

*'A natural pedagogue': The life long educational quest of Richard Slater (1854-1939), 'Father of Salvation Army Music', as described in his manuscript diaries*

In his authoritative study, *Brass Bands of the Salvation Army* (2006), Ronald Holz describes Richard Slater, who was responsible for shaping the rapid musical development of the Salvation Army in its early years, as 'a natural pedagogue', whose achievement was 'educating and training a Musical Army' (p. 79).

My own interest in Slater's reputation as a pedagogue and educator had been aroused previously by some tantalising references about his thirst for knowledge, and his ventures into secularism and then Salvationism, in the brief in-house biography of him by Wiggins (1945), and indeed in Slater's own autobiographical accounts (Slater, 1887, 1909). I was intrigued to learn that he had been an inveterate diary keeper, but the whereabouts of the diary was unknown. Apart from the 'official' documentation stemming from his career in the Salvation Army held in the International Heritage Centre of the Army, there was little that was prior to this, or anything that was personal or independent.

I had become reconciled to writing a study of his life 'out of absence and silence, out of records missing and lost' (Steedman, 2007, p.9), when through following up a chance suggestion made to me by Ray Steadman-Allen, a distinguished successor of Slater as head of the Army's music editorial department, I managed to locate the extensive diaries comprising 24 volumes covering Slater's whole life, held in safe keeping by Slater's great-granddaughter, Stella Taylor (Rolfe). (1) His diaries include an account of his early years, and from 1871 until his death a highly detailed account of his day to day life, including discussions of individuals, ideas, music criticism, lists of books read, his walking tours, his health etc.

For Slater, the reasons for writing his diaries were clear:

This account of my life was written in the first instance to satisfy my own mind's desire to have as complete a record as possible. In

the second place I thought my children, relatives and friends would find it of interest and service in the future, and thirdly I have some hope that it might prove of public interest in publication, at least in some modified form in years to come. (2)

In order to make sense within a limited time frame, of all the data Slater had so assiduously assembled, I decided to limit myself to the diaries written up until 1913, the year of his retirement as head of the Army's musical department. The focus of my investigation was upon his educational quest, and his attempts to put his ideals into practice.

My portrayal is of an individual who was a working class autodidact, brought up in poverty, for whom learning was lifelong (see Gardner, 2007). Slater's self-education engaged him with sceptics and free-thinkers, as well as with musicians. He managed to establish himself, albeit somewhat precariously, as a lecturer in phrenology and music in working men's clubs, and as a teacher of violin, piano and voice. Aged 28, he finally found an environment in which he could exercise a moral influence, when he experienced a religious conversion within the Salvation Army. Thereafter he became a full-time officer (worker) responsible for the musical direction of the Salvation Army, creating much of its repertoire, and educating and training his troops.

In deciding how to organise Slater's life story it became apparent to me that it would be best to present it as an educational biography, in the sense of examining the life of an individual who worked in the field of education, broadly conceived (see Kridel, 1998). Such a study might reveal the educational, religious, social and cultural crucibles 'within which a person develops new ways of knowing, thinking, acting and being' (Finkelstein, 1998, p. 47). I shall draw these threads together in my conclusion.

## **1. Early Years 1854-1870**

Richard Slater was born on 7 June, 1854, in 6 Oldham Place in the district of Clerkenwell, adjoining the City of London. His father was Alfred Richard Slater, a brass founder, married to Mary Ann Suich. The next time we encounter Slater in

official documents is in the 1861 census where we read that Mary Ann Slater was now a widow whose occupation was a laundress, living at 27 Brighton Street, King's Cross, a house which contained 11 inhabitants altogether including herself and her two children, Richard, aged 6, and Eliza, his younger sister.

