

TIN PAN ALLEY

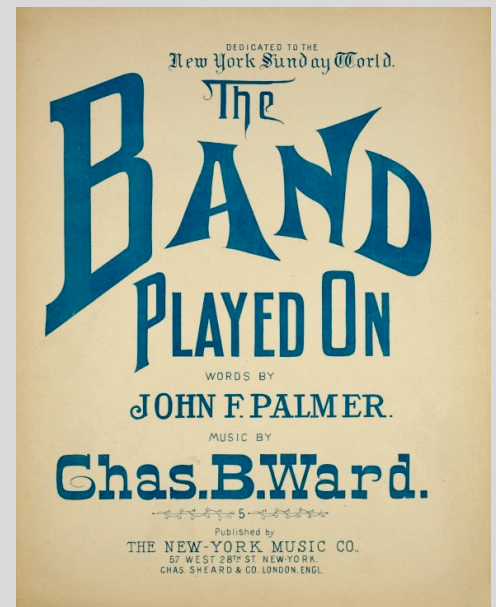
AMERICAN POPULAR MUSIC PROJECT

Wraparound Series for Teaching American Popular Songs

The Band Played On

(1895)

Concert Band or Orchestra
Middle or High School



Music by **Charles B Ward**
Lyrics by **John F. Palmer**

Published by **The New-York Music Company, 57 West 28th Street, New York City**

This wraparound was developed by
The Tin Pan Alley American Popular Music Project Education Committee
aligned to New York City Public Schools'
Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Music

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The Tin Pan Alley American Music Project Repertoire series of music wraparounds aligns with the Strands and Benchmarks in the New York City Public Schools' *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in Music*, and explores opportunities for teaching American popular songs, wrapped around all five strands of learning in music:

- I. Music Making
- II. Music Literacy
- III. Making Connections
- IV. Using Cultural and Community Resources
- V. Careers and Lifelong Learning

Recognizing NYCPS anchor values¹ to teach this music through the lenses of CR-SE, SEL and DEI&B, we have highlighted some learning opportunities throughout the wraparound to be considered.

The Band Played On

Music by Charles B. Ward; Lyrics by John F. Palmer

Published in 1895 by The New-York Music Company, 57 West 28th Street, New York City

Key Ideas/Considerations for this Song

- The waltz is a dance form, very popular in the Tin Pan Alley era.
- This song anticipates the AABA popular song structure, primarily used after 1923.
- Although better known as a piece for band², this song has been performed and recorded by string ensembles and orchestras.
- It is an early and highly successful example of mass-marketing across media in the music publishing industry of the Tin Pan Alley era.
- Authorship is questioned, highlighting the practice of song purchase (or theft) for publication under the purchaser's name, a practice that continues today.

Published arrangements to consider for concert band or orchestra

- "The Band Played On by Ward," for String Quartet, [Orchestra/String Ensemble], Level/Grade 3 – medium, arr. Joseph Judge, School Ensemble Music³
- "The Band Played On" [duet for violin and cello] Level/Grade 3 – medium, arr. Michelle Hynson, Hal Leonard⁴

¹ Please visit the New York City Public Schools' Music Education Anchor Values page to explore teaching through SEL and CRSE as the lens for the entire lesson. <https://sites.google.com/schools.nyc.gov/gtm-k-5-curriculum/our-approach>

² Perhaps the most well-known version being a 1941 recording by Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians, charting #6 on *Billboard* in 1941.

³ The publisher does not have a direct sales site, but this arrangement is available at both J.W. Pepper and Sheet Music Plus. You may preview 5 pages of the conductor score and hear a demo at: <https://www.jwpepper.com/11575493E.item>.

⁴ Available at both J.W. Pepper and NoteFlight. You may preview 2 pages of the score and hear a demo at: <https://www.noteflight.com/music/titles/451c6bdd-8110-4e12-9e87-e9e7ac1f6b61/the-band-played-on-arr-michelle-hynson>. This arrangement is also in the Hal Leonard collection *Folk Songs for Violin and Cello Duet*.

- "Busker's Holiday," [Concert Band], Level/Grade 1 –easy, arr. Bill Park, Band Music Press, Hal Leonard Music Publishing [Medley includes "The Band Played On," "Yankee Doodle" and "Skip to My Lou"]⁵

Enduring Understandings⁶

- A song becomes iconic through popularity over time, or through aggressive marketing in the moment, or through a combination of both.
- The music industry is constantly evolving. New practices and new roles both complicate and streamline our music consumption.

Essential Questions⁷

1. How does money, popularity, and marketing combine to affect music created and shared with the public?
2. What role(s) should music influencers play in the music industry?

