

Mary Elizabeth Smith

People, Place, and Performance: Early Years of the Halifax Academy of Music

On 9 January 1877, the "handsome and complete" Halifax Academy of Music opened to the public with a Grand Opening concert featuring the Halifax Philharmonic Union, the Rudolfson Quartette of Boston, and the Boston Philharmonic Club. It was sponsored by the Halifax Musical Union. Much more significant than the event itself in a city accustomed to musical performances was the opening that inspired it of a "theatre worthy of the name, a concert room fit for the best vocalists" (*Morning Chronicle* 10 Jan. 1877), a house that was well-lighted and heated, handsomely frescoed, with comfortable seating and a well-designed stage equipped with "every facility for the proper mise en scene of the most gorgeous spectacular plays or the quietest of comedies," a building in which the city could take pride and even boast that it now possessed "as pretty a theatre as is to be found on the continent" (*MC* 9 Jan. 1877). No longer would it be necessary to attempt to disguise the ugliness of the Temperance Hall with flags, banners, bunting and foliage; nor to apologize to vocalists, dramatic stars and theatrical managers for the makeshift quality of its lecture-platform stage; nor, alternatively, to resort to the mostly abandoned, cold, small and ill-equipped Spring Garden "barn theatre" (known as the Theatre Royal and Sothern's Lyceum).

A week later, on 16 January, William Nannary's stock company began an extended season of drama that would last until 24 March. The first play performed on the Academy's stage was *Clouds*, a comedy that E. A. McDowell (Nannary's one-time partner) had performed to enthusiastic

reviews in Toronto and had used to open his second season at the Montreal Academy of Music on 6 October 1876. The handsome juvenile, William Smith Harkins, spoke the first dramatic lines. Over 50 years later, in 1929, when the Academy (renamed the Majestic since 1918) was being sold for demolition to the Famous Players Corporation, Harkins—who in the meantime had brought many companies of his own to the Maritimes—remembered that moment fondly. From his home in East Orange, New Jersey, he wrote to James W. Power, news editor of the *Acadian Recorder*: "How I would like, as the curtain falls for the last time, to make a little talk, as having spoken the first lines, to speak the last ones on the old stage. Please remember me to all our mutual friends of the old days" (PANS V/F 103: 17).¹ One of those friends was William Gill, a Haligonian and scene painter for the opening season and (with Harkins and his wife Lenora who had recently celebrated their 52nd wedding anniversary) its only survivor. Gill wrote his own reminiscence to Power from his home in Newton Highlands, Massachusetts: "Just to express my profound interest in the late production of the Fortune Teller, which marked the passing of the old Academy of Music, replete with so many wonderful and pleasant memories; . . ." (PANS 1: 1049).²

The opening of the Academy of Music in 1877 marked a significant transitional moment in the artistic and social life of Halifax. The Academy was the first building to be constructed as a theatre and the only well-equipped performance space. Under Nannary's direction its opening inaugurated the first extended winter/spring/summer season since E. A. Sothern had lost money in a similar ambitious enterprise in a renovated barn 20 years previously. Its inception and operation drew unprecedented support from the civilian elite of the city. The story of the Academy of Music has never been told in any detail and is worthy of presentation, though the telling will necessarily reflect one person's reading of available archival and newspaper materials and her selection from them. At the same time, since an elite perspective has been preserved in the archival records, not only my own selectivity is reflected here, but the selectivity of the records as well. Archived letters come without the full context that inspired them, while the voice of the newspaper reviewer then as now may or may not speak for the general spectator. For the most part the Academy documents display the pride and hopes and frustrations of a people who may be marginalized

geographically but whose elite are not insular, whose points of reference are London, Boston, and New York and never Toronto or Montreal, whose assessment of the adequacy of the Academy theatre opened in 1877 could be intelligent and informed even if more boastful than, say, a visiting Montrealer used to the somewhat larger and more grand Montreal Academy of Music built in 1875 would believe warranted. The paragraphs that follow will examine the factors leading to construction of a modern theatre and the accomplishment of its construction and operation, with considerable attention given to those people involved in leadership capacities as directors, as civilian and military patrons, or as artists (sometimes enmeshed in controversy)—and to what can only be an encapsulation of performance trends in the initial decade.

Halifax (a city that was founded in 1749, was visited by the professional American Company of Comedians in 1768, and enjoyed garrison performances early on), had to wait a surprisingly long time for a proper theatre facility. By contrast, for example, Saint John had had its Dramatic Lyceum since 1857 and had acquired an Academy of Music as well in 1872. By the 1870s numerous complaints, coupled with the clear inadequacy of existing facilities that had not been intended as theatres, finally resulted in various abortive schemes to remedy the situation. In April 1873 the Legislature passed an act to incorporate Bartol and McLellan and Associates as the Halifax Academy of Music Company with a capital of \$30,000 (*Statutes of Nova Scotia* 1983). The building was to be a wooden structure in a central part of the city, on the corner of Gottingen and Cogswell Streets. However, after the awarding of tender to John Crowe in July, on a bid of \$15,977, the project was not heard of again. In 1875 William Nannary, whose company occupied the Temperance Hall three months of that year,³ proposed, unacceptably, an even more modest wooden theatre at an estimated cost of about \$10,000 on the corner of Lockman Street and Poplar Grove, not far from the Temperance Hall but inconvenient from the south end of the city where most of its wealthy citizens resided.⁴

Meanwhile quietly, Simon Sichel, W. M. Doull, and Dr. W. B. Slayter were determinedly raising stock. Slayter chaired a meeting of shareholders in the Merchants Exchange on 20 November 1875 which reported names on the stock list representing \$25,000; in addition, several more thousand dollars were promised reliably—hence a recommendation to

appoint a provisional Board of Directors whose standing in the community would encourage many more merchants and capitalists to buy stock. Accordingly J. Doull, J. Taylor, J. Kenney, Wm. Esson, Jas. Hunter, Wm. Black, H. Peters, A. Burns, and J. M. Dwyer were elected with Doull and Slayter to be Directors.⁵ (Sichel, the initiator of the enterprise, would become Secretary to the Board of Directors and manager of the theatre on its behalf.) By the next shareholders' meeting, held on 14 December in the Halifax Hotel, President Doull reported \$45,000 in subscriptions (with another \$50,000 easily envisaged), and the meeting authorized the Directors "to take such steps as they may think fit for selecting and purchasing of a site, procuring of plans, erecting of building and doing whatever may be necessary in connection with the said building." An Act of Incorporation was shortly obtained (*Statutes of Nova Scotia* 1876), a site was purchased from Dr. Ternan on the east side of Pleasant Street (now Barrington) at the foot of Spring Garden Road, bylaws were approved by the shareholders on 27 June 1876, and construction began in July on a building whose cost could only be estimated as not "less than \$75,000."

Half a year later, a rough statement of anticipated actual costs is included in the minutes of the shareholders' meeting held the day after the theatre's opening. It shows the largest amount of \$39,706 going, predictably, to Alderman S. M. Brookfield, the builder, \$12,600 for purchase of property, \$4,750 for scene painting, \$3,750 for gas fixtures and electric appliances, all these, with other expenses for contracting, frescoing, carving, stage properties and furnishing totalling \$77,700 (PANS MG 20: 182).⁶ Stock of \$57,000 had been taken, and the balance would be issued as preferential stock. Because it was considered too early to estimate running expenses or probable returns, further monies would be raised through issuance of new stock and other appropriate means.