Slater succinctly itemised the disadvantages he encountered in his early years: 'bad sight, great poverty, narrow circumstances and being fatherless'. The death of his father from consumption at the age of only 28 was a devastating blow to himself and his family. Alfred had been a man of diverse and lively interests, an engineer according to Slater who worked with success on ships pumps, and was something of an inventor. Besides this he was a keen violinist, who played as an amateur in the Sacred Harmonic Society Concerts (3) in the Exeter Hall, and was an able singer, particularly fond of the songs of Henry Russell (1820-1900) (4).

Slater's mother was one of a large family and was of Italian ancestry. Her father had escaped to England with his brother from Naples at the time of the Napoleonic wars. Mary Ann grew up in straitened circumstances in the King's Cross area of London, worked as a cook, and then as a barmaid in a public house. Slater recollected that she took much interest in Shakespeare and knew many long passages by heart, and she also possessed an attractive singing voice. Tragically two of her four children died soon after Alfred's death, one of whooping cough at the age of two, the other was only two or three months old.

For the next seventeen years the family lived in Cromer Street in the heart of the King's Cross district of London. It was an area dominated by the railway: King's Cross station opened in 1852 as the terminus for the Great Northern Railway, and the adjoining St Pancras Station opened as the terminus for the Midland Railway in 1868 (Picard, 2006). King's Cross had a bad reputation, long notorious for poverty and prostitution (Hunter and Thorne, 1990). Charles Booth (1902, p. 174) observed that 'the lowest of women used to live in the vile quarter off Cromer Street'. The mean streets of King's Cross and its immediate surroundings comprised the focal point of

Slater's life up until he was 28, and in fact he was to spend much of his working life with the Salvation Army in Judd Street, situated right beside Cromer Street.

At first the family lived in a kitchen below a shop, later they progressed to a front kitchen. Mary Ann's main occupation was mangling, a job which allowed women to earn at home, even if there were no facilities for washing. The mangle took up space often in cramped conditions. It was the heaviest job associated with laundry work:

You forced round a big handle while feeding the wet clothes and sheets through the rollers which squeezed out the water, putting them through repeatedly until they were flat and damp.(Davin,1996, p. 188)

Even so, as we shall see, it was a task that was often carried out by children.

Slater recollected the contents of the one room kitchen where he lived with his sister and mother: a box mangle, a bedstead, a fireplace, a washstand, two boxes one on top of the other which served as a table, a small round table, a window, chairs, coal cellars, steps leading to the street, a clock with a swinging pendulum. For sleeping he made his bed on the box mangle with a few chairs added to extend the length, while his mother and sister slept on a shut up bedstead pulled down from the wall.

Slater mentioned little about his schooling. He attended an infants school in a house near the Regent's Canal, and then after his father's death moved to Dutton Street School, off Cromer Street, and then for some unremembered reason he went to the nearby Woburn Place School, off Marchmont Street. However by this time he only attended three days a week, as he had to help his mother at home to help fetch or take back clothes for mangling: 'As a boy I had some very heavy loads of clothes to carry at times. I used to carry these clothes baskets on my shoulder and have thought some evil results did arise at the time'. He also had to turn the mangle on Fridays and Saturdays.

A continual fear for him, which lasted well into adulthood, was that he would go blind, as there were inherited problems with cataracts. It was for this reason that both his mother, and her brother, Frank, were keen that the boy received violin and musical tuition of various sorts as they believed that violin playing, maybe in the streets, might serve to be a good source of income when blindness finally struck (Eventually Slater underwent a successful operation which removed the cataracts in 1908 (October 14, 1908)). Slater had a variety of teachers, with orchestral, military and temperance band connections. He recollected that his start in music was through the Band of Hope, a leading temperance organisation (see Harrison, 1971), connected to the Cromer Street Mission, which had a drum and fife band. The Cromer Street Mission Hall was a significant venue for Slater, with its Band of Hope, singing class and Sunday School. (5)

As a boy, Slater used to practice for hours in the kitchen at Cromer Street, as he spent many days alone. He recalled ‘My memory lingers over that poor room and recall many happy hours I enjoyed here in the days of the opening out of my mind’. On a later occasion he recalled his musical progress:

As I grew up my mother decided that I should try music as a profession, and at much self-sacrifice -as she was really poor- I was put under different masters...Apart from my set studies I pushed on in other directions, such as the study of harmony, counterpoint and composition for in my teens I felt an impulse towards making music.

