
The Melbourne Popular Concerts: Emulating an English Concert Model

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Many of us once resident in London have, time after time, passed such buildings as the Tower of London, the British Museum, and the National Gallery without ever entering them. If it were possible how gladly should we now avail ourselves of such opportunity. By a combination of circumstances we, in Australia, though thousands of miles away from the great centres of art, have at our very doors what may be correctly termed PERFECT PERFORMANCES of the chamber music of the greatest masters.¹

During the 1880s and early 1890s, a series of 135 chamber-music concerts, entitled the Melbourne Popular Concerts, was held in Collins Street, Melbourne. These concerts were significant because they presented a large number of chamber works before the Melbourne public over a relatively short period of time while achieving what were considered to be high standards of performance.² The concerts, however, were also remarkable for their 'Englishness,' a characteristic that was achieved through the conscious efforts of the directors of the concerts to recreate the cultural institutions of England in their new homeland.

This article examines the influence of English concert life, and particularly Arthur Chappell's Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts (1859–1903),³ on Australian chamber-music concerts of the same period. The influence of Chappell's concerts shall be demonstrated through a case study of one series of chamber-music concerts that took place in Melbourne during the late nineteenth century: the Melbourne Popular Concerts. The article will also demonstrate that while the influence of the English concerts was strong, the Australian concerts were unique in their own right. Discussion will commence with a brief overview of the history and significance of the Monday Popular Concerts followed by examples of Australian concerts that attempted to emulate

¹ T.H. Guenett, 'Melbourne Popular Concerts,' *Argus*, 17 August 1887: 8.

² The term 'chamber music' is used in this article to denote high-art instrumental music for two to eight performers with one instrument per part while the term 'chamber-music concert' is used to describe concerts in which chamber music was presented as the primary feature. These concerts usually contained a combination of vocal music, solo instrumental music and chamber works.

³ The Australian violinist Johann Kruse attempted to revive them in 1903 but after just one season of concerts they came to a definitive close. See W.C., 'The Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 3rd ed., ed. H.C. Colles (Philadelphia: Theodore Presser Company, 1927), vol. 3. 791–92.

them. The article then concentrates on the Melbourne Popular Concerts and their similarities with and differences from the London concerts, particularly in terms of repertoire and programme construction, the aesthetic goals of the directors and audience support. Other issues, such as the use of programme notes and the length of the concert season, are also briefly mentioned.

Originally formed in 1858, Chappell's Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts aimed to place 'classical music within the reach of the general public ... The idea was "to collect a permanent audience from the lovers of music resident in London and the suburbs" and, *inter alia*, help to popularize [St James's Hall], which was as yet far from paying its way.'⁴ Tickets to the London Popular Concerts were affordable for the average citizen, and could be purchased via subscription or singly prior to each concert.

The history of the Monday Popular Concerts is tied very closely to the building in which they were housed. St James's Hall, home to the Monday Popular Concerts, was opened in spring 1858 and was promoted by two music publishers Chappell and Cramer.⁵ While the cost of building the hall was estimated at £40,000, unexpected complications during the process of erecting the building blew the budget out to £70,000, and, with extensions added at a later date, to £120,000.⁶ In an attempt to attract new patrons to the hall, Chappell announced "'Three Popular Concerts" to be given on three consecutive evenings, December 7, 8 and 9, 1858, during the week of the Cattle Show."⁷ These concerts, featuring the well-known musicians Arabella Goddard, Alfredo Piatti and Sims Reeves, were 'popular in the literal sense,'⁸ 'consisting largely of old ballads and well-known instrumental pieces.'⁹ According to H.K. in *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1954 edition), the preliminary series of concerts ran at a loss.¹⁰ Joseph Bennett, however, note writer for the Monday Popular Concerts in 1887, claimed that the original concerts 'resulted in a small profit.'¹¹ The decision to produce concerts of popular-styled music was viewed critically by J.W. Davison, music critic for the *Times*, and in 'cattle-show parlance' he aired his opinion to the public:¹²

These concerts, denominated 'Popular,' were ... directly addressed to the visitors who flock to town at this period of the year, eager to behold certain unctuous beasts rolling their larded sides in stifling pens... It is not always, however, that the lovers of fatted beeves and eyeless pigs are attracted by a musical programme, or moved by the concord of sweet sounds. Dearer to the ears of our cattle-surfeiting gentry are the low of herds, the bull's loud bellow, the neigh of the gelding, the grunt of the pig, the quack of the duck, the cackle of the goose, the bray of the donkey—the whole artillery of the farm-yard—than the finest symphony or the sweetest song.¹³

⁴ H.K., rev. 'The Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 5th ed., ed. Eric Blom (London: Macmillan and Co., 1954) 874.