Understandably, the Board was confident in the wisdom of an expenditure that had resulted not "in a mere Music Hall and Lecture Room" but in a "building furnished with every modern improvement for entertainments of all kinds whether oratorical musical or theatrical, an edifice reflecting credit on those whose money has built it and on the city at large." Designed by T. R. Jackson of New York, the architect who had also designed the Brooklyn Theatre and Mrs. Morrison's Grand Opera House in Toronto (*Evening Reporter* 10 Jan. 1877), the elegant three-

storey brick edifice had a capacity of 1,250 (425 in orchestra and parquet, 325 in the dress circle, and 500 on benches in the gallery) (*Cahn-Leighton* 654; *Julius Cahn-Gus Hill* 375).⁷ Despite the *Morning Chronicle's* optimism that the Academy was "evidence of progress, of increasing prosperity" as well as of developed taste (9 Jan. 1877), the magnitude of the accomplishment of its construction is clear when one sets it in the context of an economic recession and a general attitude of discouragement blamed in large measure on the Confederation agreement of 1867:

The cloud of financial depression which has so long overshadowed the commercial world has been felt in Halifax more than many other places. It has been intensified here in consequence of the money which was formerly circulated by this city and province, uncontrolled by outside interference, being now sent to Ottawa; when, after being divided, a certain portion is returned to us for the Government Service.

Few new buildings have been erected and fewer new enterprises started, and unfortunately many of our older establishments and houses exist but in a contracted condition, compared with what they were ten years ago.

The Academy of Music has been opened since our last publication, and is giving great satisfaction to the theatre-going population, and we trust, will give like satisfaction to the stockholders. It was formally opened during the first week of January this year and seems to have been well patronized ever since. (*McAlpine's Halifax City Directory* 17)

The preface to the 1879-80 *City Directory* again complains that "it has been a very tiring season of depression," so trying indeed that the publisher wonders whether to discontinue publication of the *Directory* because advertising, its chief means of support, has fallen off so badly. This atmosphere of depression is in marked contrast to the position of economic strength that, prior to Confederation, Hon. S. L. Tilley of New Brunswick described to the conference considering political union, speaking on behalf of the Maritime delegates: "Look at the immense amount of shipping we own. I am in a position to state that, for the year 1864, after paying the interest on all our debts, and after providing liberally for roads, bridges, and other public works, we shall have a surplus of half a million" (qtd. in Lawson & Sweet 194; Smith, "On the Margins" 41-51)⁸—but the realities of economic depression and its attendant air of dis-

couragement are the context within which the managers and artists of the new Academy of Music would have to struggle.

In looking back into the previous decade to see what sort of theatrical activity created the demand for a fully equipped modern theatre in a time of recession, one discovers that the professional stage in the first half of the 1860s was extremely quiet following its flowering during the lengthy seasons offered by E. A. Sothern from 1856 to 1859 (Andrews 73-91; Maybee).⁹ Moses W. Fiske came for what appears to have been an exploratory two weeks in August 1865, accompanied by J. B. Fuller and other members of James West Lanergan's company, which had just finished its 10th summer season in the Saint John Dramatic Lyceum. Business must have been good enough to induce Fiske to return the next two years with summer seasons that nearly paralleled Lanergan's in length. Then from 1868 to 1870 T. C. Howard (who had been with Lanergan the previous two years) brought his Olympic Company in summer seasons of from one-and-a-half to three months duration; Howard too used several actors who had worked with Lanergan. Kellor's Company added two weeks in July 1868, and in 1869 and 1870 Wilson and Clarke included Halifax in their Maritime tour. In 1871 there were only a few days of professional theatre, brought by Annie Sefton and by J. W. Lanergan in July. The next two years saw the Flora Myers Company in four separate engagements, the longest of which was just over a month.¹⁰ Between 11 and 23 August 1873, William Nannary's Company paid its first visit to the Temperance Hall, and from then until 1878 there was only Nannary, or Nannary in combination with E. A. McDowell (1874) or with J. W. Lanergan (1875). Interspersed with these professional engagements were some amateur productions, mostly by Catholic associations, the Young Men's Literary Association, or the Garrison Amateurs. Professionally, Halifax relied on long stays from a few companies mostly spawned from Lanergan's troupe and none of which, until Nannary, returned for more than three seasons.

The 34-year-old former dry-goods clerk of Irish stock had been for some years an energetic manager and actor with the Saint John Dramatic Club. As far back as 30 June 1865 he had played Antonio in *The Merchant of Venice* with Lanergan's company at the Dramatic Lyceum, and he had subsequently become the Lyceum's box-office agent and then the first in that role at Saint John's newly opened Academy of Music in

1872 (as well as owner and editor of its *Footlight Flashes* and co-organizer of a concert series that saved it from financial bankruptcy in its initial year). He must have met major supporters of theatre in Halifax when business manager with T. C. Howard in 1868; certainly one of those, F. H. D. Vieth, was in the cast of *La Debutante* when Officers of the 60th Rifles presented it in the Saint John Academy on 29 August 1873, soon after Nannary's return there from his first season on his own in Halifax. Twenty-eight year old Eugene McDowell was in Nannary's Grand Comedy Company that August (the two had met when McDowell joined Lanergan's company in 1873), and in 1874 their combined company provided competition from the Saint John Academy for much of Lanergan's summer activity in the Dramatic Lyceum, as well as performing for a month in Halifax. The two theatrical entrepreneurs then struck out in management of companies of their own (except for a brief period together in 1876), Nannary continuing to juggle between Saint John and Halifax both alone and in collaboration with Lanergan in 1875, and with a new sense of responsibility and opportunity from 1876 when Lanergan no longer came regularly to the Maritimes.¹¹

Operating out of the comfortable and well-equipped Saint John Academy of Music from 1872, Nannary must have been acutely aware of the deficiencies of the Halifax Temperance Hall and no doubt promoted a more adequate theatre vociferously. Though the magnificent Academy of Music that opened in 1877 greatly surpassed his humble proposal, his efforts drew him appreciative (if exaggerated) notice from the press: "If we ever have a decent theatre here, it will be owing entirely to his enterprise and energy, and the good taste for public amusements which he has encouraged here" (qtd. in *Saint John Telegraph* 26 Nov. 1875). As late as 1927 his contribution was remembered (the trials and tribulations and criticism forgotten); on 15 January the *Acadian Recorder*, mindful of the 50th anniversary of the opening, recalled sentimentally: "The company remained for ten weeks, and the members established themselves such favorites that even to this day they have not been forgotten by old time theatre goers."

For the first half of 1877 Nannary shuffled his company continuously between Halifax and Saint John, the short-lived peak of his entrepreneurship coming in the summer when he simultaneously operated stock companies in both Academies, having hired stars to play in each in turn.¹²

Unfortunately the Great Fire that destroyed Saint John's five-year-old Academy of Music (as well as its Dramatic Lyceum and Lee's Opera House) put an end to that, and until the end of 1878 he mostly invested his energies in managing Saint John's one surviving hall, the Mechanics' Institute, contributing significantly to renewing the theatrical life of the devastated community; he also toured his company as far as Montreal and Ottawa. He was lessee and manager of the Halifax Academy during a five-day engagement of the Anna Granger Dow English Opera company in October 1877 and probably was as well when the Boston English Opera Company came there in November; both companies went on to Saint John.¹³ He arranged for the May Howard company, starring George Fawcett Rowe, to occupy the Academy from 22 April - 1 June 1878, his brother Patrick acting as business manager, and he may have had responsibility for other occupants of the Academy in that year, for they were the same ones he brought to Saint John, among them Charlotte Thompson, the Lingards, the Hess Opera Company, McDowell, and Lanergan.¹⁴

Undefeated in his vision for an Atlantic circuit with good facilities in its major centres, he was back in the Halifax Academy of Music with his own company between 14 January and 24 March 1879, then set sail on the steamer *Alhambra* for St. John's, Newfoundland, where he hoped to establish "permanent seasons of the drama."¹⁵ Though the reviews of the performances there in April and May are mostly excited puffery alleged to express the delight of "the elite and intellectual portion of the town," it seems clear that the crowding of the Total Abstinence Hall "to its utmost capacity" was not sustained much beyond opening night, and rivalry with Halifax had to be invoked in an appeal to local pride: "Will St. John's be behind Halifax in its appreciation of Mr. Nannary's efforts to give us the drama as he gives it in the largest cities of the Dominion? In Halifax the citizens turned out en masse to show their appreciation of his untiring efforts to please them" (*St. John's Evening Telegram* 30 May 1879). Nannary's views may well have been those of his company who, according to the *Acadian Recorder*, were uniformly "loud in their expressions of disgust at the theatre-going population of Codopolis," but, not surprisingly, the *Evening Telegram* (13 June 1879) chose to reprint the manager's more diplomatic commendation of "The hospitality and

generosity of our neighbors in the 'Ancient Colony' as reported in the *Halifax Herald* 7 June 1879" (Tavernier Collection).

