‘A Piano in Every Other House’?

THE PIANO IN NEW ZEALAND TRADE STATISTICS, 1877–1931

THE PIANO HAS LONG BEEN REGARDED as the foremost musical instrument of colonial New Zealand. Early British settlers and missionaries were advised that the instrument was ‘a valuable and cheerful companion’ which lent ‘homely charm to the new house in the new land’.[1] A level of mass popularity was apparent within a few decades, resulting in ‘a piano in every other house’ according to an 1880 newspaper article.[2] The instrument appealed not only as a means of creating music and entertainment, but as a status symbol. Pianos were, John MacGibbon notes, ‘our biggest luxury import’.[3] They stood for social respectability and were an acknowledged indicator of upward mobility. For women, the ability to play the piano was an accomplishment that indicated cultivation and application, and was regarded as improving their marriageability. The piano was literally an ‘instrument’ of colonization too, an impressive mass of material culture by which Western musical traditions were made audible in the new land. These multiple meanings have cemented the piano’s place as a latterday icon of settler culture, as in the films *The Piano* (1990) and *Utu* (1983), and artist Michael Parekowhai’s monumental carved Steinway grand, *He Kōrero Pūrakāu mo Te Awanui o Te Motu: Story of a New Zealand River* (2011), held by the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa.

In recent years, there has also been a surge of scholarly interest in the piano which has enlarged and complicated our understanding of the instrument’s role in colonial New Zealand. Kirstine Moffat and John MacGibbon, for instance, have drawn attention to the piano’s use across different social strata and in numerous institutional settings, from dance halls and churches, to hospitals and army barracks.[4] Moffat has also challenged the stereotype of Māori hostility to the instrument, highlighting various instances of indigenous adoption and adaption.[5] Other writers have investigated the retailers who supplied pianos for the New Zealand market.[6]

The historiography, however, has so far been based largely upon qualitative evidence such as diaries, letters, newspapers, advertisements, sheet music, oral histories and photographs. As illuminating as this material has proved to be, there has been surprisingly little quantitative analysis of the

piano’s New Zealand history, despite the instrument’s obvious importance in the colonial music economy. The instrument’s supposed ubiquity has been taken largely for granted, with historical claims about its high prevalence tending to be cited somewhat uncritically. The broad historical arc of the instrument’s popularity in New Zealand also remains surprisingly vague, with certain basic questions still to be addressed: in which decades did pianos peak in popularity? Where did all the pianos come from? Was there really ‘a piano in every other house’? How do the numbers stack up internationally? What factors were involved in variations in national demand?

This article sets out to address these questions using a rich and relatively untapped source of quantitative data relating to the piano: government trade statistics.[7] The main focus is on the 55-year period between 1877, when official statistics for piano imports were first reported, and 1931, after which imports bottomed-out due to the effects of the Great Depression. These statistics provide an invaluable baseline index for considering the piano’s New Zealand history. They also throw up several surprises, showing, for example, that the period of greatest popularity was somewhat later than previously thought, and help illuminate the relationships between certain musical, social and economic developments, including transnational dimensions of the music trade. Lastly, they contribute powerful evidence for a New Zealand music history centred not around composers, musicians and canonical works, but rather on musical practices which were the domain of the majority. Kate Bowan and Paul Pickering have recently argued that historians need to ‘recognize active music-making as the vital part of nineteenth-century popular culture that it was’.[8] As far as New Zealand is concerned, the statistical record of the piano trade suggests that this timeframe should be extended well into the twentieth century. Nonetheless, the statistics do not cast light on every aspect of the colonial New Zealand piano. The data contains nothing specifically relating to Māori use of the instrument, for instance, and this article has little to add on this subject.

The article begins with an overview of the statistical sources, before turning to the popular heyday of the piano in New Zealand from 1896 to 1916. After quantifying the piano’s prevalence in various ways, it considers some explanations for the booming piano trade. The article then explores the instrument’s function as part of the ‘cult of domesticity’ which characterized this period. Utilizing some ethnomusicological ideas about the ritual function of music, it focuses on the popular household practice of singing around the piano and argues that this was a kind of ritual occasion for expressing domestic and social values. The article concludes by discussing the later decline in demand and examining statistics for various substitute goods.

Government Trade Statistics

Official information about musical instrument imports was collated in New Zealand from the 1840s as part of the process of gathering customs duty, an important source of government revenue. During 1846, for instance, the *Statistics of New Munster* tell us that a case of musical instruments worth £15 was landed in Wellington.[9] The Registrar General's *Statistics of New Zealand for 1857* contain an isolated early mention of a piano among the sundry musical products that came ashore in Lyttelton: '1 Piano, 5 packages, and 3 in No.', together worth £205.[10] National import values in this early period are difficult to estimate, however, as it is uncertain whether all ports enumerated musical imports separately or included them in the non-specific 'other articles' category.[11]

National import figures for musical instruments were first published in the *Statistics of New Zealand for 1860*, their value for this year being £5842. The picture becomes somewhat clouded between 1863 and 1866, when figures for musical and scientific instruments were combined, but the annual totals point to a gradual upward trend over the next 20 years. In 1877, pianos began to be treated in a separate sub-category, due probably to their commercial significance. They made up far and away the largest portion of musical imports, comprising 71% of the total value of instruments for 1877 and, until the late 1910s, pianos often accounted for over 75% (see Figure 1).

Crucially, the annual *quantity* of imported pianos — a rather more reliable statistical measure — was also recorded from 1877. This was presumably because of the instrument's high per-unit value: the average wholesale value of the 1080 pianos imported during 1877 being just over £33 (around NZ$4800 in 2016 terms). The official statistics also include a variety of other information: total duty paid (1877–1931); quantity and value by country whence imported (1877–1925); quantity, value and duty paid according to whether the import fell under the preferential or non-preferential tariff rate (1904–1913); total duty according to preferential and non-preferential tariffs (1914–1931); quantity and value by country of origin (1914–1931); and quantity and value by importing ports (1914–1925). Similar information for a trickle of piano exports was published from 1878.[12] For a summary of the sources and calculations used for this article, together with a table of basic import data, see the Appendix.

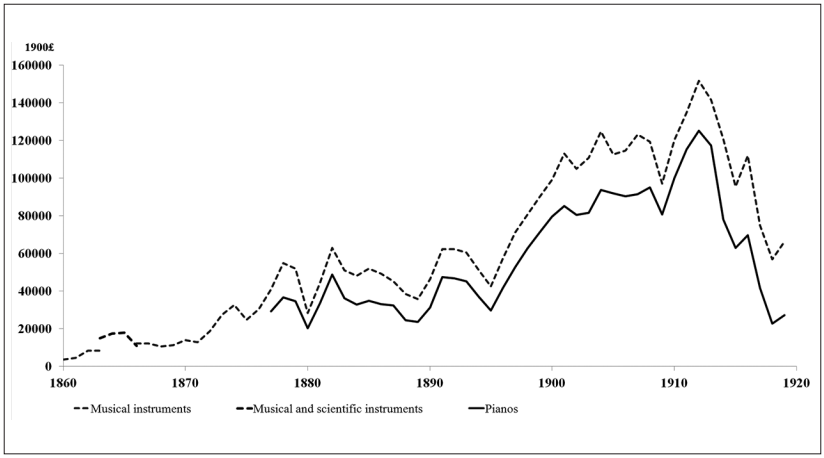

Figure 1: Value of imported musical instruments and pianos, 1860–1919

While containing an abundance of useful information, three caveats about the statistics should be noted. First, the statistics apply mainly to the commercial piano trade, but not exclusively. Until the Customs and Excise Duties Act was passed in 1888, migrants’ personal baggage — including their household effects — was exempt from duty. After 1888, personal items purchased less than a year beforehand and/or exceeding £100 in value became subject to duty. It is thus likely that a small number of privately imported pianos are represented in the reported figures.[13] Secondly, from 1920, the import category of pianos came to include player-pianos, instruments such as the Aeolian Company’s Pianola which could be played by hand and also mechanically reproduce performances using a paper roll. Player-pianos had formerly been categorized with phonographs and other mechanical instruments for music reproduction.[14] Given the post-1920 piano figures also include those relating to a partial substitute good, they need to be treated distinctly to some extent. Thirdly, a more general caution applies around the quality of the data. While the reported volumes of pianos can be regarded as fairly reliable, the valuation data (as importers could be tempted to under-declare value to avoid duty) and country of origin ascriptions (given pianos could be assembled from parts manufactured in different places) should be treated with care.[15]