⁵ Percy A. Scholes, 'St James's Hall,' *The Mirror of Music 1844–1944* (London: Novello and Co., 1947), vol. 1, 206–7.

⁶ Scholes, *Mirror of Music*, vol. 1, 206.

⁷ *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

⁸ *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

⁹ W.C., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1927) 791.

¹⁰ H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 874.

¹¹ Joseph Bennett, 'A Story of Ten Hundred Concerts' from Monday Popular Concert Programme, 4 April 1887 (London: Chappell and Co., [1886]) 3.

¹² *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

¹³ J.W. Davison from an unnamed source quoted in the *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

Despite Davison's objections, the directors produced a further four concerts, held on consecutive Mondays, from the 3rd to 24th of January, 1859.¹⁴ The second series, termed 'Monday Popular Concerts,' was considered more successful than the earlier concerts.¹⁵ 'Then,' according to the *Musical Times*, 'came the great change in the character of the music performed at the Monday Popular Concerts.'¹⁶ At Davison's suggestion the directors decided to substitute 'classical music' for the popular selections and while 'the music to be performed was decidedly *unpopular* in character, no change was made in the name.'¹⁷ Thus, the Monday Popular Concerts, as the world came to know them during the latter half of the nineteenth century, were born.

By 1882, the year the Melbourne Popular Concerts commenced, the Monday Popular Concerts were best known for their performances of high-art chamber music; their programmes comprised a combination of chamber works (duos, trios, quartets and quintets), instrumental solos and vocal items. Annotated programmes containing analytical notes and analyses of the works performed, first written by Davison and later by Bennett, were an integral part of the concerts and were used to aid the audience in their appreciation and understanding of the music.

Such was the fame and following of the Monday Popular Concerts, that musicians in Melbourne began to model their own concerts on Chappell's example in the hope that they too would secure similar success. Charles Horsley was the first resident musician in Melbourne to carry out concerts modelled on the Monday Popular Concerts. In 1863, he produced a short series of instrumental and vocal concerts entitled Monday Popular Concerts at the Prahran Town Hall and St George's Hall, Melbourne.¹⁸ The concerts, according to the *Argus* critic were 'modelled on the plan of the celebrated "Monday Popular Concerts" in London... The special object of the promoters ... directed to performing first class music at low rates of prices.'¹⁹ Horsley's Monday Popular Concerts emulated Chappell's early Popular Concerts in so far as they consisted of serious instrumental solos combined with a large proportion of vocal ballads, operatic arias, popular songs and the like. Unfortunately, Melbourne's first Monday Popular Concerts were terminated within a matter of weeks. Despite encouraging reports from the press, promoters of the concerts were unable to recover their expenses. Horsley wrote a letter to the editor of the *Argus* explaining: 'Had these concerts merely paid the expenses, the object of their promoters would have been attained, and the Melbourne public would have been provided with a source of entertainment, which is on all hands admitted to be desirable, and worthy of support.'²⁰

Further indication of the influence of Chappell's Monday Popular Concerts was given in 1877 when the *Argus* critic described the Melbourne Quartette Party's performance at a *Herren Abend* held by the Melbournier Deutsche Liedertafel as 'the nearest approach yet known in

¹⁴ *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

¹⁵ H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 874.

¹⁶ *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595.

¹⁷ *Musical Times*, 1 September 1898: 595–96.

¹⁸ Prahran is an inner suburb of Melbourne.

¹⁹ *Argus*, 16 May 1863: 5; Charles Horsley, 'The Monday Popular Concerts,' Letter to the Editor, *Argus*, 6 June 1863: 7.

²⁰ Charles Horsley, 'The Monday Popular Concerts,' Letter to the Editor, *Argus*, 6 June 1863: 7.

this part of the world to the celebrated “Monday Popular Concerts,” which takes place every week in London. We have not here,’ wrote the critic, ‘the Norman-Neruda, nor Messrs Ries, Zerbini, and Piatti; but we have those we must consider the next best.’²¹

The influence of Chappell’s concerts was not confined to Melbourne. In 1880, the Adelaide String Quartet Club was ‘formed with the intention of giving Concerts, subscriptional, at which Chamber Music only will be performed.’²² At the commencement of the seventh season, a clearer indication of the aims of this society was given in its prospectus, where it was stated that the club was ‘founded on the lines of the London “Monday Popular Concerts” for the purpose of giving the musical public ... an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the best chamber music.’²³