STRAND I: Music Making

This selection's key musical characteristics ("big ideas") and technical considerations include:

- duple & triple meters: verse in 2/4 and chorus in 3/4 (3/8 in Joseph Judge arrangement)
- different tempos for the verse and chorus
- extended eighth note sequences (Joseph Judge and Michelle Hynson arrangements)

Suggested Instructional Sequence: (Joseph Judge arrangement)

1. Chorus, mm. 36-67: Viola & Violin 3 on melody – all instruments read melody. Students analyze the melodic structure (AA¹BA²). Students read lyrics and discuss the story of the song. (Strands 1, 3)
2. Chorus, mm. 36-67: All Parts – Violins 1 & 2 have almost parallel rhythms. Students learn historical background of the song, including issues concerning authorship. (Strands 1, 3)
3. 2nd Verse, mm. 70-102: Cello on melody – accompanying instruments all on single note rhythms on beats 1 and 2. Students identify musical markings, including how to play the fermatas on cue. (Strands 1, 2)
4. 1st Verse, mm. 1-35: Violin 2 on melody – same melody as cello and ensemble has almost parallel eighth note rhythms with the melody. Students analyze the melodic structure (AA¹BA²), realizing a parallel structure to the chorus. Students learn what "à la

⁵ Band sets may be ordered from the Guitar Center or J. W. Pepper. You may hear a demo at <https://www.jwpepper.com/BUSKERS-HOLIDAY/2348878.item>.

⁶ "Enduring refers to the big ideas, the important understandings, that we want students to 'get inside of' and retain after they've forgotten many of the details. . . . Enduring understandings go beyond discrete facts or skills to focus on larger concepts, principles, or processes" (*Understanding by Design*. Wiggins, McTighe, 1998, p. 10).

⁷ Essential Questions are genuine questions that real people seriously ask, either in their work or in their lives- not a "teacherly" question asked only in schools. They are meant to be explored, argued, and continually revisited (and reflected upon) and have various plausible answers. Often the answers these questions, raise new questions, spark or provoke thought and stimulate students to engage in sustained inquiry and extended thinking. Essential Questions lead to transferable ideas within (and sometimes across) disciplines. Wiggins and McTighe, *The Understanding by Design Guide to Creating High-Quality Units*, (Alexandria VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum, 2011), 77.

- barbershop" means in playing as a string ensemble. (Strands 1, 2, 3)
5. Play through both verses and choruses to the end. Students learn about the songwriting industry in the Tin Pan Alley era and draw parallels to today's practice of ghostwriting, buying songs, and the role of music influencers in marketing popular music. (Strand 5)
 6. Students rehearse for mastery of entire piece. (Strands 1, 2)

Suggested unit time: 7 lessons

Structural considerations and technical challenges

- **mm. 1-32**
 - Playing tightly together as an ensemble in eighth note sequences, with attention to certain dotted eighth/sixteenth figures.
 - Terms *ritenuto*, m. 22 and *a tempo*, m. 25
- **mm. 33-37, 66-71**
 - Playing together on cue to three fermatas and then continuing together in a new tempo in waltz time.

STRAND II: Music Literacy

Key Music Literacy Considerations:

- Fermata – how long should they be held? The three note passage leading into the chorus is a distinctive feature of the original published sheet music as well.
- Form – both the verse and chorus can be described as AA¹BA² form. This form is not common in songs of this era, but AABA form would become the standard pop song structure for almost 40 years, beginning in the early 1920s.
- Below is a list of musical vocabulary words and terminology that pertain to this selection:

Allegretto (verse)	Moderately fast, moving along. (In "The Band Played On," the tempo keeps the story of the verses moving forward.
Breath mark or luftpause (')	Break in a melodic line for breath or even a slight pause in the music.
Fermata	A sustained note, held beyond the metrical count of a measure until released by the ensemble or on cue from the conductor.
Form	The structure of a piece, how similar and different phrases or segments are organized. The segments can be labelled by similar and different sections eg. ABAB, AABA.
Waltz	A dance in 3/4 meter, propelled with a strong downbeat on each measure. The tempo for this dance varies, but for songs like "The Band Played On," the dance is moderately

	fast like the verse (see Allegretto above), sometimes referred to as a “Viennese” waltz. ⁸
Narrative song	A song that tells a story, usually in the verses, often called a “ballad” because it tells a story. (This is not to be confused with a modern song <i>style</i> called ballad that tends to be performed at a slow to moderate tempo.)
Plagiarism	The act of using someone else’s ideas or intellectual work without crediting them.
Ghostwriting	A composition is published as the work of someone else and the ghostwriter is paid, but receives no public credit.
Mass marketing	Promoting a product in different mediums and through different approaches to achieve the widest reach in sales.
Music influencer	A user of social media with a wide following and established credibility to promote and popularize a piece of music. Professional influencers may be independent advocates or the musicians themselves.