Unhappily for Nannary, his welcome back to the Halifax Academy of Music with Byron's *Our Boys* was not as warm as he would have desired. The *Morning Chronicle* felt obliged to comment at length, hitting on the audiences' thirst for novelty and spectacle and Nannary's indifferent presentation on his reappearance:

Mr. Nannary did not do himself justice in his re-opening at the Academy last night. After a long season of entertainments, many of them of a high order, superior attractions are needed to draw people to the Academy, and Mr. Nannary's stock company do not possess such attractions. It is far from our purpose to disparage the company. We gave them high praise before they went to Newfoundland and they deserved it all. A better company, take it all in all, Halifax has never had, but in the theatrical business, in Halifax at least, novelty is essential to success. In returning to Halifax with the old company, and re-opening with a piece already played, Mr. Nannary risked a cool reception and got it. The house was a slim one. (10 June 1879)¹⁶

Within the framework of the familiarity and consequent predictability of the resident stock company, as well as his financial limitations, Nannary could not offer sufficient enticement for a small population unused to regular theatre to part with sparse resources frequently; yet experience would have taught him that the mere introduction of a new piece would not necessarily have drawn as well as a popular old chestnut. With *Around the World in Eighty Days* featuring W. H. Lytell as Passepartout, Nannary finally "struck the taste of the community" (MC 1 July 1879) and crowded houses for the duration of the run (1-9 July). His apologetic speech at the close of the opening performance, citing exhaustion of the company and the difficulty of preparing the piece, however, confirms the *Morning Chronicle's* unfavorable comparison with Nannary's own production of the same piece two years previously (14-23 June 1877) and the *Herald's* more forgiving complaints about "usual first night hitches" in the operation of scenic effects; the strain of touring and constant struggle were telling. Yielding place to the Boston Pinafore company, the actors transferred briefly to Charlottetown, P.E.I., whose Market Hall performance space Nannary would endeavor, a year later, to replace with a small Opera House.

Correspondence from Charlottetown to the Directors and Stockholders of the Academy of Music indicates that Nannary was by now deeply involved in a serious dispute with Simon Sichel which threatened to undermine both his reputation and his pocketbook. In a letter dated 12 July, Nannary complained that he had been "violently assaulted" by Sichel and looked for some protection in the conduct of his business, accusing Sichel of interfering with his rights and responsibilities as manager and lessee of the theatre, of profiteering, lying, insults, and attempts to defame:

Since the Academy has been opened and at almost every period of my occupancy your present Secretary has been desirous of controlling all amusement to a certain extent, and it is very difficult for a manager, with a heavy load of responsibility on his shoulders, to succeed if he is continually subject to the operations of an outside speculator, and especially if that speculator has in his power a certain controlling influence with the public and the building. At the close of my summer season in 1877, S. Sichel offered me a bonus of \$1500 for a partnership—the amount to be paid in notes of 3, 6, 9 and 12 months—this I refused, and then commenced the trouble. (PANS MG: 2606.205)

The trigger for the immediate crisis seems to have been alleged violation of an arrangement Nannary said he entered into for sharing of receipts of the Pinafore Company—but Sichel took all the receipts and wrote a letter Nannary considered insulting and untrue (and which he attached to his own of the 12th):

The Pinafore Co. was got here for the purpose of making a little money, but principally to pull you out of the disagreeable and irretrievable position of bankruptcy in which you found yourself. . . . I have supported you when not a soul would touch you. You owe me a large amount of money, which you have not even made an attempt to pay me back, besides all the back rent of the Music Hall. (PANS MG 1: 2606.205)

Nannary's side of the affair is presented in his letter of 14 July—he had gone to Sichel's place of business to inform him that obligations of \$500-\$600 (with substantial property in the Academy) would hardly put him into bankruptcy, that if Sichel wanted to help he needn't demand such a large slice of the Pinafore profits, that small sums lent out of the rental

the previous year had been repaid, that Sichel had been at his own request partner in the financially unsuccessful St. John's business which in any case lost him only \$200 that Nannary had made up by allowing Sichel 10 cents profit on 500 yellow tickets.

Meanwhile, trouble with leading man W. F. Burroughs was brewing to the boiling point over alleged non-payment of salary, finally resulting in cancellation of the third night of performance back in Halifax when Burroughs refused to go on stage, in statements to the press by both parties, and effective termination of the season. The bitterly acrimonious dispute arose over Burroughs's issuance of 400 tickets to a benefit that he hoped would partially recoup the \$300-\$400 he contended he was owed, tickets that Nannary subsequently repudiated as expression of unauthorized self-interest regardless of the results to other members of the company.¹⁷ As a letter to the Directors dated 28 July reveals (the day of the first of two complimentary benefits offered the whole company, Burroughs having waived his claim), Nannary laid the trouble with his company squarely at the feet of Sichel. Sichel was, he charged, instrumental in having published a libellous letter purporting to be from W. H. Lytell but published *after* Lytell had left Halifax;¹⁸ it was read aloud at a private meeting of the company held at the Halifax Hotel. Moreover, the *New York Clipper* (2 Aug. 1879) named Sichel as the source of its information that "Mr. Nannary HAD BEEN ASSISTED VERY MUCH by the Directors, he at the present time being HEAVILY IN DEBT FOR RENT." Untrue, said Nannary. His rental indebtedness was \$188 which was nearly balanced by his overpayment of the gas bill by \$175. But even if it were true,

what right has this oily 'Iago' to make known my private business affairs with outside people? his one object to leave no means untried—LIES OR TRUTH—they are all the same to him—to injure my reputation, and that of others, and destroy my business in Halifax. Once I am out of the way he can then manage the Academy as he pleases to his own interests, and, like Iago, 'put money in his purse.' I have labored hard to keep your building open during a season of general depression, when not one out of a thousand would have done it, and as I have paid for rent to you over \$10,000, I respectfully request your consideration of my case. . . . And if I am to do any further business here it is necessary to have some protection from a man who, if he has not his 'finger in the pie,' will place all the impediments in my way he possibly can. (PANS MG 1: 2606.24)

On 6 August Nannary complained again that, more than three weeks after the "Pinafore business," he had not received a settlement from Mr. Sichel "nor one single voucher for the monies he handled."

How, at this late date, can one hope to ascertain the whole truth of such a struggle? Certainly one feels sympathy for Nannary, considering the effort he had put into promoting theatre in the region, while understanding Sichel's protective stance towards a theatre edifice he helped create and his responsibilities towards the fortunes of its shareholders,¹⁹ and while acknowledging the actors' undoubted pain. Only appreciation is expressed in the press for Nannary's hard work, honorable business transactions, courteous attention to the comforts of his patrons, good taste, and "indomitable pluck" in risk-taking and persistence. Indisputably the season was a financial disaster (only about 70 people were waiting for the curtain to rise on the night of the cancelled performance according to the *Acadian Recorder*); no wonder that the combined misfortunes brought the manager to a condition "of life having almost gone out of him" (*Morning Herald* 26 July 1879). The "long and short" of the problem, according to both the *Morning Chronicle* and the *Morning Herald* was that Haligonians had a "limited capacity for amusements," thus requiring "shortness and sweetness," whereas Nannary did not know when to stop; he had "attempted to do a theatrical business in Halifax such as no city of its size in America supports" (30 July 1879). Ironically, Nannary's efforts on behalf of the Academy in late 1877 and in 1878 must also have served to introduce its audiences to some of the variety that could be theirs. Whatever damage the dispute with Sichel did him, his grip on the major centres of Atlantic Canada would have come to an end soon, for the quarrel was only a symptom of Nannary's predicament. Although the region was feeling the effects of depression, the day of the long-stay stock companies such as his, offering mostly familiar plays, was passing; undoubtedly it was impractical to establish resident stock in a city of only about 36,100 (*Census* 1881: I.8) in the current economic climate and in the prevailing climate of taste (as it was impractical to attempt to establish it simultaneously throughout the Atlantic region), but Nannary had never been afraid of a challenge in which he believed.²⁰ Certainly it was a weakened but still determined and visionary Nannary who suffered further misfortunes, including the

eventual loss of his company, in Newfoundland in November (Smith, *Too Soon* 140-41).