Despite these reservations, the import statistics provide a remarkably good guide to piano acquisition in colonial New Zealand.[16] There are several reasons for this. Due to New Zealand’s small population, limited industrial capabilities and geographic remoteness from overseas markets, piano

manufacturing seems to have always been a rather marginal proposition here and one that relied heavily, in any case, upon imported keyboard actions and other parts. Based on the evidence available, a rough estimate of total local production before 1931 would be around 7000 pianos, compared with over 19 times this number imported into the country before 1931 (including post-1920 player-pianos).[17] Re-exportation was also minimal due to the high local demand. Between 1877 and 1931, a mere 1415 pianos were reportedly exported from New Zealand and only eight of these were New Zealand-made. We can fairly safely conclude that an estimated 95% of pianos in New Zealand were imported from overseas and 99% of all pianos stayed in the country.

The usefulness of the New Zealand trade figures becomes even more apparent in light of the often limited and ambiguous data available for other countries.[18] The UK did not record pianos separately from other musical instrument imports prior to 1895, for instance, while the first census of English manufacturing was undertaken only in 1907.[19] By contrast, production in the USA was recorded in national censuses from at least 1870.[20] But even these figures remain somewhat open to interpretation as a measure of national piano acquisition. Countries such as the USA and UK engaged in large-scale manufacturing for domestic *and* export markets, while also importing some pianos, such that calculating domestic demand is considerably more difficult than for New Zealand. Few analyses of piano statistics have been published for Australia, but piano-making was also undertaken there on a scale that has similar implications for trying to estimate national acquisition.[21] In New Zealand, by contrast, where most pianos had to pass through Customs and its statistics-gathering net before reaching the open market, imports can be relied upon as fairly representative of general levels of acquisition.

The Edwardian Heyday of the Piano

The clearest way of apprehending the piano's shifting popularity between 1877 and 1931 is as a time series of annual import quantities. As Figure 2 shows, the number of pianos imported fluctuated from year to year. A combination of factors probably accounts for many of the short-term variations. What is more immediately striking — and which this article will concentrate on — are the longer-term variations which correlate strongly with broader economic periods and historical events. The period from 1877 to 1895 corresponds with the Long Depression, reflected in fairly static piano import levels. The period 1896–1916 corresponds with the prosperity of late-Victorian and Edwardian New Zealand, and hence sees a soaring piano trade (with the 1909 notch possibly related to the previous year's financial scare in the United States). The second half of World War I and the post-war recession finds imports slumping, as one might

expect, followed by a spectacular if brief revival during the economic upturn of the mid-1920s. During the Great Depression, the trade collapses once more.

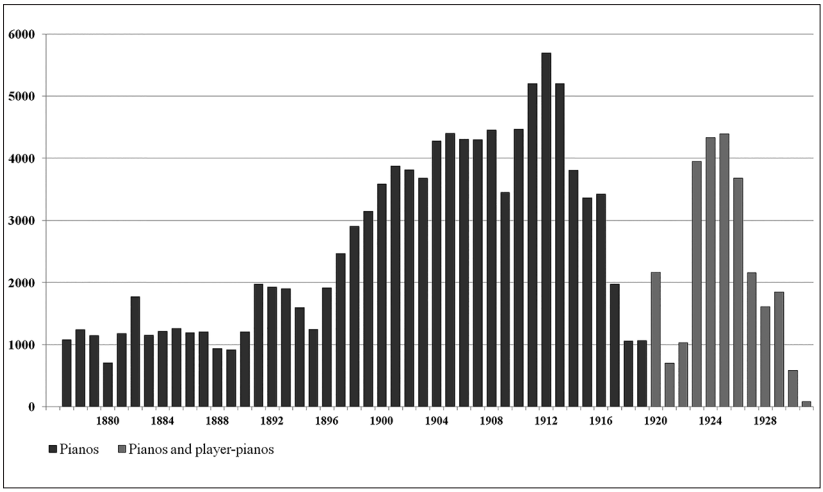

Figure 2: Piano and player-piano import volumes, 1877–1931

The most important finding here is the well-defined heyday for piano imports to New Zealand between 1896 and 1916, which for convenience sake will be referred to as the ‘Edwardian era’ even though it extends beyond the actual reign of King Edward VII. Various explanations for this upsurge of piano imports will be considered below, including increasing international supply, general improvements in the New Zealand economy, demographic shifts and changes in domestic culture of families. First, however, it is worth exploring in detail some of the boom’s demographic implications and the new light it casts on previous historiographical assumptions.

Some 81,749 pianos were imported during the 21-year period from 1896 to 1916, an average of almost 3900 per year. But the boom can be characterized not only in terms of sheer quantity. As Table 1 shows, in terms of the New Zealand population, the *rate* of importation during the Edwardian era completely outstripped population growth. In 1896, one piano was imported for every 388 people in the country; within five years, the rate had nearly doubled to one piano for every 211 people. This rate was then maintained for a decade. Although similar pre-1877 data is lacking, earlier eras are unlikely to have ever matched such per capita import rates.[22] If there was ever a period of mass popularity for pianos in New Zealand, the Edwardian era was truly it.

Census year imported	Total population	Pianos imported	People:pianos
1878	458,007	1242	369:1
1881	534,030	1177	454:1
1886	620,451	1195	519:1
1891	668,632	1974	339:1
1896	743,207	1915	388:1
1901	815,853	3873	211:1
1906	936,304	4309	217:1
1911	1,058,308	5204	203:1
1916	1,149,225	3426	335:1

Table 1: Piano imports per capita in census years[23]
Sources: *The New Zealand Official Year-book* (1941) and Appendix.

Further analyses can be made on the basis of pianos being consumer durables. 'The late nineteenth-century piano had a high expectation of life', Cyril Ehrlich notes. 'Those that were discarded for new models were not destroyed, but generally moved to a humbler milieu. It is therefore reasonable to cumulate production figures over thirty to forty years in order to arrive at an estimate of the national "stock" of instruments'.[24] Assuming a 40-year survival rate and subtracting the small cumulation of exports since 1877 (833 pianos), New Zealand's national 'stock' of pianos by 1916 would thus amount to 105,778: approximately one piano for every 11 people.[25]

Demand for pianos from individual households probably accounted for over 90% of all imports. Thus, if cumulated totals are divided by the number of inhabited dwellings across the country, some even more startling findings can be made. Rollo Arnold uses this method in his 1982 article, 'The country child in later Victorian New Zealand', calculating that by 1901 there were enough pianos in New Zealand to stock every fourth inhabited dwelling (with 4000 left over for schools, halls and other buildings).[26] However, if Arnold's method is extended further into the Edwardian boom period, the ratio increases dramatically. Within five years there was a piano for every third house, rising to a peak in 1916 when there were enough pianos to stock 40% of New Zealand homes — with 8000 spare.[27] True, some pianos had presumably perished since 1877 and there were probably also a few unreported exports. But as the cumulated figures do not include local production, private imports or pre-1877 leftovers, the two in five ratio is quite probably an understatement.