Two years after the formation of the Adelaide String Quartet Club, Thomas Harbottle Guenett (usually referred to as T.H. Guenett) founded the Melbourne Popular Concerts. According to a contemporary press review in 1883, the concerts were already, at the close of their third season, the longest and most successful series of chamber-music concerts yet to be produced in Melbourne.²⁴ During the years 1882 to 1893, a total of twenty-one series and 135 concerts were produced under the leadership of six different directors (see Table 1).²⁵

Table 1: Directors of the Melbourne Popular Concerts

| Director | Years | Series | Concerts |
|--------------------------|-----------|--------|----------|
| Thomas Harbottle Guenett | 1882-1888 | 1-15 | 1-99 |
| Otto Linden | 1889 | 16 | 100-105 |
| Max Klein | 1891 | 17-18 | 106-117 |
| Thérèse and Theo Liebe | 1892 | 19 | 118-123 |
| Benno Scherek | 1893 | 20-21 | 124-135 |

Most of the directors for the Melbourne Popular Concerts had either participated in or attended similar concerts in London while others received at least a portion of their musical education in England. Guenett, for example, was educated and received most of his musical training in England; his teachers included Charles Hallé and Ebenezer Prout.²⁶ Theodor and

²¹ *Argus*, 10 January 1877: 6.

²² Rules-1880. Note-book containing the rules, concert programmes, prospectuses and some reviews held in the Archives of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide (UA Series 308) quoted in Kathleen E. Nelson, ‘The Adelaide String Quartet Club and “the vocal element” 1880–1891,’ *Miscellanea Musicologica: Adelaide Studies in Musicology* 15 (1988): 143.

²³ Prospectus quoted in Nelson ‘The Adelaide String Quartet Club,’ *Miscellanea Musicologica* 15 (1988): 143.

²⁴ *Argus*, 17 May 1883: 6. Guenett’s financial commitment to the concerts was remarkable. According to anecdotal evidence, the Melbourne Popular Concerts ran at a loss for the entire duration of Guenett’s directorship. In 1889 the music critic for *Table Talk* observed that ‘the concerts involved a heavy outlay which [had] not yet been repaid’ while Alexander Sutherland wrote in his contemporary history of Melbourne: ‘Mr T.H. Guenett ... deserves the thanks of the colony for his long series of “popular concerts,” which have been unpopular enough to cause him the loss of a good deal of money.’ *Table Talk*, 25 October 1889: 4; Alexander Sutherland, ‘Thomas H. Guenett,’ *Victoria and its Metropolis: Past and Present* (Melbourne: McCarron, Bird and Co., 1888), vol. 1, 510.

²⁵ The data in this article is compiled from press advertisements and concert reviews found in one of Melbourne’s leading daily newspapers of the era, the *Argus*. After examining the advertisements and reviews, details of the programmes including date, venue, director, work, composer and performer, were entered into a database, henceforth referred to as the ‘Melbourne Popular Concerts Database.’

²⁶ *Table Talk*, 25 October 1889: 4.

Thérèse Liebe performed regularly in chamber-music concerts in London, while Max Klein commenced his musical training in Manchester before moving to London.²⁷ According to *Table Talk*, he later became associated with a number of notable musicians including Wagner, Rubinstein, Richter, Massenet, Goddard, Dvořák, Sir Michael Costa, Sir Arthur Sullivan, Macfarren, McKenzie and Parry, and attended all of the Monday Popular Concerts for the 1878–1879 season.²⁸

The performers at the Melbourne Popular Concerts consisted of resident musicians, some of which had also been involved in English concert life before migrating to Melbourne. Australian-born George Weston, for example, the first violinist for the string quartet group of the Melbourne Popular Concerts, received a portion of his musical education in England.²⁹ Alfred Montague and Madame Carlotta Tasca (the English pianist and wife of the composer and music critic Alfred Plumpton) were trained at the Royal Academy of Music in London,³⁰ while the most highly regarded musician to take part in the Melbourne Popular Concerts, J.B. Zerbini, was associated with the Monday Popular Concerts for almost twenty years.³¹

The relationship between the Melbourne Popular Concerts and Arthur Chappell's Monday Popular Concerts is described in reviews and notices published in contemporary newspapers, particularly the *Argus*, the only newspaper to review every concert. A review of the first concert, for example, refers to the Melbourne Popular Concerts as 'musical entertainments founded on the model of the "Monday Popular Concerts" in London.'³² Alexander Sutherland, in his contemporary history of Melbourne, described the object of the Melbourne Popular Concerts to be 'the musical education of the public ... Mr Guenett,' he wrote in 1888, 'has followed as closely as possible the example of the "Monday Pops." in London, in the hope that ultimately they will do as much for Melbourne as those referred to have done for London,' to educate the public in the ways of high-art chamber music.³³ Further evidence of this aim was given by the *Argus* reviewer who paraphrased an address Guenett made to his audience on 12 September 1883:

[Mr Guenett] then went on to say that the Monday Popular Concerts, which many years ago commenced with great financial loss, have since been the means of musically educating the London public, and that in that direction they had worked wonders.