Financial success for Nannary and others who followed him in the Academy depended in large measure on the patronage of the elite members of the society who could afford tickets regularly if they so chose. Indeed, the decision to locate the Academy of Music at 247-251 Pleasant Street near the city's largely-wooded south end, close to the residence of Lieutenant-Governor Adams George Archibald (1814-1892) at 243 Pleasant Street was, of course, a choice in favor of an elite audience and of a repertoire compatible with the values and ideals the "model of a gentleman and scholar" represented, including "education as a means of betterment" and "the concept that society rested on moral principles which Archibald implicitly identified with Great Britain" (*Dictionary* XII: 30-36), though born in Truro, Nova Scotia. His attendance at the Academy's opening helped make that a major social event, and his office as well as his character lent in patronage of performances bolstered approval of the moral and intellectual respectability of the dramatic arts in the community. Also in the south end, though at some considerable distance, situated on eight well-wooded acres on the Northwest Arm, stood Maplewood (PANS; Regan; *Citizen* 4 Apr. 1872), the residence of General Sir Patrick MacDougall (1819-1894), an Englishman educated in military academies in Scotland and England, a noted military strategist, and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces in North America from 1878-1883. Reputedly a popular commander, a "very able, educated" soldier who "was gifted with the most charming, the most fascinating manner towards all men" (Wolseley 230-31; MacDonald 526),²¹ he was a significant supporter of the drama whose name (and sometimes Lady MacDougall's) appeared on playbills as the leading military patron, and as well there was a Maplewood Amateur Dramatic Company. When General MacDougall himself appeared on the Academy of Music stage as Mr. Potter (with "inimitable" make up) in an amateur production of Tom Taylor's comedy *Still Waters Run Deep*, the audience "was literally a brilliant one" that "pressed" into the theatre "as soon as the doors were opened" (PANS MG 9: 10); the involvement of professionals was unnecessary as a draw when the military and civilian elite were the actors.

Since the early days of Halifax, garrison support for theatre had consistently been high. Many regiments had their own dramatic associations, military personnel acted alongside civilians in most amateur dramatic associations, military bands regularly played in the theatre, detachments of soldiers and marines took part in professional productions, and military patronage of professional performances was fairly frequent. In 1880 alone officers of the 101st Fusiliers (with popular actor Major W. Hall), the Officers Dramatic Club of the 97th Regiment (whose stage manager was F. H. D. Vieth), the Officers Dramatic Club of H. M. S. Northampton, the Royal Navy Minstrels and Acadia Variety Co., and the H. M. S. Blanche's "Black Blossoms" gave performances whose proceeds went to some charitable cause. A prime mover among the military was Haligonian Frederick Harris Dawes Vieth, great grandson of General John Tupper. Commissioned in the British army at 16 (following in the footsteps of most of his male relatives), he went directly to the Crimean War, was the first to plant the Queen's flag on Russian soil, and was back in Halifax by the time he was 18, performing as a garrison-amateur with E. A. Sothern's company at the Lyceum.²² He led theatricals at Government House in Ottawa during the Marquis of Lorne's regime,²³ acted with Lanergan, Fiske, Nannary, and McDowell (and probably other visiting companies), and listed himself as a writer as well as a member of Her Majesty's Defense in the 1877 *Halifax-Dartmouth City Directory*. He and his handsome wife Elizabeth (Belle) were favorites in the social life of Halifax. As part of the ceremonies dedicating the Academy to the drama in 1877, Vieth read the occasional prologue written by Mr. Green (with difficulty owing to the late arrival of "scores of people"), and he and other officers of the 97th Regiment were the first amateurs to appear in a play on the Academy stage, the occasion being a benefit for William Nannary. Such events were socially significant. Not surprisingly then, patronage of the British garrison and the ships of the Royal Navy was eagerly sought by visiting professional companies and was, reputedly, given only to attractions of "the highest class" after "the fullest enquiries." Once given, patronage nights "meant a brilliant gathering, with society out in force, with the ladies in beautiful gowns, and men in evening clothes, intermingled with the handsome uniforms of the officers, making a scene of splendor" (AR 28 June 1929). The presence and the patronage of the highest civilian authorities alongside the military was certain to

bring out the "largest and most fashionable audience," as was the case at the final performance of W. H. Lytell's Fifth Avenue Theatre Company in *The World* in 1881, when the Governor General and suite arrived at 9:00 and took seats in the parquet; the Lieutenant-Governor and General McDougall were also present (*MH* 19 July 1881).

Apart from the military, the supporters of the Academy were largely drawn from the upper middle class; they were the same group of activists who were responsible, during the 1880s, for establishment of the Orpheus Club, the Haydn Quintette, the Conservatory of Music, and the Victoria School of Art and Design, and from whom Directors of the Academy were drawn. Its Board of Directors consisted of merchants (some of them importers), a physician, a builder, and an insurance agent. The list of 64 names attached to a complimentary benefit given William Nannary on 28 February 1879 was headed by Mayor Steven Tobin and included physicians, barristers, the proprietor of the Halifax Hotel, the managers of the *Halifax Herald* and of the *Halifax Morning Chronicle*, the chief clerk of customs, a printer, ship's chandlers, merchants both wholesale and retail of everything from furs to liquors and groceries, many of them importers and others also manufacturers of sundry goods such as jewelry and furniture. The whole was under the patronage of Sir Patrick and Lady MacDougall.

A good picture of the social life of Halifax in the late nineteenth century and of one family who regularly supported the theatre is available through a delightful and compendious scrapbook compiled by Mrs. J. F. Kenny (PANS MG 9: 10).²⁴ The scrapbook contains reviews and playbills as well as photos, letters, social notes, dinner menus, and invitations, some of which belong to the 1890s but are pertinent here, because Jeremiah Francis Kenny, fourth son of Sir Edward Kenny, was one of the original Directors of the Academy and its treasurer, was musical director for the Tavernier-Lewis Company in 1882, and was otherwise actively involved in support of theatre. A member of one of the wealthiest families in Halifax,²⁵ 'Jerry' Kenny was at one time a partner in the dry goods firm of T. & E. Kenny but sold out to form his own insurance business; he was one of the founders of the Halifax Club and closely connected with several charitable institutions including the Catholic orphanage and the school for the speech and hearing impaired. One of his sisters married Sir Malachy Daly (an attorney who later became Lieu-