By 1916 there may well have been something approaching ‘a piano in every other house’ in New Zealand. The surplus would have been easily sufficient to provide a piano for every school, place of worship and hospital in the country, and probably also every theatre and public hall.[28]

Estimates of piano acquisition rates and prevalence in Edwardian New Zealand are, at this point, worth briefly checking against overseas experiences. There are various figures to draw upon, although deficiencies in some of the source data should be borne in mind. Ehrlich estimates per capita purchase rates during the same period for a number of countries. In the USA, he calculates, one new piano was purchased annually for every 260 people; one for every 360 people in the UK; one for every 1000 in Germany; and one for every 1600 in France.[29] Allowing that New Zealand import per capita rates can be equated to these purchase rates, comparison with the rates in Table 1 suggests that New Zealanders were acquiring pianos at an exceptionally high rate during the boom period. Overall piano ownership is somewhat more difficult to compare. Pianos were probably already thick on the ground in countries like Germany and also Australia, where the piano boom started earlier and was sustained longer.[30] In the USA, far and away the world’s biggest manufacturer at the time, the instrument may have become even more pervasive than in New Zealand.[31] A 1925 survey of 36 cities found that 51% of homes had pianos.[32] Probably the main point to highlight at this stage is the remarkable popularity of the piano in Anglophone colonial and ex-colonial nations, New Zealand among them. Whether this was due to compensation for cultural distance, market competition, opportunities for social mobility or for some other reason, remains a topic for future comparative research.

Identifying the Edwardian era as the true zenith of the piano in colonial New Zealand also allows us to critically re-examine previous assumptions about its prevalence. As noted already, local commentators were claiming phenomenally high ownership levels as early as 1880, when *Otago Witness* columnist ‘Civis’ asked rhetorically whether ‘it is not true that we have a piano in every other house, and a music teacher in every other street?’[33] Two national surveys of the 1880s, Arthur Clayden’s *Popular Handbook to New Zealand* and Edward Wakefield’s *New Zealand After Fifty Years*, feature similar statements:

> The piano or organ is heard in every home. The English lord who took the farmers to task for allowing their daughters to play pianos would be appalled here. He would find a piano in his coachman’s home, and his stable-boy’s sister would be heard playing opera music by the hour.[34]

A remarkable and suggestive feature in the furnishing of houses in this country is the great number of pianos and harmoniums. There is probably no other country in the world, where a musical instrument worth from £10 to £40 is so common an accessory of the home, even among the poorer classes.[35]

A letter to the *Evening Post* in 1887 also asserted that high piano-ownership revealed a general social prosperity: 'There is a large body of working men and mechanics in New Zealand, and ... they are pretty comfortable. Take the homes of the people generally. They are well furnished, piano in nearly all; their children well clothed and fashionably too'.[36]

Later historiography has often taken such claims at face value and, in some cases, misdated them back to 1860, further reinforcing the impression that the piano was widely owned across the entire colonial period.[37] Generalizations about the 'ubiquitous piano of the colonial parlour' or such like have thus seemed quite justified.[38]

The piano import statistics tell a different story, however. While there were clearly enough pianos around during the 1880s for such claims to seem vaguely credible (possibly as many as 23,000 by 1890), ownership on a truly mass scale was more a late-colonial phenomenon.[39] Earlier boasts of ubiquitous piano-ownership seem to have operated as a kind of rhetorical trope. With 'Civis' in 1880 — and Alfred Fitchett in 1895, who likewise stated there was 'a piano in every other house' — these claims served an ironic purpose, a way of highlighting the lack of higher musical achievement in the colony.[40] Clayden and Wakefield's statements, on the other hand, fall into the wider pattern of nineteenth-century discourse which promoted New Zealand as a kind of egalitarian 'Ideal Society', to use Miles Fairburn's term.[41] Not only did giant cabbages sprout from the fertile New Zealand soil, but pianos were apparently readily available to be had by all.

As well as providing a historiographical corrective, the piano statistics also raise some interesting new questions. Most obviously: why did import levels increase so dramatically in New Zealand around 1896? Part of the explanation, looking first at the supply side of the equation, was increased international availability of pianos, especially from Germany. Although the import figures only report 'country of origin' information from 1914, the longer-running 'country whence imported' data still gives a reliable indication of transnational trends.[42] As Figure 3 and Table 2 show, pianos from the UK and Germany dominated the New Zealand market over the period 1877–1919. British pianos were the early favourite, but between 1893 and 1907 they were eclipsed by German offerings.

The international market share of German manufacturers had been growing since the late 1870s, and by 1890 their output was second only to that of the USA.[43] Ehrlich ascribes their success to the adoption of American

technological innovations such as iron frames and over-stringing (which were taken up far more slowly in other countries), effective sales techniques and the prestige attached to German music more generally.[44] German agents were able to offer good-quality pianos at prices that often undercut English equivalents, for instance, by a good margin. The consequences were starkly apparent in the Australian market, where German manufacturers triumphed in the late 1880s to such a degree that by the turn of the century the value of their piano imports was tenfold that of English imports.[45]

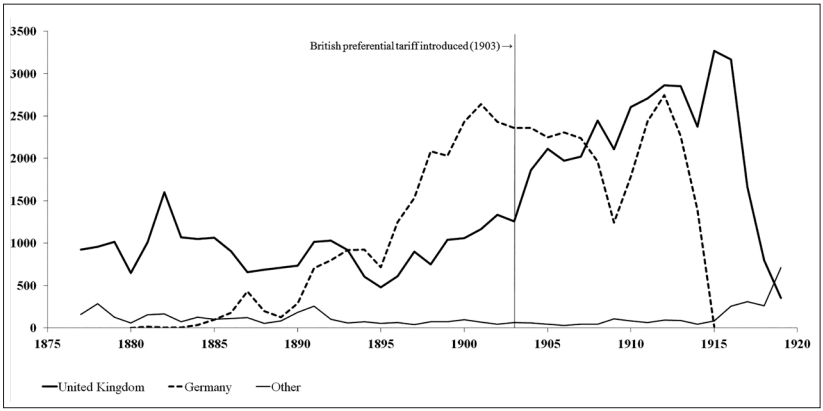

Figure 3: Piano import volumes by country, 1877–1919

Country	Pianos (1877–1919)	Pianos and player-pianos (1920–1931)
United Kingdom	60,340	26,536
Germany	45,182	844
United States	1730	3854
Australia	2814	77
Canada (incl. British Columbia)	351	1915
France	173	61
Other	115	207
TOTAL	**110,705**	**26,536**

Table 2: Import volumes by country, 1877–1931
Note: The totals for 1877–1919 use ‘country whence imported’ data; totals for 1920–1931 use ‘country of origin’ data. Sources: see Appendix.

The impact of German imports on the New Zealand market was not quite so decisive. In the early 1890s, New Zealand may have been viewed as a natural successor market to Australia in helping soak up Germany's ever-expanding production. Wholesale prices were certainly competitive, the average wholesale value of a German import to New Zealand being about 15% lower than a UK import between 1896 and 1916. But the British product had notably greater resilience on the New Zealand side of the Tasman. One factor was the passing of the Preferential and Reciprocal Trade Act of 1903, which levied an extra 10% duty (over and above the standard 20%) on imported goods produced outside British Empire countries. Another was a steady improvement in the quality of English manufactures during the early 1900s.[46] A sense emerges that strong manufacturer competition, albeit partly fueled by government intervention, may have helped sustain the Edwardian piano boom. Increased competition was also reflected in the burgeoning music retail sector. In the early 1880s, there were less than 20 music dealers across the country, but by 1909 this had risen to 106, including chains built on the piano trade such as Beggs and the Dresden Piano Company.[47]

Growing demand also clearly drove the surge in imports to New Zealand and growth in piano retail. The period from 1896 to 1916 corresponds almost exactly with the prosperity that followed the end of the Long Depression in 1895 and lasted until World War I. These economic good times were reflected in falling unemployment and rising real incomes (for some at least).[48] The mean import value of pianos fell markedly during the early 1890s too, from £26 (1890) to £24 (1895), and then more gradually to £21 in 1905. In several ways, then, pianos were becoming more affordable for more people.[49]

This expanding piano market encompassed increasing numbers of families beyond the instrument's middle-class Pākehā bastions. Given their iconic status, pianos were a key aspirational good for less well-off households, a way to broaden cultural horizons and entertainment options. The Edwardian age has been identified as a period in which working-class Pākehā — who had previously been shut out of forms of recreation dependent upon significant expenditure — began to selectively adopt the leisure habits of other classes.[50] Even so, exactly what proportion of households in different social classes acquired pianos remains an open question. New pianos in the budget range in 1914 could still cost a hefty £20 ($3000 in 2016 terms) to purchase outright,[51] although, as Moffat and MacGibbon point out, the second-hand market and hire purchase arrangements still placed the piano within reach of those determined to have one. 'In contrast to the Victorian period', MacGibbon observes, 'the 20th century has accounts of working and lower-middle-class people actually using their pianos in front parlours'.[52]