STRAND III: Making Connections

Music History:

“The Band Played On” – a study in the art of art promotion

- Charles Ward introduced the song at the Harlem Opera House, probably sometime in June 1895.⁹ Though he would persuade and even pay others to sing it, at least one newspaper noted, “it remained for Mr. Charles B Ward . . . to interpret the song in its true spirit. In his hands, it became a song of the Harrigan order.”¹⁰
- Published by Charles Ward’s The New-York Music Company, copyrighted on July 12, 1895.¹¹
- The song is an early example of successful mass-marketing of a Tin Pan Alley song, plugged to publishers, paying performers to sing it, and even publishing free copies of the song as a supplement in the *New York Sunday World* on June 30, 1895.¹² This resulted in

⁸ Raymond Knapp, *The American Musical and the Formation of National Identity*, “American Song through Tin Pan Alley,” (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2004), 67.

https://www.degruyterbrill.com/document/doi/10.1515/9780691186207-007/html?srsId=AfmBOoqOYiQCeD8IaJpP5_mctZEVWGSgEE-hfTzmrepqN6BGzS4Y8hXk

⁹ James Jacob Geller, *Famous Songs and Their Stories*, (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1931), 76. Geller’s account is published uncredited almost verbatim as “‘Let the Band Play On’ From Chance Remark,” *Schenectady [NY] Gazette*, June 20, 1933, 9.

¹⁰ “Footlight Flashes,” *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 13, 1895, 18. “Harrigan” is a reference to songwriter Edward Harrigan (1844-1911), generally viewed as one of the founders of the American musical, who as one half of “Harrigan and Hart,” and had many stage successes with actor Tony Hart in the 1870s and 80s.

¹¹ James Fuld, *The Book of World Famous Music: Classical Popular and Folk*, [3rd Edition], (New York: Dover Publications, 1985), 123.

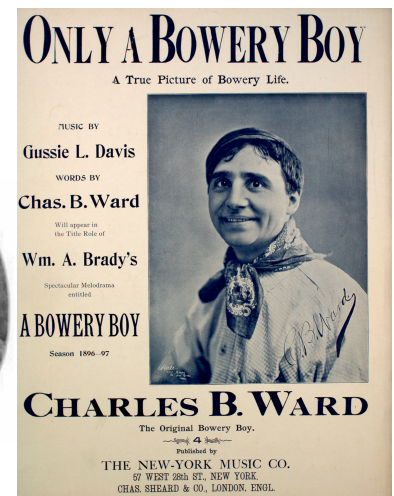
¹² *New York Sunday World*, June 30, 1895, 32, “being stated there to have been ‘written for the Sunday World.’” Fuld, 123. The song was on a concert bill in August 1895 at Pawson Park, Branford CT, listed as “The New York Sunday World Success, ‘The Band Played On.’” “Concert at Pawson Park,” *New Haven Evening Register*, August 17, 1895, 3. The song’s popularity evidently was enough of a draw to be promoted as part of the program of a one-night concert at Hammerstein’s Olympia in November 1895. Column item on “Miss Theresa Vaughn,” *New York Herald*, September

sales of over a million copies by the end of 1895.¹³ In testament to the value and power of mass-marketing, it is noteworthy that the New-York Music Company printed a dedication on the cover of their published edition, not to a performer, but to the *New York Sunday World* itself.

- Superstar actress and singer Lillian Russell apparently added the song to her concert repertoire.¹⁴ "The Band Played On" belongs to what a Russell biographer calls "the 'Golden Age of Ballad.'" The marketing of such story songs resulted in their widespread performance "at home, and in saloons and beer gardens, [which] increased [popularity] dramatically, making millions of people familiar . . . with the music before they attended a show."¹⁵
- Six weeks after the song's appearance, marketing may also have given rise to its first pop culture references in the news, such as a joke about Casey waltzing with his strawberry blonde at a high society event at the Vanderbilt Mansion, Newport, Rhode Island.¹⁶

Charles B. Ward (1864-1917)

- Born in London, England, Charles B. Ward emigrated to the United States in 1869 and was known more as an actor and vaudeville performer, than a songwriter and publisher.¹⁷
- By his own account, he may have started his career at age 12 as a singing child actor in Philadelphia.¹⁸ In the 1890s, he garnered vaudeville fame as the self-proclaimed "Bowery Boy," known for his performances of comic character and tearful, maudlin songs.¹⁹
- It appears Charles Ward did not write "The Band Played On," though he did promote it to



Right: Gussie L. Davis (1863–1899), Library of Congress

Far Right: Charles Ward's signature 1894 song, "Only a Bowery Boy," music by Gussie Davis.

29, 1895. The aggressiveness of Tin Pan Alley song promotion in the 1890s, including audience plants and street pluggers, is described by Armond Fields in *Tony Pastor, Father of Vaudeville* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2007), 153.

¹³ Geller, 76.

¹⁴ We could find no contemporary documentation to support this claim, but Lillian Russell is portrayed by Alice Faye singing "The Band Played On" in a beer garden in the 1940 fictionalized biopic film, *Lillian Russell*. Faye also kept the song in her repertoire, including it on her 1962 album, *Alice Faye Sings Her Famous Movie Hits* (Reprise Records R9-6029).

¹⁵ Armond Fields, *Lillian Russell A Biography of America's Beauty*, (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 1999), 101. Evidence that by September 1895, the song itself was thought to be a draw to vaudeville theaters, was a specific mention that "The Band Played On" would be featured by Sam T. Jack's Creole Company in the first week opening the newly redesigned Star Theater in Cleveland "Star Theater," *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, September 8, 1895, 14.