## **2. Gaining a Living 1871-1882**

By 1871 Mary Ann was living at 66, Cromer Street, King’s Cross, and her occupation in the census was described as ‘keeps a mangle’. Her son Richard was 16 and ‘unemployed’.

The diaries which cover Slater’s day-to-day life from the age of 17 until he was 28, can be read as a personal search for meaning, uncovering what it was that he should do with his life. He approached this task with great seriousness. In this section I shall

place him in the Victorian autodidact tradition, then I shall consider his progress in two fields which were to dominate his thinking, phrenology and music. Finally I shall investigate his work as an itinerant lecturer on phrenology and music in the London Working Men's Clubs.

## 2.1 The Autodidact

Jonathan Rose (2001) traces the roots of autodidact culture back as far as the Middle Ages, and documents its surge in the nineteenth century (also see Thompson, 1968, pp. 781-820). The mission of autodidacts was 'to be more than passive consumers of literature, to be active thinkers and writers' (p. 57). Gardner (2007) argues that the autodidact's passion for education was 'a process of individual self-discovery' (p. 467), the engagement with learning was life long. Indeed it was 'an inherently emancipatory exercise, and therefore a deeply moral one' (p. 468).

Richard Slater belonged wholeheartedly to this tradition. Throughout his life he listed his reading in his diaries. At the age of seventeen he was relishing the great poets, notably Tennyson, Goethe, Scott, Browning and Spencer. A couple of years later he was engrossed in psychology and philosophy, reading John Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, the essays of Jeremy Bentham, Stewart's *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind* and Francis Bacon's *Essays and Historical works*.

He recollected his excitement on purchasing Bacon's great work *Novum Organum*:

I have a clear recollection of my buying this work, making many attempts to get it, going in shop after shop in vain...After mangling work was done, March 14<sup>th</sup>, 1874, I remembered hurrying off to Holywell Street, Strand, at the shop at the corner of the west end of the street expecting to get a copy as I had called some time before...I found they now had a copy which I received with intense excitement and interest, and wondered with some anxiety if after all it was in Latin and not English...On reaching home my joy was great to find *Novum Organum* was in English with notes, and that unexpectedly *The Advancement of Learning* was in the same volume...On mother's return she asked me if I was satisfied with the book...My reply was of the brightest character and I said I had

much more than I expected. (1881)

*Novum Organum* had been published in 1621, and Bacon put forward the idea that in building a true model of the world in the human understanding, it was necessary to dissect its anatomy (see Bantock, 1980, pp. 292-3). Slater understood from this that there were three stages in the growth of the individual mind: the grasp of the actual, the perception of the possible, and the extraction from the possible of the proper and sustained endeavour for its accomplishment (1877). He elaborated on the extent of Bacon's influence upon him in a letter to Sir George MacFarren, the distinguished blind composer and Principal of the Royal Academy of Music (6):

My mind eagerly desires to be such as Bacon, a true teacher and guide of men as to what they are, and what their surroundings are, and what therefore they should seek. (ibid)

Meanwhile Slater was avidly acquiring knowledge and devouring ideas: he would rise at 5.30 a.m. working from 6 until 7 on mastering Book 2 of Euclid, and then from 7 until 8 on Algebra (1876).

