’ I am very glad to have them, and wish there were *more* like them. Very sincerely, GERALDINE FARRAR.”<sup>62</sup>

Many individual pieces of sheet music were advertised on or in recording catalogues.<sup>63</sup> Victor, as well as other recording companies began publishing their own sheet music.<sup>64</sup> Sheet music covers began depicting illustrations of talking machines and Victrolas, and the actual texts of songs—such as John Cooke’s “And When She Turned the Phonograph”—began to demonstrate just how much the phonograph was affecting

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<sup>62</sup> Frank Waller, *On Sunday* (New York: Harms Incorporation, 1922).

<sup>63</sup> For example, sheet music was advertised on a catalogue of “Little Wonder Discs.” Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, *Phonographica: The Early History of Recorded Sound Observed* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2004), 126.

<sup>64</sup> For example, “What’ll You Have My Hearties” (Camden, NJ: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1906). It is interesting to note that instead of listing the name of a famous singer on the cover, as was the custom, the caption, “As sung by the Victor” appears instead. The McKinley Talking Machine Company also became involved in the publication of sheet music for a time. See Fabrizio and Paul, 111.

musical life in the home.<sup>65</sup> Versions of songs were distributed specifically in “operatic editions,” which seemed to affect the arrangement of the song less than it affected the types of rhetoric employed in the accompanying advertisements.<sup>66</sup> Finally, Victor published collections of opera arias titled, “Grand Opera With a Victrola.” Although the editor is quick to point out that the version of the song contained within the printed collection might differ from the recorded version, individuals are encouraged to play and sing these arrangements for their own enjoyment.<sup>67</sup>

Many have misleadingly characterized the recording industry as mechanical and factory-like from the beginning.<sup>68</sup> Many of the early practices utilized were simply drawn from the already established sheet music industry. There did not seem to be a fear of competition between the two industries and the two worked together for mutual benefit. The companies generally believed that individuals would not buy a recording of a particular piece instead of the corresponding sheet music.<sup>69</sup> Consumers would buy the sheet music first, and then buy a recording to help them better appreciate the music. Record companies were trying to encourage individuals to buy records of songs already made popular by the sheet music industry. As late as 1910, anywhere between 30 million and 2 billion copies of sheet music were sold, a strong sales figure when compared to

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<sup>65</sup> John Cooke, “And When She Turned the Phonograph” (New York: Howley Haviland & Co., 1897). The cover illustration depicts a young woman turning a phonograph. Other examples of talking machines appearing in cover illustrations include, Maurice Abrahams and Grant Clark, “They Start the Victrola (and go Dancing Around the Floor),” (New York: Maurice Abrahams Music Co., 1914). And Abe Losch, “Uncle Silas (some rube) March Two-Step,” Williamsport, PA: Vandersloot Music Pub., 1913).

<sup>66</sup> For example, see Jaan Ken Brovin and John William Kellette, “I’m Forever Blowing Bubbles,” operatic edition (New York: Jerome H. Remick & co., 1919). Page six advertises for songs under the heading, “Operatic and High Class Songs.”

<sup>67</sup> Wier, *Grand Opera With A Victrola*, [3].

<sup>68</sup> Keith Negus, *Music Genres and Corporate Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 17.

<sup>69</sup> William Kuhlman, *Breaking Records: 100 Years of Hits* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 3.

record sales.<sup>70</sup> Although 30 million might represent a weakening industry, figures closer to 2 billion represent an industry that remained strong in the face of a growing recording culture.

Clearly, the sheet music industry was a predecessor for the recording industry. Much previous scholarship has suggested that the technical limitations of the phonograph during the early years held it back from becoming the success to which it was destined in later years. One of the largest drawbacks suggested was the two minute time restraint for the majority of recordings. In the Early twenty-first century, we are accustomed to full discs of music with at least seventy minutes of music, or a computer storage device (hard drive) capable of storing hours of music. But in the musical context of the music industry at the turn of the twentieth century, two minutes was precisely the recording length needed for the majority of popular tunes. In fact, additional time was not considered an asset.

Early longer playing records were explored by the budding industry. For example, the short-lived (two years) Columbia Cylinder E had an eight-minute recording and play-back capability according to an 1894 Columbia catalogue.<sup>71</sup> Never meant to be used for prerecorded music, this six-inch cylinder was sold as an economical blank that could be shaved between 150 and 200 times. It was compatible with all Columbia machines except the “Baby Grand,” and no Edison Phonographs could play it.<sup>72</sup> Had the extended recording and play-back feature been a desirable commodity, it would have

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<sup>70</sup> Kuhlman, 19. In the first eight years of its existence, the Edison company produced a total of 18,474,858 recordings. In 1909, Columbia sold a total of 27.2 million recordings. In 1910, Victor sold a total of 5,988,004 recordings.

<sup>71</sup> Chicago Talking Machine Co., *The Perfected Graphophone, with Clockwork or Electric Motor* (Chicago: American Graphophone Company, 1894) 10.

<sup>72</sup> Fabrizio and Paul, 27.

given Columbia a huge advantage over Edison in the early recording years. Timothy Fabrizio and George Paul have suggested that the huge entertainment potential for the Cylinder E was ignored or simply not recognized. But perhaps there simply was no need to place longer songs onto a record.

In most instances, between two and four minutes was all that was needed for the performance of a single song, aria, hymn and patriotic tune from a typical sheet music arrangement. Although many repeats and additional verses could not be included within a two minute restriction, the essence of the song could certainly be retained. As a result, the earliest recordings simply needed to utilize versions of the song already in print rather than create or arrange their own truncated versions. Of the roughly four hundred selections included in *Heart Songs*, 184 consisted of one page of music or less, or an average of 16.29 measures. 182 songs utilized two pages or less, or an average of 24.59 measures. A mere 23 songs utilized more than two pages, or an average of 41.35 measures. The overwhelming majority of songs included in this popular collection could easily have been placed on a time-limited recording.

Columbia and Victor's later use of a double-sided record made it popular to place two individual selections on a single disc, one on each side. Advertisements promoting the double-sided disc all claim a free selection, or two selections for the price of one. Initially, the added time was not used to accommodate a longer selection. Between two and four minutes was not so much a time constraint as it was an ideal recording length.

By the turn of the twentieth century, the player piano, nickelodeon, phonograph, and to a lesser extent the movie all promulgated the popular music genres.<sup>73</sup> The

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<sup>73</sup> Alan Howard Levy, "The Search for Identity in American Music, 1890-1920." *American Music* 2, no. 2 (1984): 74.

phonograph in particular made music more available—selling affordable culture in the form of pre-recorded discs—and offered poorer families the chance to hear “good” music in the home. Many viewed early recordings as a means to democratize musical tastes; specifically the recordings that offered opera arias for all to hear and created a mass audience for European art music.<sup>74</sup> Opera was no longer the privilege of the social elite—those who could afford the expensive tickets to attend professional productions—it could now be enjoyed by anyone possessing a talking machine and a collection of opera records.<sup>75</sup>

The popular song tradition emphasized beautiful and lyrical melodies most often sung by professional and semi-professional women (prima donnas). “For the most part, then, the era of acoustic recording, which lasted until the mid-1920s at least in the classical sphere, was preeminently a medium of the opera singer.”<sup>76</sup> It was not until after 1924 and the advent of electrical recording, that decent orchestral music was available on recordings. Therefore, the earliest years of recordings are properly known as the great age of song.<sup>77</sup> American’s love of opera (in the form of arias) existed before the advent of in-home recordings, but the popularity of these arias grew as people began to hear in their homes excerpts from the “greatest operas, and have come to know their meaning in connection with the stories of the operas.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Timothy Day, *A Century of Recorded Music: Listening to Musical History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 58.

<sup>75</sup> Colin Symes, *Setting the Record Straight: A Material History of Classical Recording* (Middletown, CN: Wesleyan University Press, 2004), 27.

<sup>76</sup> Symes, 66.

<sup>77</sup> Harold C. Schonberg, “A Half Century of Orchestra Recording.” *Musical Courier* 127, no. 6 (December, 1945): 6.

<sup>78</sup> “Before We Go to the Opera,” *National Music Monthly* 1 (August 1917): 41. Quoted in Katz, “Making America,” 450.



Appealing directly to the woman of the home, “democratic” ideology surrounded the success of previously recorded music, championing its ability to educate the home with music that was moral, good, quality entertainment, instant and available whenever you wanted it. Recording music previously made available by the sheet music industry, the early recording companies promised pre-packaged culture for a price, in advertisements promoting opera aria recordings. Opera arias were already a popular genre in the parlor and frequently performed in amateur concerts in the home. The advent of mass produced opera aria recordings made opera music even more accessible to individuals. As we have seen in the previous chapters, they were a cheaper alternative to the purchase of a piano, the talking machine took up less space in the parlor, negated the need for practice and provided “perfect” renditions instantly by the “greatest artists” instead of the mediocre, even painful amateur renditions previously heard regularly in the home. Furthermore, pre-recorded music brought the “best singers” into the home, eliminating the high cost previously needed to see opera performed on the professional stage.

### **“Selling America Music”: Owning a Star**

The second section of this chapter focuses on the importance of the opera recording star over the composer or even the quality of performance (recording). As with advertisements for recitals and concerts, the use of particular names allowed the growing phonograph industry to sell America music, by arguing that the prestige of a particular individual aided in the provision of moral education and quality entertainment, and thus provide culture in the home. Specifically, the early recording industry capitalized on the popularity of the “prima donna” or famous female singer. Women frequently aspired to

“prima donna” status, much like the American Idol craze of today (2007). Appealing to these women, the heavy use of education rhetoric—primarily in Victor advertisements—along with the names of primarily female opera stars were used to entice women to purchase recordings of operatic arias.

Victor created one of the earliest and arguably the most effective logo to use in its various advertising campaigns—“Nipper” the dog listening to “His Master’s Voice” as it was reproduced on a talking machine. Victor first spent over 1 million pounds in England to reproduce this image. Louis Barraud, the painter and owner of the original image, sold it to Alfred Clark of the London Gramophone Company (predecessor of the Victor company) in 1898.<sup>79</sup> The creation and use of Nipper allowed people around the world to recognize a Victor recording and talking machine at a glance. But Victor was also cutting edge in its use of famous female names and photographs to sell recordings. Unlike Edison, Victor claimed to have exclusive access to the greatest classical singers in Europe. Most of these singers were women and Victor covered the majority of their advertisements with these feminine faces, a corporate decision that ultimately led to the success of the Victor company while its competitors struggled.<sup>80</sup> In advertisements, Edison confronted Victor with claims of technological improvements and design patents exclusive to his machines and recordings, but he and his designs ultimately lost out to the greatest singers in western culture who “sang” on cheaper machines.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> For a complete history of “Nipper” see Barbara Engh, “After ‘His Master’s Voice’: Post-Phonographic Auralities” (Ph.D. diss., University of Minnesota, 1997), 11-12; and Dave Laing, “A Voice Without a Face: Popular Music and the Phonograph in the 1890s,” *Popular Music* 10, no. 1 (1991): 4.

<sup>80</sup> Alexander Bayden Magoun, “Shaping the Sound of Music: The Evolution of the Phonographic Record, 1877-1950,” (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2000), 180.

<sup>81</sup> Magoun, 125.

Unlike the Victor company, Edison utilized an old “hard sell” approach in his advertising. He strongly believed that his face and name alone was enough to sell records, and the overwhelming majority of early Edison advertisements utilized his face somewhere in the ad. This marketing approach hearkened back to the middle of the nineteenth century, where the names and faces of the men who founded and/or operated the industrial firms presided over nearly every advertisement for that particular company.<sup>82</sup> No reason to purchase the items was given and no consumer need expressed. Although Edison’s early machines and recordings were successful, this dated approach held the inventor back as the Victor company (and to a lesser extent, the Columbia company) was quick to market something other than the face of male investors or owners.

Women, who were nameless at first, increasingly appeared in advertisements as the “soft sell” approach—or the reason why approach discussed in chapter 2—replaced the older and less effect “hard sell” approach. The women who sang for the Victor Talking Machine became “musical missionaries” who sold education to the public, encouraging them to listen to the best music, defined as anything they chose to sing or record. Ultimately, Victor was able to sell infinite quantities of education on their recordings.<sup>83</sup>

Any individual with an affinity for early recordings recognizes the name and voice of Enrico Caruso. Easily hailed as the most popular recording artist, he was paid an extraordinary amount of money to record exclusively for the Victor company. No doubt

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<sup>82</sup> Pamela Walker Laird, *Advertising Progress: American Business and the Rise of Consumer Marketing* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 2.

<sup>83</sup> For “musical missionaries,” see Stephen R. Greene, “From Mission to Market: “Good Music,” Radio, and the Transformation of a Crusade, as Portrayed in *Musical America*” (MA Thesis. University of Pittsburgh, 2004), 12-13. For selling education, see Laing, 4.

loved by many consumers of early records, he represents one of the very few men utilized in the Victor advertisements. As a famous opera singer, he owned a voice that people wanted to hear. Or was it simply his name that attracted attention rather than his abilities? A revealing incident took place in Chicago while the Metropolitan was on tour and is noted in John Dizike's book, *Opera in America*.

In the popular double-bill, Andreas Dippel was singing in *Cavalleria Rusticana*, Caruso in *I Pagliacci*. There was a capacity house, attracted by Caruso, not Dippel. The latter was not in good voice that night and was worried about the famous offstage serenade that opens the opera. So the audience was told that he was indisposed and prepared itself to make allowances, a familiar enough incident in opera. Meanwhile, Caruso suggested that he sing the one aria for Dippel—and he did, gloriously. The audience, however, heard what it expected to hear—an unknown Dippel replacement—and responded with mild applause. Caruso was neither hurt nor angered, recognizing that his name was as potent as his voice.<sup>84</sup>

Caruso was a superstar, regardless of his actual abilities. At the box office, people often requested seats to Caruso's next performance rather than a particular opera. As with other superstars, his every performance began and ended with applause.<sup>85</sup> Although he seemed to disregard the public's mediocre response reported above, in a later interview published in *Etude* in 1912, Caruso stated that the public will respond well if one sings well.<sup>86</sup>

In 1904, Caruso signed the first "superstar" contract to record exclusively with the Victor company. He was awarded \$4,000 for the first 10 sides or selections recorded with additional royalties of 40 cents per disc sold and \$10,000 in advance. It has been estimated that he earned between two and five million dollars on recordings alone during his lifetime. His "major hit"—if you will—was "Vesta la Guibba" from Leoncavallo's *I*

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<sup>84</sup> Dizikes, 397.

<sup>85</sup> Dizikes, 396.

<sup>86</sup> Enrico Caruso, "Italy, the Home of Grand Opera," *Etude* 30, no. 1 (1912): 11.

*Pagliacci*. Originally released in 1904, this record was one of Victor's most popular catalogue selections. Re-recorded in 1907, this aria became an even bigger hit, supposedly selling over a million copies.<sup>87</sup>

But Caruso was not simply a recording star, he was also an opera star. In the 1912 *Etude* interview mentioned above, Caruso is hailed as “The most eminent living operatic artist.”<sup>88</sup> He began performing at the Metropolitan Opera House in 1903, earning \$960 per performance. This amount quickly increased to \$1500, then again to \$2000 and \$2500 a performance. He received even larger sums to perform in other venues including \$4,000 to sing in Paris and \$7,000 to appear in Argentina in the 1910s. Later performances include \$10,000 to sing in Havana and \$15,000 to sing in Mexico.<sup>89</sup>

Some have explained Caruso's superstar status, particularly his popularity on record, as a natural phenomenon when compared to female singers. Theodore Adorno in his article “The Curves of the Needle” claims that a woman's voice simply does not record well because it demands the presence of her body. This problem is not shared by men because their voice is akin to their body.

Only there where the body itself resonates, where the self to which the gramophone refers is identical with its sound, only there does the gramophone have its legitimate realm of validity: thus Caruso's uncontested dominance. Wherever sound is separated from the body—as with instruments—or wherever it requires the body as compliment—as is the case with the female voice—gramophonic reproduction becomes problematic.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Kuhlman, 12-14. It is difficult to know exactly what the record sales were during these early years. See Kuhlman, 5.

<sup>88</sup> Caruso, 11.

<sup>89</sup> Dizikes, 398.

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in Engh, 38.

Adorno's conclusions that are problematic. First, as Laing points out, the source of sound from a talking machine had to be "extra-human."<sup>91</sup> Individuals were simply not comfortable with a machine taking on "human attributes." Edison's early recording devices failed to overcome the boundaries of the home sanctuary for this very reason. People were discomfited hearing their own voices emanate from a mechanical machine, so the source of the sound had to be transferred from the individual onto the talking machine itself. The focus of the early models was the large horn and many photographs of individuals listening intently to the machine abound. One could own a famous voice of a singer, male or female, but that voice had to be reproduced or recreated on a musical instrument (phonograph). Thus, it was the disembodiment that allowed pre-recorded records to become acceptable in American homes.

