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Episode 344: Music in British North America

[00:00:00] **Announcer:** You're listening to an AirWave Media podcast.

[00:00:04] **Liz Covart:** *Ben Franklin's World* is a production of the Omohundro Institute and is sponsored by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Hello and welcome to episode 344 of *Ben Franklin's World*, the podcast dedicated to helping you learn more about how the people and events of our early American past have shaped the present-day world we live in. And I'm your host Liz Covart.

Our five-episode series about music in early America continues with this second episode that seeks to answer your questions about music in early America. David Hildebrand is a musicologist and an expert on early American music. His research specialty is in Anglo-American music and he joins us today to answer your questions. Now, during our conversation David reveals what the musical landscape of European music was like by 1492, the ways religious or church music shaped early American musical tastes, and the different places and circumstances where you would've heard early Americans singing and playing music outside of a church. But first, thanks to our friends and sponsor the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, you will hear a few musical examples and selections as we speak with David. I've placed the song titles and album information for these songs in the show notes, which you can find at benfranklinworld.com/344. So big thank you to our friends at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation for all their help with this series. Thank you very much.

All right. Are you ready to investigate the European-inspired musical landscape of America and get answers to your questions about it? Let's go meet our guest musicologist.

Our guest is an instructor of musicology at the Peabody Institute at Johns Hopkins University. He's a well-regarded expert on music in early America who's written several articles and books on the subject, including the book *Musical Maryland*. He has written and produced the documentary film *Anthem: The Story of "The Star-Spangled Banner"* [transcript corrected] and, together with his wife, Ginger Hildebrand, he has also produced seven full-length musical recordings, including *George Washington: Music for the First President*, and most recently, *Music of the War of 1812*. Welcome to *Ben Franklin's World*, David Hildebrand.

[00:02:37] **David Hildebrand:** Thank you for having me, Liz.

[00:02:39] **Liz Covart:** Now before we dig into the heart of today's episode, which is answering a lot of listener questions about music in early America, I wondered if we could begin by going back in time and trying to understand what early America sounded like just after Europeans arrived. So, David, as you are this well-regarded expert on the history of music in early America



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and on the history of Anglo-American music, to be more specific, would you set the musical landscape for us and tell us what European music was like by 1492 and what this European music that was starting to come over to North America in this early period sounded like?

[00:03:15] **David Hildebrand:** You know, if we go back to the Age of Exploration, the two central sponsors of music, of course, are the church and the court, and music evolves in beautiful ways through the Renaissance period into the early and later Baroque periods. And music becomes standardized in lots of ways, you know, a wide variety of musical instruments, you know, much wider than are found in the African or Native cultures. I don't like the term "classical" for classical music generically. I prefer to use the term "art music," or "cultivated music" because that's what it is. It's more of an artifice, especially in the hands of the great composers like Bach and Beethoven and et cetera. The music becomes more and more stylized, more and more sophisticated. Levels of structure, levels of standardization, of rhythms and melodies and performance practice, and so forth. So it's a very sophisticated and rich musical world that gradually works its way across the ocean. You know, I've looked closely at the earliest records of music making here in Maryland after the arrival of the *Arc* and the *Dove* at St. Mary's City in 1634. And here's another important source for studying early music: estate inventories. Many cities and counties will keep track of the deceased's property and have an inventory, which in the earliest days might include a flageolet, which is one of the ways to refer to a member of the flute family, drums, military trumpets. I think the oldest known instrument here in my county was an oboe, referred to as a "hoboy pipe," but clearly referencing an Oboe. With time, the fancier, more sophisticated instruments like the spinet harpsichord, later pianos. These are so different. These technologically advanced, very complex musical instruments were of course not seen before the whites arrived.