Both he and Moffat provide various examples,[53] to which can be added music educator Frederick Page’s recollections of Edwardian Lyttelton where ‘Quite poor houses had an upright piano’, and writer Pat Lawlor’s of Wellington where ‘A home without a piano was a poor home indeed’.[54] Nonetheless, other writers close to this period imply that piano ownership still marked a certain class divide.[55] Furthermore, if 40% of homes had pianos by 1916, then 60% did not, and it seems reasonable to suppose that the piano ‘have-nots’ were more likely to be the economic ‘have-nots’. Lack of affordability probably still precluded a majority of Māori families from acquiring pianos, too, although Moffat reports that the instrument was becoming more common by the 1920s.[56] While we can assume that the piano was increasingly penetrating these markets during the first two decades of the twentieth century, there is scope for further research on working-class and Māori acquisition patterns.[57]

Musicking and the Cult of Domesticity

Even as economic factors helped stimulate the piano market during the Edwardian period, many of the incentives for families to acquire an instrument remained essentially the same. These motives, which Moffat and MacGibbon have discussed in detail, include the musical and entertainment potential of the piano, the social status that ownership implied and the instrument’s ability to provide cultural continuity for migrants. The piano also continued to define femininity. In Caroline Daley’s study of Taradale, for instance, learning the piano appears to have remained a form of ‘girls’ play’ across the period, a means by which the ‘feminine values of being domestic and decorative’ were instilled.[58]

But the Edwardian era was a period of great sociological change and certain new trends could have also encouraged piano acquisition. Changes in the typical Pākehā family structure brought about by urbanization and increased separation of work and home are especially pertinent. The 1880–1920 period in New Zealand is regarded by historians as marking the transition from the ‘colonial’ model of the family, an economic unit in which home life and work life overlapped, to what Jock Phillips calls the ‘sentimental’ model. ‘[As] society became urbanised’, Phillips notes, ‘increasing numbers of men left their household to travel to work. A new set of polarities became established. The home and family became the domain of the woman; the business/factory arena that of the man. The home became a spiritual and moral retreat away from the heartless amoral conflict of the marketplace. A stronger sense of the private, introspective family emerged’.[59] This transition was reflected in major demographic and housing shifts. There was a decline in family size, as the importance of children’s economic contributions decreased and more time was

invested in rearing each child. Women married in 1880 were likely to have an average of 6.5 children, but this had almost halved by 1913.[60] Between 1886 and 1921, the average occupied dwelling also gained more rooms and became less crowded — becoming a home, therefore, with more space for bulky fixtures like a piano.[61] Urbanization was an underlying cause of such changes — urban populations rising from 42.9% to 56.2% of the national total over the 1886–1921 period[62] — which consequently brought ever more people into contact with piano dealers, who tended to be based in cities and towns.

The sentimental family also saw the emergence of a new culture of domesticity, often referred to as 'the cult of domesticity'. Manifest much earlier in England and the USA, the cult of domesticity defined the home as a woman's natural sphere and her signal virtues to be piety, purity and submission.[63] The very meaning of the home, its appearance and appurtenances, was profoundly transformed. As Erik Olssen and Andree Levesque explain, the home:

> …became a symbol and setting of new importance. It was a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the market or factory, a fortress against the sins of the world, in which various domestic rituals emphasised the cyclical and timeless qualities of family life.... [Within] its walls all was in its proper order, all neat and tidy and clean, an outward and visible sign of the correct spiritual state. The old goal of respectability was in the process of being re-defined; all eventually would pay homage, would order their domestic and spiritual furniture in accord with the new pattern.[64]

The enormous popularity of the piano in this same period, I would argue, was partly driven by its suitability as a form of 'domestic and spiritual furniture'. Playing the piano already signified domestic feminine virtue, and group music-making could serve as a ritual that met the new emotional needs of the family as a whole. A Caversham Project-related study suggests that these needs were behind the rise of family leisure activities such as piano singsongs in the Dunedin suburb of Caversham. These practices had first been 'popular' in the 1890s, but had become 'well-nigh universal' a few decades later.[65]

The rise of the cult of domesticity and the piano import boom may initially seem historically misaligned, given the former is usually regarded as starting around 1880 in New Zealand. But relatively few families — even if they conformed to the new 'sentimental' structure — could have afforded a piano in the midst of the Long Depression. The arrival of economic prosperity in the mid-1890s, though, was like a spring being released, enabling households to buy into the new cult of domesticity by way of luxury home accessories. There were also many more families after 1895. The marriage rate, having remained flat for some years, rose almost 40% between 1895 and 1904.[66] Social transience was also on the decline, which is germane

given the perennial challenge of moving such a heavy item of furniture.[67] The piano importation boom was itself an indicator that tens of thousands of New Zealanders were becoming more willing to invest in settled domesticity. Both its expense and immovability made the piano a symbol of permanency. Mass ownership can therefore also be taken as a sign that the colonial society had reached a certain level of confidence; that the post-settler Pākehā generations felt they were truly here to stay.

How did music-making function as a domestic ritual in Edwardian New Zealand? This question is somewhat challenging to answer retrospectively, without direct access to the performance culture, but it is still interesting to make some speculations given the piano’s apparent popularity. Various theories concerning the ritual content of music and its role in the formation of group identities have been put forward by ethnomusicologists.[68] One of the most fertile is Christopher Small’s theory of ‘musicking’. This has the benefit of drawing attention to the importance of musical performance and other forms of participation (such as listening), all of which he regards as ‘musicking’ of one kind or another; and because he regards all forms of musical life — from concert hall events to humble singalongs — as worthy of analysis. ‘A musical performance’, according to Small, ‘is a ritual in which is acted out the mythology of a social group’.[69] He defines the process in the following terms:

> The act of musicking establishes in the place where it is happening a set of relationships ... found not only between those organized sounds which are conventionally thought of as being the stuff of musical meaning but also between the people who are taking part, in whatever capacity, in the performance; and they model, or stand as a metaphor for, ideal relationships as the participants ... imagine them to be: relationships between person and person, between individual and society and even perhaps the supernatural world.[70]

The modelling of this ideal society or set of relationships can be found in different features of musical events: the roles that people take; spatial relationships between participants; the temporal ordering or ‘script’ of an event; repertoire selection and performance style; and the criteria by which participants define a successful occasion.

Such an analysis could be applied to various forms of domestic musicking in Edwardian New Zealand, including piano-playing for solitary pleasure, courtship at the piano, the taking of piano lessons and practising, either alone or within earshot of the rest of the household, and composition and improvisation. Here I want to focus on those practices — in particular singing around the piano — that drew the entire family into a musical ritual and could thus express the cult of domesticity’s values most comprehensively. The examples are drawn mainly from existing work by MacGibbon and Moffat.

While these writers have extensively explored the dimensions of sociability inherent in such occasions, I want to suggest that the cult of domesticity is a crucial context for understanding such musicking during the Edwardian era and helps shine a light on the underlying ritual structures.