¹⁶ "Entre Nous," *Boston Herald*, August 16, 1895, 4.

¹⁷ Maristella Feustle, "In Search of Charles B. Ward," [presentation notes], 3. Grove Music Online contributing author, Feustle presented her research on Charles B. Ward at the Third Annual Digital Frontiers Conference, September 18, 2014. The presentation notes may be retrieved at University of North Texas archives.

<https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc402448/>

¹⁸ "Vaudeville Stage: The Bowery Boy," *The New York Dramatic Mirror* January 18, 1896, 19.

¹⁹ Maristella Feustle reports that Ward's career seems to have peaked in the mid 1890s, "In Search of Charles B. Ward," 5. Just prior to his song success with John F. Palmer, two 1894 songs illustrate his style of repertoire: "Only A Bowery Boy: A True Picture of Bowery Life," music by Gussie Davis and lyrics by Ward, <https://levysheetmusic.mse.jhu.edu/collection/143/051> and "A Little Boy For Sale," music by Henry Robson and C. A. Baldwin, with lyrics by Robson.

<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=11927&context=cht-sheet-music>

success.²⁰

- One account credits the song's title to neither Charles Ward nor John Palmer, but Palmer's sister, Pauline Palmer, who told her brother, "The Band Played On" would be a good title for a song. In that account, Charles Ward overheard Palmer humming the tune he had composed to his own lyric. Ward offered to publish and promote Palmer's song for composer credit.²¹
- Charles Ward can be seen as a pioneering "music influencer," with his promotional savvy, marketing "The Band Played On" across mediums, and aggressive song-plugging strategies to lead in sheet music sales and become a pop culture reference in the very year it was published.²²
- By 1899, Ward had opened the "Chas. B Ward Music Publishing Co." on Tin Pan Alley at 42 West 28th Street, publishing his second major hit, "Strike Up The Band (Here Comes A Sailor)" in 1900, with words by Andrew B Sterling.
- Ward sold his entire published catalog to Harry Von Tilzer in 1902.²³ The Harry Von Tilzer Music Publishing Company continued to publish Ward's songs at 42 West 28th Street and, after 1903, at 37 West 28th Street.²⁴
- Ward continued to work as an actor and performer until his death in 1917²⁵



Charles B. Ward, circa 1907
J. Willis Sayre Collection, University of Washington

John F. Palmer (born 1870)²⁶

- Little is known about John F. Palmer, and many of the details in this wraparound concerning "The Band Played On" come from a 1931 secondary source book,²⁷ more than 35 years after the song's publication.
- Palmer was a composer as well as a lyricist, but apparently could not write out music in 1895. Palmer reportedly got a trap drummer who worked at the Third Avenue Theatre²⁸ to transcribe the melody onto manuscript.²⁹

²⁰David A. Jasen, *Tin Pan Alley: An Encyclopedia of the Golden Age of American Song*, (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1988), 28.

²¹ Geller, 75. Pauline Palmer called her brother to breakfast in their Harlem home over the loud music of a nearby German street band and John calling back "One moment. Let the band play on." Pauline noted to John it was a good song title.

²² Geller, 76. This account claims the sales figure was achieved as Ward "prevailed upon dozens of professional friends to use it and even paid them for 'plugging' the composition publicly. Not content, he exploited and advertised it in the public prints and soon witnessed writers adopt the song for parodies and cartoons."

²³ Feustle, 5.

²⁴ Jasen, *Tin Pan Alley*, 291.

²⁵ Despite being ill the last four months of his life, Ward had apparently just appeared in a vaudeville act with his wife, Katherine Klare Ward, prior to his final entry into Roosevelt Hospital in New York. "Man Who Wrote 'The Band Played on' Dies," *Watertown [NY] Daily Times*, March 3, 1917; *New York Clipper*, March 14, 1917, 5.

²⁶ No date of death can be identified. James Fuld notes in *The Book of World Famous Music*, that John F. Palmer may not have been "the John Palmer who was born in 1877 in Albany, N.Y., became a pianist and entertainer, and later an employee at Steinway & Sons, and died in Albany in 1943; obituary, MA, Sept., 1943."

²⁷ Namely, James Jacob Geller, *Famous Songs and Their Stories*, (New York: The Macaulay Company, 1931).

²⁸ Opened in 1875 as Hitchcock's Third Avenue Theater at 443 3rd Avenue at 31st Street, the theatre was demolished in 1957. Damien Farley, "Superior Theatre," Cinema Treasures. <https://cinematreasures.org/theaters/13547>.

²⁹ Geller, 75.