tenant-Governor) and acted in amateur theatricals; another married an admiral in the British Navy and another an army doctor stationed in Ireland; thus the close association between the civilian and military elite, and with Britain, was exemplified within the family. In her public and private pastimes, his wife was carrying on the tradition of her mother-in-law, for the obituary notice of Lady Kenny at age 84 called her "a lady of great benevolent character. . . and her greatest delight was to benefit the condition of others. She was heart and soul in everything in which her husband was interested, and was a lady of great culture and refinement" (*Evening Mail* 1 Nov. 1896). Mrs. Kenny has preserved reviews of various military-and-civilian productions (most of them benefits for the School of Art and Design, the Catholic Benevolent Society, the Women's Work Exchange, or another charitable cause), in a few of which she participated—as Ernestine in J. F. Buckstone's *Our Mary Anne*, as Mrs. Scantlebury in W. S. Gilbert's *Randall's Thumb*, as a singer, and as a participant in tableaux. There is also evidence of her travel in playbills from the Lyric Theatre, the Prince of Wales, the St. James's Theatre, and the Royal Court, playbills from Hoyt's Madison Square Theatre and an invitation from the Ladies Orchestra to a private concert there, and a bill from the Lyceum Theatre in New York. Reputedly an artist of some talent, she was the former Mary Helen Furness and, from her student days, a friend of the *prima donna* known as Madame Albani.²⁶ Tributes to Mrs. Kenny in the press describe her as "one of the chief leaders of gaiety in Halifax;" a charming dark-eyed beauty with a fondness for rich fabrics and jewels, for the ornate and colorful, yet "a veritable Lady bountiful to the poor of her own religion" (*Mercury* 17 Oct. 1891; *Halifax Herald* 19 & 20 Apr. 1897).²⁷ Her great energy and remarkable business and executive capabilities were credited with bringing success to many endeavors. She was a signatory of the declaration of the Primrose Club of Westminster, whose objects were "the maintenance of religion, of the Estates of the Realm, and of the Imperial ascendancy of the British Empire." Gifted with hospitality, she and her husband entertained lavishly at their residence at 16 South Street, giving dinners, balls, and musical and dramatic soirees. It would have been natural for her to invite Oscar Wilde following his lecture on "The House Beautiful" at the Academy of Music on 10 October 1882, and a handwritten note

from Wilde to Mrs. Kenny, accepting her invitation, is preserved in the Public Archives of Nova Scotia:

Dear Mrs. Kenny,

It will give me much pleasure to sup with you tomorrow after my lecture, and to make the acquaintance of your husband.

Truly yours

Oscar Wilde. (PANS MG 100: 246.8b)

On the 9th Wilde had dined with the MacDougalls at Maplewood.

Wilde was at the end of a year-long lecture tour of North America instigated and financed by Richard D'Oyly Carte to boost ticket sales for Gilbert and Sullivan's *Patience*, the operetta that satirized the "aesthetic" school of writers and painters among whom Wilde numbered himself. Excitement had run high in anticipation; advertisements of retailers capitalized on it: "Oscar himself is not arrayed in better velveteen than is sold daily by Blakely and Co." (*MH* 10 Oct. 1882). A large crowd was present for his arrival by train from Fredericton and Amherst, many stood to hear him speak from the richly decorated "gentleman's boudoir" stage-setting on the ninth, but the second night was poorly attended, possibly diminishing the pleasure of Mrs. Kenny's social accomplishment, but certainly providing material for conversation, for the drama of the event was more in the public's response to Wilde than in his lecture. Until 21 October, considerably after he had gone on to Saint John and Moncton, controversy raged in the press: he was "full of beautiful moonshine" (*AR* 10 Oct.), was "decidedly effeminate" and spoke "the dullest bosh" ("Aesthete Eater" *MC* 11 Oct.), was "immoral and disgusting" (*Presbyterian Witness* 14 & 21 Oct.); he was an "educated man" who spoke "wondrous word pictures" (*MC* 12 Oct.).²⁸

The social as well as artistic curiosities that welcomed Wilde's arrival undoubtedly accounted also for the lionization of Eugenie Legrand and Lily Langtry in 1883. Mlle. Legrand was "a handsome Frenchwoman of slight and graceful figure with bright sparkling eyes," whose father allegedly held "a high position in the ministry of France," and who had reportedly studied at the *Conservatoire de Paris* under the same professor as Sarah Bernhardt.²⁹ The *Morning Herald* (3 Jan. 1883) indulged in ecstasy over her "magnetic ability and individuality" as Camille—a

puzzling ecstasy in light of an assessment from New York that she "faithfully divided the honors of her failure" with Lewis Morrison (*New York Music and Drama* 13 May 1882), and especially since, nearer home in New Brunswick, the *Miramichi Advance* complained that she hung on Claude's neck, "love-mauling him in a manner ill becoming even the heroine of a kitchen courting scene and invited the jeers of the 'gods'"; moreover, that "she had not yet mastered the English language" (11 Jan. 1883). Whatever the actual merits of Legrand's own performance, the Halifax production must have been weak; David Murray, playing Armand, had joined the company merely the previous day, had not yet rehearsed with it, and therefore had to be "excused" for insufficient power in Act IV. Nevertheless, *Lady of Lyons* was received with equal enthusiasm, its second night being awarded the coveted civilian and military patronage. Likewise, the beauty of Lily Langtry, the "famed flower of England" and "friend" of the Prince of Wales, appears to have been of more interest to the socially aware than her acting. Ladies and gentlemen who could afford the especially high ticket prices filled the lower floor of the Academy to greet her³⁰ as Hester Grazebrooke in *An Unequal Match*, though the "heavens" had vacant places, and reports later assessed her as "a lady of charming personal appearance and an actress possessing creditable talent" (*MH* 9 June 1883) "devoid of disagreeable staginess" (*AR* 9 June), whose Hester was "acceptable" and whose Galatea was only a "pleasing" if "somewhat ambitious attempt." Clearly the supporting company was weak, for the *Herald*, characteristically trying to put the best face on the matter, said that, "while not brilliant," they "play their parts in a manner that leaves little room for unkindly criticism" (9 June 1883).³¹

Among serious music-lovers as well as discerning theatre-goers of the elite in Halifax in the early 1880s, as well as elsewhere, opera was popular. More than 15 opera companies played the Academy of Music in its first decade (most of them only once), ranging from Little Corinne's and Bennett-Moulton's juvenile companies through the opera bouffe extravaganzas of Fred Stinson's Ideal Opera Company to the grand opera of the Tagliapiatra Grand Italian Opera Company. Tagliapiatra was initially a disappointment when *Martha* was marred by the "decidedly over zealous efforts of the prompter"—and these were the only presenters of grand opera. Jones's Boston English Opera company seems to have

been well received on its several visits; in 1881, with Haligonian Anna Guenther in its cast, it brought in receipts of over \$3,000 at eight performances: "The management has made money, the Directors of the Academy have made money, and the music-loving community have been favoured with charming entertainments" (*MH* 22 Feb. 1881). Perhaps the Standard English Opera Company was rewarded with excellent attendance at six different operas in July/August 1883 because it was an "evenly balanced company" showing "excellent rehearsal and direction," with a strong orchestra, even if an occasionally "rough" chorus (*MH* 1 Aug. 1883); perhaps it was because people were indeed ready to give "generous support when a good Company appears" (*AR* 31 July). Yet oxymorons such as "crowded with a select audience" demonstrate that the Academy was often far from fully occupied for performances judged artistically worthy as, if one can trust them, do the scolding comments of "A lover of music" in response to the St. Quinten Opera Company:

The company is a very good one, quite as good I venture to say as Halifax has seen for many years past. The performers are fair to look at, their dresses are fresh, their acting excellent; and their singing much above the ordinary, and it certainly speaks very ill for the public that they have no taste for such entertainments. The prices are absurdly low and I am sure that no such performances could be got for anything like the money in the States or Europe, and how twenty-four artists could be induced to come to Halifax in the dead of winter, bringing with them costumes and the varied accompaniments for a new bill nightly, will ever remain a mystery to me. I feel sorry for the troupe—who are deserving of better patronage—and Mr. Clarke,³² who has my unbounded sympathy in this venture, which from the empty seats prove that it has been unprofitable. The fact is this indifference of the public to encourage operatic or dramatic companies who come among us and who are really deserving of patronage, will result in all such companies shunning us for the future. Already we have a most unenviable reputation and all managers speak of the city as one to be avoided. Can anyone explain the reason for such a thin audience when poorer companies on former occasions have been much better patronized? (*MH* 5 Feb. 1885)³³