There were a few other arguments against the female voice. One such argument set forth by Amy Lawrence was that a woman's voice was naturally too small and too soft, its higher frequencies translating poorly into recordings. But this argument seems more appropriate when considering technical limitations rather than trying to argue a cultural distaste for women's voices, a perspective that few truly held.<sup>92</sup>

For example, women's voices were used exclusively at the early telephone exchanges, and the majority of opera recordings were made by women. Although Caruso was considered the most popular singer, his career paralleled that of Geraldine Farrar.<sup>93</sup> Both singers recognized their shared fame and sang together on numerous occasions. Articles, such as "The Only Opera Octopus" in *Cosmopolitan*, celebrated them together

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<sup>91</sup> Laing, 8.

<sup>92</sup> Engh, 39.

<sup>93</sup> Batchelor, 176. Caruso first appeared at the MET on November 23, 1903. Farrar first appeared at the Metropolitan opera in New York on November 26, 1906. See also Dizikes, 402.

in 1910.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, a number of magazine articles argued that female voices were naturally superior to male voices.<sup>95</sup>

Victor realized early on that a performing star could sell not only sheet music but also records, and other companies were quick to follow suit. The earliest commercial recordings were completed by anonymous singers, but quickly these were replaced by the names of specific famous performers allowing people to own a particular performance and play it whenever they wished in the home.<sup>96</sup> Although the use of specific famous singers became a norm within the industry, the consistent use of a male singer—such as Caruso—was actually an anomaly.

For instance, Victor ran a consistent advertisement campaign in *Musical America* between November 18, 1905 and December 27, 1913 that showcased the photographs of many different recording artists who recorded exclusively for the Victor company (see appendix A on page 261). Of the 214 advertisements, 187 feature the photo of one singer, 7 feature two singers and 5 feature five different singers for a total of 226 different photos (14 ads feature an image of a Victor talking machine and 1 features the opera composer, Verdi). Women are featured 156 times while men appear only 70 times (69% to 31% respectively). Although women by far outnumber men in this campaign, what is even more interesting is that only 15 different singers were used, 11 women and only 4 men (73.3% to 26.7% respectively).

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<sup>94</sup> Pierre Van Rensselaer Key, “The Only Opera Octopus,” *Cosmopolitan* 48, no. 5 (1910): 542-553.

<sup>95</sup> For example, see “Woman’s Advantage Over Man in Music,” *Musical America*, 4, no. 12 (August 4, 1906): 4

<sup>96</sup> Laing, 6. It is interesting to note at this point that in the surviving Edison surveys sent out by the Edison company in 1921, Edison asks people for their favorite song titles. Although many returned their surveys properly completed, many also returned their surveys having scratched out song title, and replaced it with a list of their favorite singers. Although outside our time frame (1880-1913), this practice still reinforces the point that people were very concerned about the voice on the recording. See the School of Music Library at University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, holdings of 2,644 surviving surveys sent out by Edison Incorporated. 20,000 were originally distributed through the mail.

As we would expect, Caruso is used by Victor Records more than most other singers in this campaign to sell records, and certainly more than the other three men. In fact, he is used 48 different times, which represents roughly 69% of all the male ads. If we accept the premise stated above that Caruso is somewhat of an anomaly, our statistics become even more compelling when we remove him from the equation. Of the 178 other appearances, 87.64% are women and only 12.36% are men (156 to 22 appearances respectively).

One other star appears in the advertisement campaign more than Caruso: Nellie Melba appears 67 times. If we remove both of them from the equation, we are left with 111 appearances, 89 women and 22 men (80% to 20% respectively). What is further interesting is that while Caruso's appearances represent 69% of all male uses, Melba's total appearances only represent 43% of women. But no matter how we choose to analyze the number of appearances, what is overwhelmingly clear is that Victor Records chose to use primarily female opera stars to sell its opera records.

Similar conclusions can be drawn when the Victor advertisements in other magazines are also analyzed. Additional female stars such as Adeline Patti and Jenny Lind are used regularly. The latter is interesting since she died before the advent of recording and therefore never made a record. Adeline Patti used her own name to sell not only tickets to her "Farewell Concerts" but also to sell the relatively few recordings she made for the Victor company. Jenny Lind's popularity lingered even after her retirement and rumors of a Lind recording surfaced soon after Edison's invention was first used to record famous singers, but no disc has ever been found.<sup>97</sup> Although she lived and sang a half

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<sup>97</sup> Michael Scott, *The Record of Singing: Volume 1, to 1914* (Illustrated by the Stuart-Liff Collection. Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1993), 2.



century before Victor began recording and advertising their products, she was used by the company to sell records. For example, see figure 7.5 on page 232. The ad is quick to point out that “all that remains of Jenny Lind is her autograph, her picture, and memories dear to all who ever heard her sing. Her greatest charm—her wondrously sweet and melodious voice—is gone forever. How different had she lived in the present day!”<sup>98</sup> Her image was co-opted by Victor, even though they could not sign her to an exclusive contract. Her name survived into the twentieth century alongside other female Victor recording stars such as Sembrich and Farrar.<sup>99</sup> Of the many singers that Victor used to sell its opera records, many were already hailed as some of the greatest singers in New York. Names such as Calve, Sembrich, Melba, Nordica and Tamagno were hailed as “celebrated guests” and encouraged to record for posterity. The famous Mapleson discs include some of the “Greatest Singers” such as Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Calve, Nordica and Scotti. All of these singers signed exclusive contracts with the Victor recording company during their singing careers.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Examples of this Jenny Lind Advertisement are found in *Life* 52, no. 1350 (September 10, 1908): 277; *Life* 53, no. 1367 (January 4, 1909): 88; *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 2 (January, 1909): Rear Cover; And *Saturday Evening Post* 181, no. 13 (September 26, 1908): Rear Cover.

<sup>99</sup> H.T. Finck. “Success Hints By Great Artists.” *Etude* 28, no. 4 (1910): 239.

<sup>100</sup> Scott, 2.



Jenny Lind singing at  
Castle Garden in 1851

*Jenny Lind*

All that remains of Jenny Lind is her autograph, her picture, and memories dear to all who ever heard her sing.

Her greatest charm—her wondrously sweet and melodious voice—is gone forever.

How different had she lived in the present day!

The *Victor* would have preserved her beautiful voice to posterity, just as it has Tamagno's; just as it does the other great singers of the world.

You can hear them to-day on the *Victor* whenever you like; and generation after generation will keep on hearing them though the artists themselves will be forever silent.

You owe it to yourself to stop in and hear the *Victor*, the very next time you pass a *Victor* store.  
Write to us for catalogues.

**Victor Talking Machine Co., Camden, N. J., U. S. A.**  
Berliner Gramophone Co., Montreal, Canadian Distributors  
Preserve your records and get best results by using only Victor Needles



A complete list of new Victor Records for September will be found in the September number of *Munsey's*, *Scribner's*, *McClure's*, *Century* and *Everybody's*; and October *Cosmopolitan*.

Figure 7.5: Advertisement from *Life* 52, no. 1350 (September 10, 1908): 277

### **“Teaching America Music”: Opera Prima Donnas**

The prima donna or celebrated female singer of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was the equivalent of the modern day popular music star. The majority of public concerts, recitals and music performances in general centered on a particular female voice or name. Although overtures and other purely instrumental works were programmed, the prima donna would be greeted with adoration at her first stage entrance. Sometimes, particularly in the less refined cities, flowers, gold coins, jewelry and thunderous applause were cast by the audience towards the stage as a symbol of their affection for the celebrated singer. Whistling, stamping and yelling were also frequently heard, particularly from the cheaper seats, and were not reserved for the end of a musical number.<sup>101</sup>

### **Women Aspire to Sing**

The prima donna became a symbol of culture, education, refinement and class within the home. Many women desired to become like the famous singers, earning for themselves prestige, glamour and “the exciting life of the concert artist.”<sup>102</sup> Making up the majority of amateur musicians due to their musical responsibilities in the home, women sought musical approval and an agreeable rendezvous outside the home. The resulting women’s musical clubs had two objectives, to develop individual member’s talents and to stimulate the musical culture of the cities. Reinforcing the moral imperative of performing music in the home, “most club members agreed that men’s time was occupied with the quest for money and power leaving women with the duty of

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<sup>101</sup> Martin, 32-33.

<sup>102</sup> “Why Ten Girls Studied Music,” *Etude* 20, no. 6 (June, 1902): 208.

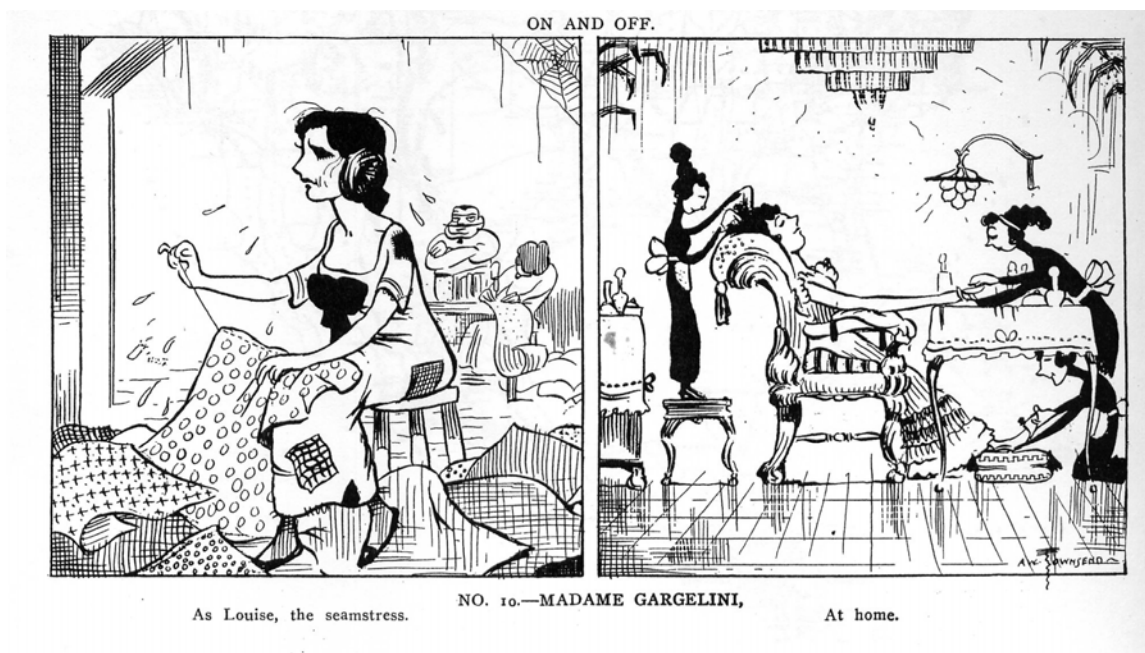
cultivating music and other arts.”<sup>103</sup> The desire of many women to achieve popular status stemmed from a spirit of idealism—a recognized portion of American life—that placed a constant struggle between fact and dream.<sup>104</sup>

Consider the cartoon published in *Musical Courier* and drawn by A.W. Townsend (see figure 7.6 on page 235). Titled “ON AND OFF,” this cartoon depicts “MADAME GARGELINI” both on and off the stage. While on the stage, she depicts the tough and poor life of a seamstress who works in a “sweat shop.” Sweat is obviously pouring from her body while the male boss can be seen in the back ground with folded arms. In strong contrast, Gargelini at home is literally waited on hand and foot by three maids. One is massaging her feet, another tends to her fingers, while a third massages her head. This pampering takes place in a very large room of her home, complete with chandelier, plants (creeping in from either side of the cartoon), expensive furniture and polished floor. Although the extreme difference between the two frames borders on the absurd, Townsend is commenting on the perceived level of luxury available to popular female performers.

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<sup>103</sup> Linda Whitesitt, “The Role of Women Impresarios in American Concert Life, 1871-1933,” *American Music*, 7, no. 2 (1989): 161.

<sup>104</sup> Malcolm Bradbury, “Introduction,” in *Introduction to American Studies*, edited by Malcolm Bradbury and Howard Temperly (New York: Longman, 1998), 2.



**Figure 7.6: Cartoon found in *Musical Courier*, 66, no. 11 (March 12, 1913): 23**

. Many music teachers and magazine articles that provided advice and promised success abound from this time period. However, few opportunities to sing in front of an audience actually presented themselves outside the local musical club. It is interesting to note that unlike women, men seemed uninterested in achieving musical popularity. Very few men studied singing. This created shortages of properly trained male singers. The Roman Catholic Church, for example created a special dispensation for churches in the United States, allowing parishes to forgo the use of Gregorian chant in the liturgy.<sup>105</sup> In fact, a 1906 article published in *Musical America*, states that “there is one line in which men have never held supremacy over women, and that is in the line of the Muses and of music itself in particular.”<sup>106</sup> According to the article, Adeline Patti made more money in her career than any male singer who ever lived. Although the history of western music

<sup>105</sup> “Pope Not to Enforce the Gregorian Chant,” *Musical America* 3, no. 7 (December 20, 1905): 11.

<sup>106</sup> “Woman’s Advantage,” 4.

has been told through the lives of primarily male composers, the story of nineteenth-century amateur musicians and the subsequent early recording opera star is one that is accurately told with famous women singers. Consider the final two paragraphs of the 1906 *Musical America* article mentioned above.

The supremacy of women in music is a purely natural result. People are willing to pay for what they like and in proportion to the earnestness of their choice. Women make the more beautiful music, while men, as a rule, have the more money. As men, therefore, pay well for what they like well, the women musicians have the advantage.

Women also have the privilege of dressing in fine costumes, even when they sing in concerts, while men can only be plain and neat at their best.<sup>107</sup>

Articles reinforcing the idea that women are superior in music abound from this time period. Many of these articles take every opportunity to remind the reader of the most famous singers. A portrait titled “Remarkable Collection of World’s Greatest Opera Divas” was first published in the French music journal *Musica*, and again in *Musical America*. The accompanying caption in the second publication states that “most of these will be recognized as singers who are familiar to American audiences, and several will be identified as American born artists.”<sup>108</sup> A great many of the 43 artists depicted in opera costume in this portrait also recorded for the Victor and Columbia companies. Names such as Sembrich, Garden, Cavalieri, Calve, Patti, Destinn, Nordica, Farrar and Fremstad were all extensively placed by their respective companies in advertisements for opera records. Another article, listing many of the same names, reinforces the fact that American girls are increasingly successful on the stage.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> “Woman’s Advantage,” 4.

<sup>108</sup> “Remarkable Collection of World’s Greatest Opera Divas,” *Musical America* 7, no. 9 (1908): 7.

<sup>109</sup> “Why American Girls Succeed on the Grand Opera Stage,” *Musical America* 7, no. 7 (1908): 7.

Advice was offered by these same stars. Singers such as Garden, Nielson and Tetrizzini state that a woman who wants to sing professionally need to be willing to work hard and sacrifice much of a personal life. Mary Garden claims that a woman must sacrifice marriage, a home and children in order to become an artist.

A woman artist should not marry. That is one of the things she must deny herself. A singer's time is so filled to the brim with work that she has no time to attend to the duties of a home. A man singer may marry, yes; he needs a woman to look after him, to attend to his wants, to give him the loving adulation which is helpful.<sup>110</sup>

Garden continues, "as for a man who marries a singer, I don't think it a very glorious position to be known as a prima donna's husband." In order to attain a great operatic career, Garden states you must study in Europe and you need between \$200 and \$300 a month in expenses.<sup>111</sup>

In direct contrast to Garden, Nielson warns American girls against studying in Europe. She states that teachers demand high prices and never convey the truth about your voice as long as the money holds out. This poor education is coupled with a prejudice against "American debutantes" in Europe, making it difficult for American singers to obtain stage roles.<sup>112</sup>

Melba cautions girls to not pursue a career in singing unless they have a good work ethic, a brain, correct breathing, a "posing" of the voice, physical health and a thorough study of piano and harmony.<sup>113</sup> These requirements are echoed in an article by Tetrizzini who challenges perspective female singers to make sure they have a voice, a natural love of music and the ability to work hard. Of course, she provides these

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<sup>110</sup> Garden, 174.

<sup>111</sup> Garden, 172-73.

<sup>112</sup> Alice Nielson, "A Warning to American Girls," *Etude* 30, no. 1 (1912): 20.

<sup>113</sup> Nellie, Melba, "What Good Singing Really Means," *Ladies Home Journal* 26, no. 6 (1909): 6.

requirements only after she tells her readers that she studied for three months before obtaining her first big role. But she also suggests that this may have a “misleading effect.” Unlike herself, most girls need to work hard.<sup>114</sup>

In addition to articles, many cartoons also comment on amateur musician’s pursuit of fame and success. Consider figure 7.7 on page 239, the caption describes “Doc” Leahy as “Star Discoverer.” A number of astral singing stars are depicted in the dark sky, each with its own human caricature drawing. Doc Leahy peers through his telescope, looking for the next famous singer. Only two of these caricatures are named, Tetrizzini and Polacco. Of these two, only Tetrizzini is a singer. More importantly, she was a famous singer who recorded extensively and exclusively for the Victor company.<sup>115</sup> Giorgio Polacco (1873-1960) was a famous conductor, who held key posts at various opera houses in Europe, South America, and North America during his career.<sup>116</sup> All of the other stars contains women waiting to be discovered, who are begging Leahy to notice them and find their talent.

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<sup>114</sup> Luisa Tetrizzini, “Story of My Operatic Career: The Greatest of Lyric Sopranos now on the Operatic Stage Gives An Interesting Account of the Exceptional Condition under which She Has Become Famous,” *Cosmopolitan* 41, no. 1 (1908): 48-51.