²⁷ While the brother and sister 'cellist and violinist were reportedly better known in America and continental Europe, their activities in London were noteworthy, particularly their participation in the People's Concert Society during the late 1880s. Between December 1886 and February 1888 Theo Liebe appeared in concerts at the Poplar Town Hall, the South Place Chapel, Omega Hall, Lisson Grove, and St Andrew's Hall, Bloomsbury. On at least two occasions he was joined by his sister Madame Thérèse Liebe. This information was provided by Alan Bartley (Oxford Brooks University), email correspondence, 28, 29 July 2003. See also *Australasian Critic*, 1 April 1891: 171.

²⁸ Klein arrived in Melbourne in 1888 to take the position of first violinist in the International Exhibition Orchestra. *Table Talk*, 11 January 1889: 5–7.

²⁹ The Weston family moved to England where it was believed George could receive the best possible musical training. There he studied with Herr Bosenneck and then Mr H.C. Cooper. After making tours of Scotland and Wales, the family returned to Melbourne in 1877. *Table Talk*, 18 January 1889: 7.

³⁰ *Argus*, 10 May 1926: 10. For further information on Plumpton, see J.J. Royal, 'Guiding Lights: An Investigation of Two Melbourne Music Critics and Melbourne Music Criticism from 1870 to 1889, BMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 1995.

³¹ J.B. Zerbini died in Melbourne in 1891. See *Argus*, 30 November 1891: 6.

³² *Argus*, 1 June 1882: 9.

³³ Sutherland, 'Thomas H. Guenett,' vol. 2, 477.

He hoped that the Melbourne Popular Concerts, which had so far gone on steadily progressing, would at last achieve a similar result here.³⁴

In terms of facilitating exposure to repertoire, this goal of musically educating the public was achieved. While the Melbourne Popular Concerts were carried out on a much smaller scale than the London Popular Concerts, comprising approximately one tenth the number of concerts and surviving approximately one quarter the life span, a substantial number of chamber works were produced. Overall, 304 performances of 122 different chamber works were given, including 156 quartets, 54 trios, 40 duo sonatas, 38 quintets, 10 septets, 5 octets and 1 sextet (see Table 2).

Table 2: Number of Chamber Works for Two to Eight Players

| Work Type* | Performances † | Works |
|-------------|----------------|-------|
| Quartets | 156 | 57 |
| Trios | 54 | 24 |
| Duo sonatas | 40 | 24 |
| Quintets | 38 | 12 |
| Septets | 10 | 2 |
| Octets | 5 | 2 |
| Sextets | 1 | 1 |
| TOTAL | 304 | 122 |

* work type classification refers to the number of performers

† including multiple performances of the same work

The emulation of Chappell's Monday Popular Concerts begins with the selection of repertoire. A closer examination of the major works and styles of music performed at the Melbourne Popular Concerts reveals numerous similarities between the concerts. The repertoire at the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts at St James's Hall, for example, concentrated predominantly on composers such as Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Schumann and Mendelssohn, later introducing the works of Grieg, Brahms, Dvořák and Rubinstein. As noted by the critic for the *Times*, 'Liszt and his school [were] ... rigorously excluded, and the same remark applies, with few exceptions, to contemporary French composers, with the [exception] of M. Saint-Saëns.'³⁵

Although the repertory of the London Popular Concerts concentrated predominantly on works of the classical and romantic styles, some pre-classical works, such as those by J.S. Bach and Handel, were also included in programmes. Over approximately four decades and 1400 concerts, the eight composers with the greatest number of instrumental works (including works for solo instrument) performed at the London Popular Concerts were Beethoven (99), Schumann (79), Mozart (66), Mendelssohn (64), Bach (66), Chopin (59), Haydn (58) and Brahms (46).³⁶

³⁴ *Argus*, 13 September 1883: 5.

³⁵ 'The Monday Popular Concerts,' *Times*, 1 November 1881: 11, The Times Digital Archive, Gale Group Databases, Issue 30340, www.galeuk.com/times, accessed 2 August 2004; [no author], *Catalogue of Works Performed at the Monday Popular Concerts during Thirty Four Seasons Commencing February 14, 1859 and Finishing April 11, 1892*.