Part of Slater's desire to understand the world resulted in a rejection of Christianity, and an alliance with freethinkers or sceptics. He had been a Sunday School teacher at the Cromer Street Mission since he was seventeen. However in his 21<sup>st</sup> year he announced 'I've finished with Christian teaching; there's nothing in it!' (Wiggins, 1945, p. 9). He had been led to examine the nature and extent of his knowledge, opinions and beliefs:

The results have been painfully disappointing. Instead of building on what I find, in many cases I have been building on sand, false notions and misconceptions have been leading me in erroneous practice. Most often, those I look to for guidance have failed me, and they have given chaff in place of wheat, they have taken me into dreadful deceit instead of into green pastures and by the still waters of truth. (1874)

Slater began to associate himself with free-thinkers. His interest coincided roughly with the start of what Royle (1980) has identified as the golden age of secularism

1877-1886. The Euston and St Pancras area was something of a hotbed for the propagation of these ideas: the Midland Arches of St Pancras provided a popular platform for secular lecturers. Slater became a regular visitor:

After the service I went to the Arches in St Pancras Road where so many combats between infidels and violent defenders take place. Here are opportunities for my carrying on some of my important studies. (1874)

By 1881 he concluded 'My religious position at the close of the year is there is little evidence for the existence of God, for life after death, for the truth of Christianity' (1881).

## **2.2 The Phrenologist**

What is fascinating about Slater, is that rather than pursuing a radical atheism, or socialism, characteristic of the time, he put his energies into propagating phrenology. As far as socialism is concerned, although there is not a great deal about politics in the diaries, there are three entries on the subject. On meeting with George Bernard Shaw in 1905, Slater made it clear he did not hold with the playwright's socialism (8 December, 1905). Five years later we learn that he intended to vote for the Unionists, in order to get rid of the Liberals, who had been 'moved by most questionable people of socialist views' (20 January, 1910). Finally, with regard to 'the great coal strike' of 1912 he came out strongly in favour of the masters: 'I cannot but think that socialism is greedy' (1 March, 1912).

Slater's interest in phrenology had been stimulated by reading his father's copy of an arts and science journal. Subsequently he gathered together a number of friends to hold regular discussions with them about phrenology. What intrigued him was the possibility of mapping clearly and fully the world of the mind.

A.N.Wilson's (2007) succinct definition of phrenology is hard to improve upon:

Its various proponents divided up the skull into areas- twenty-six in one scheme, forty-three or more in another- in which it was purported that organs could be discovered explanatory of human behaviour. The lumps and bumps of the



human cranium were seriously supposed to relate to propensities and characteristics such as amativeness, hope, wonder, wit and so on. The fact that no relation between brain functions and cranial formation could be demonstrated did not prevent serious people, many of them scientists being wholly convinced by it (p. 54).

Phrenology's golden age in Britain was in the first half of the nineteenth century, emerging from the work of Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828) in Vienna (see van Whye, 2004). It entered Britain as a new strain from seeds brought by Gall's 'wayward disciple', J.G.Spurzheim, who in turn influenced George Combe. It was Combe who popularised the subject in England (Harrison, 1961). Phrenology was faithfully preserved and pursued in popular working class culture in the second half of the century, mainly due to the popularizing of the subject through the tours of England from 1860 onwards of the American phrenologist L.N.Fowler (see Cooter, 1984). Significantly as regards Slater, early phrenologists thought of themselves as following in the footsteps of Francis Bacon, emphasising observation, absolutising 'objective facts', and stressing accessibility, practicality and progress (ibid).

Slater was attracted to phrenology as if to a religion, and by 1878 was in the thick of it, evangelising through lecturing on the subject, often for well over an hour at open air venues all within a couple miles radius of King's Cross (see Appendix A). Slater itemised his spendings on phrenology: 8/6d for the phrenological bust, 1000 handbills 2/-, Charts 5/-, Professional Cards 1/6d, Window Card 1/3d, a second 1000 bills, 2/6d. He charged individuals 2/- for a personal delineation, and up to July 27<sup>th</sup> had examined in all about 60 persons (July 27, 1878).

