19TH-CENTURY KEYED BUGLE PERFORMERS: A CHECKLIST

Ralph T. Dudgeon

The original purpose of creating a list of keyed bugle players was to gain an understanding of the demographics of the instrument. I wanted to know who performed on the keyed bugle and what kind of people they were. I was interested in where it was played and in the occasions and celebrations in which it participated. I was hopeful that this information would lead to the discovery of additional music for the instrument. At the various lectures and keyed bugle concerts that I give, one of the most frequently asked questions is, “How many keyed bugles were made and how many people played them?” A comprehensive inventory of even the extant instruments is not practical at this point in my research, but it is possible to document the manufacture of keyed bugles by at least 126 makers. It is likely that thousands of keyed bugles were produced. Detailed answers remain for the future, but I am closer to those answers (and more importantly, able to ask more informed questions) than I was fifteen years ago when I began this research.

From the invention of the keyed bugle in 1810, it was clear that keyed bugle performers were a different generation from the trumpeters and horn players who had preceded them. I alluded to aspects of these differences in my article, “Keyed Bugle Method Books,” in the second issue of this Journal. These early keyed bugle students were not bound to the conventions of an apprentice training program. They studied the instrument from material provided by newly published tutors and with professional musicians who were touring locally. There was no traditional literature for the new instrument, leaving it free to roam through popular and art music on its own. The keyed bugle, like the later saxophone, was associated with dance music performed by bands and small orchestras, but it was also used in opera and concerted music for wind bands and brass groups. Patent or trade restrictions were not yet enforced to the degree that prevented free experimentation with the design or manufacturer of the instruments. The keyed bugle came into being at a time of the most wild experimentation in the Romantic era and that spirit is reflected among the people who played the instrument.

The performers on this checklist can be divided into professionals and amateurs. A few American keyed bugle virtuosi made a good living by promoting their own public recitals, fronting popular bands in the winter, and touring with the circus or establishing a “residency” with their ensemble at a resort in the summer. Finding information on the professional-level performers was not difficult. The best performers left a trail of photographs, letters, newspaper articles, reviews, programs, music, instruments and memorabilia. For every documented virtuoso, however, there were dozens of section players: people who were not full-time musicians, but had enough training to perform
in the town, factory, or militia band. These amateurs bought the bulk of the method books and sheet music, paid for the lessons, copied the music, and shared their new knowledge and skills with their peers. The keyed bugle was a "democratic" instrument. The majority of the people who played it were from the middle class. A few of the early keyed bugle players benefited from the patronage of institutions such as the Paris Opera, the Prussian and English military, or the Court Orchestra at Berlin, but they were the exceptions. By the late 1820s, patronage was on the way out. The word itself took on a negative connotation. When William Dunlap said, "Every artist who has the feeling of a man, or more especially of a Republican man, will spurn the offer of patronage as debasing to himself, his art, and his country," he was speaking as much to his entire society as to the future artists that he was actually addressing. Among the ranks of keyed buglers were blacksmiths, coachmen, mill workers, grocers, clerks, store owners, machinists, music teachers, publishers, instrument makers and even a hermit who lived on an island in the Mississippi River. Clearly music was very important to these people, but it was not the primary endeavor for the majority.

Women are conspicuously absent from the list. I have found no reference to women keyed bugle players during the 19th century. Early 19th-century ladies were making inroads in opera as singers, in the concert world as pianists, and occasionally as poorly paid composers. They did not, however, take to the keyed bugle as some of their granddaughters took to the cornet in the 20th century. Brass playing was a male activity during the keyed bugle era.

The instruments themselves are often important sources for the names of the players. Presentation instruments given to band leaders and other loyal performers also document the times and places where keyed bugles were used. The extent of the engraving, the amount of decoration, and the material used for construction of the instrument are often indicators of the performers' status and the budgets of the presenting organizations. For example, E.G. Wright made fine presentation instruments of coin silver. Some had gold keys; others were fashioned out of solid gold. The presentation of such a treasured object to a musician had a significant impact on both the community and the recipient.

The brief biographical sketches that follow, while incomplete, hint at the individuality of those who played the keyed bugle. I treat many of them in greater detail in my book, The Keyed Bugle, which will be published in 1993 by Scarecrow Press. The information given here includes: name; dates of birth and death, if known; the person's activity as keyed bugler; city or country of activity; known details of career; and source(s). The sources for the listings are cited with the entries rather than as footnotes.