- He was a "struggling" actor,³⁰ living in Harlem with his sister Pauline when he first conceived of the lyrics with her.³¹ He was also working as a press agent and treasurer for the Duquesne Theater in Pittsburgh just after "The Band Played On" was published.³²
- The success of "The Band Played On" opened doors to Palmer for other songs to be published over the next two years.³³ Compositions include comic song, "McCafferty's Feet," published by George Willig & Co., Baltimore in 1896.³⁴
- In 1896, John F. Palmer took Charles B. Ward to court:

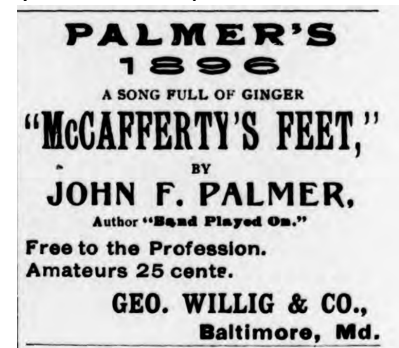


"Ward got about all the credit of it ["The Band Played On"], but now

Palmer claims it all and says that all Ward did was to transpose three notes in his original score. Palmer's lawyer has succeeded in collecting royalties amounting to about \$1,700 on the song and says he will get \$2,000 more."³⁵ Given his concern with credit, it is sad that Palmer apparently never thought to give his sister co-credit for the song they originated together.

- John F. Palmer formed his own music publishing house in 1897³⁶

Left: Later editions of the sheet music, such as this 1957 arrangement, altogether omitted credit to John Palmer.



³⁰ John F. Palmer must have really struggled as we could find no primary source evidence that he was an actor. Geller's account states that Palmer had "just completed the season" in *The Two Orphans*, a rather famous play at the time starring Kate Claxton, but programs from 1894 and 1895 do not list him in that cast. *The Two Orphans*, Playbills and Programs Collection, Harry Ransom Center, University of Texas at Austin.

³¹ The notion that the song may have been a sibling collaboration does not appear to have been disclosed before 1930. "It furnished a topic for mutual discussion to the brother and sister at the breakfast table . . . and with the dishes cleared away, he set about devising the tale of Matt Casey . . . A tune suggested itself to the actor . . ." John Palmer seems to composed the lyric himself. Geller, 75.

³² *The Auburn [NY] Bulletin*, August 17, 1895, 6.

³³ This included "Only A Child of Fate" written with Hal Beach, *New York Dramatic Mirror*, August 29, 1896, 18 and "What's The Use of Being Mad," which was performed in vaudeville by F. Edward and Nellie Daly. *New York Dramatic Mirror*, October 3, 1896, 20. Palmer provided lyrics to "I Wonder If the Old Place Looks the Same," with music by Richard H. Barker, published by M. Witmark & Sons in 1898. *Catalog of Title Entries of Books*, April 13-July 6, Second Quarter 1898, Vol. 15, 190.

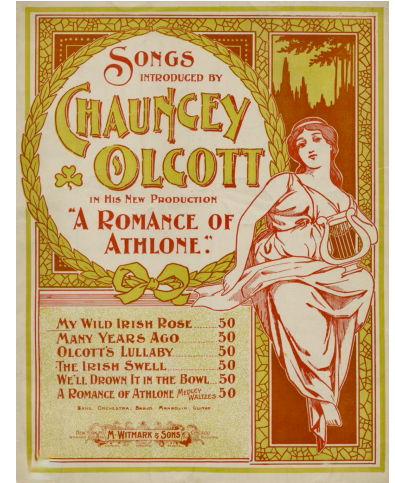
³⁴ Copy in the Edison sheet music collection, 1830-1958, Library of Congress.

³⁵ *The Auburn [NY] Bulletin*, January 4, 1896, 6. Most published sheet music since 1895 has consistently credited music to Ward and lyrics to Palmer. Palmer's name is often not credited on instrumental arrangements, like the School Ensemble Music arrangement for strings suggested for this wraparound, and omitted on at least one simplified piano edition that contains his lyrics, published in 1957 by the Art Publication Society. Palmer however has sole credit on the cover of at least one current digital edition of the vocal sheet music, published in 2000 by Sunhawk.com, even though the advertised listing for that edition on SheetMusicNow.com lists "Sheet Music by Charles B. Ward." <https://www.sheetmusicnow.com/products/the-band-played-on-p254058>

³⁶ "John F. Palmer, New York" published at least three titles in 1897, listed *The Catalog of Copyright Entries*: "New Murray Hill March" by J. J. Dunn Jr. (Jan 4-March 20, 1897 No. 290, 17), Al J. Patton's "When You Bid Your Mother Good-Bye," (Jan 4-March 20, 1897 No. 295, 21), and Charles Graham's "As Long As There's Love In Your Heart." (March 22-July 3 1897, No. 299, 19). This last publishing credit is also noted in the *New York Dramatic Mirror*, June 26, 1897, 6. We could find no surviving copies of sheet music with a "John F. Palmer, New York" imprint.