I guess in the biggest possible terms, I see the colonial period in America through the eyes of the British settlers. That's been really the focus of my study since my dissertation many years ago. And it's so important to break out within the immigrant white societies, the same sort of role that music plays for weddings, for funerals, but especially important as the colonial period matures is theater and dance. These became two of the biggest, most favorite pastimes of people here in the New World and a seed bed of creativity. I haven't even really referenced the psalmody, the religious music that was brought over. That's more of a New England thing, really when you think about it. The survival, the flourishing of the local independent churches up in Massachusetts and beyond. Church was central to life and it was not surprising that church music evolved up there in a way that it really didn't down here in the South. Folks in the South were more interested in the theater and the dance, and very highly stratified society, and one also spread out over these tobacco plantations. So we didn't have a lot of the urbanization down here that drove the musical development of say, William Billings and Daniel Reed and the named composers of late eighteenth-century Massachusetts.



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There's so many differences and, you know, music changes over time. It changes within region. And I more recently have been attracted to these cross currents of influence. If you drew a triangle and sort of put white, African, and Native American at each corner, there's so many arrows back and forth of say, upper-class white children of wealthy here in the Chesapeake attempting to imitate slave dances at a social gathering and being reprimanded for that or the enslaved say on Pinkster, which was a holiday that played a big role here in the South, was a time when many of the enslaved were given the castoff clothing of the whites and invited to dress up and have a role-reversal day, kind of upstairs-downstairs kind of a thing. The arrows of connection, connectivity, between these three cultures I think is, is extremely fascinating, again, because I've spent much of my career researching and performing and recording the more specifically Anglo-American white-influenced music, which in itself is fascinatingly informative about history.

[00:07:43] **Liz Covart:** Well, it sounds like early America was a very diverse place musically, in that you did have Native American peoples, African and African American peoples, and Europeans all sharing different musical tastes and instruments and styles. So it does sound like there was a lot of cross-pollination and sharing going on of musical tastes in early America. And to follow up on that a bit, Kyle wonders if you could go a bit deeper and tell us in what ways Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans influenced the musical tastes, genres, and traditions of each other as they interacted in British North America.

[00:08:20] **David Hildebrand:** The African influence on pop music is immeasurable. It's what put America on the map in the twentieth century. Actually, even in the late eighteenth century there were black influenced pieces being performed on the stages in London. In Scotland in the 1780s, there were what were known as quote, unquote "negro jigs." These were the banjo tunes that had been picked up and played for dances within the Black culture. Found their way into print in a gentleman's magazine in Scotland in the 1780s. So the African music in both the world of popular music and the world of art music is gigantically more complete an influence. In the classical world it's George Gershwin that's often credited with the *Rhapsody and Blue* in 1924. At the debuts of that, the classical world really woke up to the potential of incorporating jazz. And people like Aaron Copeland, who was a little reluctant it seems until Nadia Boulanger told him to start writing in a jazz style. Almost any composer in Europe or America in the art music world had to write something that was influenced by jazz because it was new and it was different.

I should also mention the one other really important player in the dissemination of African-based music from North America. And that is this really interesting fellow born in New Orleans in 1829. His name was Louis Moreau Gottschalk. And Gottschalk was a child prodigy, incredible virtuoso piano player, who as a young boy in his teens was taken to France and played for Chopin, and Chopin praised him and Gottschalk ended up taking with him a bunch of classically framed but African- and Afro-Caribbean-inspired pieces of music like *Le Banjo*. It sounds kind



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of silly to put a French “le” in front of “banjo,” but it was extremely popular piece, published and played all around. And Gottschalk traveled and performed widely through Spain and France, through South America, through the Caribbean, toward through America. Died quite young, aged forty, and his name is often forgotten. But his actions were gigantic in exposing people to the potential of these polyrhythms. But, you know, there are other important Africanisms in music that came here across the ocean. The whole idea of call-and-response-style singing shows up continuously in gospel music today, it’s an important part of sea shanty singing and many of the shanty leaders were men of color. The idea of a scale that’s different from the European diatonic, you know, we’re used to the [sings] “do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do,” and you watch *The Sound of Music* and you just get convinced that the only kind of scale is a major diatonic scale. But in African cultures, there’s certain points of the scale that are much more ambiguous, and we call those “blue notes,” and those are the notes that a good singer like Billy Holiday or a saxophone player is going to bend and sort of grind those notes in a way that Europeans never would’ve, were it not for the African influence.