³⁶ H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 875.

Similar tendencies can be observed in the repertoire performed at the Melbourne Popular Concerts where composers with the greatest number of instrumental works performed were Beethoven, Chopin, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Liszt, Schubert and Haydn (see Table 3).

Table 3: The most-performed Composers at the Melbourne Popular Concerts

| Composer | Works* | Performances |
|-------------|--------|--------------|
| Beethoven | 41 | 84 |
| Chopin | 36 | 68 |
| Schumann | 23 | 56 |
| Mendelssohn | 22 | 67 |
| Mozart | 15 | 32 |
| Liszt | 15 | 16 |
| Schubert | 14 | 43 |
| Haydn | 14 | 26 |
| TOTAL | 179 | 391 |

* these figures include chamber works by Beethoven (23), Mendelssohn (15), Mozart (15), Haydn (14), Schubert (9), Schumann (8) and Chopin (1).

The most marked difference between the repertoire performed at the London and Melbourne concerts is the almost total absence of early music (music earlier than 1750) in the Melbourne Popular Concerts' programmes. While J.S. Bach was one of the eight most-performed composers at the London Popular Concerts not a single chamber work and just four works for solo instrument by J.S. Bach were performed in the Melbourne Popular Concerts during this period.³⁷ The Bach revival that swept through much of concert life in London during the nineteenth century appears to have had little or no impact on the chamber-music repertoire in Melbourne. The absence of Bach's compositions can also be observed in some of the other leading amateur music societies. Very few works by Bach, for example, were performed in the Melbourne and Metropolitan Liedertafels' concerts. Prior to 1893, the year the Melbourne Popular Concerts finally disbanded, only five works (predominantly instrumental solos) by Bach had been performed.³⁸

³⁷ Other early instrumental works presented at the Melbourne Popular Concerts included Corelli's Adagio in A minor for 'cello, a Rameau Gavotte, Handel's Chaconne from *Suite de Pièces*, Air and Variations for piano, a Gavotte, and a Sonata in A for violin, Porpora's Suite in G and Vitali's Chaconne in G minor. Tartini's *Sonate du Diable*, which received a total of thirty-five performances in the first thirty-four seasons of the Monday Popular Concerts, was performed only once in Melbourne by George Weston on 13 June 1888. See H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 875. For a comprehensive list of J.S. Bach's works performed at the London Popular Concerts see *Catalogue of Works performed at the Monday Popular Concerts*.

³⁸ It should be noted that early music in Melbourne during the nineteenth century was not entirely without support. In 1886, Mr S.P. Needham gave a series of five concerts in an attempt 'to introduce the Melbourne public to the rich store of madrigals and glees, mostly by English composers, which were [at that time] almost entirely unknown in Australia.' Works performed at his concerts included those by 'Morely, Festa, Spofforth, Benet, Walmisley, Attenburg and Carrulli.' Eight years earlier Mr H. Kaepfel delivered a lecture on the life and works of J.S. Bach at the Musical Artists' Society. The lecture included the performance of a variety of works by the composer. Database of Melbourne Concert Life, CSAM, Parkville, Melbourne; *Age*, 1 November 1886: 5; *Leader*, 6 April 1878: 19.

Further differences in repertoire can also be observed. In contrast to the Monday Popular Concerts, Liszt's works for pianoforte were a predominant feature at the Melbourne Popular Concerts.³⁹ Fifteen of the composer's works were performed by six different pianists, more than double the number of solo-instrumental works by Mendelssohn and three times the number of those by Schubert (see Table 4).⁴⁰

Table 4: Composers with the Most Performances of Solo Instrumental Works

| Composer | Works | Performances |
|-------------|-------|--------------|
| Chopin | 35 | 67 |
| Schumann | 15 | 29 |
| Beethoven | 18 | 28 |
| Liszt | 15 | 16 |
| Mendelssohn | 7 | 9 |
| Schubert | 5 | 8 |
| Raff | 3 | 7 |

While all of Beethoven's late string quartets had been introduced to London audiences during the first half of the nineteenth century, none of them was performed at the Melbourne Popular Concerts. Beethoven's penultimate piano sonata, op. 110 in A-flat, however, was performed in December 1891 by Ernest Hutcheson, the Australian pianist who had recently returned from studying in Leipzig.⁴¹