A number of unidentified keyed bugle players appear in photographs and other portraiture. Even though we do not know the identity of these musicians, their dress, instruments, and the location of the iconography often provides useful information. If there are Historic Brass Society members who have additional information on these people or source material on others that I have not listed or those that remain unidentified, I would be interested in sharing that information and adding them to the checklist.


Bayley, William Wood (fl. 1820s-30s). New England & Ohio. Early keyed bugle soloist and bandleader. A contemporary of Richard Willis (the elder). While Willis was at West Point, Bayley was at Norwich, VT (1825 and 1826), afterwards Middletown, CT, at Capt. A. Partridge's Military College. Father of William R. Bayley above. His son mentions him as organizing a band in Chillicothe, OH in 1834.

Benz, Louis "Old Wax," also listed as "Bentz" in some sources (b.? Prussia; d. 9 July 1878, West Point, NY). New York. He enlisted as a musician at West Point in 1834 and was detailed to sound the calls for the Corps of Cadets in 1835, continuing this assignment through 1877. Benz was known to generations of cadets as "Old Wax." He was a chewer of honeycomb and always had a wad in his mouth or deposited on his instrument. One researcher informed me that, as he looked through the West Point yearbooks, the pictures of Benz's instrument showed that he was losing keys as the years went by. Benz's instrument is still at West Point and shows evidence of his home repairs and traces of the ubiquitous beeswax. Dudgeon, _Keyed Bugle_.

Bod . . ., (n.d.). Methuen, MA. Named on a partially illegible tag with a Greenhill keyed
Bugle in the collection of the Trumpet Museum, Pottstown, PA. It is likely that the person is John White Bodwell of Methuen, MA, a shoemaker ca. 1840.

Brant, _____ (n.d.). England. Coachman on the Leister "Union" who "could bring many to the windows and doors of their houses by the sweet music of his bugle. Brant was also a scholar, and as great a favorite with gentlemen going down to the head quarters of the hunt as he was with the pretty lasses of Dunstable." Captain Malet, Annals of the Road: Notes on Mail and Stage Coaching in Great Britain (London: n.p., 1876), p. 44.

Brenan, Joseph J. (b. 1829; d. 1900). Marietta, OH. Named on a presentation eleven-keyed bugle by E.G. Wright "presented to Joseph J. Brenan by the Marietta Band 1854." The instrument is now in the collection of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. He is listed in the 1850 census as a clerk, in the 1860 census as a grocer. A brass band under his direction performed on 19 April 1854 at Marietta College, OH. He was born in the West Indies in 1829, of Irish emigrant parents, and moved to Marietta at age 11. He was a grocer after 1852. Martin Andrews, A History of Marietta & Washington County (1902), p. 964, and History of Washington Co. (H.Z. Williams & Bro., 1881), p. 93.


Campbell, _____ (n.d.). England & USA. Came from London to U.S. ca. 1821 and participated in concerts with the Plimpton family. May have been the author of a keyed bugle method. Eliason, Keyed Bugles, p. 13; R. J. Wolfe, Secular Music in America, item 1492.


Chase, D. (n.d.). New York. His name is inscribed with the date of 1854 on an instrument presented to him by the Clinton Brass Band. Eliason, Keyed Bugles, p. 28. The
instrument was formerly in the Benkovic collection.


Clapp, Lewis B. (fl. 1840-1860). Battle Creek, MI. First leader of the Battle Creek Band. The band began as a quintet of keyed and valved brasses in 1848. By the mid-1850's it had increased to thirteen musicians. Clapp and the rest of the quintet are pictured in Margaret and Robert Hazens's *The Music Men* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1987), p. 103. The original daguerreotype is lost, but copies are preserved in the Willard Library, Battle Creek, MI.


Coles, Daniel (ca. 1830s). Hempstead, NY. A manuscript band book with his name is in the author’s collection. He was a member of the Hempstead (Long Island) Band. This ensemble is mentioned in *The Hempstead Inquirer* as giving concerts in the summers of 1830 through 1835.


Evens, William (n.d.). Pittsburgh, PA. Advertisement, ca. 1826: "William Evens,


Fisher, Jabez, M.D. (b. 24 April 1824, Cambridgeport, MA; d. ?). Moved to Fitchburg, MA in 1851. His Eb Graves keyed bugle is in the Fitchburg Historical Society collection. A physician, fruit grower, musical director, chairman of the water commission and bank president. He is pictured in William E. Emerson’s Fitchburg, Past and Present (Fitchburg: Emerson, 1903), p. 281.