Descriptions from memoirs, oral histories and other sources give the impression that piano-based group music in households involved two broad and overlapping practices. First, there was what was called a 'musical evening', comprising a mixture of vocal items and piano instrumentals, sometimes with violin or other instruments, and perhaps recitations. Such events are recorded from the earliest days of colonial settlement and seem to have been most typical of upper-class or musically committed households, such as Katherine Mansfield's in Edwardian Wellington.[71] The more formal and large-scale version became known as an 'At Home', which could include dancing with a hired musical group and guest performers.[72]

The second main type of piano-based group musicking was 'singing round the piano'. This practice seems to have been more prevalent than the 'musical evening' and more informal, with participants all contributing their voices to group singing with piano accompaniment. Group singing would have been a familiar activity for Pākehā New Zealanders throughout the nineteenth century, encompassing existing domestic singing practices, along with those associated with church, work and social settings inherited from British antecedents.[73] But references to the act of 'singing around the piano' become increasingly profuse during the Edwardian era, suggesting that it had emerged as a key ritual of the cult of domesticity across all social classes. MacGibbon quotes from a set of oral histories of people living in Petone born between 1893 and 1914. Six out of seven use a variant of the phrase 'singing round the piano' or describe something very similar; for instance:

> We used to have all the aunties playing together. Sing-songs around the piano. I remember my uncle — he was killed in the First World War — he had a beautiful tenor voice. I can remember him and Aunty Grace, the youngest aunty, sitting at the piano, me between his legs, singing….
>
> We used to do a lot of singing round the piano, 'cos Dad would sing. And Sunday nights, we would sometimes have a sing-song. Even if it was a wet night through the week, we would sometimes have a sing-song. We always had somebody there.
>
> In those days we used to have a piano in the house and everybody used to get round it. We used to have lovely sing-songs. We'd get in the front room there and play the piano and have a good old sing-song on Sunday nights.
>
> We had a lovely old piano. Dad used to say, 'Aw come on, we'll have a sing-song.' Old songs, we knew them.[74]

Of 28 interviews about childhood with people born between 1890 and 1914 undertaken for the Caversham Project, apparently ‘[almost] all mentioned musical evenings at home, usually around a piano’.[75] Caroline Daley also identifies the ‘sing song around the piano’ as a key form of communal leisure in late colonial Taradale.[76] Numerous other examples could be cited.[77] In some descriptions, the act of gathering around the instrument was combined with individually performed items, so clearly the ‘musical evening’ and ‘singing around the piano’ formats overlapped to some extent. Such an intersection is evident in this evocation of 1900s Wellington by Pat Lawlor: ‘On Saturday or Sunday nights in a hundred or more front rooms in the city a similar thing might be happening. The older people would be seated on the plush-covered chairs or on the old horsehair sofa; the young people around the piano; the programme — “Silver Threads” (tears in the eyes of those on the sofa), “Thora”, “At Dawning”, “Clementine”, “Oh Promise Me”, and maybe Sullivan’s “Lost Chord”.... Performers and audience were one, for everybody had to give an item’.[78]

Returning to Christopher Small’s concept of musicking, what were the ideal relationships being modelled in such musical occasions? If the ‘musical evening’ was a series of performances that showcased individual musical competency and achievement, modelling a bourgeois ethos of individualistic cultivation and self-improvement, then ‘singing around the piano’ seems redolent of heartfelt domestic communion. The phrase ‘singing around the piano’ may at first seem nondescript, a ‘normal’ way to use the instrument, but on closer examination it conveys some quite specific choices. First, a preference for *singing* — an act everybody could participate in and join together — over the more specialized expertise of instrumental playing. Second, the phrase connotes a gathering turned inwards upon itself, creating eye-to-eye intimacy and providing ‘the communicative base for a circular flow of feeling among the participants’.[79] The piano, meanwhile, with its imposing physical and sonic presence, formalized the flow of shared feelings arising from the performance in terms of the era’s materialistic aspirations. Here was a large and typically ornate edifice stationed in the sitting or drawing room, an expensive piece of ‘domestic and spiritual furniture’ around which the family could pay homage to domestic concord and material attainment.[80] Appropriately enough, a woman was very likely to be at the centre of this symbolic configuration of her ‘natural’ domain, as the accompanist. Her individuality unacknowledged in the popular descriptor ‘singing around the piano’, she thereby also demonstrated the virtue of submission.

Of course, ‘singing around the piano’ varied widely in terms of repertoire, and therefore in its symbolic content, from home to home. The available

resources of popular song, hymns, art song and lieder were immense at this time, and from these possibilities individual households selected, built and maintained their own unique musical 'idiocultures'.[81] Some sense of the distinctiveness of these domestic idiocultures can be glimpsed in the hand-me-down piles of family sheet music and owner-bound albums that survive to the present day, each collation representing the mingled aesthetic preferences, cultural aspirations, impulse buys and religious beliefs of particular households.[82] Nonetheless, whatever the repertoire, the act of singing together around the piano still found families forming tableaux of sentimental communion which modelled the general values of the cult of domesticity.

Decline of Piano Imports

The period from World War I to the 1930s Depression brought wide fluctuations in piano importation and an overall decline in popularity (see Figure 2). Imports dropped away during World War I, as might be expected. The importation of German pianos, not surprisingly, was completely stopped by 1916 and international shipping severely disrupted: over a third of ships engaged in British–New Zealand trade were sunk by German U-boats.[83] Post-war, the supply of pianos remained tight, with the rebuilding of the English and German manufacturing industries.[84] The New Zealand market probably softened in the early 1920s, too, due to the post-war recession coupled with a dramatic wholesale price spike. The average wholesale value of an imported piano climbed to £41 in 1921, double the 1916 average, although the inclusion of more expensive player-pianos in the post-1920 statistics elevated such averages considerably.

Import volumes recovered to pre-war levels around 1923, but the days of the piano's pre-eminence as the household centrepiece were numbered. The instrument's declining popularity in New Zealand can be ascribed to the combined impact of new modern technologies. This included the arrival and increasing affordability of substitute goods such as the gramophone and radio, along with an entirely new evening entertainment option — the movies — while new status symbols such as the motor car also eroded some of the piano's middle-class appeal.[85] A similar pattern unfolded in other countries, too.[86] A less obvious factor perhaps was the changing role of women from the 1920s, including greater assertion of the right to employment and for fair wages, as well as a general shift from service to industrial occupations. The consequent 'fracturing' of domesticity, to use Melanie Nolan's term, probably undermined some of the piano's symbolic value in the home and as a medium of feminine 'accomplishment'.[87]

The import statistics cast new light on some of the economic processes in the New Zealand context. A comparison of the annual import values of musical substitute goods shows that the piano indeed faced stiff competition in the 1920s (see Figure 4). The gramophone was the first challenger. In 1925, the value of imported gramophones and records overtook pianos and player-pianos. The following year, HMV boasted of selling 3064 units of a new model during a single month.[88] Radio imports began to be statistically enumerated in 1928; their annual value soon exceeded that of gramophones and pianos combined.

Figure 4: Value of selected imports, 1920–1931

As means for providing domestic music, gramophones and radios had distinct advantages over pianos. Neither of the new technologies required musical proficiency or lessons. Price was another key point of difference. The new products were cheaper — portable gramophones could be obtained for as little as £3 during the 1920s — and were thus less affected by the dramatic tariff increases that were instituted during this decade.[89] The advent of the Great Depression was yet another blow to consumer demand for pianos. During 1931, only 81 pianos were imported, the trade bottoming-out in 1933 with a mere 14. The disruptions of World War II ensured that piano imports did not really recover until the late 1940s.

Conclusion

Official trade statistics suggest that there may well have been 'a piano in every other house' in colonial New Zealand. However, this level of piano ownership was achieved much later than previously assumed, during the settled prosperity of the Edwardian era, as national and transnational economic factors made pianos increasingly affordable. Various social trends of the day also lent impetus to widespread piano acquisition, including the new culture of domesticity. Nonetheless, the presence of a piano in almost half of New Zealand homes by 1916 can now be confirmed as a central fact of New Zealand social history, highlighting the sheer proliferation of musical activity in people's everyday lives.

The late colonial popularity of group musicking practices such as 'singing around the piano' also has implications for understanding the long-term development of New Zealand music culture. Along with other widely shared musical experiences, such as hymn singing and school singing, family singsongs around the piano provided a basis for many other types of twentieth-century vernacular music about which we still know relatively little. How were people able to participate at community sings, smoke concerts, neighbourhood variety shows, rugby and tramping club singsongs, and party singalongs? Why weren't they self-conscious about singing? Piano-import statistics help explain why.

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Appendix

The main data used in this article comes from four main series of the New Zealand government statistical reports: *Statistics of New Zealand* (1853–1872); *Statistics of the Colony of New Zealand* (1873–1907); *Statistics of the Dominion of New Zealand* (1908–1920) and *Statistical Report on the Trade and Shipping of the Dominion of New Zealand* (1921–1952). Some of the same information can also be found in the *New Zealand Official Yearbooks*.