Catering to a much broader or a different audience and at the other end of the spectrum of taste from opera in the search for novelty and sensation were the various *Uncle Tom's Cabin* companies, the minstrels,

Lizzie Gayton in *Mazeppa*, and especially Lily Clay's Gaiety Company with its burlesque *Adamless Eve*. About the Boston Ideal Double Uncle Tom's Cabin Company, the *Morning Herald* said condescendingly but with some accuracy: "When everything else fails to attract, theatrical managers usually have recourse to the ancient and honorable drama of 'uncle tom's cabin' with almost a certainty of reaping a harvest." The play, it continued, "is one that appeals to a class who do not as a rule patronize theatrical representations, and as well has a charm for the regular theatre-goer" (28 Nov. 1882). Similar things could have been said about such burnt-cork companies as Baird's Mammoth Minstrels for whose opening, on 10 April 1882, 1,500 tickets were reportedly sold (though the Academy supposedly had room for only 1,250 patrons). But *Mazeppa*, for all the careful preparation of the "runs" and scenic mountains and precipices that required postponement of the opening by a day, must have disappointed the 1,300 people who witnessed it in February 1881, for some of the performers were "rather off their lines," and even the trained horse "Fearless" was inadequate. Not a seat in the parquet was vacant when the curtain rose on Lily Clay's "meanest and trashiest" of plays that allegedly "disgusted the great majority of the better portion of Haligonians" (*MH* 16 July 1886). The parquet "looked like a political meeting—nothing but Adams to be seen—except one Eve in the reserved seats"; the arrival of Adams (mostly soldiers and sailors) in the orchestra was greeted with bursts of applause, the most furious given to "a gentleman with a field glass hung over his shoulders, whose head looked like a full moon with whiskers round it when he took his hat off" (*AR* 16 July); most of the disgusted undoubtedly were not present. Only a deputation to the mayor and city marshall from the company and manager Clarke, with agreement that the women would dress less scantily, allowed the second performance to go forward. When the women violated the agreement in the second part of the show, the company was required to leave Halifax; thus further disgrace to the city was prevented and the moral high ground was maintained.

Most companies (and there were many) catered to a great range of taste, offered old and new plays, and varied in quality. Many companies were new to Halifax in the 1880s, but others had visited earlier, or their leaders had. Some, like Harkins, McDowell, and the Taverniers, through repeated visits, provided continuity and stability, and the comfort of

familiarity. Irish comedy, such as that brought by Joseph Murphy and Charles Verner could usually fill both seats and standing room, and the comical song and dance routines of Comedy Companies such as Atkinson's and Alvin Joslin's, as well as the frontier drama of Frank Mayo and Joseph Proctor, could pack the house, indicating their appeal to a broad spectrum of citizens. The press never says that there were "large and fashionable audiences" for these entertainments, as it does for Kate Claxton in the romantic costume drama *Two Orphans* and for Barry and Redmond in *A Midnight Marriage* when people were also refused admission, so the composition of these houses was probably different. The "fashionable" too liked to be "in a continual roar of laughter" (*MH* 13 April 1880), as they could with McDowell's *H.M.S. Parliament*, and to see some new plays, like his rendition of *Private Secretary*. They seldom came out *en masse* for tragedy like that offered by Stafford and Foster and by George Miln, so houses for tragedy were generally small. It is indicative of taste that the plays chosen for performance by the amateur military-civilian groups were comedies, such as Gilbert's *Trial by Jury*, Buckstone's *Rough Diamond*, Gordon's *Dearest Mamma*, and Halliday's *Checkmate*. Lengthy reviews in the *Morning Herald* of Lytell's Fifth Avenue Dramatic Company's June/July season in 1881 confirm the qualities frequently espoused in print as those most favored by Halifax's theatre-goers: high moral principles (*Banker's Daughter* is "clean in every thought and suggestion"), laughter (*The Giv'nor* provides "continuous mirth, which makes one's laughing muscles ache"), emotion ("The essences of construction [of *Hazel Kirke*] are forgotten in the outburst of feeling"), strong dramatic situations and scenic display, praised in *The World* and *The Shaughraun*. Though competition with the circus diminished the number of spectators who witnessed the fully-rigged phantom rescuing ship that appeared, hull down, upon the expanse of rolling waves that seemed to stretch for miles when the curtain arose on *The World*,³⁴ an audience that overflowed into the Academy's aisles enthused over the scenic display that William Gill painted for Boucicault's old Irish *Shaughraun*:

The ruined Abbey is undoubtedly the most realistic set ever seen on the Academy stage. The moonlight effect is novel, and the whole painting is so far above the attempts of other artists whose work has been placed

before the patrons of the Academy as to call for unlimited praise. The revolving tower is another pretty scene, . . . (MH 27 Sep. 1881)

There is no question that Halifax was proud of its own William Gill, the first scenic artist of the Academy. Gill was born in Chatham, England, in 1854 and came as a child to Halifax where his father was gardener to Lord Mulgrave, governor of Nova Scotia (1858-1863). As a boy he ushered at the Temperance Hall and consequently "rubbed elbows with the snobs and fine people who patronized the plays," making friends with some of the "patrons of art, literature and song" who would be active in the life of the Academy later, including Dr. W. B. Slayter and Lieut. Vieth. He rubbed shoulders too with actors he afterwards would recall as "America's famous stars"—E. L. Davenport, Clara Morris, Frank Roche, Billy Scanlan, John W. Norton, actors who came with Lanergan, Howard, or Nannary's companies—as later he would rub shoulders with Booth, Irving, and Ellen Terry. As a youthful scenic artist he spent weeks painting Baghdad and the oil jars for a "wonderful" *Ali Baba* done by the 60th Rifles in the Temperance Hall, as "ferverently" as, not many years later (1878), he would paint the deck of the H.M.S. Pinafore for its first performance in America at the Boston Museum (letter from Gill, *Halifax Mail*, 12 March 1935). As a young landscape artist he painted watercolors of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick scenes, finding it necessary also to paint "show cards for Woodill's Drug Store and glass signs for James Reardon to keep the wolf from the door." Though he later exhibited his landscapes as far away as the Colonial Exhibition in South Kensington (1886), he always considered himself "just a scene painter" who "burned the midnight oil for 25 years to learn the fundamentals and earn bread and butter" (letter from Gill, *Halifax Mail*, Dec. 1933).³⁵ He was a valued scenic artist in Saint John as well as Halifax before the Halifax Academy opened, and he painted in several Canadian cities including Montreal, Quebec, Ottawa, and Toronto, and was as far afield as Bermuda. Eventually he settled in Boston, where he was scene painter at the Boston Museum for four years, returning there many times to help with special productions, and at the Tremont Theatre for two years, while he continued his connections with the Maritimes. Among other things he designed two new scenes for the remodelling of Saint John's Mechanics Institute in 1881, produced a new act drop for the transformation of that city's Lansdowne Rink into a "commodious theatre" in 1888, spent three

months painting new stock scenery for the Halifax Academy of Music in 1892, provided scenery on numerous occasions especially for Nannary, McDowell, and Lytell's companies and, following his retirement in Boston, wrote letters of reminiscence to various Halifax newspapers (*AR* 4 & 14 March 1925; 16 Feb. 1892; 9 July 1929).