[00:11:28] **Liz Covart:** James has a follow-up question about polyrhythms, and just so we’re all on the same page I’m going to play as an example of African polyrhythms so that we can all hear them and understand what we’re talking about.

[00:11:39] [Recording]

[00:12:17] **Liz Covart:** Okay, so James notes that Africans were a big source of polyrhythms and their introduction to North America. But he also believes that the Spanish introduced polyrhythms to colonial North America as well. So David, could you tell us more about Spanish-influenced polyrhythms and the impact those Spanish rhythms would’ve had on the Music of early America?

[00:12:35] **David Hildebrand:** I’ve spoken of Louis Moreau Gottschalk from New Orleans, and New Orleans is one of those places where the Caribbean trade was highly influential. This sort of specific Caribbean and South American rhythms that we now associate with bossa nova music and jazz of the 1950s and ’60s and so forth. There is not a ton of influence to my knowledge of specifically more uniquely Caribbean or uniquely South American rhythmic patterns working their way into American music much before this fellow Louis Moreau Gottschalk in the mid-nineteenth century, but certainly much more so in the twentieth century in the field of jazz.

[00:13:17] **Liz Covart:** Now, during our earlier tour of the musical landscape of early North America around 1492, and of European music around that same time period, you mentioned that one of the chief sponsors of music and its creation was the church. And Sparky would like to know more about the role that religion played in the musical landscape of early America and Connie would like to know how much of early American music is based on church music? So



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would you tell us more about the role religion played in influencing and shaping music in early America?

[00:13:47] **David Hildebrand:** Those who arrived on the shores of North America came in some cases for nonreligious reason. Face it, the founding of Jamestown in 1607 was a commercial operation. It was a corporation. It didn't have a high, lofty religious purpose. But Maryland, where I'm from, was the only colony founded for Catholics and by Catholics to be able to enjoy freedom of religion. The places where sacred music really flourished and became fascinatingly diverse are from the north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Philadelphia and its attraction not just to Quakers but to, to some of these unusual sects. You have smaller, almost unique little religious enclaves that are involved in music. I'm thinking of the Ephrata Cloister is one specific site in Pennsylvania, founded by a fellow named Conrad Beissel. And Beissel came up with his own system of musical notation and encouraged his followers to sing a kind of a music that was unique to this one place.

Much more impact though from the whole world of Protestant psalmody. Remember in England that in the periods of persecution, Protestants fled, some of them as far as Switzerland, many of them to Amsterdam. And the whole idea of a Protestant Reformation getting away from the ornate Catholic practice impacted music gigantically. So those who settled in Plymouth and eventually in Boston, New England became just peppered with these people who'd grown up with a heavily Protestant approach to music. In some cases, the denial of the use of musical instruments at all in worship, the limiting of the kind of texts that could be sung in church to the book of Psalms. That's why it's referred to as "psalmody" or "psalm books" or "psalters." By 1640 it was so important to try to codify the practice of psalmody—which in many cases was a folk practice passed on from person to person in Old England—in 1640 is published the first book in English in North America, what we call the *Bay Psalm Book*, it had a more fancy name, but this was the collection of translations of the psalms into English, but metrical translations, meaning that the rolling of the syllables per line and the structure of the lines dictated what musical tunes were appropriate to use to sing those texts. And there was a lot of interchange. It's sort of the sacred equivalent to the parity going on in folk music and the secular world. And so church music dominated up in New England in a way that it was barely paid attention to down in the South.

But in the middle colonies, especially Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, it's tremendous variety of people not just representing English Protestant culture. The Germans who poured into Maryland and Virginia, and central and western parts of other colonies, in the 1730s and 1740s of course bring Lutheranism, reformed German practice, and so forth, to the extent that there's a church nearby in Baltimore that still holds a service in German, Zion Church, gradually morphed from having them only in German in the eighteenth and nineteenth century to some in each language, to now just one service is done each Sunday in the German language here today.



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[00:17:13] **Liz Covart:** Now you talked a bit about the *Bay Psalmody*, and how the *Bay Psalm Book* was the first book printed in English North America, and Nancy notes that the *Bay Psalm Book* and the *Genevan Psalter* were really important bodies of music in Europe. And she's curious to know whether these bodies of European religious music had any place in early America. So right now we need to take a moment to thank our episode sponsor. When we get back, we'd love to talk more about Nancy's question.