<sup>115</sup> *Victor Records*, (Montreal: Berliner Gram-o-phone Company Limited, May 1912) 236.

<sup>116</sup> <http://www.answers.com/topic/giorgio-polacco>, last accessed on March 31, 2007. Conducting remained (and still does) a role primarily filled by men.





Figure 7.7: Cartoon in *Musical Courier* 66, no. 1 (January 1, 1913): 11

Similar ideas are conveyed in Figure 7.8 on page 240, “Operatic Aspirants appearing before Hammerstein,” depicting a room full of people auditioning for positions in the Manhattan Opera Chorus. The only two men in the room are Hammerstein himself behind a desk and Zuro, the chorus master seated at the piano. All of the applicants are women, pictured in quite comical posturing, wearing hats, elegant dresses and high

healed shoes. Both Hammerstein and Zuro seem annoyed with the sounds made by the current singer who arches her back and stands on her toes. One of the women waiting her turn (in the lower right hand corner of the cartoon) snickers as she evaluates the current singer's performance. Not only are all the applicants women, but they seem to lack skill as they obviously bore Hammerstein who tiredly leans his head on one hand. Oblivious to the glances of the jurors, the expressions of the women suggest a high opinion of themselves.



Figure 7.8: Cartoon in *Musical America* 10, no. 11 (July 24, 1909): 4

## Women Need Musical Training

The desire to become a “great” singer fueled many women’s desire for a formal music education and career outside of this home. Even those women who developed their musical abilities simply to provide entertainment and education in the home sought the aid of a “professional” piano or voice teacher. Music, as well as other “domestic sciences”—defined simply as “the application of science” (known as home economics)—were argued by some to be “a legitimate branch of the collegiate education,” because it could better prepare women for their life of house keeping.<sup>117</sup>

The cost of collegiate education or private music lessons was expensive, especially when compared to the phonograph. Formal music education was no longer a necessary prerequisite for the consumption of “good music” in the home. Women now had the option of providing music without practicing many hours at the piano playing or singing, eliminating the “agony” of both the student and those forced to listen to the resulting imperfect sounds. The appeal of this option was strengthened by the low average price of a phonograph (somewhere between \$10-\$35), far less than the piano. Even though Red Seal Label Records cost a lot more than sheet music—\$3.00 for 12-inch records according to many advertisements—the price difference between the instruments demanded much less financial commitment on the part of the family. While not necessarily cheap, according to the account books examined in chapter 3, families did have disposable income that would cover the cost of the record. Furthermore, by 1906, Victor reduced the cost of their 12-inch records to \$1.00, 10-inch records to 60 cents, and 7-inch records to 35 cents.<sup>118</sup> The records themselves—particularly the Victor Red Seal

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<sup>117</sup> Alice Peloubet, “Training for the Home,” *Good Housekeeping* 34, no. 3 (1902): 212.

<sup>118</sup> *Saturday Evening Post* 178, no. 30 (January 20, 1906): n.p.; and 178, no. 34 (February 17, 1906): n.p.

Label records, became a cheap voice lesson, one that individuals could have “over and over again.” These records offered the voices of the greatest artists for study within the individual’s home, and made them available at any convenient time.

The need for quality music education and training was evident as the agony of practice for others in the home is a common discussion in the literature from this time period. Mary Elizabeth Wilson Sherwood writes in her 1881 publication *Home Amusements* that practice is not home amusement but home torture. She then longingly wonders what it would be like if only a person could learn to sing or play without those first noises.<sup>119</sup> Louise Homer, a famous opera singer and Victor recording artist, suggests that young girls who study singing should not have very high expectations for success. The student should simply choose to study if that is what she wishes to do and not worry about establishing a public career.

No student need feel appalled by the requirements in this her chosen work for the very seriousness of her art will be a joy to her and a constant inspiration in conquering its technique. But she will escape much unhappiness and disappointment if she tries to approach her work without too great expectations of results. If these expectations are not overdeveloped, and she is yet prepared to do her best, her mastery of music will be a source of life-long happiness even if her gifts do not fit her for a public career.<sup>120</sup>

The appropriateness of the American girl’s desire to sing publicly was questioned in many of the popular journals and music magazines. The musical ability of women was frequently the subject of jokes and satirical cartoons. A preeminent collection of these jokes is the “It Is To Laugh” column published in *Musical America*. This column

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<sup>119</sup> Donna R. Braden, “‘The Family That Plays Together Stays Together’: Family Pastimes and Indoor Amusements, 1890-1930,” in *American Home Life, 1880-1930: A Social History of Spaces and Services*, edited by Jessica H. Foy and Thomas J. Schlereth (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 155.

<sup>120</sup> Louise Homer, “Opera Training and the American Girl,” *Good Housekeeping* 54, no. 5 (1912): 618.

appeared each week featuring a collection of jokes pertaining to the musical world.

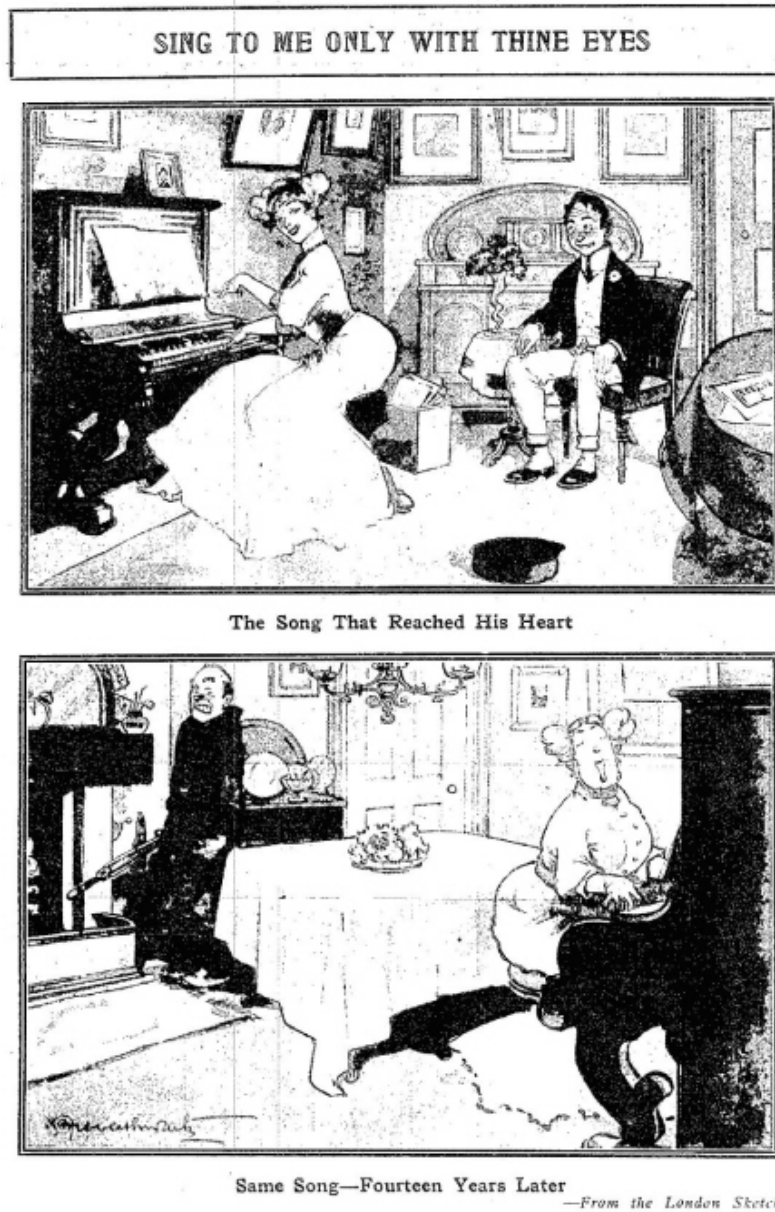
Lousy amateur playing or singing by a female is a common theme, one repeated regularly between its first issue in October, 1898 and December, 1913. A few examples are found in Table 7.3 on page 244.

The humor in most of these examples derives from the assumption that many people have found themselves in a similar situation. But many other jokes border on the fantastic and are not meant to mimic real life; instead the twist is based on the assumed cultural investment of learning to play music, (see the eighth example, Torke, De Pork). Although all such jokes reflect negatively on the ability of female amateur musicians, they also consistently show women's involvement in music making. Many references the high cost of music lessons and the willingness of people to "invest" in the cultural education.

Such sentiment was not limited to the "It is to laugh" column in *Musical America*. Many cartoons also mocked the talent (or lack there of) of the amateur female musician (see figure 7.9 on page 245). In the first of two panels, a young man patiently listens to a young woman play the piano. He is obviously captivated either by the performance or the female he is staring at. In either case, he is enjoying himself and the caption accompanying the first panel says "The Song That Reached His Heart." The caption accompanying the second panel states "Same Song – Fourteen Years Later." We assume that it is the same man, woman, and song. Although the woman continues to enjoy singing the song, the man is anything but captivated by the performance. Again, the implication is the woman seriously lacks in her musical abilities. She can only play one song and never bothered to learn another tune.

**Table 7.3: Several examples of Jokes found under the “It Is to Laugh” column in Musical America**

JOKE	VOL. #.	Date	pp
<p>“My wife knows more about a kitchen range than about a piano.”  “Lucky man.”  “You’re wrong. She thinks she knows more about the piano.” – <i>Kansas City Times</i>.</p>	9, no. 24	April 24, 1909	24
<p>A MUSICAL EDUCATION – “Why do you keep your daughter practicing so incessantly on that piano piece?”  “I want to be sure she can play something when our friends ask to hear her.”  “But suppose they want to hear her play something more?”  “Oh, there’s no danger of that.” – <i>Boston Record</i></p>	9, no. 9	January 9, 1909	31
<p>“There was a murder in the flat above ours last night.”  “Horrors! Tell me about it!”  “That red-headed Miss Afton murdered a few popular songs.” – Exchange.</p>	4, no. 25	November 3, 1906	11
<p>“Heavens! Who’s the girl that’s trying to sing?”  “That is my daughter.”  “Oh – um – if that fool of an accompanist would consent to stop thumping the piano as if it were some wild savage thing he want to kill, we might – ah, that’s better. What a sweet, beautiful voice she has.”  “Yes. That is her brother at the piano.”  – Chicago “Record-Herald”</p>	4, no.25	November 3, 1906	11
<p>“Can that neighbor of yours sing?”  “No; but she does.” – Baltimore “American.”</p>	5, no. 20	March 30, 1907	13
<p>“Come up and see me to-night, old man.”  “All right; I’ll be glad to.”  “our daughter is studying music—“  “By jingo! I have just remembered an engagement. I am sorry, but I cannot possibly come.”  “Pshaw! As I was about to say, our daughter is studying music in Germany, and we get a little bit lonesome.”  “I’ll just cut out the engagement and come anyhow.” –<i>Houston Post</i>.”</p>	10, no. 24	October 23, 1909	24
<p>He – Miss Highnote is certainly a plain looking girl, isn’t she?  She – Well, she isn’t a beauty; but when you hear her sing you will forget her face.  He – Gracious! Is her singing as bad as that? – <i>New York American</i></p>	10, no. 24	October 23, 1909	24
<p>Torke – Your daughter’s musical education must have cost a lot of money?”  De Pork – Yes, it did, but I’ve got it all back.  Torke – Indeed!  De Pork – Yes! I’d been trying to buy the house next door for years and they wouldn’t sell. But since she’s come home they’ve sold it to me for half price. – <i>Harper’s Weekly</i>.</p>	10, no. 24	October 23, 1909	24
<p>She finished her piano solo with a pretty flourish, and, whirling around on the stool, faced the young man. She was proud of her effort, but she was a modest young woman.  “You see,” she said, “you see, I really play very poorly, just as I told you.”  “Yes,” he replied, “but you are truthful, and that is more than being artistic.”  Question: Was the young man ever invited to call again?  Answer: He was not !—Cleveland Plain- Dealer.</p>	7, no. 6	December 21, 1907	13



**Figure 7.9:** Cartoon in *Musical America* 11, no. 12 (Jan. 29, 1910): 28

Other cartoons also question the abilities of amateur musicians: in one crying piano movers are serenaded by a woman on the instrument they just finished moving instead of receiving a tip for their efforts; in another a man desperately scrambles about

the music studio, looking for a key to lock the piano because guests are due to arrive.<sup>121</sup>

One additional cartoon—originally published in the *London Opinion*—deserves attention, (figure 7.10 below). It shows two elegantly dressed “gentlemen” in a park. One standing, addresses the other who is reclining on a park bench. Titled “An Effective Preventative,” a simple exchange takes place. One asks the other, “Are you a believer in vaccination?” The reply, “Most certainly. It kept my daughter from playing the piano for nearly a week.”



Hewitt—Are you a believer in vaccination?  
 Jewett—Most certainly. It kept my daughter from playing the piano for nearly a week!—*London Opinion*.

Figure 7.10: Cartoon in *Musical America* 8, no. 12 (August 1, 1908): 19

<sup>121</sup> These cartoons are titled “Ample Compensation” and “Precaution” respectively. “Ample Compensation,” *Musical America* 6, no. 15 (August 24, 1907): 19; and 9, no. 4 (December 5, 1908): 19.



Most of these jokes and cartoons were first published in other non-musical publications, and republished by the editors of *Musical America*. The wide-spread use of such jokes demonstrates the cultural currency of women's roles as singers, teachers and providers of music in the home, while at the same time questioning their abilities or the quality of the music they created.

They also point to the marketing opportunity for a high-quality music teacher to fix the inadequacy of home performances. There were few options for most homes. Many students did not have the discretion needed to choose an appropriate teacher. Without an education, how could individuals know what to look for? How could they know who the quality singers were unless they were also famous (in which case, they probably would not be teaching)? And yet, a good teacher was necessary if in-home recitals were to improve. According to one author, most American girls did not have the ability to find a good teacher. The same author claimed that the key to Mary Garden's success was her discrimination in choosing the right voice teacher. She did not accept third party claims of excellence.<sup>122</sup> Other articles promulgate the importance of a quality teacher, whose ranks were supposedly increasing due to the increase in the demand for quality opera.<sup>123</sup> Proper training, even of a naturally good voice was a must.<sup>124</sup>

Professional singers, music educators and popular journals agreed that in addition to a good teacher, students needed access to the greatest singers. Karleton Hackett, author of the article "Listening to Great Artists," poses the rhetorical question, "How shall the

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<sup>122</sup> William Armstrong, "A Wonderful New Singer: The Career of Miss Mary Garden, Idol of Parisian Opera-Goers, who has Come Back to America to Interpret the Great Roles She Made Famous at the Opera Comique," *Cosmopolitan* 44, no. 3 (1908): 296.

<sup>123</sup> Homer, 618.

<sup>124</sup> Italo Campanini, "How to Train the Voice," *Etude* 28, no. 4 (1910): 270.

young student gain any real love for music, realize any artistic standard, have a true conception of the meaning of music, unless he hears the artists sing.”<sup>125</sup> He states further that hearing the “great artists” is a vital element in learning to sing. Similar statements abound: “There is no greater help to a student than to listen to and study carefully the best singers and the great artists”:<sup>126</sup> “from this time forward all occasions to bring the child into contact with music and musicians (good music and good musicians) must be sought for...”<sup>127</sup>

### **Records Offer Superior Music Education**

Advertising educational rhetoric to promote records as a cheap alternative, rendered both high ticket prices for concerts and expensive studio rates for private vocal instruction unnecessary. Recognizing the fact that women were primarily the ones making amateur music—due primarily to a cultural and moral mandate to teach and provide music within the home, as well as aspirations of fame in the professional and semi professional music world—all provided a need for formal vocal training among the female population. Victor was the first talking machine company to capitalize on this need. The explicit language in the Red Seal Label Record ads promised a superior educational experience. The average cost of these records according to the advertisements, was \$2.00. However, in reality many recordings cost much less. But even \$2.00 (in conjunction with a low priced talking machine) was cheaper than studio time with a quality teacher. In addition to owning culture in the form of a famous singer, such an investment purchased a lesson, one that could be reviewed over and over again

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<sup>125</sup> Hackett, 49.

<sup>126</sup> Homer, 621.

<sup>127</sup> Albert Lavignac, *Musical Education*, translated by Esther Singleton (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903), 28.

by the student. Furthermore, it allowed consumers to purchase an infinite amount and variety of education.<sup>128</sup> The repeatability of the records became a central factor in the success of recordings as an educational force.<sup>129</sup>

Victor's Red Seal Record advertising campaign in *Musical America* consistently used rhetoric that promised a superior vocal education for the listener. Some ads simply tell the consumer to "Study under Sembrich" or another popular artist. Others tell the consumer to "Get the best interpretation of operatic music" or claim that the Victor is "An important aid in your study." These ads all promise "no better way to study intricate passages," "forward strides" in your vocal study, "[a] study [of] the actual tones, exquisite expression, and the actual finished tones" of a particular singer, rapid advancement in your own singing, and of course the ability to "at any time hear your favorite singer render that particularly difficult aria you are studying!"<sup>130</sup> One popular ad (used consistently between March 13, 1909 and July 31, 1909) incorporates a quote from Ernestine Schumann-Heink (along with her photo)...