To enable comparison, real values were calculated using the Reserve Bank of New Zealand’s inflation calculator (see: http://www.rbnz.govt.nz/monetary-policy/inflation-calculator). The adjusted values are given in 1900£ (Q4), while the source values are also assumed to be Q4 of the relevant years. Because the inflation calculator only starts at 1862, the 1860–1861 values have been equated with 1862£ (Q4) values.

The table below gives the annual value of musical instrument and piano imports, together with the quantity of pianos. The annual values for musical instruments include all the sub-categories that were added in over time, including instrument parts and materials (from 1887), and gramophones and records (from 1914). For 1877, the piano unit of quantity was described in *Statistics of New Zealand* as a ‘package’, which has been assumed here to equate to a single piano, the average value of a ‘package’ in 1877 and a piano in 1878 being very similar. Adjusted values have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Year	Musical Instrs. (£)	Musical Instrs. (1900£)	Pianos (£)	Pianos (1900£)	Pianos (no.)
1877	50,640	40,848	36,245	29,236	1080
1878	63,632	54,723	42,472	36,525	1242
1879	56,816	51,965	37,888	34,653	1144
1880	31,652	28,274	22,579	20,169	705
1881	47,712	44,335	35,940	33,396	1177
1882	66,641	62,928	51,586	48,712	1774
1883	51,904	51,065	36,685	36,092	1152
1884	47,644	48,111	32,453	32,771	1211
1885	49,695	51,986	33,394	34,933	1264
1886	45,760	49,215	30,778	33,102	1195
1887	40,002	45,086	28,620	32,258	1210
1888	34,178	38,522	21,809	24,581	939
1889	34,246	35,825	22,567	23,607	918
1890	42,577	46,200	28,726	31,170	1209
1891	57,886	62,257	44,111	47,441	1974
1892	58,259	62,307	43,679	46,714	1928
1893	58,063	60,503	43,414	45,238	1898
1894	49,410	51,207	35,705	37,004	1597
1895	40,705	42,416	28,374	29,566	1245
1896	55,434	57,451	40,376	41,845	1915
1897	69,405	71,213	51,517	52,859	2469
1898	81,947	80,741	63,517	62,582	2907
1899	88,370	90,189	69,706	71,141	3146
1900	99,074	99,074	79,534	79,534	3583
1901	116,396	113,020	87,755	85,210	3873
1902	110,663	104,942	84,841	80,455	3813
1903	116,185	110,727	85,656	81,632	3679
1904	130,863	124,716	98,235	93,620	4280
1905	123,795	112,610	101,091	91,957	4401
1906	128,070	114,476	100,954	90,239	4309
1907	136,459	123,043	101,466	91,490	4302

Year	Musical Instrs. (£)	Musical Instrs. (1900£)	Pianos (£)	Pianos (1900£)	Pianos (no.)
1908	132,202	119,204	105,340	94,983	4451
1909	106,278	97,137	88,366	80,766	3452
1910*	133,414	120,297	110,853	99,954	4470
1911	148,295	134,896	126,599	115,160	5204
1912	172,013	151,730	141,871	125,142	5696
1913	164,021	141,510	135,999	117,334	5202
1914	146,392	120,553	94,772	78,044	3809
1915	124,025	95,552	81,559	62,835	3362
1916	157,188	111,776	97,847	69,579	3426
1917	116,062	74,823	64,325	41,469	1973
1918	99,692	56,876	39,698	22,648	1057
1919	127,528	66,263	52,222	27,134	1064
Note: from 1920 the import category for pianos also included player-pianos.					
1920	302,833	139,154	136,547	62,744	2163
1921	162,299	80,369	58,324	28,882	703
1922	158,657	85,352	61,416	33,040	1032
1923	389,402	205,847	202,265	106,922	3952
1924	478,967	255,208	215,524	114,838	4331
1925	608,961	315,924	223,838	116,125	4392
1926	569,087	296,963	175,905	91,791	3679
1927	424,343	223,523	113,036	59,542	2154
1928	410,073	214,655	85,448	44,728	1610
1929	533,084	280,361	94,234	49,560	1850
1930	318,038	174,244	29,654	16,247	589
1931	133,400	79,247	5331	3167	81

*In 1910, the total quantity of imported pianos was given as 4468. However, when country-specific quantities are added together, the total is revealed to be 4470. The higher figure is used here.

NOTES

The author would like to thank Philip Norman, Jim McAloon, Kim Cannady, Megan Cook, Kirstine Moffat, and the two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

1 Henry Hanson Turton, 'Tritonia: or memoranda of the first voyage of the Wesleyan missionary ship "Triton" from England to New Zealand in 1839–40. To which are added Hints for intending missionaries and emigrants. By a New Zealand missionary', 106, MS-Micro-Coll-03-42, Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington (copy of original held by Methodist Missionary Society, London); Charles Hursthouse, *New Zealand or Zealandia, The Britain of the South*, E. Stanford, London, 1857, II, p.447.

2 Civis, 'Passing Notes', *Otago Witness*, 11 December 1880, p.18. 'Civis' was a penname for Alfred Robertson Fitchett, who took over the column from his younger brother Frederick: see A.E.J. Fitchett, 'Fitchett, Alfred Robertson', in Jane Thomson, ed., *Southern People: A Dictionary of Otago Southland Biography*, Longacre Press in association with the Dunedin City Council, Dunedin, 1998, pp.162–3. The cited passage was probably written by Frederick Fitchett.

3 John MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour: When the Piano was New Zealand's Home Entertainment Centre*, Ngaio Press, Wellington, 2007, p.7.

4 See MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour* and the following works by Kirstine Moffat: '"My Ears Were Astonished By the Sound of the Piano": The Soundscape of the Colonial New Zealand Parlour', in Ros Brandt, Michelle Duffy and Dolly MacKinnon, eds, *Hearing Places: Sound, Place, Time and Culture*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2007, pp.287–305; 'The Piano as Cultural Symbol in Colonial New Zealand', *History Compass*, 7, 3 (2009), pp.719–41; 'The Piano as Symbolic Capital in New Zealand Fiction, 1860–1940', *Journal of New Zealand Literature*, 28, 1 (2010), pp.34–60; *Piano Forte: Stories and Soundscapes from Colonial New Zealand*, Otago University Press, Dunedin, 2011; and '"Concerts and Socials for the Promotion of Good Fellowship": Amateur Pianists Perform', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 15 (2013), pp.63–76. See also Allan Thomas, 'The Family Album of Drawing-room Songs', *Music in New Zealand*, 28 (1995), pp.40–43; and Patricia Ubeda, 'Keeping Time: The Piano as a Barometer of Auckland Society, 1896–1900', PhD thesis, University of Auckland, 2008.

5 Moffat, *Piano Forte*, pp.37–62.

6 Elizabeth Nichol, 'The Dresden Pianoforte Manufacturing and Agency Company Limited—A Pioneer of New Zealand Music Publishing', *Crescendo*, 74 (2006), pp.10–15; Claire Gleeson, *Meet Me at Begg's*, Ngaio Press, Wellington, 2012; and Adrienne Kay Eady, 'Family Business Resources and Their Contribution to Long-term Business Survival: The Case of Lewis Eady Limited, 1880–1957', MCom thesis, University of Auckland, 2012. See also: MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp.60–74; and Moffat, *Piano Forte*, pp.200–208.

7 These statistics are cited only rarely in previous research. Rollo Arnold provides some analytical leads I develop further here in 'The Country Child in Later Victorian New Zealand', *Comment: A New Zealand Quarterly Review*, 15 (1982), pp.22–27. See also MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p.7; David Murray, 'Fitchett's Fallacy and Music at the New Zealand and South Seas Exhibition, Dunedin, 1889–1890', *New Zealand Journal of History* (NZJH), 42, 1 (2008), p.51; and Gleeson, *Meet Me at Begg's*, pp.26, 28.

8 Kate Bowan and Paul A. Pickering, '"Songs for the millions": Chartist music and popular aural tradition', *Labour History Review*, 74, 1 (2009), p.46.