As we've been hearing, music was an ever-present aspect of early American life, and our friends at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation have a new exhibition in the art museums of Colonial Williamsburg called *Making Music in Early America*. *Making Music in Early America* will immerse you in the musical world of the eighteenth century, a time when you could hear songs sung in the work fields, at militia drills on town commons, and places like churches, ballrooms, and family parlors. This exhibition at the art museums of Colonial Williamsburg will allow you to see the instruments used to enliven dinner parties, theaters, and life and enslaved quarters. It will also allow you to see how music changed over time and created communities and community life. To learn more about Colonial Williamsburg's *Making Music in Early America* exhibition visit benfranklinworld.com/music. That's benfranklinworld.com/music.

David, would you tell us more about the *Bay Psalm Book* and about the *Geneva Psalter* and whether these bodies of European religious music played any role in informing early American musical culture and tradition?

[00:18:48] **David Hildebrand:** The *Bay Psalm Book* was published specifically to get over the loss of continuity that had been felt just in those first twenty years from arriving in 1620 to having to publish the words in 1640. Order and structure and control, that's what's required of a church. And the *Bay Psalm Book* was a way to get there. We know of its popularity because it went through so very many editions, I believe seventeen off the top of my head. But most importantly, as the learned musical culture of those who arrived from England and from Amsterdam, as sort of the folk practice gradually degenerated, it became more and more important to educate people how to sing their psalms, how to do it in an organized, structured, controlling fashion. Because if you read some of the sermons describing the sounds coming out of churches when they were trying to sing psalms, it was pretty horrid. It was disorganized, it was cacophonous in many cases.

And this all led to what we refer to as the singing school movement in the 1720s, where ministers decided we need to train people how to sing. In order to do that, we need to set up schools for them to learn how to read notes and to practice singing. To practice singing, not just in unison or octaves, but to sing in harmony in parts. And over the decades—again, this is a New England process almost exclusively—through the course of the eighteenth century, these schools become popular. People want to go to them because even though the church leaders are after



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control, the meetings of the schools involve a little bit of socializing, a little bit of relaxing. I think there was a student at Yale who wrote in a letter that he can't wait to go to singing school because he can get away with some niggling and some kissing. That's going to bring kids, young people to go to school, I would think. Anyway, the singing school movement and the instruction of numerous people—we're not talking to upper class here. We're talking common folks, learning how to read music.

This is what lays the groundwork for what's known as the First New England School of Composition, and that is the sort of part-time, quasi-professional, quasi-amateur composers who realize that there's demand for selling music books. You can have them printed; you can sell them. If you go, especially in an itinerate fashion from town to town, and you open a singing school, you invite people to attend, you take their money for tuition, you sell them the books, and then you move on to the next town, there's money to be made. And it's only that form of the late movement that finds its way as far south as Baltimore, wherein there's this commercial aspect to it. Hardly the intention of the church elders in the 1720s. But the result is a great rise in average musical literacy, and by the end of the 1700s into the early 1800s, we go from having just a handful of American-composed pieces of church music to hundreds, and then even thousands of pieces exploring new musical styles, too.

One of which is called a "fuging tune" that's more fun to sing than one of the old psalm tunes. Or anthems, which is a term still used in church today for a more complicated presentational piece that a trained choir would present. So this incredible outflow of Yankee ingenuity applied to church music is the story of New England through the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth century. Then, unfortunately, largely suppressed in the cities as a counter movement occurs of an interest in more higher-class music from Europe. There's no coincidence that the elite music society founded in Boston in 1815 was called the Handel and Heyden Society, and they supported much more formalized European-sanctioned musical styles that weren't as fun to sing as the fuging tunes and the simple anthems. So this whole process of William Billings music, for instance, gets pushed out into the countryside from the churches and there finds its way out into the mountains and down the Appalachians and surviving in the form of shape-note singing today as far down as Alabama.

[00:23:17] **Liz Covart:** Speaking of singing, just how common was singing in early America? Renee wonders how often we might have heard singing in early America and whether early Americans thought that singing outside of the church was sinful? And it sounds like that really might have been the case in New England.