A sense of honor accruing to Halifax, perhaps even undeserved, certainly unexpected, comes through in the reporting of the visit of the Boston Museum Company to the Academy of Music in 1884: "It was hardly to be expected that this company would pay Halifax a visit, but the energetic manager of the academy succeeded in inducing the manager of the museum to extend his tour down this far" (*MH* 29 Oct. 1884). A spectator who had seen "a great deal of theatrical life on both sides of the Atlantic" declared that he had not seen *London Assurance* played better either in England or in America. Here, on one side, is a sense of being marginalized on the edge of the world of culture and on the other a cosmopolitan sense of participating at the centre. But regardless of the satisfaction given audiences, not all actors who visited Halifax found it agreeable, as a scathing letter to the *New York Mirror* from one of the King Hedley company shows:

There is an old saying founded no doubt on a basis of truth, that compares Halifax with Hades (revised version), for to go to H— or Halifax were synonymous, and if we except the pretty surroundings and the agreeable summer climate we fancy they are synonymous still. On this round globe of ours, we fondly hope and steadfastly believe there is no other such dull, unprogressive, dormouse of a town as Halifax. It is (happily) the only place on the American continent cursed by the presence of British soldiers and weighed down by the burden of artillery. (*MH* 28 July 1886)

Insulted and annoyed, the *Morning Herald* retorted caustically: "The next time this individual visits our good city he should be treated to a free public bath in the harbor."

In the first four years of the 1880s there were usually four and sometimes five months of the year when there was no professional theatre in the Academy; yet if the shareholders were unhappy they did nothing about it, for at each of their annual meetings they reelected the old Board of Directors by a large majority. Minutes of the annual meeting in 1883

show a balance on hand of \$1,447 and occupancy of the Academy for 99 nights, exclusive of matinees; minutes for the next two years show 90 nights of occupancy in 1884 and 101 in 1885.³⁶ Commenting on this, the *Morning Herald* provides a rationale for the many dark nights, within the framework of morality and excellence:

The entertainments produced during the year have been unobjectionable in point of morality, and in many cases of more than ordinary merit. The support given, however, was not always sufficient to make the enterprises profitable to the managers. Business has been so good in the States in the entertainment line that it was difficult to bring companies to Halifax at all. Many who were negotiated with declining to take the risk and loss of time involved, while the large certainty insisted on by some made their coming a matter of impossibility. (10 Jan. 1884)

Halifax's distance from the main centres was telling; it was not worthwhile for companies who could find business elsewhere to spend the long travel time necessary to reach Nova Scotia from the United States, and especially as there could be no guarantee of a warmly profitable response at the end of it.

Halifax audiences could not be relied upon for consistency of response to the professional theatre, nor could the press reviews. If attendance was bad, the excuse could be either that business was too good in the States to allow meritorious companies to come north, or it was Saturday, or it was summer, or it was winter, or there was a rival attraction, or there had been too many companies recently or a dearth of them, or there was a snowstorm or a rainstorm—though these seldom kept people from minstrels). Criticism is sometimes perfunctory, sometimes reluctant to be negative, and at other times full and discerning; despite its frequent call for novelty it generally reflects a traditionalist stance that includes British and Irish cultural identifications, and it insists on morality. It demonstrates a self-consciousness about Halifax as place, a desire to seem knowledgeable, worldly but moral, and up-to-date; it attempts "to resist peripheral status and to assert connections to the metropolitan centre" (Smith, "On the Margins" 47); its values are those exemplified by Lieutenant-Governor Archibald and Mrs. J. F. Kenny. Clearly it was not feasible to maintain a stock company in a city of Halifax's size in a large, well-equipped, and costly theatre such as the Academy during depressed

economic conditions, while conflict between the manager of the Academy and the manager of the stock company did not help. No one else offered to establish one, after the collapse of Nannary's ambitious venture. Clearly too, Halifax's location, together with its small population, made attracting leading companies from the larger centres difficult though not impossible. Certainly long stays of any sort were impractical economically in the Academy. Remarks made by H. Price Webber as business agent for the Micawber Club of Saint John when E. A. McDowell tried a stock company there in 1889 are equally applicable to Halifax. Despite strong audience response, the project could not reap a financial profit:

I stayed for five weeks, and I saw very plainly that the admission rates would not furnish enough funds to carry on the enterprise, as the people in the company being exceptionally fine performers and high salaried artists demanded a great deal more patronage than could be looked for, and so I told the gentleman who furnished the money for the company that it was utterly impossible to put it on a paying basis. In fact, I said to him: "The whole outfit is superb. However, you cannot pay Broadway, New York, salaries with St. John, New Brunswick, receipts." ("Theatrical Stars")

Although support from the merchant and professional class brought about the Academy's existence, it was inconsistently maintained and frequently socially rather than artistically motivated. A repertoire that could appeal to the widest spectrum of the society was naturally most viable financially. In the 1880s the Temperance Hall, renovated and renamed the Lyceum, answered a felt need for an alternative performance space that was smaller and less expensive.³⁷ Though some said it offered "dramatic pabulum" (and from a "legitimate" perspective that would apply to its many variety entertainments), it provided workable conditions for Rennie's Comic Opera company, for the Holman Comic Opera company, for H. Price Webber, and for Harry Lindley—occasionally operating in competition with the Academy but usually not. Unfortunately the Lyceum was at times plagued with "'hoodlums' who made Starr street notorious with their howls" and stone-throwing at the ticket box (AR 18 June 1884), and it was not equipped to handle the requirements of most of the companies that came to the Academy. Despite the difficulties of operating the Academy on a paying basis, by 1886 there is no evidence of

deterioration in manager Harshawe Clarke's enthusiasm for the task he had assumed two years previously and indeed he would persevere to the end of the century. Nor is there evidence of a falling off of companies—1886 was, in fact, one of the fullest years. If the theatrical world of Halifax was not burgeoning as much as at least some of its population would have liked, the Academy of Music had at least made possible the best of what there was. Halifax had much for which to be grateful to local entrepreneurs and artists such as William Nannary and William Gill, and to the persistently devoted directors and managers of its Academy of Music.

NOTES

1. Program for "The Fortune Teller" 55. The *Acadian Recorder* (AR), 28 June 1929, said that Harkins "brought more companies to the Academy of Music than any other manager, with many actors and actresses who were leaders on the American stage."
2. Harkins's wife was the former Lenora Bigelow of Truro, Nova Scotia, one of two sisters, the other being Zaidee, who became professional actresses. All three were in Nannary's company when the Academy opened in 1877. William and Lenora were married in Halifax on 17 March.
3. 31 Dec. 1874 - 26 Jan., 15 July - 18 Aug. (with J. W. Lanergan), and 14 Oct. - 24 Nov. 1875.
4. A letter to the editor of the *Acadian Recorder* on 26 Oct. 1875 complained about Nannary's proposal.
5. A 7 x 9 blue notebook presented by Mr. C. W. Ackhurst contains minutes of meetings of shareholders (PANS MG 20: 182). The minutes of 20 Nov. 1877 show election of 11 directors. Sichel is not listed among them, although the program for "The Fortune Teller" in 1929 says he was a director. "Kenny" is "Kenney" in other sources.
6. The *Morning Chronicle* of 10 Jan. 1877 reports that the cost was \$77,000. Linden Best says that the cost of the theatre was about \$100,000 because he adds the purchase price of the property and of furnishings to the amount printed in the *Morning Chronicle*. However, those items are clearly included in the statement in the shareholders' minutes of 10 Jan. 1877. (See Best 46-67.) My entry on the Halifax Academy of Music in *The Oxford Companion to Canadian Theatre* follows Best in giving the cost as "approximately \$100,000," whereas both the shareholders' minutes and the *Morning Chronicle* suggest it was somewhat less.
7. See also *Julius Cahn-Gus Hill* 375. The *Morning Chronicle* 10 Jan. 1877 gives a clear and detailed description of the interior.