Another significant similarity between Chappell's Monday Popular Concerts and Guenett's Melbourne Popular Concerts is the use of vocal music. The Monday Popular Concerts, like many other chamber-music concerts in London during the nineteenth century, adopted the practice of incorporating vocal and instrumental solos into their programmes. While the early Monday Popular Concerts included numerous popular ballads and instrumental pieces, the usual practice later was to incorporate vocal works of a serious nature such as art songs (lieder), operatic arias and religious pieces. According to Christina Bashford, most directors of chamber-music concerts in London during the first half of the nineteenth century realised the need for vocal and /or instrumental works in their programmes; they not only provided 'light relief' between the serious chamber works but also made the concerts more attractive to the wider public.⁴²

Following the example of the Monday Popular Concerts and, indeed, many other concerts in London during the nineteenth century, the Melbourne Popular Concerts featured a substantial proportion of solo instrumental and vocal music. In total, 308 performances of vocal music were heard, compared to chamber music's 304, and 216 solo instrumental performances.

³⁹ Between the years 1859 and 1892, just one work by Liszt was presented at the Monday Popular Concerts. See *Catalogue of Works Performed at the Monday Popular Concerts*.

⁴⁰ Liszt's solo works for piano included a number of song transcriptions, Hungarian Rhapsodies, Hungarian Fantasia (twice), Ballade in D flat, Berceuse, *Air Hongroise* in A minor and *Waldesrauschen*. Note that all the solo instrumental works by the composers in Table 4 were written for the pianoforte.

⁴¹ *Argus*, 3 December 1891: 6.

⁴² Christina Bashford, *Public Chamber-Music Concerts in London, 1835–50: Aspects of History, Repertory and Reception*, PhD thesis, University of London, 1996, 347–48.

Vocal items selected for the Melbourne Popular Concerts were very similar to those presented at the London Popular Concerts and typically included lieder, operatic arias, airs and excerpts from oratorios. Songs by Beethoven and lieder by Schubert, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Gounod and Rubinstein were standard inclusions while operatic arias by Mozart, Donizetti and Wagner were also popular.⁴³ The high-art nature of Guenett's concerts meant that popular or sentimental songs could not be included. There was the occasional exception, however, such as the concert on 12 September 1883, which featured the Metropolitan Liedertafel singing part songs, or those on 20 September 1882, 25 October 1882 and 21 May 1884, which included salon-styled songs composed by local musician and music critic for the *Age*, Alfred Plumpton. The practice of combining vocal music with high-art chamber and solo instrumental music can also be observed in Horsley's Monday Popular Concerts in 1863 where the large number of vocal items was seen as an appropriate sweetener to the more serious instrumental items.

Guenett's emulation of Chappell's famous 'Pops' was further demonstrated through the manner in which the Melbourne Popular Concerts were structured. The programmes for the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts at St James's Hall, London, consisted of two parts and five to seven works. Two standard models of concert were used with chamber works for two to eight players commencing and concluding the programmes. The typical concert contained, for example, an instrumental work for two to eight players (often a quartet), followed by one or two songs, and a second instrumental work, often a sonata for one or two instruments, in the first half of the concert—a song (or songs) and an instrumental work for two to eight players in the second half. Alternatively, an additional instrumental solo or work for two to eight performers commenced the second part of the programme. Thus, the standard programme for the London Popular Concerts followed the formats shown in Tables 5 and 6.

Table 5: Standard Programme for the Monday Popular Concerts 1

| | |
|---------------|---------------------------------------|
| Part 1 | Instrumental work (2-8 performers) |
| | Vocal work |
| | Instrumental work (1 or 2 performers) |
| Part 2 | Vocal work |
| | Instrumental work (2-8 performers) |

Table 6: Standard Programme for the Monday Popular Concerts 2

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Part 1 | Instrumental work (2-8 performers) |
| | Vocal work |
| | Instrumental work (1 or 2 performers) |
| Part 2 | Instrumental work (solo or 2-8 performers) |
| | Vocal work |
| | Instrumental work (2-8 performers) |

Two Monday Popular Concerts held early in 1871 are good examples of the two styles of

⁴³ Favourites included Beethoven's 'Adelaide' and 'Penitence and Forgiveness' (the most-performed vocal work with a total of six performances), Schubert's 'Erlkönig' and Rubinstein's 'The Dream.'

programme (see Tables 7 and 8).⁴⁴

Table 7: Monday Popular Concert at St James's Hall on 13 March 1871

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Part 1 | Mozart, String Quintet in C major |
| | Handel, 'Revenge, Timotheus cries' |
| | Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C major, op. 53 |
| Part 2 | Gounod, 'The Fountain Mingles with the River' & 'It is not Always May' |
| | Haydn, String Quartet in E-flat, op. 64, no. 2 |