9 *Statistics of New Munster, New Zealand, from 1841 to 1848*, https://www3.stats.govt.nz/historic_publications/statistics-new-munster-NZ-1841-1848/statistics-new-munster-NZ-1841-1848.html, accessed 13 July 2016.

10 *Statistics of New Zealand for 1857*, 1858, Table 37.

11 For example, no musical instruments imports are recorded in any port for 1858–1859, suggesting these were all subsumed into the ‘other articles’ category.

12 The government trade statistics prior to 1940 also encompass a range of other musical sub-categories: harmoniums and organs (1880–1895, separate; 1896–1939, combined); band instruments (1900–1910, 1922–1940); phonographs and other mechanical devices (1914–1940, including records from 1923–1927); records (1914–1922, 1928–1940); great organs (1928–1940); and various classes of instrument parts and accessories. These data hold much potential for future investigation and analysis.

13 Whether this tariff was seriously enforced is unclear. Very few examples have been found of migrants being convicted for false customs declarations on pianos (see *Press*, 11 November 1922, p.12; *Hawera & Normanby Star*, 2 March 1923, p.7).

14 These earlier statistics cover the years 1914 to 1919. Only ‘country whence imported’ information and total values are given.

15 For a discussion of problems relating to use of New Zealand government trade statistics, see E.P. Neale, *Guide to Official New Zealand Statistics*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Christchurch, 1955, pp.130–6.

16 Import statistics seem to comprise the only such guide available for New Zealand: no equivalent annual figures for national retail sales — such as occasionally reported for other countries — have been located.

17 There is room for further research on the extent of piano manufacturing in New Zealand. The two largest local manufacturers appear to have been the music retail firm Beggs (Dunedin) and Bishop & Sons (Auckland). According to Justine Olsen and Len Stanners, Beggs built 1000 pianos between 1865 and 1927, while Bishop & Sons is said to have produced ‘several thousand upright pianos’ between 1913 and the early 1930s: see Justine Olsen and Len Stanners, ‘Instrument Making in New Zealand’, in John Mansfield Thomson, *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1991, pp.286–7. Government statistics also contain production data for the census years and then annually from 1919, including the number of instrument manufactories, employee numbers and value of production. Extrapolating piano production from this data alone requires some guesswork. If one assumes that 80% of the overall production value was in pianos, which then wholesaled for the same price as the average import, then annual manufacturing levels remained low prior to the 1920s (e.g., 1896: 87 pianos; 1911: 163 pianos; 1916: 75 pianos). The figures certainly point to a major surge in the value of production during the 1920s, however, such that might correspond with the activities of Bishop & Sons and perhaps also the incentive provided by import tariff increases (see note 89 below). My estimate for the national output over this decade would be 3795 units.

18 For a brief discussion of the difficulties of quantifying piano manufacturing and trade, see Cyril Ehrlich, *The Piano: A History*, Dent, London, 1976, pp.37, 68–70, 157. Ehrlich’s production estimates for the nineteenth century are often based on analysis of serial numbers and various statistical inferences, and he does not always give an explanation of sources or methods of calculation.

19 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.69, 157.

20 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p.129.

21 By 1889, there were at least ten piano manufacturers in Melbourne, while Beale & Co. of Sydney had produced more than 60,000 units by 1920. See Kay Dreyfus et al, ‘Piano-playing’, in Aline Scott-Maxwell and John Whiteoak, eds, *Currency Companion to Music and Dance in Australia*, Currency House, Sydney, 2003, p.516; and Michael Atherton, ‘Instrument-making’, in Aline Scott-Maxwell and John Whiteoak, p.351.

22 The available data on combined musical instrument imports for the 1840s–1850s suggests these were limited, which makes sense given the formative nature of the New Zealand

colony before 1860. Private imports may have been common among upper-class migrants, but these people made up a relatively small proportion of the colonists. Ehrlich's estimates for mid-nineteenth-century piano purchases in England — around one new purchase per 1000 people each year — suggest that piano ownership by middle-class migrants would have actually been quite low. Imports between 1860 and 1876 are also unlikely to have matched later per capita rates. Commercial import volumes can be tentatively estimated by taking 71% of the total real value of musical instrument imports for 1860–1862 and 1867–1876 (this being the proportion in 1877), then dividing this by the mean real value of a piano in 1877 (£27). This calculation yields much lower per capita importation rates and a cumulated total of around 5000 units.

23 The 1901 and 1916 census figures are probably slightly understated due to soldiers being at conflicts overseas.

24 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p.91; cf. Arnold, 'The Country Child', p.24.

25 The total 'stock' figure of pianos imported from 1877 to 1916 is 106,611.

26 Arnold, 'The Country Child', p.24. Arnold's calculations do not appear to include tents, although there is photographic evidence that a few pianos found a home under canvas. For the sake of comparability, I have not included tents in the calculations here. Māori-occupied dwellings are not included either, as these were not recorded in the census until 1926.

27 The 1916 census records there being 243,086 inhabited dwellings in New Zealand.

28 The 1916 census records there being 3847 places of worship, while *The New Zealand Official Yearbook 1917* records there being 2355 schools and 63 hospitals in 1916.

29 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p.91.

30 Dreyfus et al, 'Piano-playing', p.516; Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p.86, Figure 2.

31 United States piano production in 1909 was 364,545 units: see *Fourteenth Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1920*, United States Bureau of the Census, Washington, 1923, X, p.979. Ehrlich estimates the 1910 output of the next largest producer, Germany, as 120,000 (p.221).

32 Richard J. Walsh, ed., *Zanesville and Thirty-six Other American Communities*, Literary Digest, New York, 1927, p.112, cited in Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrell Lynd, *Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture*, Harcourt, Brace and Company Publisher, New York, 1929, p.244 n35. For further evidence of high piano ownership rates in the USA, see Craig H. Roell, *The Piano in America 1890–1940*, University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 1989, pp.186–7, 198–9.

33 Civis.

34 Arthur Clayden, *A Popular Handbook to New Zealand, Its Resources and Industries*, Wyman & Sons, London, 1885, p.213.

35 Edward Wakefield, *New Zealand After Fifty Years*, Cassell & Company, New York, 1889, p.34.

36 H.J.L. Augarde, 'To the editor', *Evening Post*, 31 May 1887, p.4.

37 For example, Moffat erroneously states that (Felix) Edward Wakefield's 1889 description was made in 1860 by Edward Gibbon Wakefield (1796–1862): see 'The Piano as Cultural Symbol', p.722; '"My Ears Were Astonished"', p.289; and *Piano Forte*, p.18. Moffat's source does not cite the original publication and is somewhat misleading about the dating: see Margaret Campbell, *Music in Dunedin*, Charles Begg & Co, Dunedin, 1948, p.19. The same error is in Gleeson, *Meet Me at Begg's*, p.25.

38 Adrienne Simpson, 'Opera in the Antipodes: A Forgotten Aspect of the Nineteenth-Century Trans-Tasman Entertainment Industry', NZJH, 27, 1 (1993), p.62. For similar inferences of long-term ubiquity, see Allan Thomas, 'Pianos and Pioneers', *NZ Listener*, 13 March 1976, p.64; MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp.28–29.

39 More accurate, then, are Robert Loughnan's 1908 claims about the prevalence of pianos: 'We import probably more pianos that any country double the size. We fill the towns with

them, we broadcast them over the country....’: Robert Loughnan, *New Zealand at Home*, George Newnes, London, 1908, p.108. Here there is a hint, also apparent with Claydon and Wakefield, that piano ownership levels also satisfied a sense of nationalistic pride.

40 Alfred Robertson Fitchett, ‘Musicians and Musical Taste in Australasia: II — New Zealand’, *Review of Reviews*, 30 July 1895, p.30.

41 Miles Fairburn, *The Ideal Society and Its Enemies*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1989.

42 From examining data relating to preferential and non-preferential tariff rates, it seems that ‘country whence imported’ figures for pianos probably align quite closely to what ‘country of origin’ would have been. From mid-1904, preferential rates were imposed on products which were manufactured outside the British Empire, regardless of which country they were imported from. The statistics from 1905–1913 show that 100% of pianos imported from Germany during this period were subject to the higher tariff, hence likely all produced in Germany; and that 94% of UK imports were not subject to the tariff, hence likely this 94% were all produced in the UK.