8. For more discussion of Confederation and the theatre in the Maritimes see my "On the Margins" 41-51.
9. See Andrews 73-91. J. W. Lanergan, with Julia Bennett Barrow as star, was present from 30 July to 22 Aug. 1860. Barrow stayed on to do readings and then returned with a company of her own from 30 July to 10 Sep. 1861. Dates prior to 1877 are from Maybee.
10. Fiske: 3 - 18 Aug. 1865, 4 June - 24 July 1866, 3 June - 4 July and 22 July - 30 Aug. 1867. Howard: 28 May - 4 July and 20 - 27 July 1868, 26 April - 7 Aug. 1869, 13 June - 11 Aug. 1870. Kellor: 4 - 13 July 1868. Wilson and Clarke: 24 March - 22 April 1869, 24 Jan. - 21 March and 10 April - 2 June 1870. Sefton: 13 - 15 July and during the Aquatic Carnival from 28 Aug. Lanergan: 17 - 22 July. Myers: 25 Jan. - 9 Feb. and 20 May - 28 June 1872, 6 May - 28 June 1873. Since Maybee's thesis does not provide a complete performance record, there may be a few additional dates.
11. Nannary: 12 - 23 Aug. 1873. Nannary & McDowell: 16 June - 17 July 1874. Nannary: 31 Dec. 1874 - 26 Jan. 1875. Nannary & Lanergan: 15 July - 18 Aug. 1875. Nannary: 14 - 28 Oct. and 4 - 24 Nov. 1875, 26 June - 28 Aug. 1876. The names of Nannary and McDowell's company were new to the region, but once Nannary assumed management on his own former members of Lanergan's company were sometimes present.
12. Nannary's company in Halifax in 1877: 16 Jan. 24 - March, 23 April - 4 May, 14 May - 4 Aug.
13. PANS has nine Nannary playbills from 1877, one of the Anna Granger Dow and one of the Boston English Opera Company.
14. PANS has 12 May Howard bills, four of McDowell, two of Charlotte Thompson, one of Lanergan, two of George Ulmer, two of the Hess Opera Company, four of the Adelaide Phillips Grand Opera Co.
15. See *St. John's Evening Telegram* 12 and 14 April 1879 for Nannary's stated purpose.
16. During Nannary's April/May absence Mrs. Scott Siddons gave two nights of readings that crowded the Academy "to the very doors" (15-16 April). George A. Jones's "well-drilled" Boston English Opera Company gave vivacious, realistically set and carefully mounted productions of *Pinafore* (24-26 April) with which Henri Laurent's production could be unfavorably compared (26-27 May). Duprez and Benedict's Minstrels and the Fairbairn family of Scottish vocalists and musicians were present, and there were Garrison productions of *Caste* under patronage of the Lieutenant-Governor and the band of the 97th regiment (18-19 April).
17. The *Halifax Herald* and *The Morning Chronicle* of 22 July both publish Nannary's "Card to the Public" and Burroughs's letter to the editor; the *Acadian Recorder* offers a synopsis and encourages the contending parties "to settle their difficulties without further resort to the press."
18. Lytell himself was in financial difficulty in the Maritimes in 1884. His scenery was seized "at the suit of Western United States people" in Halifax; creditors "came down on him" in Saint John, and his company left for New York where he soon went himself, expressing his intention "to pay everybody" when next "in funds" (*AR*

- 30 Aug. 1884). In June 1885. Lytell was obliged to appear before the curtain to explain "that the company are labouring under disadvantages owing to their long and tiresome journey" and to apologize that Flora Abell had to act with her arm in a sling.
19. A meeting of the Directors, as reported in the *Morning Chronicle* of 18 Jan. 1879, agreed that the Academy company, "though not making fortunes for its shareholders, is in a fairly healthy condition, and the shareholders have reason to be satisfied with the careful and efficient management of their interest of the past year."
 20. For more light on the strength of Nannary's character see Killen.
 21. Cited in Lucas 50-54; also MacDonald, *Annals* 526.
 22. For Vieth's account of Halifax theatricals in Sothern's time, see chapters XIV and XV of his *Recollections* (PANS F 100: 67.12). Glued to the inside of the front cover of the PANS copy of *Recollections* is an obituary of Major Vieth from an unnamed Ottawa newspaper and also an obituary of Mrs. Vieth from the *Halifax Herald* that gives information about her husband.
 23. The Marquis of Lorne was Governor-General of Canada from 1878 to 1883. The investiture of the 33-year-old Marquis took place in the Assembly Chambers in Halifax in the presence of His Royal Highness the Duke of Edinburgh, General Sir Patrick MacDougall, Sir John A. MacDonald and others in Dec. 1878. The *Halifax Evening Reporter* issued two special editions to describe the various events associated with the visit of the Marquis and Her Royal Highness Princess Louise (PANS MG 100: 77.30; RG 51: 16.31).
 24. Scrapbook of Mrs. J. F. Kenny, Halifax, NS, presented by Miss Lola Henry in 1960. The PANS catalogue designation calls it Mr. Kenny's scrapbook, but the presentation information and the contents both mark it clearly as Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook.
 25. A list of 130 of the richest men in Halifax credits J. F. Kenny with \$100,000 and his father Sir Edward and brother Thomas Kenny each with \$500,000. Only one other man has \$500,000 and only one has more. John Doull and Adams Archibald have \$100,000 and S. M. Brookfield has \$150,000 (PANS MG 9: 10).
 26. The two women were once classmates at the Convent of the Sacred Heart in Montreal. On the occasion of Madame Albani's first visit to the Maritimes in March 1896 Mrs Kenny entertained her. In Nov. 1896 Madame Albani began a cross-Canada concert tour in Halifax. See Albani; *Halifax Echo* 30 March 1896; *Halifax Herald* 19 April 1897.
 27. Mrs. Kenny died on 18 April 1897. In 1898 Mr. Kenny married Helena Henry (1853-1920), a daughter of William Alexander Henry who was one of the founders of Confederation, and a sister to W. A. Henry who was active in the amateur theatricals. W. A. Henry was the father of Lola Henry who presented the first Mrs. Kenny's scrapbook to PANS. Kenny died in 1902.
 28. For an account of Wilde's visit, see Sutherland (PANS MG 100: 246.7a) and Winnett.
 29. *The New York Spirit of the Times* 6 May 1883, doubted her pedigree.
 30. On Lily Langtry's visit in the Maritimes see Goss 57-62.

31. The advance notices for Mlle. Hortense Rhea in Sep. 1886, and the unequivocally enthusiastic reviews, show plainly that Halifax theatre-goers thought they were once again being visited by a celebrity, though Rhea judged the audiences undemonstrative.
32. Harshawe B. Clarke was manager and lessee of the Academy of Music from 1884 to 1900.
33. The actual quality of the St. Quinten Opera company's performances cannot, of course, be measured confidently from these comments. The company reached Halifax via the Intercolonial Railway from Chatham, New Brunswick, stopping at small communities *en route*. The Halifax Academy of Music was the only proper theatre available to the company on this tour during which they faced a dimly lit hall in Chatham, inconvenient dressing rooms and a poor stage in Newcastle, the "execrable rags" of scenery in Moncton's Roller Rink, and snow storms that made for late arrivals.
34. The *Saint John Telegram* 2 Aug. 1881 has a good description of the scenery and effects for *The World* as produced in the Mechanics Institute following the Halifax engagement of Lytell's company.
35. Also see Mckay's ms., Dalhousie Archives.
36. Not all of these nights of occupancy will be for theatre, of course, but include concerts, both professional and amateur; nor do they represent all the entertainment offered in Halifax, for some will have been given in other halls.
37. In May 1880 the St. Vincent's Dramatic Club purchased the Temperance Hall for \$4,825 and undertook renovations to transform "the dingy old Hall" into "a handsome little theatre" (*MH* 29 Nov.); on 8 Dec. it opened as the Lyceum with a grand concert by the Hayden Quintette Club. Harry Lindley was the first lessee, offering mostly old favorites such as *Our Boys*, *Lady Audley's Secret*, and *Arrah na Pogue* (20 Dec. 1880 - 29 Jan. 1881). Frequently, over the next years, the building was in use as a Dime Museum; in 1884, the *Morning Herald* observed: "The managers of the dime museum appear to have struck a bonanza in Halifax" (23 Aug.).

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