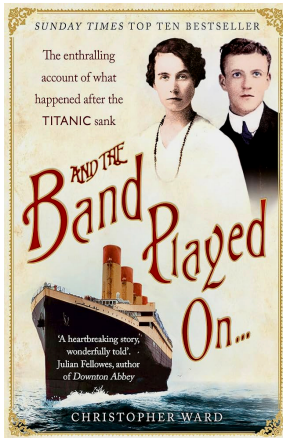
Irish-American and Waltz Song Traditions

- With "Casey," an Irish-named protagonist, "The Band Played On" fits into a line of Irish-themed songs that were extremely popular in the United States from the 1880s into the early Twentieth Century. Songs by Irish composers in the 1880s, J. L. Molloy's "Love's Old Sweet Song" (1884) and were soon joined by hits by American composers including Joseph Flynn's "Down Went McGinty" (1889), performed on stage with his partner Frank Sheridan,³⁷ vaudeville singer Maud Nugent's "Sweet Rosie O'Grady" (1896) and Chauncey Olcott, who composed "My Wild Irish Rose" (1899) for his musical play *A Romance Of Athlone*.
- The song is typical in tempo and style of the fast-paced Viennese waltz commonly found in famous Tin Pan Alley songs like "The Bowery" (1891), Daisy Bell (1892), The Sidewalks Of New York (1894), and the iconic "Take Me Out To The Ball Game" (1908).



Original sheet music edition for "My Wild Irish Rose,"

Interdisciplinary Connections to ELA



1. Idiomatic expression in the English lexicon: "And the band played on"³⁸

- The song's title has come to be used as an expression to describe the deliberate masking or downplaying of an impending disaster by authorities. This may be first attributed in reference to the string quintet that played during the sinking of the Titanic.³⁹
- The idiom is notably used for the title of Randy Schilts' 1987 book, *And the Band Played On: People, Politics, and the AIDS Epidemic*, and the Emmy-winning 1993 film, chronicling the apathy, shrug offs and inaction during the AIDS crisis of the 1980s.⁴⁰

³⁷ Sheridan & Flynn popularized "Down Went McGinty"

³⁸ This idiom is even used in music publishing to market Hal Leonard's "Flex-Band" series of concert pieces for the classroom, using the line in the opening banner, "The Band Played On With 'Flex-Band.'"

<https://www.halleonard.com/feature/1305/flex-band---flexible-instrumentation-for-concert-band-grade-2-3>

³⁹ It is tempting to speculate that "The Band Played On" was among the waltzes the Titanic's string quintet played. Steve Turner uses the Ward/Palmer song for the title of his book about the musicians of the Titanic, *The Band That Played On: The Extraordinary Story of the 8 Musicians Who Went Down With the Titanic*. (Nashville TN: Thomas Nelson, 2011). Contrary to internet claims and CD compilations of a legendary final playlist, "The Band Played On" is not listed among the 148 waltzes that passengers might request of the quintet in the "White Star Line Music" pamphlet, which listed all the pieces the quintet could play. "White Star Line Repertoire," *Encyclopedia Titanica*, <https://www.encyclopedia-titanica.org/white-star-line-repertoire.html>. But given its widespread popularity by 1912, it seems likely the musicians would have known "The Band Played On," should passengers have requested it. The list does verify "Alexander's Ragtime Band," also a title in this wraparound series, was in their repertoire, as reported to have been played on the ship.

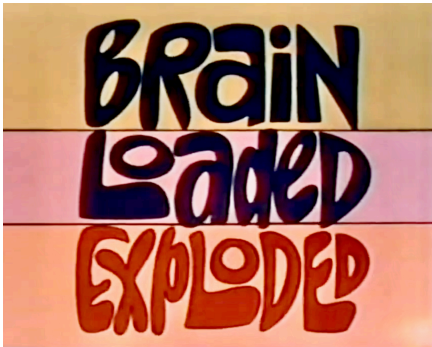
⁴⁰ Randy Schilts, *And the Band Played On: People, Politics, and the AIDS Epidemic*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987). The 1993 film with Matthew Modine and Alan Alda is available to view on YouTube

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-mmVj-s9SQ>. Though not appropriate to include in a middle school unit on this song, it can be noted that Alfred Hitchcock also used the song with chilling symbolism in his 1951 film, *Strangers On a Train* in the scene where a character played by Kasey Rogers sings the song on a carousel and is subsequently stalked and murdered by Robert Walker while the strains of "The Band Played On" are heard in the distance.

SEL (Social Emotional Learning) Connections⁴¹

Possible self-esteem; self-awareness; resilience; social-awareness; and/or conflict-resolution skills.

2. Envisioning and working out our hopes and dreams



His brain was so loaded it nearly exploded.

"The Band Played On" tells a story in verses. What does the lyric tell us about the kind of person Matt Casey was? Of his temperament and his hopes and dreams? What sort of thoughts might have been in his head to make his brain "so loaded"⁴² in the moment described in the chorus?

Left: Frame from the 1961 cartoon, *The Alvin Show*, CBS

When we envision a goal we want to achieve, we make plans in our heads to see it through. The lyric quoted above is not only funny, it's a wry and true observation of how we often feel when we are determined to succeed at something.

Recall a time when your brain was so loaded with ideas that it nearly exploded and share what you were trying to do? How did it work out?