Flagg, Eben B. (n.d.). Needham, MA. Performed with many New England groups including the Boston Brass Band. His portrait appears on Howard’s Quick Step sheet music in the collections of Kurt Stein and this author (see Figure 2). Leonard, “Reminiscences,” p. 23.


Gifford, J. Cambridge (ca. 1850). England. His name is inscribed on a six-keyed bugle by Charles Pace, London. The instrument is in the Carriage Museum, Maidstone.

Goodwin, Jack (n.d.). England. Coachman who was noted for his keyed bugle playing. His renditions of “Or che in cielo” from the opera Marino Faliero were particularly remembered ca. 1845. His playing and coaching career ended when he fell off the Kingsbridge coach and became paralyzed. Malet, Annals of the Road, pp. 43, 47, 48.

Hall, David C. (b. 16 May 1822, Lyme, NH; d. 11 February 1900, Boston, MA). USA. Tourd extensively. Listed in 1880 as leader of the Lowell (MA) Brass Band, he was very active in New England, and also designed, built and sold instruments. A painted portrait of him is in the Lyme Historical Society Museum, Lyme, NH. An E.G. Wright Eb twelve-keyed bugle inscribed to him is in the Pillsbury Collection, Cat. No. 667, in the Henry Ford Museum. Eliason, Keyed Bugles, p. 28; Leonard, “Reminiscences,” p. 23.

Hall, Rhodolph (b. 22 July 1824, Lyme, NH; d. 10 December 1878). USA. Tourd extensively. Secondary leader of Hall’s Brass Band, brother of D. C. Hall. Portrait on trade card, Mark Elrod collection. The trade card depicts an Eb bugle/cornet with both valves and keys. This unique instrument remains unlocated. There is some question as to the extent that Rhodolph actually played the keyed bugle. He was primarily known as a performer on the clarinet and the valved cornet. The Lyme library has an echo cornet that belonged to him and the Henry Ford Museum has a gold gift cornet that was inscribed to him. Both of these instruments have four valves. A painted portrait of him is in the Lyme Historical Society Museum, Lyme, NH.


Harrington, F.S. Chepachet, RI. His name is engraved on a nine-keyed bugle in Eb by Hall and Quinby, 20 June, 1859. The instrument is in the collection of John Karzon.


Huber, Peter (1766-1843). Sachrang, Upper Bavaria. He was also known as “Müllner-Peter” because of his family’s mill operation. Huber inherited the mill and was also a village doctor and pharmacist, a gynecologist, and mayor of Sachrang. He played many instruments and conducted a choir. He wrote sacred and secular music and gave a series of popular concerts in Munich. He married a former flute student. The marriage was notoriously unhappy, but his wife was well known as a master-carpeter and wood worker. Examples of her fine furniture can still be found in monasteries and churches in Bavaria. His portrait (holding a keyed bugle and a quill pen with music) still hangs in the
family mill in Sachrang, Germany. A photo of the painting is in the collection of the Streitwieser Trumpet Museum (see Figure 3).


Jackson, Frank (n.d.). Minnesota. Leader of the 6th Regimental Band stationed at Fort Snelling, MN. His keyed bugle playing was said to have been “well known throughout the length of the Mississippi.” Olson, Music and Muskets, p. 26.

Jacobus, J.D. (n.d.). Salem, MA. “Bugle Soloist of Merit,” who was the leader of Felton’s Brass Band, which became the Bay State Band in 1853. White, History of Military Music in America, p. 45.


Jones, Mr. (n.d.) England. Coachman who played keyed bugle on the Brighton coaches circa 1820. Malet, Annals of the Road, p. 44.


Leixner, V. (fl. 1823). Joseph Küfällig’s Polonaise pour le cor a Signal à Clef obligé for keyed bugle solo and orchestra is dedicated to Leixner. Ms score in British Museum, dated 1823.


Marshall, W.F. (n.d.). Providence, RI. Leader of the American Brass Band in the 1850's. Instrumentation for this group is given in Goldman, Concert Band, pp. 96-97.