What is particularly revealing is the phrenological examination given to Slater by L.N.Fowler on 7 June 1879, revealing in the sense of outlining Slater's character and personality. It is worth presenting Slater's account (I have italicised the phrenological organs and faculties in the following quotation, the brackets are also mine; for further information on the faculties etc. see Appendix B):

My Love [*Amativeness*] is not strong, there is little regard for fashions, forms, ceremonies. There is strong attachment to home, also to children [*Philoprogenitiveness*]. *Continuity* is small. Need affection [*Amativeness*]. My

affection is as much outside as inside the family circle. There is a marked condition for *Combateness*. *Self-esteem* is large, no fear of responsibility, can speak heroically to heroic men, have manliness. A feeling of superiority. *Firm[ness]* was large, have a tendency to hold fast to my views and purposes. *Conscientiousness* is an active organ, my desire to know the rights and wrongs of everything, but I lack circumspection, likely that I do at will strain a point. *Hope* is good, continue giving tendencies to look on the bright side...*Spirituality* was said to be good but no other remark on it was made. *Benevolence* was an active organ likely to work [more] in home relations than in external institutions.

I did not put things unwisely...but my blunt plain speaking way was apt to tell people just what I thought of them. Wit [*Mirthfulness*] is large, I am disposed to see and enjoy the comic and to be lively. There is a veil of poetry in my *Ideality* being a prominent organ, and there is a love of a taste for the perfect, the finished, the beautiful. Acquisition [*Acquisitiveness*] is an active condition so far as gaining money goes, but not for its own sake. *Tune* is large and it takes a high [position] in my head, the organ being high up works in reality...*Causality* is large, and I want to know all about the reasons, principles, the basics of things. There is sufficient Caution [*Cautiousness*] so as to keep me safe but not enough to cause timidity or procrastination. *Order* is large, giving fondness for system, ability to work by method. *Form* and *Size* are large, fitting me for mechanical work so I could put things together with success...*Individuality* is well exercised and with sight could give great delight in physical phenomena. *Destructiveness* is low, so I am not disposed to be cruel or harsh.

Fowler credited Slater with considerable musical power and musical taste, 'not for the common ditty style, but 'Mozart music' rather'. He advised him to take a course of philosophy, and saw that public speaking might be his line in life. Then Slater confided that he had no belief and religion. Quite the contrary, he held to Kant's view of religion, backed up by Huxley. Fowler however did not think such men were proper moral guides, and advised Slater to reason out the question of God's existence.

### **2.3 The Musician**

While many working class autodidacts looked to literature for enlightenment, others regarded music as 'the high road to a better world' (Rose, 2002, p. 200). Slater had

access to both highways. In his entry for 1871, he itemised the musical scores he had purchased which included Bach's Mass in B minor, and Mozart's *Idomeneo*. He was hard at work tackling Cherubini's *Treatise on Counterpoint and Fugue*. By August 1<sup>st</sup> he was commencing the study of 4 part counterpoint, and two months later he was writing fugues. His first composition in definite form was a setting of words taken from a Band of Hope source, followed by a hymn tune. By the February of the following year he was composing the first part of an Allegro for two violins. But he was dissatisfied with his progress: 'when I see how little I have composed in spite of all my opportunities I feel disgusted with myself' (13 February , 1872).

He submitted some of his work to several well-known music publishers around 1877, including Novello, and Joseph Williams. Disappointingly, he only received rejection notices from them, one of them implying that what was wanted were pieces more in sympathy with modern styles. He unburdened himself to Macfarren:

If so little is possible in [the] direction of musical composition, as the recent experiments seem to indicate, I cannot deem it to form anything like the principal part of my life's plan. (22 January, 1877)

In another entry he admits that he might have had too strong a desire of originality.