I consider the Victor Record a mirror of the human voice, and the best vocal instructor of the day. They reproduce the art of the singer so accurately that no point of beauty and no fault escapes detection. What a wonderful study they are for gifted students, and how welcome they must be to artists to enable them to enhance the good and avoid the bad.

Advertisements claimed that the superior education found on the Victor Red Seal Label Records was the result of the famous singer's willingness to be your teacher, to come to your home and "demonstrate" how to sing particular passages of music for

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<sup>128</sup> Laing, 4.

<sup>129</sup> Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004) 53.

<sup>130</sup> For example, see *Musical America*, Vol. VI, No. 2 (May 25, 1907) p 19; Vol. IV, No. 24 (October 27, 1906) p 18; Vol. V, No. 20 (March 30, 1907) p 23; Vol. VI, No. 4 (June 8, 1907) p 16; and Vol. VI, No. 6 (June 22, 1907) p 19 respectively. Also, refer to the chart in Appendix A beginning on page 261.

you.<sup>131</sup> But if you were not convinced by the rhetoric above, beginning in Vol. 13, no. 16 and continuing through Vol. 15, no. 12 (February 25, 1911 – January 27, 1912) Victor ran ads featuring Geraldine Farrar, boldly stating that...

You might go to Paris, or any of the great musical centres of Europe, to hear and study the great operas, **but you will not find anywhere, more practical actual voice demonstrations or a better opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the methods of the greatest living artists, than afforded you by the Victor.**<sup>132</sup>

Edison tried to compete with the Victor company, arguing that the ability to record a voice for later review by a teacher brought educational progress to the student. There was little benefit in simply listening to pre-recorded opera stars. According to various ads, Mr. George Crampton, a graduate of the Royal College of Music, and the Siegel-Myers Correspondence School of Music functions as teacher. After hearing the lesson on cylinder, the student then makes a record of their voice to send in for correction. Many students have “enthusiastically” written to Edison saying.

“Your Voice Lessons, with the aid of the Phonograph, are a revelation; just like having the living teacher at my side. Have corrected the faults that retarded my progress, and am now succeeding beyond my expectations.”<sup>133</sup>

By 1912, the concept of listening to opera records as a fundamental part of one’s musical education had taken hold in articles and music education books. For example, *Etude* published a list titled “Some Operas a Child Should Know.” In explaining what one should do with this list, the student is told first to study the libretto, second listen to pianoforte transcriptions and talking-machine records of the operas; finally, study the life

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<sup>131</sup> A number of Caruso ads placed in *Musical America* between Vol. XI, No. 26 – Vol. XIII, No. 16 (May 7, 1910- February 11, 1911) state that “The Caruso records cannot be too lightly commended to teachers and students, giving the latter just what most teachers cannot give – actual voice ‘demonstrations.’”

<sup>132</sup> Emphasis added.

<sup>133</sup> *Etude* 31, no. 3 (March, 1913): 231.

of the composer.<sup>134</sup> By 1907, music magazines encouraged saving records for educational and historical collections.<sup>135</sup> In 1909, *Musical America* explained how records were being incorporated into the music classroom: first, the record was played; then the teacher explained what was heard; finally, a discussion of the singer ensued. No mention or emphasis was placed on the composer. The article further explained that the use of phonograph music in the classroom was made a general practice due to its popularity among the students: children enjoyed listening to “high class” recorded music.<sup>136</sup>

As singing and piano playing were being replaced in the home (and schools) by records, the definition of musicianship needed to be altered. Cultivating an intelligent enjoyment of music, rather than applied musical skill, became the highest goal of educator and student.<sup>137</sup> Louis C. Elson was one of the early educators who questioned the validity of teaching singing to everyone in public schools. A type of musical appreciation being inserted in the curriculum promoted—in his view—an understanding of the elements of musical culture, an increasingly important idea in the growing humanistic education.<sup>138</sup>

*Etude* magazine promoted the use of a particular game in 1912 called “Stars of the Opera.” For use in the music history class, the game is designed to encourage musicianship among the students by having them learn about the life of opera stars. The description of the game is as follows:

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<sup>134</sup> “Some Operas a Child Should Know,” *Etude* 30, no. 1 (1912): 62.

<sup>135</sup> “Save Phonograph Records,” *Musical America* 5, no. 9 (1907): 1.

<sup>136</sup> “Opera Records in School,” *Musical America* 9, no. 15 (1909): 2.

<sup>137</sup> Katz, “Making America More Musical,” 457.

<sup>138</sup> Zultan Roman, “Music in Turn-of-the-Century America: A View from the ‘Old World,’” *American Music* 7, no. 3 (1989): 319.

To each player is given a card with the name of an opera star and her leading role. Calve—*Carmen*; Burrian—*Tristan*; Melba—*Lucia*; Fremstadt—*Isolda*; Gadski—*Brünnhilda*; Caruso—*Johnson*; Eames—*Eva*, etc.

A blindfolded leader stands in the center of a circle of children. He is the manager. Touching one of the children he says, “What opera singer is this?” The child answers “*Calve*, come hear me sing.” Each gives the name on his card, and when all are named the manager says, “Go get your contracts.” They break the circle and scamper out of reach, but not out of the room. When the manager shouts “The opera season is here, who’ll sing *Carmen*?” the child representing Calve answers. The manager must locate her and try to catch her; the game is continued until all the singers are caught. The one who takes the longest to be caught receives a favor of an opera star’s picture in her leading role.<sup>139</sup>

The use of educational rhetoric in record advertisements promoted and enabled a shift away from actual singing and towards music appreciation in schools.<sup>140</sup> During the first decade of the twentieth-century, Victor designed a “schoolhouse” model, or the Victor XXV.<sup>141</sup> The use of a talking machine debuted in the University classroom at least as early as 1913 when Mount Holyoke purchased a phonograph and a number of records for use in their music courses.<sup>142</sup>

Many books and articles provide concise lists to be followed by the student and teacher. For example, in 1911, Dolores Bacon published the book *Operas Every Child Should Know: Descriptions of the Text and Music of Some of the Most Famous Masterpieces*. The author claims that the short list is due to the importance of covering fewer operas in greater detail than to give a limited account of many titles. She also contends that some of the choices are musically poor, but are included due to their popularity.<sup>143</sup> The contents of this volume—including Balfe’s *The Bohemian Girl*,

<sup>139</sup> “Stars of the Opera,” *Etude* 30, no. 1 (1912): 63.

<sup>140</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 61.

<sup>141</sup> Holly Kruse, “Early Audio Technology and Domestic Space,” *Stanford Humanities Review* 3, Autumn (1993), 4.

<sup>142</sup> Katz, “Making America More Musical,” 460.

<sup>143</sup> Dolores Bacon, *Operas Every Child Should Know: Descriptions of the Text and Music of Some of the Most Famous Masterpieces* (New York: Grosset & Dunlop Publishers, 1911), v.

Flotow's *Martha*, Sullivan's *Pinafore* and Verdi's *Rigoletto*, *Il Trovatore* and *Aida*—mirror the contents of the majority of similar collections published during this time period as well as the early record catalogues. Similar selections can also be found in help aids published in magazines, such as “How to Pronounce Names of Some Well Known Operas” and “Some Operas a Child Should Know.”<sup>144</sup>

Consider again the music history game described in *Etude* magazine. The emphasis was on the singer and the particular opera roles they were currently famous for. Learning this culture became more important than actually learning to sing, a reality predicted and feared by Sousa as he considered the potential for Edison's invention. Text books began to incorporate singers in their own chapters alongside composers, pianists and conductors. The popularity of such books reflect the shift towards music appreciation and away from actual music making. Consider J. Cuthbert Hadden's book, *Modern Musicians: A Book for Players, Singers & Listeners*. Great emphasis is placed on both male and female singers, describing their study, careers and reinforcing their fame. The title places the listener on equal footing with actual players and singers of music.

This new emphasis on music appreciation mirrored the growing belief that civilization was currently improving standards of education, behavior and economic growth, factors used to measure human and social progress. The concept of civilized living contained, by implication, the ideal of enlightened consumption, or the ability to distinguish between quality goods that promoted learning, and inferior goods that left a

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<sup>144</sup> “How to Pronounce the Names of Some Well Known Operas,” *Etude* 27, no. 7 (1909): 499; and “Some Operas a Child Should Know,” 62.

person lacking refinement.<sup>145</sup> A personal ability to regurgitate on command a store of memorized knowledge symbolized an individual's progress from barbarism to cultivation. Character, ability to understand language construction (linguistic training) and developing a constructive imagination were all important in the creation of a "cultivated" person.<sup>146</sup> Music was increasingly seen as an essential knowledge, which when appropriately appreciated by an individual, symbolized progress.<sup>147</sup>

Not all educators accepted the phonograph as an asset. In fact, many music teachers, particularly those involved with private instruction viewed the talking machine—along with the player piano—a menace to the future of the teaching profession. By 1913, these individuals were encouraged to accept the talking machine as a benefit and try to work with it rather than continue to oppose it. One article published in *Musician* challenges those teachers who continue to view mechanical instruments as a negative. "Why not accept the fact that the talking machine and the mechanical player are boons to the folks at home! There is more music in the American Home today than there was ten years ago."<sup>148</sup> One author known as F.S.L. writes in *Musician* that the talking machine has assumed an important role in vocal instruction, and views "A Gramophone Method of Singing" as a favorable development. The author believes that the use of the talking machine technology may open the way to new and unsuspected

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<sup>145</sup> Grier, *Culture & Comfort*, 101, 104.

<sup>146</sup> Charles W. Eliot, "The New Definition of the Cultivated Man," *Etude* 22, no. 5 (1904): 186.

<sup>147</sup> The use of educational rhetoric to sell products was used by many different industries, not just the Victor company. Consider the Johnson Educator Food Company, particularly advertisements for their "Educator Crackers." Many reasons for superior quality and taste are given, but no real reason for the use of "Educator" is set forth in the advertisements. See the ad in *Good Housekeeping* 55, no. 6 (December, 1912): 80a.

<sup>148</sup> "Music in the Home," *Musician* 18, no. 5 (1913): 312. See also, W.S.B. Mathews, "The Self Player," *Etude* 20, no. 6 (June, 1902): 217.



possibilities in teaching and in learning.<sup>149</sup> The phonograph's proponents were numerous and varied, comprising teachers, critics, activists, patrons, performers, and "average" phonograph owners. All believed that this technological development in the home—as *Etude* magazine put it in 1922—would "help America become a truly musical nation."<sup>150</sup>

The Victor company established its own educational department responsible for developing materials that utilized the Red Seal Records and to work directly with schools.<sup>151</sup> The many resulting publications focused on listening to opera recordings both in the schools and in the home. Some of the earliest titles clearly for use in the classroom include, *What We Hear in Music*, *Musical Manual for Rural Schools with the Victrola* and *Music Appreciation with the Victrola for Children for Elementary Grades*. *What We Hear in Music*, by Anne Shaw Faulkner, was one of the very first formal music text books published by the industry (1913).<sup>152</sup> The course was designed to utilize the many Red Seal Record Labels, and included 279 different records; and of course, the student would need access to all of them in order to benefit fully from the curriculum.

Victor also published beautifully bound catalogues that combined record promotion with instruction (an early example of "infotainment").<sup>153</sup> Other publications meant to promote in-home consumption of recordings includes the famous *Victor Book of the Opera*, first published in 1912 and designed to specifically help mothers teach the opera stories and buy the appropriate records.<sup>154</sup> By its own description, the *Victor Book*

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<sup>149</sup> F.S.L., "A Gramophone Method of Singing," *Musician* 15, no. 9 (1910): 618. See also W.D. Wegeforth, "The Talking Machine as a Public Educator," *Lippincott's* 37, (1911): 629.

<sup>150</sup> Katz, "Making America More Musical," 449. *Etude* quote from Horace Johnson, "Department of Recorded Music: Phonographs in the Home," *Etude* 40 (February, 1922): 88.

<sup>151</sup> John Harvith and Susan Edwards Harvith, eds., *Edison, Musicians, and the Phonograph: A Century in Retrospect* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 3.

<sup>152</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 66.

<sup>153</sup> Symes, 222.

<sup>154</sup> Kruse, 9.

*of the Opera* was an elaborate catalogue. It included opera titles in various languages, date and place of first performances, date and place of U.S. première, cast of characters, brief and clearly stated synopsis of the story, occasional translations of the text, every act and scene indicated, every separate number mentioned in proper order, and more than three hundred portraits and pictures, making it the most completely illustrated book of opera ever published.<sup>155</sup> Such a volume was clearly meant to provide visual cues for the recordings in order to make them a more complete replacement for the actual staged performances. Furthermore, it served to overcome the problem of abridged opera recordings by providing a textual substitute for the missing music.<sup>156</sup> Victor also published a guide form for phonograph memory contests, where competitors would be given a list of records to “memorize.” After a period of preparation, usually several weeks in length, the contestants would recall the name of the work and composer as it was played. The individual or team that scored the highest would win a prize.<sup>157</sup>

All of the print media surrounding Victor’s records was supposed to help eliminate the confusion of record buying and unite the reader quickly and painlessly with the best in classical music.<sup>158</sup> Victor’s materials targeted mothers as the moral educators of the family, arguing that these records were able to provide a complete musical education to the children in the home. These high-brow recordings became synonymous with taste and property.<sup>159</sup> To press as many records as possible and educate the public

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<sup>155</sup> *Victor Book of the Opera* (Camden, NJ: Victor Talking Machine Company, 1912), 9.

<sup>156</sup> Symes, 229.

<sup>157</sup> Katz, *Capturing Sound*, 65.

<sup>158</sup> Symes, 225.

<sup>159</sup> Roland Gelatt, *The Fabulous Phonograph: From Tinfoil to High Fidelity* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippencott, 1954, 1955), 188.

regarding proper record consumption was the work of the early recording industry during the first half of the twentieth century.<sup>160</sup>

It is impossible to know exactly how many recordings were produced and sold during these early years.<sup>161</sup> But the surviving lists do tell us something. With the heavy emphasis placed on Victor's opera recording stars and their Red Seal Label record, it is interesting to note that—according to a chart of Victor record sales by class of record, filed with the U.S. District Court of New York on January 26, 1943—between 1903 (when the label was first released in the United States) and 1913, the Red Seal Records always represented 15.58% of total Victor record sales while 79.42% were the black label and 5% were simply noted as “Miscellaneous” (see table 7.4 below).<sup>162</sup>

**Table 7.4: Total Victor records sold by class between 1903-1913**

Year	Red Seal		Black		Misc		Total
	Records sold	% of total	Records sold	% of total	Records sold	% of total	
1903	306,312	15.58%	1,561,422	79.42%	98,302	5%	1,966,036
1904	404,308	15.58%	2,060,952	79.42%	129,751	5%	2,595,011
1905	555,540	15.58%	2,831,855	79.42%	178,284	5%	3,565,679
1906	1,098,680	15.58%	5,600,506	79.42%	352,589	5%	7,051,775
1907	1,197,604	15.58%	6,104,770	79.42%	384,335	5%	7,686,709
1908	817,671	15.58%	4,168,069	79.42%	262,407	5%	5,248,147
1909	722,837	15.58%	3,684,653	79.42%	231,973	5%	4,639,463
1910	932,942	15.58%	4,755,662	79.42%	299,400	5%	5,988,004
1911	966,895	15.58%	4,928,738	79.42%	310,296	5%	6,205,929
1912	1,425,646	15.58%	7,267,209	79.42%	457,519	5%	9,150,374
1913	1,727,296	15.58%	8,804,869	79.42%	554,324	5%	11,086,489

<sup>160</sup> Schonberg, 6.

<sup>161</sup> Kuhlman, 5.

<sup>162</sup> It is unknown what “miscellaneous” means before 1910 in the chart filed with the U.S. District Court. The number of records sold in each class is taken from an exhibit filed with the U.S. District Court, S.D. of New York, January 26 1943, and titled “Victor Record Sales (1901-1941),” [www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html](http://www.mainspringpress.com/victorsales.html), last accessed on December 19, 2006.

During these early years, the Red Seal Label consisted primarily of opera aria recordings. Opera selections were also regularly included under the black label in addition to many other popular songs and dance tunes. These versions often used lesser known artists whose name sometimes did not appear on the record, and they were cheaper than their Red Seal Label counterparts. It is unclear what the miscellaneous column represents in the Victor statistic, and no lists exist showing exactly which titles were sold. Yet very few advertisements can be found that promote a “lowbrow” record, popular tune, or popular song artist. Clearly, advertising was not needed in order to sell the “other” records. People did not need to be taught how to appreciate the cheaper “dance music” selections. In spite of these unclear statistics, what is clear is that a single selection was all individuals needed in order to provide culture, education and quality entertainment in the home. A single record by Schumann-Heink or Emma Eames provided ownership of that voice for the entire family. Prestige and moral entertainment on record was more expensive than the lower-class recordings, but only a few were needed for an individual to engage in upward social mobility.

### **Conclusion**

At the outset of the twenty-first century, it is difficult for us to imagine a world without recorded music in our homes, in our vehicles and on our personal listening devices. We are tempted to view Edison’s invention as an instant success, one that people immediately desired to own, display and use in their homes. Although recorded sound was plagued with technical limitations, we imagine a world ripe with desire for it.