Table 8: Monday Popular Concert at St James's Hall on 20 February 1871

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Part 1 | Mozart, String Quintet in G minor |
| | Niedermeyer, 'Le Lac' |
| | Weber, Piano Sonata in D minor, op. 49 |
| Part 2 | Beethoven, Sonata for Piano and Violin |
| | Gounod, 'The Fountain Mingles with the River' & 'It is not Always May' |
| | Mendelssohn Piano Quartet in F minor |

More significantly, the defining characteristic of the programmes at the London Popular Concerts was the interleaving of larger and smaller works, instrumental and vocal items. While other cities in Europe such as Vienna and Paris produced series of chamber-music concerts performing similar repertoire, the content and design of concerts varied from city to city.⁴⁵ For example:

Baillot's concerts in Paris presented instrumental repertory only (typically five ensemble works and one violin solo, played by Baillot with piano accompaniment), whereas ... the programmes of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde concerts offered few large-scale instrumental chamber works, being chiefly made up of small-scale instrumental and vocal pieces (including a number of Schubert's lieder), usually with a string quartet to open proceedings and a work for vocal ensemble (often one of Schubert's vocal quartets) to end.⁴⁶

The interleaving of instrumental and vocal works can also be observed in the Melbourne Popular Concerts. While there are no surviving programmes to indicate the order in which the works were performed at the Melbourne Popular Concerts, programmes were often printed in the advertisement columns of the *Argus*. Reviews of the concerts also indicate from time to time where the works were positioned within a programme, particularly if a work commenced or concluded a concert. These showed, as in the case of the Melbourne Popular Concerts held in July 1893, a close resemblance to the concert programmes of the Monday Popular Concerts already described (see Tables 9 and 10).⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Monday Popular Concert Programmes, 13 March and 20 February 1871, 'Concert Programmes,' Floyd Collection, Grainger Museum, Parkville.

⁴⁵ Christina Bashford, 'Chamber Music,' *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2001), vol. 5, 440–41.

⁴⁶ Bashford, 'Chamber Music,' 440–41.

⁴⁷ *Argus*, 1 July 1891: 8; 19 July 1893: 8.

Table 9: Melbourne Popular Concert at the Athenæum Hall on 19 July 1893

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Part 1 | Haydn, String Quartet in G, op. 17, no. 5 |
| | Handel, 'Waft Her, Angels' from <i>Jephtha</i> |
| | Beethoven, Piano Sonata in C minor, op. 13 |
| Part 2 | Mendelssohn, 'Bei der Wiege' & Schubert, 'Die Forelle' |
| | Schubert, Piano Quintet in A, D. 667 |

Table 10: Melbourne Popular Concert at the Masonic Hall on 1 July 1891

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Part 1 | Mendelssohn, String Quintet in E flat, op. 87 |
| | Schumann, 'Mailed' & 'Die Lotosblume' |
| | Beethoven, Piano Sonata in F minor, op. 57 |
| Part 2 | Spohr, Sonata Concertante for Violin and Harp, op. 115 (Larghetto) |
| | Schubert, 'A Water Song' |
| | Mozart, Piano Quartet in G minor, K. 478 |

While the Melbourne Popular Concerts exhibited a very strong resemblance to the Monday Popular Concerts in terms of repertoire and programming, they contrasted dramatically with the London concerts in other ways. Perhaps the most significant departure from the London Popular Concerts was the omission of detailed programme notes. Containing information on the composers and analyses of the works to be performed, the annotated programmes were published prior to the commencement of the upcoming season of concerts and were to be read before attendance at each Monday Popular Concert; they were considered to be a valuable means by which to educate the audience about the music, and thus heighten their appreciation of it. Unfortunately, no programmes of Melbourne Popular Concerts are known to have survived from the period, so it is impossible to discover how much or how little detail was contained in them. A report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* made during the Zerbini Quartet's tour of Sydney in July 1886, however, suggests that no such programmes were produced for the Melbourne Popular Concerts, or for any concerts in Melbourne and Sydney during this period. The critic wrote:

The programme was unique for that of a Sydney concert and like those of the Wednesday popular concerts in Melbourne during the past five years was modelled on the plan adopted at the time-honoured Monday Popular Concerts, save that the musical analyses and remarks, which have been such a boon to musical students, are not yet furnished for Melbourne or Sydney programmes.⁴⁸

The Melbourne Popular Concerts also did not have the cheap ticket prices for which the Monday Popular Concerts had become renowned, and which had enabled a large sector of London's public to attend.⁴⁹ Perhaps more significant is the lack of consistency concerning

⁴⁸ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 July 1886: 13.