But there had been other difficulties:

While living at Cromer Street my conditions of study were not good...I need have been under a disadvantage in having to work so much by the eye in place of the ear...I heard little good music in boyhood...I have laboured in composition without aid and sympathy from others, and little in my circumstances had any stimulating effect on me. (1877)

Meanwhile, a welcome change occurred in his material circumstances due to the generosity of a Mrs Rees, a retired cutler, for whom Slater's mother had undertaken some domestic work. Mrs Rees decided to take the family under her wing. She offered Mary Ann the chance to move to a small house nearby in Claremont Place, to take responsibility for it at a comparatively small rent, which could be supplemented by taking in lodgers. Mrs Rees also believed that through this move, Richard could be

given opportunities to see what he could do as a teacher of music. A piano was provided for him. In his diary Slater reflected that his future work

lies in the direction of teaching, and in changing persons and things....  
Composition should be thought of rather as of a secondary character, to be taken up when teaching will permit. But it then stands as a subject to be weighed with another viz. the philosophy of mind chiefly in relation to art, and although my desire to engage in musical invention is strong, I must confess that my mind is more inclined to the latter of the two courses. (22 January, 1877)

By the end of the first quarter of 1877 he had managed to build up a teaching practice comprising 34 pupils each of whom received one or two lessons weekly on the violin or piano or the voice (in that order). The average quarterly rate was 12/- (1877).

The different fields of phrenology and music did come together in Slater's teaching. One of the phrenological organs was Tune which was also associated with the faculty of Time, and Severn (1929) devotes a whole chapter in his life story as a phrenologist to the problems associated with locating Tune. But he concludes:

A good phrenologist would be able to tell in the space of a few moments, the amount of musical capacity a person may possess, and whether it would be worth while to learn music. (p. 319)

Slater described his practice in this regard:

Upon receiving a new pupil I have sketched his character as declared by the formation of his head. Then I have watched the character as it has unfolded itself and have found my prediction to answer to actual facts. I have made experiments in my teaching and have had positive results of the development of certain characteristics in the head by calling into activity certain faculties. (November 22, 1877)

He was many years later to record in his diary a conversation with a colleague about his views on musical intelligence and ability, demonstrating the continuing influence that phrenological thinking had upon him:

Now the chief line taken was my contention that capacity, ability, conditions and character of success are determined by natural possessions we start life with, more than on training, education, or the will to do this or that... We start life with a certain momentum as to bodily and mental capacity and force, and as we can only by great effort and long use make an increase of an inch or so in height or length of limb, so it is with our powers of minds. And that energy could be better used along the lines of our naturally predominating faculties, than by

will the forced continuity of those that were weak. (1912)

Two other aspects of Slater's musical life need emphasising. He played the violin in a number of orchestras. He and his friend Alfred Edwards had joined the Royal Albert Hall Amateur Orchestral Society when it began in 1872 (see Scholes, 1947, p. 405), adding characteristically 'I being placed on examination among the first violins, and he among the seconds'. There are numerous references peppered throughout the diaries of his involvement as a violinist with mostly amateur orchestras, with choral societies, and playing Beethoven Sonatas and Haydn Quartets.

But undoubtedly the most profound musical influence on Slater was Wagner. Slater even went to the length of calling his two daughters after Wagner's heroines, Brunnhilde and Elsa. In 1877 he wrote his judgement of the music based on his knowledge of the scores of *Tannhauser* and *Lohengrin*:

On getting them, my study of them straightaway convinced me that he was one of the greatest composers. Impressed me, for I saw evidence of his great intellectual power... Without a doubt one of the chief things in my life has been becoming acquainted with his works from which I have had some of the deepest pleasures I have ever experienced... The more I study him the more wonderful does he appear to me... I think he stands alone among musicians in having consciously an intellectual aim to the scheme as a basis for the artist's labours. (26 June, 1877)

Slater's passion for Wagner was life long, and serious. In 1882 he submitted a manuscript to the *Musical Times* on Wagner. The article related to the number of bars in *Parsifal*, and how they functioned, including an analysis of the amount and frequency of different time signatures, and the number of bars which were purely vocal, purely instrumental, or mixed. There was an analysis of the amount and frequency of different time signatures (*Musical Times* XXIV, 1883, p. 601). The editor went on to say that while accepting 'this enthusiastic calculator['s] document as a unique specimen of industry and perseverance, it was to be hoped that it may not lead the admirers of other composers ...to count up and classify the bars contained in the numerous works bequeathed to us' (p. 601). (7)