[00:23:33] **David Hildebrand:** The sinful thing—again, I defer to those more expert in Puritan culture—but I think it's over exaggerated. For instance, for a long time people commonly said, well, you know, they didn't dance up in New England. That's not the case at all. They didn't



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have big formal dancing assemblies with the fancy clothing that you'd see down in Annapolis and Williamsburg and Philadelphia but dancing in the privacy of the home was a big social activity up in New England. There are aspects of things. And those who read church sermons are really good at this. I haven't read all that many sermons in my life, but the aspects of sinfulness associated with music, they don't cover everything. I know there are accounts of theater troupes who traveled successfully town to town to put on plays, ballad operas, works of Shakespeare, and et cetera. I know earlier on, at times, they were turned away at the city of Boston, they could not get permission to put on theatrical presentations. But with time that subsided. And to get back to the main part of that question, there are so many accounts of singing occurring at county fairs, spontaneously in taverns, especially as we get into the nineteenth century, organized singing, taking place at social clubs, gentlemen's clubs, especially at big dinners. Now Francis Scott Key, sang his first setting of "The Anacreontic Song" at a dinner in 1805 in Georgetown, near DC. Gentlemen would gather and sing songs involving verses and then everyone joining back in a chorus. That's how our national anthem was originally performed. The last two lines of each of the four verses were published in four-part harmony for people to sing back as a group when the soloists sang each verse.

And so social singing—we're, of course now far from church music, we're into the secular world—singing widely reported by the enslaved, that singing appreciated by the white overseers because it indicated the presence of work going on. But of course, the function, as Frederick Douglass reminds us much later, in many cases, the singing is an outlet of emotional turmoil and veiled attacks upon the slaveowners that couldn't be done otherwise can sometimes occur through the song. Functional singing, if we look at an entire musical life, there's a fantastic map of the city of Baltimore—digitized map—as Baltimore appeared in the year 1815, I highly recommend go and poke around and click on the various places in the city two hundred plus years ago, you'll see the first cathedral in America under construction. You'll see the rope works down by the docks where ships are being built. You'll see a mill, multiple churches, private wealthy homes. In each of those cases, singing will be occurring appropriate to those places. Work songs by those on land doing repetitive things. Sea shanties, of course, being sung by the guys who will sail those ships out and need to coordinate their labor for the tasks aboard ship. Singing is just a natural thing and you'd never really be able to quantify it, put a number on what percentage of people or what exact number of hours, but silence gets kind of tedious and it's natural if you're working alone, if you're a poor tobacco planter, you're working alone picking those little black worms off each leaf, you may well be singing an erotic ballad, perhaps, to try to keep things interesting, you know, in your own imagination. But lots of singing in almost every circumstance.

[00:27:14] **Liz Covart:** Since we're on the topic of social singing, Jennifer would like to know more about the different venues where early Americans could have gone to hear live music, and specifically she wonders about the roles taverns and inns must have played in offering live musical events.



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[00:27:29] **David Hildebrand:** The tavern is a very interesting place. I wrote a chapter on that at my doctoral dissertation, and I went and I looked at the estate inventories of tavern owners. And it was amazing how many of them had musical instruments. One even had a harpsichord, which really struck me as odd because to be a tavern keeper is not a high-class job, but a harpsichord is an absolutely exclusively expensive instrument that only shows up in the hands of the very, very wealthy. However, things change, you know, fortunes are made, fortunes are lost. One of the things about taverns is that they will eventually morph into these urban city hotels, and it's that kind of setting, when I referenced Francis Scott Key in Georgetown in 1805, this would be at the city tavern, which is more like a middle- to upper-class establishment. If you go back to the seventeenth century though, there were laws in states like Virginia and Maryland and others, where if a traveler came through and it was late at night and they needed shelter, by law you had to bed and board a stranger in your house by the tavern law because left out in the wilds, you know, death is right around the corner. Not just disease, but wild animals, unhappy Native Americans. Taverns provided a much more primitive essential life or death purpose in the seventeenth century than they would as they evolved into more like city taverns, coffee houses, hotels, the term morphs into later on. But music, of course, if you can attract people to come and have an extra drink, people still do that today. How many people advertise that there's a live band playing or an acoustic duo playing on Wednesday night, so come eat and drink at my establishment? That still goes on today.