STRAND IV: Using Cultural and Community Resources

- Important recordings to know
 - Dan W. Quinn. First recording, vocal and piano, made for Berliner Gramophone, circa 1895⁴³ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gmAEufuYm18>
 - Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians, Decca Records 3675-A, 1941. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4aqe4ShvQg>

⁴¹ Social And Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined by CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning) as an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions. For more information visit: NYCPS SEL InfoHub <https://infohub.nyced.org/in-our-schools/programs/race-and-equity/social-emotional-learning> and Toolkit Resources: <https://indd.adobe.com/view/12bbe88e-696b-497b-8582-7338d3785ce4>

⁴² There is a possibility that John F. Palmer meant Matt Casey was drunk as this use of U.S. slang existed from about 1890, according to the *Oxford Etymological Dictionary*: "A Democrat who stood on the sidewalk made this uncharitable exclamation as S. stepped into a carriage: 'He's loaded'." Cited in *Voice* (New York) 28 July, 1892. However, in context of the lyric's story, it seems more likely Palmer meant Casey's mind was filled with ideas about his future with the strawberry blonde.

⁴³ Recorded on November 3, 1895 for Berliner, according to *DAHR Discography of American Historical Recordings*, [Database], UC Santa Barbara https://adpprod1.library.ucsb.edu/index.php/matrix/detail/2000148334/961-The_band_played_on, Dates of issue for Berliner numerical listing 961 are given as May 18, 1897 and March 26, 1898. 78 Discography. <https://www.78discography.com/Berliner.htm>

Recorded February 26, 1941 and charted at #6 on *Billboard* in May 1941.⁴⁴ Vocal by Kenny Gardner and chorus, Released as a tie-in with the Warner Brothers film, *The Strawberry Blonde*.⁴⁵

Alice Faye & Co-Stars: The 20th Century Fox Years Volume 2. [CD.] Sepia Records, 1377, 2023. Original soundtrack recording of "The Band Played On" from 1940's *Lillian Russell*.

Alice Faye Sings Her Famous Movie Hits, Reprise Records R9-6029, 1962.⁴⁶
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Urx0Njt_Nkl

Gaslight Orchestra (Arr. E. L. Jefe) on *Gay Nineties Waltzes*. Somerset Records, S-34, 1958.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVbtpGUCYYk>

Imperial Strings and Maxwell Davis, *In The Good Old Summertime*, Crown Records, circa 1960. Interesting string arrangement, but orchestra has intonation issues.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qABnRiPM_OU

Sharon Hubbocks, "The Magic Bow," 1996. Beautiful solo violin rendition, including verse, accompanied by guitar. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2PJgieHtaGo>

- Internet video clips / other media
— *Lillian Russell* (Dir. Irving Cummings, Twentieth Century-Fox, 1940). The fictionalized biopic features Alice Faye as Lillian Russell performing "The Band Played On" early in her career in a beer garden, which the real Russell reputedly performed at the peak of her fame in the late 1890s.⁴⁷



— "The Band Played On" clip from *The Strawberry Blonde* (Dir. Raoul Walsh, Warner Brothers, 1941), featuring James Cagney dancing with Rita Hayworth in an 1890s beer garden while the song is performed by Abe Dinovitch.⁴⁸ This is followed by a "singalong" version, which played during the film's closing credits.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1dHo3w_ktNA
— Alvin and the Chipmunks, *The Alvin Show*, CBS, 1961. [Song starts at 1:35]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-X5VcLvyj4>

⁴⁴ Joel Whitburn, *Top Pop Records 1940–1955*. (Menomonee Falls, WI: Record Research, 1973).

⁴⁵ Many recordings appeared in 1941, including those of Ambrose & His Orchestra (Vocal Sam Browne), Raymond Scott and His New Orchestra, and The Jesters (Red Latham, Wamp Carlson and Guy Bonham), Decca 3676 A, the last which charted #20 on *Billboard* in June 1941.

⁴⁶ Alice Faye performs a 4/4 "Dixieland" arrangement of "The Band Played On" in this 1962 recording, which is curious as part of this movie music collection when she sang the song in the Lillian Russell film in 3/4 time.

⁴⁷ The entire film is on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P5TpNe_rjU. The scene in which Faye as Lillian Russell is discovered singing "The Band Played On" for Tony Pastor, played by Lee Carrillo, starts at 25:26. Also on DVD: *Lillian Russell*. Dir. Irving Cummings, Perf. Alice Faye, Henry Fonda, Don Ameche and Lee Carrillo, 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2007.

⁴⁸ *The Strawberry Blonde* (1941) IMDB. The story was presented on NBC Television with Edgar Bergen and Janet Blair on October 18, 1959. IMDB.

- Local performances / venues / cultural institutions



The Tenement Museum, 97 Orchard Street

The basement of this site was once a family-friendly saloon,⁴⁹ typical of the German bars and beer gardens of the Bowery, in which Matt Casey would have danced, and Charles Ward’s stage persona of the “Bowery Boy” might have performed. The Tenement Museum depicts life in housing of the 1890s, and apartments typical of the one John Palmer likely would have rented with his sister in Harlem, prior to his fame as composer of “The Band Played On.”