This dissertation attempts to provide a clearer picture of the budding recording industry and the preexistent musical and social factors that investors needed to navigate

in order for recordings to become the phenomenon we recognize them to be today. Understanding the different factors that lent themselves to the creation of an in-home culture for recordings helps us to understand subsequent history of recorded sound.

The history of the early recording industry in many ways mimics the history of America around the turn of the twentieth century. Understanding the one aids in comprehending the other. The gender roles in redefining Edison's invention—specifically women's role of matriarch in the home, women's moral imperative to provide music (as culture) in the home in the form of quality entertainment and education, and women's responsibility to purchase the items for the home—are an important part of phonograph history that have previously been under-recognized in the scholarship on the subject. Particularly, the concept of the phonograph as a labor-saving device has previously escaped scholars' attention.

The acceptance of the phonograph in the home by women established a recording culture in America, one that continues to affect the way we consume music a century later.

## **APPENDIXES**

**APPENDIX A: VICTOR RED SEAL LABEL RECORD ADVERTISEMENTS IN  
*MUSICAL AMERICA*, VOL. 3–18**

**Preface**

The journal *Musical America* was published between the years 1898 and 1964, ceasing publication for several years after June 24, 1899 and beginning again on November 18, 1905.<sup>1</sup> With its re-emergence, *Musical America* began running a consistent advertising campaign for Victor Red Seal Records, one every other week with rare exceptions; all promoted opera recordings. The chart below lists these advertisements in order of publication. In addition to the date, issue number and page number, the chart also indicates which artist/artists appear (as photographed) and whether they are male or female, and includes a transcription of each ad. If the photo appears without the artist's name, then the name is included within brackets. If the same advertisement was repeated, this is indicated with ditto marks (quotation marks) in the "Advertisement Transcription" column.

The dimensions for all of these advertisements (except the single full page advertisement featuring Arral in volume 10, number 22) are roughly 3 inches high by 5.5 inches wide. The total number of photos or appearances in the ads (including illustrations of the talking machine) between November 18, 1905 and December 27, 1913 is 214. Of these 199 ads feature at least one—on rare occasion two or five—famous

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<sup>1</sup> In 1964, this publication was absorbed into the journal *High Fidelity*. In 1987, *High Fidelity* changed its name to *Musical and Dramatic Courier*.

Victor recording stars. Altogether, 15 different singers appear 226 times. Of these appearances, 156 were women (69%) and 70 were men (31%). See the analysis, page 288.

**Chart: Victor Advertisements in *Musical America*, Vol. 3-18**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Artist Featured</b>	<b>Voice Gender</b>	<b>Advertisement Transcription</b>
11-18-1905	3, no. 1	13	[Caruso]	Male	<b>The great opera singers teach you[.]</b> The living voices of famous operatic stars are brought right to your home on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> and are of great value in the study of music. The rich musical tone of the “ <i>Victor</i> ” has converted even the most skeptical musicians. They are delighted now, instead of critical.
12-9-1905	3, no. 4	13	[Caruso]	Male	<b>Study Music Under Famous Opera Singers[.]</b> You can thoroughly master the great musical compositions under their guidance. They render selections over and over again for you on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Musicians are delighted with the sweet and melodious tone of the “ <i>Victor</i> ” and endorse this method of study. “ <i>Victor</i> ” Red Seal Records are sold by more than 25,000 dealers—any of them will gladly play some of the newest records for you.
12-23-1905	3, no. 6	10	[Calve]	Female	<b>The Best Aid to A Musical Education[.]</b> Catch an inspiration for your vocal studies—the true spirit and right expression of the master compositions, as sung by leading operatic stars. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> bring to you the actual living voices of Calvé, Journet and many other, and you can hear them as often as you want. Musicians are captivated with the sweet, musical tone of the “ <i>Victor</i> .” So different from what they expected of a talking machine. Stop in your dealer’s and ask him to play some of the latest “ <i>Victor</i> ” Red Seal Records.
1-6-1906	3, no. 8	17	[Calve]	Female	<b>Get the best interpretation of operatic music[.]</b> The noted opera singers of the world are the best teachers for you. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> bring their living voices to you to help you in your studies. The “ <i>Victor</i> ,” by its full, clear musical tone, has entirely overcome the prejudice against talking machines and proved itself a real musical instrument. Hear some of the newest “ <i>Victor</i> ” Red Seal Records. Your leading music dealer will be glad to play them for you.
1-20-1906	3, no. 10	13	[Eames]	Female	<b>Famous Operatic Stars as Vocal</b>



Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					<p><b>Instructors[.]</b> Valuable lessons in true expression come to you from the perfect rendition of difficult pieces by most noted artists of both continents. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> give you the benefit, not of one, but any artists' teachings, and broaden and polish your musical training. Even the most critical judges of music are enthusiastic over the full, rich, musical tone quality of the "<i>Victor.</i>" Ask your leading Music Dealer to play some of the latest "<i>Victor</i>" Red Seal Records.</p>
2-3-1906	3, no. 12	11	[Plancon]	Male	<p><b>Master the Great Musical Compositions[.]</b> The soul-thrilling harmonies of the ablest composers, rendered by world-famous vocalists, assist you to a higher musical education by means of the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> They give the real natural expression true to the living voice of such noted singers as Plancon, Calve, Eames, Caruso and others. It is a great pleasure to listen to the "<b>Victor.</b>" Its sweet, clear, melodious tone has proven a revelation to even the most skeptical musicians. Why not go to your leading music dealer's and hear some of the latest <b>Victor</b> Red Seal Records?</p>
2-17-1906	3, no. 14	11	[Caruso]	Male	<p><b>Be a pupil of celebrated opera singers[.]</b> The broadest musical education by the whole galaxy of world renowned stars, is yours through the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> What an inspiration to have their actual living voices continually at your service! The "<b>Victor</b>" has a charming, rich resonant tone that is a constant source of delight to musicians as well as the music-loving public. Your leading music dealer will play any of the newest <b>Victor</b> Red Seal Records you want to hear.</p>
3-3-1906	3, no. 16	11	Sembrich	Female	<p><b>Vocal Lessons by Sembrich[.]</b> No better way to become familiar with every aria of classical music than by hearing the leading operatic stars sing on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The selections are true to life and even the most delicate passages are clearly expressed. The "<b>Victor</b>" is a really wonderful musical instrument and opens up splendid opportunities with its clear, full, melodious tones. Why not go to your leading music dealer's and hear some of the newest <b>Victor</b> Red Seal Records?</p>
3-17-1906	3, no. 18	11	[Plancon]	Male	<p><b>Valuable lessons in vocal instruction[.]</b> Nothing could be more helpful to any one of a musical tendency than a close study of the compositions as rendered by the great opera singers. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> [b]ring to you the living voices of Melba, Caruso, Calve, Plancon and other famous artists and make you</p>

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					familiar with their methods of singing and manner of breathing. The VICTOR is an inspiration to a musical temperament and its clear, rich tone has won over the most critical judges of music. Your leading music dealer will gladly play some of the newest VICTOR Red Seal Records for you.
3-31-1906	3, no. 20	11	Sembrich	Female	<b>Study under Sembrich[.]</b> Sembrich, Scotti, Eames and Campanari are among the operatic stars who impart their artistic phrasing to you through <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> They teach you by their singing the correct expression of every passage. Besides its value as an instructor, the <i>Victor</i> is a great entertainer and has endeared itself to hosts of music lovers. Go to your leading music-dealer's and hear a few of the very latest <i>Victor</i> Red Seal Records.
4-14-1906	3, no. 22	12	[Journet]	Male	<b>Just the interpretation the composers intended[.]</b> Melba, Journet, Calve, Caruso and other noted vocalists show you how the various musical gems should be rendered. Their instruction comes to you through the <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> and they inspire you to higher things in the world of music. All compositions are played by the <i>Victor</i> in such a sweet, musical tone, and so true to life, that it has been endorsed by even the most critical judges of music. Ask your leading music dealer to let you hear some of the latest <i>Victor</i> Red Seal Records.
5-5-1906	3, no. 25	13	Caruso	Male	<b>Study under Caruso[.]</b> His magnificent voice is at your service to help you to a perfect rendition of the various musical gems. Other leading operatic stars of both continents sing for you on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> and enthuse you with their passionate and masterful style. Every part of every selection is as clear and natural as the human voice and rendered in the rich, musical tone known only to the <i>Victor</i> . Hear some of the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> at your leading music dealer's.
5-12-1906	3, no. 26	13	[Blauvelt]	Female	<b>Learn the true expressions of all compositions[.]</b> Don't retard your musical education when it is so easy to find out the correct interpretation of the great composer's conceptions. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> Unfold to you the manner of breathing as well as the method of singing of such renowned operatic stars as Blauvelt, Caruso, Melba and many others. Even the most skeptical musicians have nothing but praise for the sweet, melodious tone of the VICTOR. Your leading music dealer will gladly play some of the newest VICTOR Red

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					Seal Records for you.
5-26-1906	4, no. 2	11	Melba	Female	<b>Study under Melba[.]</b> There is much to be learned in method, breathing, and the art of interpretation by hearing Melba and other famous artists sing on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records [.]</b> The parts of the compositions that are the most difficult to you can be played over and over again until you have thoroughly mastered every note. The VICTOR is particularly adapted to the study of music because of its rich, clear musical tone. Go to your leading music dealer's and hear a few of the very latest VICTOR Red Seal Records. Write for catalogue of machines and records.
6-9-1906	4, no. 4	11	Sembrich	Female	<b>Sembrich will help you to master music[.]</b> All her charm of expression and beauty of rendition are as an open book to you through the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> An excellent means of preserving the actual living voices of the greatest opera stars, and at the same time getting the benefit of their years of training and experiences. The tone quality of the VICTOR is full, rich and melodious, and pleases musicians and music lovers alike. Hear some of the newest VICTOR Red Seal Records at your leading music dealers'. Write for catalogue of machines and records.
6-23-1906	4, no. 6	10	Eames	Female	<b>Study under Emma Eames[.]</b> Broaden your education by studying the expressive and stirring arias as rendered by Madame Eames and other celebrated vocalists on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> These artists throw themselves into the spirit of their music and help you to a proper interpretation of the great masterpieces. The VICTOR has a beautiful, clear, musical tone that captivates even the most critical judges of music. Ask your leading music dealer to let you hear some of the latest VICTOR Red Seal Records. Write for catalogue of machines ad records.
7-7-1906	4, no. 8	2	Melba	Female	<b>Study under Melba[.]</b> You can't help but improve in your studies of music under the guidance of such high class artists as Melba, Sembrich, Caruso, Scotti and Plancon. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> bring to you the living voices of the world's best singers and give you an insight into their artistic interpretation and manner of breathing. This method of study has found favor among even the most skeptical musicians. They are delighted with the full, rich tone qualities of the VICTOR.
7-21-1906	4, no. 10	14	Plancon	Male	<b>Study under Plancon[.]</b> The master of legato singing, will be the greatest assistance in

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					perfecting your musical education. His interpretation of the "Invocation" from the Magic Flute by Mozart, on No. 85042 of the <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> has been referred to by many great musicians as a singing lesson for generations to come. The most critical judges of music have no fault to find with the VICTOR, but laud it as a great instructor. Go to your leading music-dealer's and hear a few of the very latest VICTOR Red Seal Records.
8-11-1906	4, no. 13	14	Caruso	Male	<b>Study under Caruso[.]</b> You go to the opera expressly to learn some of the artistic phrasing and methods of breathing of Caruso and other great singers, but you don't catch the parts you want to hear most. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> not only bring the living voices of the leading opera stars to you, but repeat any part of any composition as often as you want to hear it. The VICTOR is so good an instructor because it is first of all a real musical instrument. Ask your leading music dealer to let you hear some of the latest VICTOR Red Seal Records.
8-18-1906	4, no. 14	18	[Sembrich]	Female	<b>The finishing touches to a musical training[.]</b> Round up your vocal education by studying the faultless technique and manner of breathing as taught by Melba, Sembrich, Caruso and other famous singers on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The compositions are given with infinite art and the proper expression of every part is made perfectly clear to you. No other instrument ever made such a stir in the world of music as the VICTOR. It is a general favorite with musicians and music lovers. Hear some of the newest VICTOR Red Seal Records at your leading music-dealer's.
9-1-1906	4, no. 16	14	Eames	Female	<b>Study under Emma Eames[.]</b> The beauty of her voice and accuracy of her manner of singing are an inspiration to the student. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> instruct you in her method of breathing and delivery of tone and repeat the compositions, or any part of them, until you have thoroughly mastered them. Skeptical musicians have formed an entirely new opinion of the VICTOR after hearing its rich musical tone. Your leading music dealer will gladly play some of the newest VICTOR Red Seal Records for you.
9-15-1906	4, no. 18	14	Scotti	Male	<b>Study under Scotti[.]</b> Get the benefit of the musical knowledge of Scotti and other celebrated vocalists. Hear the reproduction of their singing on <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> the great compositions with all the freedom power and significance that belong to them. Nothing

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					but praise for the VICTOR from even the most critical judges of music. Its rich, clear musical tone is appreciated wherever it is heard. Go to your leading music-dealer's and hear a few of the very latest VICTOR Red Seal Records.
9-26-1906	4, no. 20	14	Homer	Female	<b>Study under Louise Homer[.]</b> The way she sings, her method of breathing and artistic rendering of many famous contralto arias are passed on to you through <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Sembrich, Emma Eames, Caruso, Scotti and other celebrated opera singers help you in the same way to fully develop your musical studies. The VICTOR plays everything so true to life that even the most critical judges of music can pick no flaws in its performance. Ask your leading music dealer to let you hear some of the latest VICTOR Red Seal Records.
10-13-1906	4, no. 22	14	[Scotti]	Male	<b>Famous opera singers help you in your studies[.]</b> Melba, Sembrich, Caruso, Plancon, Scotti, Journet and other celebrated artists sing for you on <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> and make clear to you the proper interpretation of the various masterpieces. Their expressive renderings also teach you their method of breathing and finished technique. The sweet melodious tones of the VICTOR have been a revelation to musicians and overcome all their prejudices. Hear some of the newest VICTOR Red Seal Records at your leading music dealer's.
10-27-1906	4, no. 24	18	Sembrich	Female	<b>Study under Sembrich[.]</b> You'll make great forward strides in your musical education if you study the masterly interpretations of Sembrich, Melba, Caruso, Plancon and other noted vocalists on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The sense of color in expression, the admirable diction, the method of breathing, are all unfolded to you and lead on to perfection. The <i>Victor</i> is valuable alike as an instructor or entertainer. The greatest musical instrument in the world. Your leading music dealer will gladly play some of the newest <i>Victor</i> Red Seal Records for you.
11-10-1906	4, no. 26	18	Plancon	Male	<b>Study under Plancon[.]</b> His artistic interpretation and breadth of treatment of the "invocation" from Mozart's "Magic Flute" on No. 85042 of <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> will be a "singing lesson for generations to come," according to many great musicians. Other selections are superbly rendered on the <i>Victor</i> by this master of legato singing as well as by other leading grand opera stars. Musicians and music-lovers unite in praising the Victor and

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					pronounce its tone quality everything that could be desired. Go to your leading music dealer's and hear a few of the very latest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .
11-24-1906	5, no. 2	18	Eames	Female	<b>Let An Artist Show You[.]</b> How does Emma Eames render that composition you are studying? Don't you want to know her method of breathing, her perfect phrasing, her wonderful expression? Don't you want to hear her sing it as it should be sung on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The great singers have helped many students, through the Victor; let them help you. <b>Eames Records, 12 inch size. \$3.00 each.</b> Ask your music dealer to play for you the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .
12-8-1906	5, no. 4	18	Caruso	Male	<b>The Greatest Living Tenor[.]</b> Caruso trusted his voice to the Victor; you can trust the <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> to give you every splendid tone, clear, natural, and inspiring. There is no greater help when you study any masterpiece of music. Melba, Eames, Schuman-Heink, Plancon, Scotti and many other great artists help you on the Victor. <b>Caruso Records. 10 inch size, \$2.00 each, 12 inch size, \$3.00 each.</b> Your music dealer will play for you any of the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .
12-22-1906	5, no. 6	18	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Study under Schumann=Heink[.]</b> Hear her glorious contralto with its wonderful range, flexible and whole souled feeling on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Hear her again and again; and learn something each time; the Victor is not confined to one performance. All the great opera singers are with you on the Victor—no wonder it is called the "Greatest Musical Instrument in the World." <b>Schumann-Heink Records, 12 inch size--\$3.00 each.</b> Have your music dealer play for you some of the newest <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> .
1-5-1907	5, no. 8	14	Verdi		<b>Verdi's Masterpiece "Il Trovatore"[.]</b> Complete from the opening chorus to the finale of the last act, by principals, chorus and orchestra of La Scala Theatre, Milan,—on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Hear the entire opera just as it has won enthusiastic audiences the world over. Get the full score in <i>20 Red Seal Records</i> —\$21.60, or you can get single selections at catalogue prices. Ask your leading music dealer to play some of the "Il Trovatore" Records for you.
1-19-1907	5, no. 10	18	Sembrich	Female	<b>Lessons from Great Operatic Stars[.]</b> If you are fortunate, you may enjoy grand opera in New York a few times this winter. You can hear Melba, Emma Eames, Sembrich, Caruso,