⁴⁹ Guenett's concerts were financed through a subscription system at rates of one guinea for singles (three-and-a-half shillings per concert) and one-and-a-half guineas for doubles for a season's tickets. Reserved tickets at the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts (in London) were more expensive, although savings could be gained by subscribing to an entire series. Subscription for those wishing to occupy the same seat at each concert for the eighth season, for example, was priced at five pounds, 'entitling holders to a special Sofa Stall' for the sixteen Monday and seven Saturday concerts of the season. However, tickets could also be purchased for as little as sixpence, thus catering for most budgets. Monday Popular Concert Programme, 15 January 1866 (London: Chappell and Co., [1865]); H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 874.

the commencement dates and length of each subsequent season. Chappell's Monday Popular Concerts were usually held over the European Winter at weekly intervals, commencing in October or November and concluding around Easter the following year. 'Furthermore, in 1865 the Saturday "Pops" were started as an occasional supplementary series, and from 1876 they alternated every week with the Monday concerts.'⁵⁰ The twenty-one series of Melbourne Popular Concerts, however, commenced on irregular dates, though more often than not were held in Spring and Autumn. They were also shorter than Chappell's concerts, usually containing six concerts, held at weekly intervals, followed by a benefit concert.

Unlike the Monday and Saturday Popular Concerts at St James's Hall, the Melbourne Popular Concerts were not held in a single venue. Over the course of twenty-one seasons, six different venues were used including two church halls, concert venues provided by two music dealers (Glen and Co. and Allan and Co.), a Masonic hall and the small hall at the Melbourne Athenæum. One characteristic shared by all venues, however, was that they were situated in what was considered to be the most fashionable district of Melbourne: the east end of Collins Street.

Unfortunately, while the Melbourne Popular Concerts were successful from an aesthetic and artistic point of view, they were plagued with financial difficulties. These were compounded by the onset of an economic depression in the early 1890s, competing musical organisations, which recruited many of the significant musicians, and a general lack of public patronage.⁵¹

Audience support, or the lack thereof, particularly defined the Melbourne Popular Concerts as an experience unlike that of the London Popular Concerts, and is perhaps best highlighted by the public response given to the celebration of T.H. Guenett's one-hundredth concert. This concert (which was actually only the ninety-ninth concert in succession) was described by the *Argus* critic as a 'record unequalled in [the] city by any other musical artist occupying the same plane.'⁵² Despite the significance of Guenett's achievement, however, it 'was the worst attended of the whole series. Lady Loch and a party of friends were present ... for the rest, the audience consisted mostly of enthusiasts and invited guests.'⁵³ Sadly, this response contrasts dramatically with the public support Chappell received for his one-hundredth Monday Popular Concert on 7 July 1862 (the last but two of the fourth season) where, according to the *Times*, the occasion in England was marked by a rush for tickets and 'more than 1000 persons were refused admission after the hall had filled.'⁵⁴

Despite inadequate audience support, the achievements of the Melbourne Popular Concerts were significant. The resourcefulness of Melbourne's musicians and the determination of the directors of the Melbourne Popular Concerts enabled the city to enjoy its first professional series of chamber-music concerts. Following Arthur Chappell's example, they had succeeded in raising public awareness in the ways of high-art chamber music. Without the support and influence of the English musicians who visited or resided in the city, and the knowledge of

⁵⁰ H.K., 'Popular Concerts,' *Grove's Dictionary* (1954) 875.

⁵¹ For a further discussion of these issues see Peggy Lais, *The Rise and Fall of the Melbourne Popular Concerts: Chamber-Music Concerts in Pre-Federation Melbourne*, MMus thesis, University of Melbourne, 2004.

⁵² *Argus*, 14 June 1888: 9.

⁵³ *Argus*, 14 June 1888: 9.

⁵⁴ Bennett, 'A Story of Ten Hundred Concerts,' 6.

concert life they inherited from their country of origin, Melbourne may not have had such a successful series of chamber-music concerts. With a significant proportion of the Melbourne community born in the British Isles, it was only natural that local musicians sought to re-create the celebrated cultural institutions of the 'Old World' in the new. As described by Geoffrey Serle: 'In a real sense they regarded themselves as part of Britain still ... They took immense pride in the creation of "another England," and assumed it was the virtue of British institutions which had made such success possible.'⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Geoffrey Serle quoted in Joseph Johnson, *Laughter and the Love of Friends: A Centenary History of the Melbourne Savage Club 1894–1994 and A History of the Yorick Club 1868–1968* (Melbourne: Melbourne Savage Club, 1994) 18.