43 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.68–70, 221.

44 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, p.71.

45 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.82–87.

46 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.155–8.

47 Olsen and Stanners, ‘Instrument Making in New Zealand’, p.287.

48 On unemployment levels, see Margaret Galt, ‘Wealth and Income in New Zealand c.1870 to c.1939’, PhD thesis, Victoria University of Wellington, 1985, p.235. The extent, distribution and longevity of wage gains during this period have been much debated, but it seems likely there was a modest average rise: the piano boom can itself be taken as evidence of increasing disposable income. For discussion on wage gains, see Galt, ‘Wealth and Income’, p.288; G.R. Hawke, *The Making of New Zealand*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1985, pp.76–79; and James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the year 2000*, Penguin, Auckland, 2001, pp.142–3.

49 Changes in migration patterns may have also helped fuel the Edwardian piano boom. During the 1890 to 1910 period, migrants were predominantly British and Irish who arrived in New Zealand after spending time in Australia, over twice as many as came direct: see Jock Phillips and Terry Hearn, *Settlers: New Zealand Immigrants from England, Ireland & Scotland 1800–1945*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2008, pp.45–46. These migrants may have brought with them a taste for acquiring pianos developed during Australia’s earlier piano boom.

50 Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, pp.142–3; Caroline Daley, ‘Modernity, Consumption, and Leisure’, in Giselle Byrnes, ed., *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2009, pp.426–7.

51 Price based on listing given in MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p.68.

52 MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p.44.

53 MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp. 44–47; Moffat, *Piano Forte*, pp.80–81.

54 Frederick Page, *A Musician’s Journal 1905–1983*, J. McIndoe, Dunedin, 1986, p.29; Pat Lawlor, *Pat Lawlor’s Wellington*, Millwood Press, Wellington, 1976, p.117.

55 For example, see C.H. Mitchell, ‘The Arts in Wellington: 1890–1912, a Cultural and Social Study’, MA thesis, Victoria University College, 1959, p.11; M.H. Holcroft, *Old Invercargill*, J. McIndoe, Dunedin, 1976, p.120.

56 Moffat, *Piano Forte*, p.55.

57 The second-hand market probably became an increasingly important source of pianos for such households, as new middle-class substitute goods and status symbols, such as the gramophone and motor car, became available.

58 Caroline Daley, *Girls & Women, Men & Boys: Gender in Taradale 1886–1930*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 1999, p.115. On the piano as an enduring symbol of feminine values in New Zealand colonial fiction, see Moffat, ‘The Piano as Symbolic Capital’.

59 Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country? The Image of the Pakeha Male: A History*, Penguin, Auckland, 1987, p.222.

60 Erik Olssen and Andrée Levesque, 'Towards a History of the European Family in New Zealand', in Peggy G. Koopman-Boyden, ed., *Families in New Zealand Society*, Methuen, Wellington, 1978, p.16, Table 1.2.

61 Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p.226.

62 *New Zealand Official Yearbook 2012*, http://www.stats.govt.nz/~/media/Statistics/yearbook/tables/pop-yrbook-2012.xlsx, accessed 7 January 2017.

63 See Phillips, *A Man's Country?*, p.222; Barbara Welter, 'The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820–1860', *American Quarterly*, 18, 2-1 (1966), pp.151–74.

64 Olssen and Levesque, 'Towards a History of the European Family', p.8.

65 Barbara Brookes, Erik Olssen and Emma Beer, 'Spare time? Leisure, gender and modernity', in Barbara Brookes, Annabel Cooper and Robin Law, eds, *Sites of Gender: Women, Men and Modernity in Southern Dunedin, 1890–1939*, Auckland University Press, Auckland, 2003, p.156.

66 The marriage rates were 5.94 (1895) and 8.28 (1904) respectively per 1000 of the population: see *The New Zealand Official Year-Book 1914*.

67 See Fairburn, *The Ideal Society*, pp.129, Table 5.1, pp.252–3.

68 The body of literature that explores this topic is too large to be summarized here, but for some important works of recent decades, see: Anthony Seeger, *Why Suyá Sing: A Musical Anthropology of an Amazonian People*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1987; Ruth H. Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music-Making in an English Town*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989; Charles Keil and Steven Feld, *Music Grooves: Essays and Dialogues*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1994; and Thomas Turino, *Music as Social Life: The Politics of Participation*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2008.

69 Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue: Survival and Celebration in Afro-American Music*, J. Calder, London, 1987, p.75.

70 Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meaning of Performance and Listening*, University of New England, Hanover, 1998, p.13.

71 Mitchell, 'The Arts in Wellington', pp.7–11; John Mansfield Thomson, *The Oxford History of New Zealand Music*, p.21; MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp.19, 22–23, 55–58; and Moffat, *Piano Forte*, p.84.

72 Ubeda, 'Keeping Time', p.177; MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p.19.

73 On British and New Zealand informal singing traditions of the nineteenth century see, for instance: Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840–1914*, 2nd ed., Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1997, pp.180–6; Roger Buckton, *Bohemian Journey: A Musical Heritage in Colonial New Zealand*, Steele Roberts Aotearoa, Wellington, 2013, pp.38–77; and Michael Brown, 'The "Chantey" and "The Bush Poet": James Cowan and Vernacular Song in New Zealand', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, 19 (2015), pp.124–39.

74 MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, p.45. The oral histories were made by Claire Toynbee in 1998. The interviewees cannot be directly identified.

75 Brookes, Olssen and Beer, 'Spare Time?', p.394, n26.

76 Daley, *Girls & Women*, pp.92, 111.

77 Two examples cited by Moffat that mention group singing also date from the early twentieth century: *Piano Forte*, pp.80, 82.

78 Pat Lawlor, *Old Wellington Days*, Whitcombe and Tombs, Wellington, 1959, p.112.

79 Erving Goffman quoted in Michael Pickering and Tony Green, 'Towards a Cartography of the Vernacular Milieu', in Michael Pickering and Tony Green, eds, *Everyday Culture: Popular Song and the Vernacular Milieu*, Open University Press, Milton Keynes, 1987, p.9.

80 Pianos themselves could become, Patricia Ubeda notes, ‘pampered’ symbols of the middle-class home in New Zealand, decorated with secondary layerings, photographs and other objects: see Ubeda, ‘Keeping Time’, pp.116–8.

81 The term ‘idioculture’ is taken from Charles Keil, ‘Introduction’, in Susan D. Crafts, Daniel Cavicchi and Charles Keil, eds, *My Music*, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover, 1993, p.2.

82 On sheet music collections, see Thomas, ‘The Family Album’; MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp.89–91; and Michael Brown and Allan Thomas, ‘Understanding the music in our past’, in Claire Dawe, ed., *Absolutely Positively Genealogy — Proceedings of the 2007 Conference of the New Zealand Society of Genealogists*, New Zealand Society of Genealogists, Wellington, 2007, pp.83–85. On owner-bound sheet music albums, see Aline Scott-Maxwell, ‘Gendered and Endangered Musical Artefacts: Owner-bound Popular Sheet-music Albums in Jazz-age Australasia’, *Musicology Australia*, 37, 2 (2015), pp.185–98.

83 See Belich, *Paradise Reforged*, p.110.

84 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.176–84.

85 For a discussion, see MacGibbon, *Piano in the Parlour*, pp.97–101.

86 Ehrlich, *The Piano*, pp.184–6.

87 See Melanie Nolan, ‘“Politics Swept Under a Domestic Carpet?” Fracturing Domesticity and the Male Bread-winner Wage: Women’s Economic Citizenship, 1920s–1940s’, NZJH, 27, 2 (1993), pp.199–217.

88 *Dominion*, 22 May 1926, p.20.

89 In 1922, import tariffs were increased from 20% (general) and 10% (preferential) to 35% and 20%. By 1929 the general tariff had risen to 45%.