## 2.4 Club Lecturer

Slater gradually began to see that he could combine his interests in phrenology and music by becoming an itinerant lecturer in Working Men's Clubs. The Working Men's Club movement had been founded in 1862 by Henry Solly, a Unitarian minister. He was keen that the clubs provided opportunities for social intercourse, and rational amusement and opportunities for instruction and study (see Solly 1881). The instruction came from lectures, given by educated friends of the movement. In his study of six clubs in mid-Victorian London, Shipley (1983) found that in most the cornerstone was the Sunday evening meeting, in which visiting lecturers were expected to be coherent in speech and well armed with facts, which would then lead to debate. Lectures on political economy, history or religion were the staple fare. The fact that Sunday was the Club day tended to be seen as a rebellion against the church and the Christian sabbath. However by the 1880s the lectures were on the wane with the 1870 Education Act coming into force, and the new Board Schools offering evening classes for adults from the 1890s.

From 1878 Slater was establishing himself in Working Men's Clubs as a lecturer in phrenology and music (8). Historically, phrenology had been one of the most popular activities of the mechanics institutes, 'the phrenologists' motto 'Know Thyself' had in it the germ of self-culture and self-improvement' (Harrison 1961, p. 117). Slater was devoted to the cause: 'The work of a practical phrenologist seems one of the highest forms of individual activity for the good of humanity' (September 4<sup>th</sup>, 1878). The subjects of his phrenology lectures included 'Is Phrenology a Science?', 'The Body and its Manifestations of Character', 'Teachings of Phrenology', 'The Utility of Phrenology', 'The Discovery of Phrenology'. In a sketch of one of his lectures his plan was as follows: a general introduction followed by the chief doctrines of phrenology followed by personal application of tests and results. (November 22, 1877). The detail included the following important points:

- the brain is the organ of the mind

- the brain is an assemblage of organs and each faculty has a special part of the brain allocated to it and its organ
- the brain is dual, so that the organs are in pairs
- the size of the brain, other things being equal is a sign of power
- each faculty in its proper place is essential to man's well-being and perfection

Slater was mostly pleased with his lectures, but sometimes he had to cope with situations which were challenging:

In the evening I gave a lecture on the discovery of phrenology at the Tailors Club. It did not commence until 9.30. There was a small audience at first, but later the room was quite full. I had good attention on the whole, but some present were the worse for drink, and one was actually sick in the room. I spoke easily with energy and steadily, and not in a systematic way in some parts. (1881)

After his lecture on this occasion, he examined four adults, and in addition a boy of 13 and two little children. But in his diary entry on November 14, 1881 he bemoaned the fact that in spite of four very successful deliveries at the clubs on phrenology, not one single person had come forward for examination. Slater wondered if it was a deficiency on his part. Ten years later, after his conversion to the Salvation Army, he declared in relation to phrenology, 'my interest has declined' (June 16, 1891).

Music played a prominent role in the early Working Men's Clubs (Taylor, 1972), some had their own brass bands, others had string bands and glee clubs. Slater limited himself to lectures on the life and works of composers, although not exclusively as this list illustrates: Beethoven, Handel, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Schubert, Shakespeare and the music connected with his plays, Wagner, National Songs, Sea Songs ('the subject seems opportune as the war is on in Egypt' (September 10<sup>th</sup>, 1882)). These seemed to appeal more than his phrenology lectures. His fee for these lectures ranged from 2/6d to 5/-. Slater always illustrated his lectures with musical illustrations by himself, and sometimes with guests. For example his Haydn lecture included several movements from a quartet in which he played first violin, while Miss A. White sang 'My mother bids me bind my hair' and an extract from *The Seasons*, both accompanied by Slater on the harmonium.

Slater often commented critically upon his own performance, as with his Handel lecture to the St Pancras Club (September 18, 1881):

On the whole I was in good order and the musical part was given much to my satisfaction. A marked impression was made with 'Cease from her grievings' and 'Waft her angels', attention being close and serious. It was only 'When in danger' that as to the music I had any trouble as to memory.