[00:29:22] **Liz Covart:** Well, you did it David. You've answered all of our listener questions. Thank you so much for doing that. But before we move into the "Time Warp," I wonder if you would answer one more question: Why do you think that understanding the place and role of music in early America is important for our understanding and knowledge of early American history?

[00:29:40] **David Hildebrand:** I remember being challenged when I defended my doctoral dissertation by a well-respected Southern historian, who knew nothing about music, this was a Catholic university, and he said: Okay, David, you know all this stuff about music, so what? Why should I care? And I felt like it was the perfect setup that you just gave me, and that is that through music you can learn things you can't get from other sources. Here's a parallel, perhaps. On Halloween you can put on a mask and dress up and go trick or treating and get away with all kinds of mischief, right? Because your face is covered. In a way, music can do that. I mean, how many songs are published anonymously? If you go back and you look at early American newspapers, my goodness, these song texts are not just about happy or humorous content. The songs of the revolutionary period leading up to 1812, the politics of the nineteenth century, my gosh, the stuff people could say through music! There's a "Yankee Doodle," for instance, making fun of Jefferson and Hemmings, Sally Hemmings, that boy, I would never recite any of those words, I mean, they're just so strong and they don't show up in other places. So people freely express their attitudes and their hopes, their fears, their positions. There are accounts of events that probably are not preserved in any other source than in songs. Music shows us a side



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of human nature that, sure, overlaps with other expressions, but in some cases is absolutely unique and it draws us in, you know, as a performer for forty-one years, I can't help when I sing "The Ballad of the Death of General James Wolfe at Quebec in 1759," it moves me to tell that story to close my eyes and go through the verses and imagine what was happening, and most importantly, to imagine how important that was to people 250 years ago, who didn't have CNN video to watch, who didn't have photography, didn't have radio, didn't have instant gratification, but people craved the details of songs as stories in the way that we all like to be read to, not just as children, but as adults. When a story is being read to you, you create your own rich world of imagery and music does that.

[00:32:12] **Liz Covart:** And now we should move into the "Time Warp." This is a fun segment of the show where we ask you a hypothetical history question about what might've happened if something had occurred differently or if someone had acted differently.

David, during our conversation you mentioned several times the importance of the African influence on American music. So in your opinion, what might have happened if enslaved Africans had not been brought to North America? How would the musical landscape of early America and even the musical landscape that we enjoy today be different?

[00:33:06] **David Hildebrand:** If Africans hadn't been forcibly brought to North America, we would have a dull and boring music history. It would just have been an outpost. And luckily, the French and the Spanish have left their mark, and so it's not homogenously English culture that would've dominated the music history. So there's some diversity, but all that European stuff comes from a, such a different place. And the fact that Africanisms include these very important musical components of rhythm, of melody, of structure, performance practice, functions of music. I often try to gesticulate when I'm speaking in public, if there's not a PowerPoint handy, to sort of point to Europe and point to Africa and then point to North America and say, isn't it kind of odd that those two other places on one side of the Atlantic Ocean were much closer to each other, but that they really came together on our side of the ocean? I don't wish to overemphasize the importance of African components to American music, but the words huge and gigantic are not inappropriate, and those things wouldn't have happened.

[00:34:20] **Liz Covart:** So David, you've produced a couple of documentary films, full-length musical albums, and you've written a couple of books. So what's next for you? What are you researching now and what form will that research take?