Visit www.tenement.org



Tin Pan Alley building at 57 West 28th Street, site of The New-York Music Company, publisher of “The Band Played On” and “Only A Bowery Boy.” Check out our Tin Pan Alley Guide on Bloomberg Connects: <https://guides.bloombergconnects.org/en-US/guide/tinPanAlleyAmericanPopularMusicProject>

STRAND V: Careers and Lifelong Learning

- Career paths
 - Music Influencer
 - Art promotion has probably existed as long as art has been made.
 - An “iconic song” is not just established over time. As Charles Ward discovered, it can be marketed to be popular across all media platforms.
 - Music influencers use their own popularity and social media following to popularize and promote many things, including pop songs.
 - Music Production: Collaboration and Ghostwriting
 - Study the practice that continues today of selling compositions wholesale to another songwriter for co-credit and guaranteed publication.
- This Repertoire Beyond School...

“The Band Played On” is also associated with the LGBTQ+ movement for social justice, dating from the AIDS crisis of the 1980s, when the community was afflicted with the HIV virus, and apathy and discrimination played a role in the slow response in government to recognize the crisis and fund research for a cure.

What crises are we facing today, and what can we do as individuals or as an ensemble to make sure the “band” doesn’t just play on, when action is called for?

⁴⁹ Cindy VandenBosch, “Awash in Beer History: Tapping into the Little Germanies of the 19th Century in New York and Brooklyn,” Tenement Museum Blog, October 1, 2009. <https://tenement-museum.blogspot.com/2009/10/awash-in-beer-history-tapping-into.html>

POSSIBLE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

1. Strands 1 & 2, Orchestra / Concert Band:

Maintaining steady tempo and not rushing a Viennese-style waltz: Two groups of students learn to sing the verse in 2/4 and chorus in 3/4, and each performs their section for the other group. Feedback is given on the adherence to a steady tempo as driven by the downbeat. The entire ensemble repeats the piece instrumentally *without a conductor* and records it.

2. Strand V, All Disciplines (scaffolding necessary for middle school grades)

Deep-dive into careers in music influencing and ghostwriting.

- Assign readings on current trends in the music influencing profession to 3-4 groups of students. (See the special section in Bibliography below or select your own from current periodicals.)
- Outline connections between marketing a song today and the tactics by Tin Pan Alley musicians like Charles B. Ward.
- Guiding prompts and questions:

"For decades, the radio industry has had to adapt to shifts in how music is consumed, as platforms like MTV, Spotify, and YouTube have changed user habits. With the arrival of TikTok, many radio stations and their talent have embraced short-form video as both a promotional tool and a resource for discovering new music . . . Marketers can also hire influencers to help a song take off, sparking a wave of user-generated posts from their fans."

— Dan Whateley, "How TikTok Is Changing and Transforming the Music Industry," 2024. ⁵⁰

"Artists like Taylor Swift and Beyoncé are not just selling out stadiums, they are rewriting the rules of regional growth. And creators are moving the digital economy at a similar scale. One campaign, one trend, one swipe at a time. Both artists and influencers are now able to reach a broader audience beyond their traditional fanbase, amplifying their cultural and economic impact."

— "How Music and Influencer Industries Move The Economy," 2025. ⁵¹

1. How has the method of popularizing a song changed since the heyday of radio in the 1970s and 80s?
2. How has the music industry measured popularity on radio, television (MTV), streaming (Spotify, Apple, and Amazon Music), and social media (TikTok, YouTube, Instagram)?
3. What concerning issues do you see, if any, in having music influencers tell us what songs should be popular, as music strategist Vanessa Alily suggests: "We don't have time to scroll endlessly anymore, so we trust the voices who've already listened."⁵²

⁵⁰ Dan Whateley, "How TikTok Is Changing and Transforming the Music Industry," *Business Insider*, October 14, 2024. <https://www.businessinsider.com/how-tiktok-is-changing-music-industry>

⁵¹ "How Music and Influencer Industries Move The Economy." *influur*, September 9, 2025.

<https://www.influur.com/blog/how-music-and-influencer-industries-move-the-economy>

⁵² Vanessa Alily, "The Rise of Music Influencers: The New Gatekeepers of New Music" *Medium*, July 1, 2025.

<https://medium.com/@vanessaalily/the-rise-of-music-influencers-the-new-gatekeepers-of-new-music-fb23f90bcb0d>

4. How do music influencers attract followers and then sponsors to make money?
What do you think an aspiring influencer would need to know to be successful?
- A student or group of students is assigned to present a reading on ghostwriting and explains to the class the legitimate profession as distinguished from plagiarism. (See the special section in Bibliography below or select your own from current periodicals.)

POSSIBLE ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

1. Strands 1 & 2, Orchestra / Concert Band:

Assessment of the recording and clocking the waltz chorus on a metronome, may or may not reveal rushing, driven by a tendency to push the downbeat in this type of waltz. Strategies are set to maintain tempo and the recording exercise is repeated.

2. Strand V, All Disciplines (scaffolding necessary for middle school grades)

Student assessments on the effectiveness of the flipped classroom activity is generated in written reports, PowerPoints, both graded on a rubric, along with documented Q&A discussions and exit slips.

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