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					Plancon, and many other stars of both continents on <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> and repeat their marvelous renditions of inspiring classics as often as you wish to study them. Sembrich Records, 10 inch size, \$2.00 each. 12 inch size, \$3.00 each. You will form a new idea of the Victor, the greatest musical instrument in the world, when you hear the newest <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> at your music dealer's.
2-2-1907	5, no. 12	18	Plancon	Male	<b>Study under Plancon[.]</b> Let Plancon guide you with his finished technique and marvelous expression. Let Melba, Eames, Caruso, Scotti, and many other artists inspire you on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> You can repeat any piece or passage until you know and feel just how a great singer does it. Plancon Records, 10 inch size—\$2.00 each, 12 inch size—\$3.00 each. Ask your music dealer to play for you some of the newest <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> .
2-16-1907	5, no. 14	18	Caruso	Male	<b>A New Way[.]</b> Let Caruso sing for you. Then you'll know just how that air you are practicing should be sung. He will do it for you, any time, and often, on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> "Only a record?" Decidedly no! It's Caruso's own voice, through the most wonderful instrument in the world. His mastery of breathing, his superb tones, and his perfect execution—you get it all. Caruso Records, 10 inch size—\$2.00 each, 12 inch size—\$3.00 each. Be sure to hear the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> at your music dealer's.
3-2-1907	5, no. 16	18	Eames	Female	<b>A Rare Privilege for Vocal Students</b> to hear Emma Eames, Melba, Gadski, Schuman[n]-Heink, Caruso, Scotti and many other stars render famous arias over and over again, while you learn, on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The victor gives you the volume, the flexibility, and richness of color, of the world's greatest voices. Eames Records, 12 inch size—\$3.00 each. Hear the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> at your music dealer's.
3-16-1907	5, no. 18	23	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Let Famous Singers Train Your Voice[.]</b> Let Melba, Emma Eames, Schumann-Heink, Sembrich, Louise Homer, sing for you the most difficult selections from classical music, on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The clear, full reproduction of every splendid tone, the wonderful expression, the illustration of the singer's method is an inspiration you can summon as often as you will. If you can appreciate a great voice, you will appreciate the Victor. Schumann-Heink Records, 12-inch size—\$3.00 each. Ask your music dealer to

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					play for you some of the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .
3-30-1907	5, no. 20	23	Caruso	Male	<b>Study with Your Favorite[.]</b> Eames, Sembrich, Melba, Caruso, Plancon, Scotti and other famous artists show you their methods, through <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Think what a help to you, to study the actual tones, the exquisite expression and the finished technique of a great singer! These perfect reproductions on the Victor are recognized by musicians as invaluable to every promising student. Caruso Records, 10 in. size, \$2 each, 12 in. size, \$3 each. Hear the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> at your music dealer's.
4-13-1907	5, no. 22	23	Eames	Female	<b>Splendid Voice Training[.]</b> You can almost see Melba, Eames, Gadski, Schumann-Heink, Caruso, Plancon, Scotti, Journet and many other artists, when they sing to you on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> You get a vivid personality in each records that inspires you to greater expression, more masterly technique, and finished execution in your own work. The Victor is developing many voices of great promise, and it will help you. Eames Records, 12 inch size, \$3.00. Your leading music dealer will gladly play for you some of the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .
4-27-1907	5, no. 24	19	Caruso	Male	<b>Great voices help you[.]</b> Eames, Sembrich, Caruso, Plancon, Scotti—just a few of the great singers who will aid and inspire you on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> For the sake of your voice, let them interpret the great masterpieces of music, perfectly in technique, expression and finished execution. The natural tone of the Victor gives you the <i>whole</i> voice. Caruso Records 10 inch size—\$2.00 each; 12 inch size—\$3.00 each. Hear the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> at your Music Dealer's.
5-11-1907	5, no. 26	23	Sembrich	Female	<b>Verdi's Opera 'Ernani[.]</b> The Victor Company, which recently created a musical sensation by producing "Il Trovatore," the first opera ever recorded completely, now presents "Ernani," by the same great composer, complete in twenty records. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> enable vocal students to study the magnificent passages of this emotional opera, sung by Sembrich, Campanari, Journet and the artists and chorus of the famous La Scala, of Milan, Italy. Price of the opera complete, in twenty records, \$27.50. Any of the records sold separately if desired. Ask your dealer to play some of the Ernani and Trovatore series for you; or any of the newest <i>Victor Red Seal Records</i> .



Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
5-25-1907	6, no. 2	19	Eames	Female	<b>Follow Eames in Your Vocal Studies[.]</b> There is no better or more thorough way to master intricate passages of grand opera than by studying the technique of this artistic singer, as reproduced on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> 10 inch size—\$2.00 each[;] 12 inch size—\$3.00 each. Melba, Eames, Gadski, Caruso, Scotti, and other famous artists also give you their methods of expression and phrasing. The full volume and perfect tone of the Victor have won for it the endorsement of leading vocal instructors. If you are not familiar with the wonderful vocal powers of the Victor, ask your music dealer to play the latest Red Seal records for you[.]
6-8-1907	6, no. 4	16	Caruso	Male	<b>Let the Famous Artists of Grand Opera teach you[.]</b> You will advance rapidly if you study under great singers like Melba, Eames, and Caruso. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> make it possible for you to follow these and other famous artists in the most brilliant roles of grand opera and to acquire their methods of breathing and enunciation. 10 inch records—\$2.00 each; 12 inch records—\$3.00 each. The clear, natural tones of the Victor are still a source of admiration and wonder to musical critics. Your music dealer will be glad to play Caruso records for you on request; or any of the latest Victor Red Seal Records.
6-22-1907	6, no. 6	19	Melba	Female	<b>Study under your favorite singer[.]</b> What a help it would be to you in your vocal studies if you could at any time hear your favorite singer render that particularly difficult aria you are studying! <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The easiest thing in the world. Think of having Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Caruso or Plancon to coach you! 10 inch records—\$2.00 each; 12 inch records—\$3.00 each. Vocal instructors who have heard the marvelous volume and life like tones of the Victor pronounce its rendition perfect. If you want to be convinced that the Victor is a perfect interpreter of the world's greatest voices, ask your dealer to play for you some of the latest Red Seal Records.
7-6-1907	6, no. 8	19	Eames	Female	<b>Let Eames Teach You[.]</b> Melba, Sembrich, Caruso and Scotti will also teach you how to render the most brilliant passages of grand opera. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> afford you the opportunity of following the methods of these and other great singers with precision. 10 inch records \$2.00 each. 12 inch records \$3.00 each. Musicians agree that the Victor reproduces the master pieces of grand opera in the actual voices

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					of the most famous artists. Your music dealer will gladly play the latest Red Seal Records for you on the Victor and prove to you that it is a perfect musical instrument[.]
7-20-1907	6, no. 10	19	Caruso	Male	<b>Take Lessons from Caruso[.]</b> Familiarize yourself with the intricate passages of grand opera, sung by the most famous tenor on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> 10 inch size \$2.00 each. 12 inch size \$3.00 each. Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Schumann-Heink, Scotti and others will make clear to you the most difficult problems of phrasing and expression. Every record an absolutely correct reproduction—a lesson that can be repeated again and again until you have acquired it perfectly. The full, clear, life-like tones of the Victor have compelled musical critics to acknowledge that it is a perfect musical instrument. Ask your dealer to play the latest Victor Red Seal Records for you and learn their wonderful quality for yourself[.]
8-3-1907	6, no. 12	23	Sembrich	Female	<b>Sing Like Sembrich</b> or Melba, or Caruso, or Eames, or any of the grand opera stars. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> enable you to acquire a finished technique by a close study of their methods of phrasing and enunciation. <b>10-inch Records, \$2.00 Each[.] 12-inch Records, \$3.00 Each[.]</b> Musical critics are everywhere praising the marvelous powers of the Victor. Your music dealer will be glad to give you the opportunity of learning for yourself what a perfect musical instrument the Victor is by playing the latest Red Seal Records for you.
8-14-1907	6, no. 14	19	Caruso	Male	<b>Study under Caruso[.]</b> Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Plancon and other stars of grand opera. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> will give you their wonderful methods of phrasing, clear enunciation and magnificent volume true to life in every tone. <b>10-inch Records, \$2.00 each[.] 12-inch Records, \$3.00 each[.]</b> Vocal instructors have nothing but praise for the Victor's marvelous rendition of the human voice. They pronounce it a perfect musical instrument[.] Your music dealer will be glad to play for you any of the latest Red Seal Records.
8-31-1907	6, no. 16	19	Scotti	Male	<b>Study Grand Opera under Scotti[.]</b> Master [technical] difficulties by studying under Scotti, Melba, Sembrich, Gadski, de Gogorza, Journet and other famous artists. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> render the most brilliant numbers in the clear tones, full volume and superb coloratura of the greatest singers. <b>10-inch Records, \$2.00 each[.] 12-inch Records, \$3.00 each[.]</b> Vocal

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					instructors unhesitatingly endorse the Victor as a means of acquiring artistic finish. Ask your music dealer to play the latest Red Seal Records for you on the Victor and learn for yourself how perfectly it reproduces the masterpieces of music.
9-14-1907	6, no. 18	19	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Let Schumann-Heink Guide you in Your Vocal Studies[.]</b> If you could have heard Schumann-Heink just once more, you would have remembered her rendering of that particular passage you are trying to master. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> repeat as often as you wish the great masterpieces of music, sung by the most famous artists, perfect in every detail of coloratura and breathing. <b>10-inch Records, \$2.00 each[.] 12-inch Records, \$3.00 each[.]</b> Leading musical authorities recognize the Victor as a perfect musical instrument and a valuable vocal instructor. Your music dealer will be glad to play Red Seal Records for you and convince you of the Victor's marvelous musical powers.
9-28-1907	6, no. 20	39	Melba	Female	<b>Study under Melba[.]</b> Her brilliant ornamentation and superb legato style are reproduced perfectly on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.] 10-inch size, \$2.00 each[.] 12-inch size, \$3.00 each[.]</b> You would be glad to hear and study the methods of this celebrated soprano for a single evening; the Victor enables you to study her voice and style at any time and as often as you wish. The Victor's faultless rendition of famous opera numbers, sung by the world's greatest artists, has won the admiration of musical critics. Ask your music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records.
10-12-1907	6, no. 22	23	Eames	Female	<b>Eames will teach you[.]</b> The magnificent voice of this soprano will serve as an inspiration to you in your studies. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> enable you to follow and apply the masterful interpretations of Eames and other great artists. Eames records are made in 12-inch size only, \$3.00 each. Musical critics are everywhere praising the life-like tone of the Victor. Ask your music dealer to play the newest Red Seal Records for you and you will be convinced that it is a perfect musical instrument.
10-26-1907	6, no. 24	23	Sembrich, Scotti	Female, male	<b>These great artists will teach you[.]</b> You will be stimulated in your studies and make rapid progress if you follow the style and expression of great artists like Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Caruso, Scotti, Plancon and others, as reproduced on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.] 10 inch size, \$2.00 each[.] 12 inch size, \$3.00 each[.]</b> Vocal instructors are everywhere

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					praising the Victor's fine musical qualities. If you have never heard the Victor, its perfect rendition of grand opera will be a revelation to you. Your music dealer will be glad to play the latest Red Seal Records for you.
11-2-1907	6, no. 25	23	Sembrich, Scotti	Female, male	“ ”
11-9-1907	6, no. 26	23	Caruso, Melba	Male, female	<b>Acquire an Artistic finish by Studying under famous opera singers[.]</b> Melba, Sembrich, Eames, Caruso, Scotti, Plancon and other great artists give you their interpretations of the most difficult passages of grand opera through <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.] 10 inch size, \$2.00 each. 12 inch size, \$3.00 each.</b> In your own home you can study over and over again the clear enunciation, the wonderful breathing and the artistic finish of the world's greatest singers. Musical critics have nothing but praise for the Victor's marvelous rendition of the human voice. Ask your music dealer to play the latest Red Seal Records for you and you will declare them perfect.
11-23-1907	7, no. 2	23	Melba	Female	<b>Let Melba Teach You[.]</b> Wouldn't you like to study under Melba and learn directly from herself her superb method of singing. You can. Why not? <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> made by Melba reproduce with absolute fidelity her exact phrasing and tone delivery—every shade and detail of her voice and style. Even her teacher, Mme. Marchesi, on hearing one of these records, declared: “It is the perfection of perfection.” Though you may not have Melba's voice, yet by hearing her sing her most famous arias again and again on the Victor records you may adopt the best possible means towards making her method your own. <b>Melba Records[.] 10 inch size \$2.00 each[.] 12 inch size \$3.00 each[.]</b> Ask any Victor dealer to play some of the Melba, Caruso, Sembrich and other Red Seal Records for you. Ask for a complete catalogue.
12-7-1907	7, no. 4	4	Scotti	Male	<b>Rehearse it with Scotti[.]</b> Have you been studying Scotti in the “Pagliacci” prologue? Wouldn't you like to study more closely his superb interpretation of this famous number? <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> faithfully reproduce Scotti's rendition of the entire prologue with all the emotional intensity that he puts into the Tonio role. By hearing it over and over again on the Victor you can master his conception of the part as would be possible in no other way. <b>Scotti Records, 10-inch size, \$2.00 each. 12-inch size, \$3.00 each.</b> Some of the popular old-time melodies, as well as the masterpieces of

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					grand opera, are sung on the Victor Red Seal records by such artists as Melba, Caruso, Sembrich, and others. Ask your music dealer to play some of them for you.
12-21-1907	7, no. 6	23	Gadski	Female	<p><b>Study Under Gadski[.]</b> Let Gadski teach you the method of singing that has made her famous. Every note and shade of expression in her grandest arias is faithfully reproduced on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Study any style of her music you prefer – from caressing softness of voice in her Gounod’s “Ave Maria” to the dramatic cry of her Brunhilde in “Walkure.” You can get more benefit by hearing her repeatedly on the Victor than occasionally on the operatic stage. <b>Gadski Records[.] 10-inch size, \$2.00 each[.] 12 inch size, \$3.00 each[.]</b> A student must be proficient indeed who cannot learn something new about method by this intimate study of Caruso, Gadski, Melba and other operatic stars who sing for Victor records exclusively. Ask your music dealer to play some of them for you.</p>
1-4-1908	7, no. 8	23	Caruso	Male	<p><b>Singing Lessons from Caruso[.]</b> “Mr. Caruso, please sing that aria again. I want to master your conception of it, if possible—even though I make you repeat it a hundred times.” You couldn’t say that to Caruso. But you can hear Caruso sing that and many other arias over and over again on the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Could you ask for a better opportunity to hear every rare quality in his incomparable voice and study the secrets of his remarkable method? <b>Caruso Records[.] 10 inch size, \$2.00 each[.] 12 inch size, \$3.00 each[.]</b> Caruso, as well as Eames, Gadski, Melba, Sembrich and other great operatic stars recognize the Victor as the only musical instrument that can faithfully reproduce their voices. Ask your music dealer to play some of the Red Seal records for you.</p>
1-18-1908	7, no. 10	8	Caruso	Male	<p><b>Victor Red Seal Records bring Caruso to your home[.]</b> You may not be able to visit New York this season to hear Caruso but you <i>can</i> bring Caruso to your home. And you can also bring Calve, Dalmores, Eames, Gadski, Melba, Plancon and many other famous artists the actual living voices on Victor Red Seal records. What a splendid opportunity to round out your vocal studies by a course of “personal instruction” under the world’s greatest singers. Caruso records: 10-inch \$2, 12-inch \$3. Any Victor dealer will gladly play for you the newest Red Seal records by Caruso and other famous operatic stars.</p>

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2-1-1908	7, no. 12	23	Melba	Female	<p><b>Melba will instruct you on Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Let Melba smooth out the technical difficulties that stand in your way. Repeat the great concert classics and operatic arias after the queen of sopranos, and study her unrivalled legato style, brilliant ornamentation and faultless phrasing from Victor Red Seal records. <b>Melba records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Caruso, Eames, Sembrich and Scotti also teach you how to sing the music of the great masters. Hear the newest Red Seal records by these and other artists at your music dealer's.</p>
2-15-1908	7, no. 14	23	Scotti	Male	<p><b>Victor Red Seal Records study under Scotti[.]</b> You <b>think</b> you can remember just how Scotti sang that particular aria you are studying, but when the curtain goes down on the opera, <b>you forget</b>. But why not have a Victor—own Scotti's voice outright—and repeat the aria until you have mastered it? <b>Scotti records: 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Ask your music dealer to play the newest Red Seal records for you—by Caruso, Abott, Calve, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Renaud, Schumann-Heink, and other artists.</p>
2-29-1908	7, no. 16	23	Homer	Female	<p><b>Victor Red Seal Records help you in your vocal studies[.]</b> If you could only hear Mme. Homer sing that operatic number you would quickly master its difficulties. No <i>ifs</i> with the Victor. Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and other artists are brought right to your home through Red Seal records. Just think of it, the greatest voices in the world ready at any time to help you over the "trying" parts of the operatic or classic selection you are studying. Ask your music dealer to play the newest Red Seal records for you. <b>Homer records: 10-inch, \$2, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b></p>
3-14-1908	7, no. 18	23	Caruso	Male	<p><b>Study grand opera at home from Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> It's impossible to follow the artists closely during a grand opera performance—so many things divert your attention. The only way to learn the methods of the great singers thoroughly is to study their vocalization from Victor Red Seal records, as often as you choose, in the quiet of your own home. Hear the latest Red Seal records by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and other operatic stars. Your music dealer will gladly play them for you. <b>Caruso records: 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3[.]</b></p>
3-28-1908	7, no. 20	23	Schumann-	Female	<p><b>Learn Schumann-Heink's technique from</b></p>