[00:34:32] **David Hildebrand:** I wrote a chapter on performing early American music for a book coming out on Routledge Press, honoring Kate Van Winkle Keller. Kate Keller was one of the most important serious scholars of early American music. She passed away almost two years ago and almost immediately upon her passing, I was approached, as the director of the Colonial



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Music Institute, which my wife and I founded with Kitty and Bob Keller, together, I was approached by someone saying: We should write a *festschrift*. For those of you who don't know, *festschrift* is a German term for a publication in honor of a deceased scholar, and it happens a lot in musicology, I don't know to what extent it occurs in the sciences or other humanities. But her importance is such that when I was asked to write a chapter, I said, well, of course. And after that chapter I said, I'm not going to write anything for a while, it's fun, it makes no money, but it takes gigantic amount of time. And I thought, I'm going to take a little break. And then these Anglican musicians write and say, hey, you know, we've got this conference coming up and we want you to write the lead article for a journal about Anglican music. And I thought, okay, why not? So I'll have an article on not just Anglican musicians, but their important role within societies as sort of freelance amateur musicians is what I discovered, at least at looking in Annapolis. So I'll be looking at some other colonial cities, probably mostly in the South, again, because of these vast differences in musical activities between the South and New England. That's what's coming up.

[00:36:07] **Liz Covart:** And how can we get in contact with you if we have more questions about music in early America?

[00:36:12] **David Hildebrand:** Well, yeah, I mentioned the Colonial Music Institute. For twenty years I've directed that organization. We had a really fancy, big separate website. We've recently passed that all on to Mount Vernon and if you type in Colonial Music Institute, it'll take you there. And luckily, they continue to distribute the books written by Kitty Keller, some of the recordings that my wife and I have done, they continue to host the databases, such as this newspaper index that I referenced, articles on important topics, frequently asked questions about colonial music. Mount Vernon will continue to carry on the mission of the Colonial Music Institute. They do have my email address there at Mount Vernon and I would love to field any other questions.

[00:36:54] **Liz Covart:** David Hildebrand, thank you for answering our questions and for helping us get a general feel for the musical landscape of early America.

[00:37:01] **David Hildebrand:** My pleasure, Liz. Thank you for having me.

[00:37:04] **Liz Covart:** Our conversation with David revealed that European colonists added a lot of different musical instruments and song structures to the musical landscape of Colonial North America. They also added to the ways that really Americans used music as an expression of religion and religious beliefs. As Chad Hamill discussed with us in episode 343, Native American and Indigenous peoples also use songs as expressions of their religious beliefs and spirituality. But unlike Europeans who had and have separate words for music and religion,



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Native Americans do not. And this is in part why music allows us to see early America from a really unique vantage point.

Music tells us stories about the past and how early Americans felt and thought about what was happening in the world around them. In many ways, music created communities of people who shared ideas and beliefs and wanted to express those ideas and beliefs in song. In other ways, music functioned kind of like social media functions for many of us today. It provides us with a kind of anonymity to express ourselves and our ideas to many people in ways that we just wouldn't express ourselves in public. Just think about the example David shared with us of the person who wrote those scandalized lyrics to "Yankee Doodle" all so they could express their anger at Thomas Jefferson's relationship with his enslaved woman, Sally Hemming. Or think of the example that David gave us of how enslaved people often used music as an outlet to express their anger at their enslavement and their enslavers. So music can help us see and understand aspects of early American life and how early Americans felt and thought about their life in ways that we just won't find in any other historical source. And this is why adding music to our study of early American history could help us see and understand a much fuller picture of the people, places, and events of the early American past. You can find more information about David, his books, albums, and films, plus notes, links, and a transcript for everything we talked about today on the show notes page, benfranklinworld.com/344.

Friends tell friends about their favorite podcast. So if you're enjoying this series about music in early America, please tell your friends and family about it. Our conversation with David raised questions and introduced people and musical genres that we're going to investigate further over our next three episodes. So be sure to check out your podcast player of choice next Tuesday as we're releasing our music series episodes back-to-back.

Production assistance for this podcast comes from the Omohundro Institute's Digital Audio. Joseph Adelman, Holly White, Ian Tonat, and Dylan Holzer. Breakmaster Cylinder composed our custom theme music. This podcast is part of the AirWave Media podcast network. To discover and listen to their other podcasts, visit AirWave media.com.

Finally, do you have more questions about music? Let me know, because this series is really just a starting point for future conversations. So tell me what you'd like to know, liz@benfranklinworld.com. *Ben Franklin's World* is a production of the Omohundro Institute and it's sponsored by the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.