Martinez, José de Juan (fl. 1830s). Madrid, Spain. Trumpet and keyed bugle teacher at the Real Conservatorio de Música de María Cristina. Author of a method book for the keyed bugle and trumpet which served as a text in the conservatory. He was the primer maestro of the Alabardero Guards Band and the first chair cornet at the Royal Theatre in Madrid. B. Kenyon de Pascual, "Jose de Juan Martinez's tutor for the circular hand-stopped trumpet (1830)," Brass Bulletin 57, (1/1987), pp. 50-65.

Maxy (Maxcey), (Mr.) (n.d.). USA. Listed as a keyed bugle soloist with the Price and Simpson Circus troupe in 1822 and 1825. Stuart Thayer, letter to R. Dudgeon 30 Nov. 1979.

Moody, Henry (d. ca. 1860). Steubenville, OH. "Henry Moody was a local musician whose favorite instrument was the keyed bugle, which had an extraordinary sweetness of tone when played by a skilled performer. He began playing about 1845 and died before 1860." Joseph B. Doyale, 20th Century History of Steubenville and Jefferson County (Chicago: Richmond Arnold, 1910; rpt, Evansville, IN: Unigraphic, 1976), p. 350.

Morse, Francis W. (n.d.). Salem, MA. Early leader of the Salem Brass Band. One of the first to perform Wood Up Quick Step on an E♭ keyed bugle. His portrait is in the Essex


Reeves, David Wallis (n.d.). Providence, RI. Leader of the American Band of Providence, RI from 1866-1900 (except for one year). Played keyed bugle in his early career. Lemons and Marciniak, *Strike up the Band*, p. 4.

Repsz, Daniel (b. ?; d. Williamsport, PA, 1891). Reported to have played the keyed bugle as early as 18 April 1813 in Clinton Township, Lycoming, PA. Settled in Williamsport and is listed as a dance teacher, an alderman of the 3rd Ward, and a tailor. Founder of the Repsz Band, Williamsport, PA. He is the earliest performer on a brass instrument in that area. Charles Scott Williams, "The Repsz Band" (Williamsport:


Self, William (n.d.). Norwich, England. A trade card bearing a caricature of his likeness is in the collection of Tony Bingham. It lists him as a provider of music for public or private balls, water parties, etc. and as a teacher of the Royal Kent Bugle, flute, violin, clarinet, flagelet, trumpet, French horn & bassoon (then handwritten: “near the John Bull [probably a pub], Crooksplace, Norwich”). He was also a dealer of musical instruments.


Smith, Jerome H. (n.d.). Salem, MA. Leader of the Salem Brass Band following F.W.


Stratton, John F. (n.d). New York City. A noted American valved brass instrument maker, who was a keyed bugle player until around 1840.


Wales, Ira (n.d.). Massachusetts and Maine. *Carte de visite* (early photo) of Ira with keyed bugle ca. 1863. An E.G. Wright presentation bugle with an inscription to him is now in the Shrine to Music Museum in Vermillion, SD. He was in Abington, MA in 1853 and then went to Augusta, ME. He later took up the valved cornet. He is pictured in Hazen and Hazen, *The Music Men*, p. 40.


Willis, Richard. (b. ?, Ireland; d. 1830, West Point, NY). First director of the U.S. Military Academy Band at West Point (1817-32). Student of Logier, teacher of Johnson. His performance of 28 May 1816 may be the earliest documented keyed bugle performance in the USA. Willis had three sons: James, Richard and John, who were also musical. A later “R. Willis” is listed as a circus keyed bugler. The inscription “R. Willis” also appears on a silver medallion (indicating ownership?) on an E♭ keyed bugle in the Elrod collection. Eliason, Keyed Bugles in the U.S., pp. 9-13.


NOTES


Fig. 1
Fig. 2
Eben B. Flagg with E♭ keyed bugle in his Boston Brass Band uniform. From sheet music cover of Howard's Quick Step in R. Dudgeon's collection.
Bavarian keyed bugle performer, Peter Huber (1766-1843), who was also known as “Müllner-Peter.” The quill, music, and instrument identify him as being both a composer and a performer. Huber inherited a family mill and was also a village doctor and pharmacist, a gynecologist, and the mayor of Sachrang. He played many instruments and conducted a choir. He wrote church and secular music and gave a series of popular concerts in Munich. The original portrait still hangs in the family mill in Sachrang, Germany. A photo of the painting is in the collection of the Streitwieser Trumpet Museum. Used by permission.
Fig. 4
Tintype of an unidentified American keyed bugle performer. He could possibly be a minstrel show entertainer. The original is in the collection of the Streitwieser Foundation Trumpet Museum. Used by permission.