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			Heink		<b>Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> Let Schumann-Heink sing it for you. Her marvelous powers of tone-coloring and expression will give you fresh inspiration in your vocal studies. The voice of the Victor is the actual voice of the artist. Ask your music dealer to play Red Seal records by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and other famous artists, and learn for yourself how perfectly the Victor reproduces these magnificent voices. <b>Schumann-Heink records: 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
4-11-1908	7, no. 22	23	Plancon	Male	<b>Victor Red Seal records—the new method of vocal instruction.</b> Vocal instructors everywhere endorse Red Seal records as an aid to students of singing. If you have never heard grand opera on the Victor, you can't begin to realize what a tremendous help this method of study will prove in the training of your voice. You listen and learn while Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrzzini and many other famous artists sing their greatest rôles for you. <b>Plancon records: 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b> Hear the newest Red Seal records at your music dealer's.
4-25-1908	7, no. 24	23	Sembrich	Female	<b>Victor Red Seal records add the finishing touches to your vocal education[.]</b> Acquire a professional finish by studying the technique of this great artist[.] Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrzzini and many other famous artists will also aid you in your vocal studies through Red Seal records. In this way alone can you accurately follow the methods of the great singers, and learn their secrets of phrasing, enunciation and expression. <b>Sembrich Records: 12-inch, \$3.</b> Your music dealer will be glad to play Red Seal records for you[.]
5-9-1908	7, no. 26	23	Eames	Female	<b>Learn Eames' Art from Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> ¶ Study her expression, phrasing and coloratura at close range. ¶ What a privilege and what a help to follow the artistic interpretations of this great prima donna in her most brilliant operatic numbers—not once or twice—but as often as you choose, until you have become thoroughly familiar with every phase of her marvelous vocalization. Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Tetrzzini, Scotti, Sembrich, and many other artists are ready at any time to sing their best selections for you. HEAR THE

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					NEWEST RED SEAL RECORDS AT YOUR MUSIC DEALERS, AND YOU'LL APPRECIATE THE VICTOR'S PERFECT VOCAL POWERS[.] <b>Eames records: 12-inch[.] \$3.</b>
5-23-1908	8, no. 2	23	Melba	Female	<b>Melba will instruct you on Victor Red Seal records,</b> Let Melba smooth out the technical difficulties that stand in your way. Repeat the great concert classics and operatic arias after the queen of sopranos, and study her unrivalled legato style, brilliant ornamentation and faultless phrasing on the Victor. <b>Melba records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrzzini also teach you how to sing the music of the great masters. Hear the newest Red Seal records by these and other artists at your music dealer's.
6-6-1908	8, no. 4	23	Tetrzzini	Female	<b>Study Tetrzzini's method at home From Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> This great coloratura artist has just made nine splendid Victor records of her most famous numbers. You can now study at close range, and as often as you want, this wonderful voice that has created such a sensation in the musical world. <b>Tetrzzini records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrzzini and other famous artists help you on the Victor. Hear them at your music dealer's.
6-20-1908	8, no. 6	23	Farrar	Female	<b>Let Geraldine Farrar help you in your vocal studies[.]</b> Miss Farrar's most beautiful numbers are now recorded on <b>Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> A rare opportunity for you to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the brilliant technic [sic] of this gifted young artist. <b>Farrar records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Don't neglect the chance that the Victor offers you to study under the greatest singers in the world. Ask your music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini.
7-4-1908	8, no. 8	19	Melba	Female	<b>Learn Melba's art from Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> What a help it would be if you could have Melba come into your home, and sing over for you a few times that difficult aria you are struggling with! You can. <b>Victor Red Seal records</b> make you thoroughly familiar with all the intricacies of her matchless style. <b>Melba records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Ask your music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer,



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					Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.
7-18-1908	8, no. 10	19	Melba & Caruso	Female & Male	<b>Study Grand Opera from Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The Victor enables you to study the individual technique of the world's most famous singers as closely and as often as you want. What wouldn't the vocal student of twenty years ago have given for such a privilege? <b>Caruso Records, 10-inch, \$2[.] 12-inch, \$3[.] Melba Records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Ask your music dealer to play for you Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrizzini.
8-1-1908	8, no. 12	19	Farrar & Caruso	Female & Male	<b>Leading Voice Teachers endorse Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> In no other way can the student of singing so thoroughly study the method of the great artist. <b>Caruso Records, 10-inch, \$2[.] 12-inch, \$3[.] Farrar Records, 10-inch, \$2[.] 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini sing their most famous numbers for you on the Victor.
8-15-1908	8, no. 14	19	Plancon	Male	<b>Vocal Lessons from Plancon on Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> Let the great basso show you how. His artistic interpretations will aid you in your vocal studies. <b>Plancon Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Other artists who teach you their methods on the Victor are Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini. Your music dealer will be glad to play for you any Victor Records by these and other artists.
8-29-1908	8, no. 16	19	Sembrich	Female	<b>Study under Sembrich[.]</b> No need to worry about technical difficulties when you have Sembrich and other great artists to repeat their most brilliant arias for you on <b>Victor Red Seal records[.]</b> The trills and runs and perplexing problems of breathing and phrasing that have baffled you in the past are all made perfectly clear. <b>Sembrich Records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Ask the nearest Victor dealer to play operatic numbers for you by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrizzini.
9-12-1908	8, no. 18	19	Homer	Female	<b>Mme. Homer will instruct you[.]</b> Like an open book—the methods of Homer and other famous operatic singers who repeat their best numbers for you on <b>Victor Red Seal records.</b> It is a help that you cannot afford to lose in your vocal studies. Your music dealer will be glad to play

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					for you any Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrizzini.
9-26-1908	8, no. 20	23	Melba & Caruso	Female & male	<b>Study Opera at Home[.]</b> The way to acquire high artistic finish is to hear the great artists—and to hear them often. Do you attend the opera as often as you ought? <b>VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS</b> are perpetual opera season. Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini always ready to repeat their greatest arias for you—and in your own home. <b>Melba Records, ----- 12-inch, \$3.00[.] Caruso Records, 10-inch \$2.00; 12-inch, \$3.00[.] Ask you[r] music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records[.]</b>
10-10-1908	8, no. 22	55	Caruso	Male	<b>Caruso will teach you[.]</b> Let Caruso repeat that trying number for you. <b>Victor Red Seal records</b> enable you to study under the greatest living tenor—perhaps the greatest of all tenors. Caruso's most beautiful arias—and Caruso himself at his best! What an inspiration! <b>Caruso Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b> Ask your nearest dealer to play for you Red Seal records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.
10-24-1908	8, no. 24	8	Farrar	Female	<b>Let Geraldine Farrar help you in your vocal studies[.]</b> Miss Farrar's most beautiful numbers are now recorded on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> A rare opportunity for you to make yourself thoroughly familiar with the brilliant technic of this gifted young artist. <b>Farrar records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Don't neglect the chance that the Victor offers you to study under the greatest singers in the world. Ask your music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.
11-7-1908	8, no. 26	23	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Schumann-Heink will guide you[.]</b> The great contralto sings her most famous numbers for you on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Ample opportunity to study this grand voice intimately and at your leisure. <b>Schumann-Heink records, 10 in., \$2; 12-in., \$3[.]</b> If you have never heard the great artists on the Victor, ask your music dealer to play for you Victor records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.

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11-21-1908	9, no. 2	31	Scotti	Male	<b>Learn Scotti's Method from Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> In no other way can you study the masterful style of the great baritone—his superb dramatic inflection and wonderful breathing at close range and whenever you want. <b>Scotti records, 10 in., \$2; 12-in., \$3[.]</b> All the great artists give you the benefit of their voices on the Victor—Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini.
12-5-1908	9, no. 4	31	Melba	Female	<b>Learn Melba's art from Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> What a help it would be if you could have Melba come into your home and sing over for you a few times that difficult aria you are struggling with! You can. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> make you thoroughly familiar with all the intricacies of her matchless style. <b>Melba records, 12-in., \$3[.]</b> Ask your music dealer to play for you the latest Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini.
12-19-1908	9, no. 6	31	Caruso, Melba	Male, Female	<b>Study Grand Opera from Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The Victor enables you to study the individual technique of the world's most famous singers as closely and as often as you want. What wouldn't the vocal student of twenty years ago have given for such a privilege? <b>Caruso Records, 10-inch, \$2[;] 12-inch, \$3[.] Melba Records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> Ask your music dealer to play for you Red Seal Records by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini.
1-2-1909	9, no. 8	31	Tetrzzini	Female	<b>Follow Tetrzzini in your vocal studies[.]</b> No better or more thorough way to master intricate passages of grand opera than by studying the technique of this artistic singer, as reproduced on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> The great masterpieces of music, perfect in every detail of coloratura and breathing. <b>Tetrzzini records, 12-inch \$3[.]</b> Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini sing their most famous numbers for you on <b>Victor Red Seal Records.</b>
1-16-1909	9, no. 10	31	Melba	Female	<b>Study under Melba[.]</b> Her brilliant ornamentation and superb legato style are reproduced perfectly on <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> They enable you to study her voice and style at any time and as often as you wish. <b>Melba records, 12-inch \$3[.]</b> Your music dealer will gladly play for you any <b>Victor Red</b>

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					<b>Seal Records</b> by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.
2-6-1909	9, no. 12	31	Eames	Female	<b>Eames will teach you[.]</b> The magnificent voice of this famous soprano will serve as an inspiration to you in your studies. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> enable you to follow and apply her masterful interpretations. <b>Eames records, 12-inch, \$3[.]</b> If you have never heard the great artists on the <b>Victor</b> , ask your music-dealer to play for you <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini.
2-13-1909	9, no. 14	31	Homer	Female	<b>Study the inflections of Homer's wonderful voice[.]</b> You can have the benefit of her years of training. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> open the way for intimate knowledge of her perfect expression. <b>Homer Records, 10-inch,[.] \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b> Let the nearest Victor dealer play for you the great <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, S[c]humann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrizzini.
2-27-1909	9, no. 16	31	Plançon	Male	<b>Acquire Plançon's artistic finish[.]</b> Study at your leisure his clear cut enunciation and perfect rendition. <b>Victor red Seal Records</b> make this possible to every vocal student. Avail yourself of the great privilege. <b>Plançon Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b> <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> include the greatest arias by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, S[c]humann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, and Tetrizzini. Ask any Victor dealer to play them for you. He'll gladly do it.
3-13-1909	9, no. 18	31	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Schumann-Heink knows; and she says: "I consider Victor Records mirrors of the human voice, and the best vocal instructors of the day. What a wonderful study they are for gifted students."</b> Why don't you study great <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> by Caruso, Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini? Ask any Victor dealer to play them for you. He will gladly do it. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
3-27-1909	9, no. 20	31	Schumann-Heink	Female	<b>Schumann-Heink knows; and she says: "I consider the Victor Records mirrors of the human voice, and the best vocal instructors of the day. They reproduce the art of the singer so accurately that no point of beauty and no fault escapes detection. What a wonderful study they are for gifted students, and how welcome they</b>

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					<i>must be to artists to enable them to enhance the good and to avoid the bad.” The world’s greatest artists make records <i>exclusively</i> for the Victor—Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini. <b>Victor red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b></i>
4-10-1909	9, no. 22	31	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
4-24-1909	9, no. 24	31	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
5-8-1909	9, no. 26	31	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
5-22-1909	10, no. 2	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
6-5-1909	10, no. 4	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
6-19-1909	10, no. 6	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
7-3-1909	10, no. 8	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
7-17-1909	10, no. 10	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
7-31-1909	10, no. 12	27	Schumann-Heink	Female	“ ”
8-14-1909	10, no. 14	27	Scotti, Homer, Caruso, Sembrich, Melba	3 = F 2 = M	<b>These famous artists themselves say that Victor Red Seal Records are perfect reproductions[.]</b> Why don’t you thus study the wonderful voices of Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini? It will be an inspiration to you. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
8-28-1909	10, no. 16	27	Scotti, Homer, Caruso, Sembrich, Melba	3 = F 2 = M	<b>These famous artists themselves say that Victor Red Seal Records are perfect reproductions.</b> Why don’t you thus study the wonderful voices of Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini? It will be an inspiration to you. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
9-11-1909	10, no. 18	27	Scotti, Homer, Caruso, Sembrich, Melba	3 = F 2 = M	“ ”
9-25-1909	10, no. 20	27	Scotti, Homer, Caruso, Sembrich, Melba	3 = F 2 = M	“ ”

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
10-9-1909	10, no. 22	8	Arral	Female Unique, full page format	<b>VICTOR RED SEAL RECORDS of BLANCHE ARRAL[.] PRIMA DONNA SOPRANO[.] OPERA COMIQUE—Paris[.] THEATRE ROYAL DE LA MONNAIE—BRUXELLES[.] DES THEATRES IMPERIAUX—ST. PETERSBURG[.]</b> “ <i>They are excellent.</i> ” <i>Blanche Arral</i> “The records by this brilliant artiste show the great range and warmth of her voice. The ‘Valse D’Oiseau,’ Bird Waltz, which created such an avalanche of enthusiasm here, is a great favorite, and the Bolero Grande, sung in Spanish, is equally popular. All of Mme. Arral’s selections are in French, with the exception of the latter, and it is a great pleasure to listen to her perfect articulation.”— <i>Ex.</i>
10-9-1909	10, no. 22	27	Scotti, Homer, Caruso, Sembrich, Melba	3 = F 2 = M	<b>These famous artists themselves say that Victor Red Seal Records are perfect reproductions.</b> Why don’t you thus study the wonderful voices of Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini? It will be an inspiration to you. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
10-23-1909	10, no. 24	35	Talking Machine	None	<b>An important aid in your vocal study.</b> Through the Victor you can closely study the masterpieces of music sung by the world’s greatest artists. <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> Caruso, Calve, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plancon, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrzzini make records <i>exclusively</i> for the Victor. Send for repertoire catalogue. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-inch, \$2; 12-inch, \$3.</b>
11-6-1909	10, no. 26	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
11-20-1909	11, no. 2	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
12-4-1909	11, no. 4	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
12-18-1909	11, no. 6	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
1-1-1910	11, no. 8	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
1-15-1910	11, no. 10	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
1-29-1910	11, no. 12	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
2-12-1910	11, no. 14	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
2-26-1910	11, no. 16	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
3-12-1910	11, no. 18	39	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
3-26-1910	11, no. 20	35	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
4-9-1910	11, no. 22	35	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
4-23-1910	11, no. 24	35	Talking Machine	None	“ ”
5-7-1910	11, no. 26	35	Caruso	Male	<b>Actual Voice demonstrations by Enrico Caruso[.]</b> “Caruso’s phrasing of famous airs, like <i>Una furtiva lagrima</i> , <i>Celesta Aida</i> , <i>Romance de la fleur</i> , or <i>Salut demeure</i> , is always a model of elegance and genuine musical expression—a delight and an inspiration even as echoed by the talking machine[.]”. “The Caruso records cannot be too lightly commended to teachers and students, giving to the latter just what most teachers cannot give—actual voice ‘demonstrations.’” That’s what so eminent an authority as Henry T. Finck says in his book, “Success in Music and How It Is Won.”—( <i>Scribner’s</i> ). <b>Victor Red Seal Records[—]10-inch, \$2[;] 12-inch, \$3[—]</b> enable you to study not only the voice of Caruso, but also of Calvé, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Homer, Melba, Plançon Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich and Tetrizzini, all of whom make records exclusively for the Victor. Any Victor dealer will gladly play for you Victor Records by these artists. Write for catalogue giving a complete list of Victor Records.
5-21-1910	12, no. 2	35	Caruso	Male	“ ”
6-4-1910	12, no. 4	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
6-18-1910	12, no. 6	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
7-2-1910	12, no. 8	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
7-16-1910	12, no. 10	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
7-30-1910	12, no. 12	27	Caruso	Male	“ ”
8-13-1910	12, no. 14	27	Caruso	Male	“ ”
8-27-1910	12, no. 16	27	Caruso	Male	“ ”
9-10-1910	12, no. 18	27	Caruso	Male	“ ”
9-24-1910	12, no. 20	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
10-8-1910	12, no. 22	95	Caruso	Male	“ ”
10-22-1910	12, no. 24	31	Caruso	Male	“ ”
11-5-1910	12, no. 26	35	Caruso	Male	“ ”
11-19-1910	13, no. 2	35	Caruso	Male	“ ”
12-3-1910	13, no. 4	39	Caruso	Male	“ ”
12-17-1910	13, no. 6	39	Caruso	Male	“ ”
12-31-1910	13, no. 8	39	Caruso	Male	“ ”
1-14-1911	13, no. 10	39	Caruso	Male	“ ”
1-28-1911	13, no. 12	39	Caruso	Male	“ ”
2-11-1911	13, no. 14	35	Caruso	Male	“ ”
2-25-1911	13, no. 16	39	Farrar	Female	<b>Vocal art study at home[.]</b> You might go to

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					Paris, or any of the great musical centres of Europe, to hear and study the great operas, but you will not find anywhere, more practical actual voice demonstrations or a better opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the methods of the greatest living artists, than afforded you by the Victor. <b>Victor Red Seal Records, 10-in., \$2; 12-in., \$3.</b> Among the great singers who make records exclusively for the Victor are Caruso, Melba, Farrar, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrassini, Calvé, Eames, Gadski, Homer, Plançon and many others. The red seal records enable you to hear their voices thousands of times until you have mastered every little tone and inflection. Any Victor dealer will gladly play for you Victor Records by these artists. Write for complete catalogue of Victor Records.
3-11-1911	13, no. 18	39	Farrar	Female	“ ”
3-25-1911	13, no. 20	39	Farrar	Female	“ ”
4-18-1911	13, no. 22	39	Farrar	Female	“ ”
4-22-1911	13, no. 24	35	Farrar	Female	“ ”
5-6-1911	13, no. 26	35	Farrar	Female	“ ”
5-20-1911	14, no. 2	39	Farrar	Female	“ ”
6-3-1911	14, no. 4	35	Farrar	Female	“ ”
6-17-1911	14, no. 6	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
7-1-1911	14, no. 8	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
7-15-1911	14, no. 10	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
7-29-1911	14, no. 12	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
8-12-1911	14, no. 14	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
8-26-1911	14, no. 16	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
9-9-1911	14, no. 18	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
9-23-1911	14, no. 20	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
10-7-1911	14, no. 22	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
10-21-1911	14, no. 24	31	Farrar	Female	“ ”
11-4-1911	14, no. 26	35	Farrar	Female	“ ”
11-18-1911	15, no. 2	39	Farrar	Female	“ ”
12-2-1911	15, no. 4	43	Farrar	Female	“ ”
12-16-1911	15, no. 6	34	Farrar	Female	“ ”
12-30-1911	15, no. 8	14	Farrar	Female	“ ”
1-13-1912	15, no. 10	19	Farrar	Female	“ ”
1-27-1912	15, no. 12	20	Farrar	Female	“ ”
2-10-1912	15, no. 14	20	Caruso	Male	<b>Actual voice demonstrations by Enrico Caruso[.]</b> “Caruso’s phrasing of famous airs, like <i>Una furtiva lagrima</i> , <i>Celesta Aida</i> , <i>Romance de la fleur</i> , or <i>Salut demeure</i> , is always a model of elegance and genuine musical expression—a delight and an inspiration even as echoed by the talking machine[”]. “The Caruso records cannot be too lightly commended to teachers and students, giving to the latter just what most teachers cannot give—actual voice



Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
					<p>'demonstrations.'" —Henry T. Finck, in his book, <i>Success in Music and How It Is Won</i>.  <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> enable you to study not only the wonderful voice of Caruso, but also of Amato, Calvé, Dalmores Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Gerville-Reache, Gluck, Homer, Journet, Martin, McCormack, Melba, Plançon Sammarco, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrizzini and Witherspoon, all of whom make records exclusively for the Victor. Any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly play these famous records for you and demonstrate to you the wonderful Victor-Victrola. Write for the Victor record catalogue, with pictures of the world's greatest artists.</p>
2-24-1912	15, no. 16	17	Schumann-Heink	Female	<p><b>Mme. Schumann-Heink's hint on vocal study[.]</b> "I consider the Victor Records mirrors of the human voice, and the best vocal instructors of the day. They reproduce the art of the singer so accurately that no point of beauty and no fault escapes detection. What a wonderful study they are for gifted students, and how welcome they must be artists in enabling them to enhance the good and to avoid the bad." ERNESTINE SCHUMANN-HEINK. <b>Victor Red Seal Records</b> give you the actual voices of Caruso, Amato, Calve, Dalmores, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Gerville-Reache, Gluck, Homer, Journet, Martin, McCormack, Melba, Plancon, Sammarco, Schumann-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrizzini, and Witherspoon, all of whom make records exclusively for the Victor. Any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly play these famous records for you and demonstrate to you the wonderful Victor-Victrola. Write for the Victor Record catalog, with pictures of the world's greatest artists.</p>
3-9-1912	15, no. 18	39	Melba	Female	<p><b>Study vocal art at home under the world's greatest singers[.]</b> You might go to Paris, or any of the great musical centers of Europe, to hear and study the great operas, but you won't find anywhere more practical actual voice demonstrations or a better opportunity to become intimately acquainted with the methods of the greatest living artists, than is afforded you by the <b>Victor Red Seal Records[.]</b> They bring to you, right in your own home, the actual voices of Caruso, Amato, Calve, Delmores, Eames, Farrar, Gadski, Gerville-Reache, Gluck, Homer, Journet, Martin, McCormack, Melba, Plancon, Sammarco, Schumman-Heink, Scotti, Sembrich, Tetrizzini and Witherspoon, all of whom make records exclusively for the Victor.</p>

<b>Date</b>	<b>Issue</b>	<b>Pg</b>	<b>Artist Featured</b>	<b>Voice Gender</b>	<b>Advertisement Transcription</b>
					And you can hear these great voices over and over again until you have mastered every little tone and inflection. Any Victor dealer in any city in the world will gladly play these famous records for you and demonstrate to you the wonderful Victor-Victrola. Write for the Victor Record catalog, with pictures of the world's greatest artists.
3-23-1912	15, no. 20	21	Melba	Female	“ ”
4-6-1912	15, no. 22	30	Melba	Female	“ ”
4-20-1912	15, no. 24	25	Melba	Female	“ ”
5-4-1912	15, no. 26	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
5-18-1912	16, no. 2	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
6-1-1912	16, no. 4	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
6-15-1912	16, no. 6	14	Melba	Female	“ ”
6-29-1912	16, no. 8	16	Melba	Female	“ ”
7-13-1912	16, no. 10	17	Melba	Female	“ ”
7-27-1912	16, no. 12	19	Melba	Female	“ ”
8-10-1912	16, no. 14	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
8-24-1912	16, no. 16	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
9-7-1912	16, no. 18	10	Melba	Female	“ ”
9-21-1912	16, no. 20	10	Melba	Female	“ ”
10-5-1912	16, no. 22	31	Melba	Female	“ ”
10-19-1912	16, no. 24	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
11-2-1912	16, no. 26	10	Melba	Female	“ ”
11-16-1912	17, no. 2	32	Melba	Female	“ ”
11-30-1912	17, no. 4	15	Melba	Female	“ ”
12-14-1912	17, no. 6	27	Melba	Female	“ ”
12-28-1912	17, no. 8	26	Melba	Female	“ ”
1-11-1913	17, no. 10	36	Melba	Female	“ ”
1-25-1913	17, no. 12	30	Melba	Female	“ ”
2-8-1913	17, no. 14	18	Melba	Female	“ ”
2-22-1913	17, no. 16	38	Melba	Female	“ ”
3-8-1913	17, no. 18	12	Melba	Female	“ ”
3-22-1913	17, no. 20	14	Melba	Female	“ ”
4-5-1913	17, no. 22	26	Melba	Female	“ ”
4-19-1913	17, no. 24	25	Melba	Female	“ ”
5-3-1913	17, no. 26	19	Melba	Female	“ ”
5-17-1913	18, no. 2	35	Melba	Female	“ ”
5-31-1913	18, no. 4	19	Melba	Female	“ ”
6-14-1913	18, no. 6	28	Melba	Female	“ ”
6-28-1913	18, no. 8	13	Melba	Female	“ ”
7-12-1913	18, no. 10	15	Melba	Female	“ ”
7-26-1913	18, no. 12	26	Melba	Female	“ ”
8-9-1913	18, no. 14	26	Melba	Female	“ ”
8-23-1913	18, no. 16	12	Melba	Female	“ ”
9-6-1913	18, no. 18	16	Melba	Female	“ ”
9-20-1913	18, no. 20	22	Melba	Female	“ ”
10-4-1913	18, no. 22	22	Melba	Female	“ ”
10-18-1913	18, no. 24	20	Melba	Female	“ ”
11-1-1913	18, no. 26	20	Melba	Female	“ ”

Date	Issue	Pg	Artist Featured	Voice Gender	Advertisement Transcription
11-15-1913	19, no. 2	30	Melba	Female	“ ”
11-29-1913	19, no. 4	26	Melba	Female	“ ”
12-13-1913	19, no. 6	39	Melba	Female	“ ”
12-27-1913	19, no. 8	27	Melba	Female	“ ”

### Advertisement Analysis

214 total advertisements, divided as follows:

- 1 featuring composer (Verdi)
- 14 featuring Victor Talking Machines
- 199 featuring famous singers, further divided as follows:

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187	1 singer featured	= 187 appearances	134 female (71.7%)	53 male (28.3%)
7	2 singers featured	= 14 appearances	7 female (50%)	7 male (50%)
5	5 singers featured	= 25 appearances	15 female (60%)	10 male (40%)
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>226 appearances</b>	<b>156 female (69%)</b>	<b>70 male (31%)</b>

**Without Melba & Caruso: 111 appearances 89 female (80.2%) 22 male (19.8%)**

### Famous Singers featured

Famous Singers Featured	Total # of Appearances	Voice Gender
Arral, Blanche	1	Female
Blauvelt, Lillian	1	Female
Calve, Emma	2	Female
Caruso, Enrico	48	Male
Eames, Emma	11	Female
Farrar, Geraldine	28	Female
Gadski, Johanna	1	Female
Homer, Louise	9	Female
Journet, Marcel	1	Male
Melba, Nellie	67	Female
Plançon, Pol	8	Male
Schumann-Heink, Ernestine	17	Female
Scotti, Antonio	13	Male
Sembrich, Marcella	17	Female
Tetrazzini, Luisa	2	Female
<b>Total appearances</b>	<b>226</b>	

**TOTAL DIFFERENT SINGERS: 15**

**11 female (73.3%) 4 male (26.7%)**

**APPENDIX B: CHRONOLOGY OF HISTORICAL EVENTS CITED IN THIS STUDY**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Event</b>	<b>Chapter</b>
1877	Thomas Edison thinks of the possibility of recording phone messages on a machine that could play them back at a later time in July (Conot, 97).	2
	Edison draws and labels a “phonograph” in his notebook in August (Israel, 144).	2
	Edison invents a machine that records sound, filing for a patent in December. He insisted on its primary function as a dictation machine (Kenney, 44).	1
1878	Edison is awarded a patent for his phonograph invention on February 19 (Read and Welch, 7-9).	1
	The <i>New York Sun</i> called Edison the “inventor of the age” on April 29, because of his phonograph invention (Israel, 142).	2
	Alexander Graham Bell called Edison’s invention a highly interesting and ingenious toy in the spring (Magoun, 59).	2
	Edison’s phonograph profits are \$4,450 for the year (Magoun, 51-53).	2
1880	Edison’s phonograph profits drop to a mere \$479 for the year (Magoun, 51-53).	2
1883	The Treasury Department of the United States issues the first five cent nickel (Schlereth, 81).	4
1887	Emile Berliner invented the gramophone (Gelatt, “Music on Records, 186).	
1888	North American Phonograph Company—headed by Jesse Lippincott—began manufacturing and marketing Edison’s phonograph as a replacement for the stenographer.	2
	Kodak created the first hand held camera (Braden, 154).	2
1889	Louis Glass—general manager of the Pacific Phonograph Company, subsidiary to the National Phonograph Company—placed two nickel machines in the Palais Royale Soloon in San Fransisco on November 23 (Kenney, 25).	2
1890	The National Phonograph Association held its first convention. The main discussion was whether the phonograph would threaten the job security of the stenographer in the business world (Kruse, 2).	2
	The growing food processing industry accounted for a full 20% of all American manufacturing by this year (Crumpacker, xxvi).	4

Year	Event	Chapter
1893	Berliner develops a method of stamping his flat discs (Day, 2).	
	Edison assumes control of the North American Phonograph Company.	
1896	Fannie Merritt Farmer publishes her cook book, <i>Boston Cooking School Cook Book</i> . This book is the first cook book to provide precise ingredient measurements (Crumpacker, xxvii).	4
	The National Phonograph Company manufactured 1,239 Edison phonographs (DeGraaf, 89).	7
1897	The National Phonograph Company increased production. They manufactured 5,165 Edison phonographs and 87,690 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1898	<i>Musical America</i> was first published.	7
	John T. Torrence developed condensed soup resulting in the Joseph P. Campbell Company of Camden New Jersey (Crumpacker, xxiii).	4
	The National Phonograph Company increased production. They manufactured 14,255 Edison phonographs and 428,310 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1899	<i>Musical America</i> temporarily ceased production.	7
	The National Phonograph Company increased production. They manufactured 46,097 Edison phonographs and 1,886,137 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1900	The Victor Company introduced “Nipper” with the slogan “His Master’s Voice” (Symes, 8).	3
	The National Phonograph Company increased production. They produced only 41,894 Edison phonographs, but 2,080,132 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
	Record sales totaled 3.75 million for this year alone (Kuhlman, 2).	7
1901	Victor sold 256,908 records and 7,650 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
	The National Phonograph Company decreased production slightly, manufacturing 41,381 Edison phonographs and 1,976,645 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1902	Caruso first recorded for the Victor (Scott, 1).	7
	Victor sales increased, selling 1,696,296 records and 42,110 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
	The National Phonograph Company increased production. They produced 80,257 Edison phonographs and 4,382,802 Edison records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1903	Victor first offered its Red Seal Records for sale in the United States (Kenney, 50).	4
	Caruso began performing at the MET in New York City (Dizikes, 398).	7
	Victor sold 1,966,036 records and 40,601 talking machines	7

Year	Event	Chapter
	(DeGraaf, 91).	
	The growing National Phonograph Company manufactured 113,151 Edison Phonographs and 7,633,142 Edison Records (DeGraaf, 89-90).	7
1904	Caruso signed the first “super star” contract with the Victor company (Kuhlman, 13).	7
	Caruso recorded his first “major hit,” “Vesta la guibba,” from Leoncavallo’s <i>I Pagliacci</i> (Kuhlman, 13).	7
	<i>McCalls</i> Magazine stated that 90% of the typical family’s income was spent by women (Schlereth, 140).	3
	Columbia sold an estimated 21 million cylinder and 4 million disc recordings (Brooks, 14).	7
	Victor increased sales, selling 2,595,011 records and 47,074 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1905	<i>Musical America</i> began publication again and continued until 1964.	7
	Victor increased sales to 3,565,679 records and 65,591 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1906	The Duplex phonograph company was founded (Fabrizio and Paul, 119).	5
	Victor offered the first cabinet style talking machines for sale, the Victor-Victrola.	5
	Victor increased sales to 7,051,775 records and 76,542 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1907	Victor rerecorded Caruso’s first “major hit,” “Vesta la guibba” from Leoncavallo’s <i>I Pagliacci</i> . First million dollar recording (Kuhlman, 14).	7
	Banker’s panic resulted in economic decline (Schlereth, <i>Victorian America</i> , 193).	4
	Victor increased sales to 7,686,709 records and 102,247 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1908	The first radio station went on the air in January (Kuhlman, 14).	
	Record sales drop due to the banker’s panic of the previous year. Victor sales dropped to 5,248,147 records and 49,790 talking machines, a forty percent drop (DeGraaf, 90-91).	4, 7
	Edison sales dropped 30% (DeGraaf, 90-91).	4
1909	Columbia introduced its Graphonola in response to Victor’s Victrola (Brooks, 14).	5
	Columbia sold 18.6 million cylinder and 8.6 million disc recordings (Brooks, 14)	7
	Victor sales drop again to 4,639,463 records and 67,911 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
	An estimated total 27.5 million records were sold this year, a large number even if the banker’s panic had a negative impact on the industry (Kuhlman, 2).	7

Year	Event	Chapter
1910	.Victor increased sales, selling 5,988,004 records and 94,557 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1911	Victor increased sales, selling 6,205,929 records and 73,062 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91)	7
1912	Victor spent an unprecedented 1.5 million dollars on advertising (Kenney, 52).	1, 3
	Victor published its first edition of the <i>Victor Book of the Opera</i> . Updated and revised editions were published each year until Stock market crash of 1929 (Harvith and Harvith, 3).	7
	Victor increased sales, selling 9,150,374 records and 70,233 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91)	7
1913	<i>Etude</i> magazine estimates that 95% of all music lessons were taught to students who intended to use their skills solely in the home (Schmitz, 757).	3
	Victor published its first edition of <i>What We Hear in Music</i> , by Mrs. Anne Shaw Oberndorfer	7
	Victor increased sales, selling 11,086,489 records and 133,777 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91).	7
1914	Columbia sold only 3.9 million cylinder recordings but an increased 23.3 million disc recordings (Brooks, 14).	7
	Victor increased sales, selling 13,564,985 records and 127,467 talking machines (DeGraaf, 91)	7
	Americans had purchased more than 500,000 phonographs annually and seven years later, yearly production exceeded 100 million (Schlereth, <i>Victorian America</i> , 193).	

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