But although he was pleased that his musical lectures were affording him a good position at the clubs, he was worried about the falling-off of his teaching work and his phrenological examinations (1881).

The following year saw him disillusioned with the club scene, especially as he had just discovered the Salvation Army:

My labours so far in gaining support have been met with very poor success by the means I have used. It is somewhat depressing to think that the moral tone I have sought to maintain in my club lecturing has been as it were by permission, for such audiences do not gather with a moral end as the chief one in view. It is also depressing to think how my moral efforts have had to be done in the midst of the drinking of the clubs, and the lax moral tone there compared with what is to be found in the Army...I feel eager to reach something better. (18 September, 1882)

## **2.5 Entry into the Salvation Army 1882-3**

Slater confided in a letter to his friend Frank Barlow in 1881 that he had formed a plan of visiting places of worship on Sunday evenings in order to learn something of oratory from well known preachers, and also 'to get some help in solving our religious problems'. It was all part of his quest for self knowledge. This plan eventually resulted in his conversion in the Salvation Army. Briefly stated (*Field Officer*, January 1900) he had read in newspaper reports of the doings of the Salvation Army. Curious he attended his first meeting at Hampstead in July 1882. He was impressed by the hearty sincerity of the people, but particularly by the testimony of a young servant girl, who exclaimed 'My missus says she believes I am saved, because I sweep beneath the mats now, and I didn't before' (Slater, 1887). As a result Slater



was challenged to look again at the New Testament in order to get into contact with the Jesus of the gospels, so that he might accomplish such moral victories over himself. After eight weeks of inward conflict, and coinciding with preparation for one of his lectures on 'Sea Songs', he decided to attend the Salvation Army's Regent Hall in Oxford Street for a meeting on a Friday evening. He had to decide whether or not he was willing to face the consequences of becoming a Christian. A Salvationist journalist taking up the story described what happened:

There was only one other at the penitent form, and the anxious looking man from the back joined him, and fought the battle out. The issues were so definite that he knew it was a complete surrender to the claims of Jesus Christ for this life and the hereafter. (*Field Officer*, January 1900, 12)

The Salvation Army had been founded in 1878 by William Booth as a revivalist working class and evangelical Christian mission to reach 'the undeserving poor', 'the submerged tenth', that part of the population that the churches shunned. William and his wife Catherine were convinced that the masses could only be reached by people from their own class, and not by envoys from the rich. Emanating from dissatisfied Methodists, the Army appropriated military discipline, popular culture, and the doctrines of the evangelical revival (Inglis, 1963). Its early growth was spectacular: by the turn of the century it numbered approximately 100, 000 soldiers in the United Kingdom, second only to the Primitive Methodists as an organised working class denomination (Horridge, 1993, p. 228). (9)

It was decided that Slater could use his musical talents to good effect at the Grecian Corps, on the City Road. This had been formerly a long established music hall known as the Grecian Theatre and Eagle Tavern, but had been 'captured' by the Army, its purchase announced on June 29, 1882 (see Scott, 1946; Walker, 2001). Slater admired the conscientiousness of the leaders but noted the difficulty of keeping the attention of much of the audience, particularly those in the gallery who were mostly between 12 and 18, 'appearing to be of the lower classes. Their clothes, voices, language, as well

as phrenological conditions...told plainly of poverty, ignorance, coarseness, vulgarity, and evil tendencies' (October 4, 1882).

He was impressed however with the potential of addressing 400 people in the Sunday night congregation, 'from a moral standpoint the position here for me is almost perfection', but he could not bring himself to agree with many of the ordinary views of Christianity and the Army. Gradually the idea of serving in the Army as a full-time officer grew in him as he renewed contact with the Regent Hall corps, despite some ambivalence: 'the nature of their meetings seems adverse to any manifestation of liberty of thought or theology' (10 September, 1883). However, a lieutenant's salary in the Army would be an improvement on his own financial position. He resolved to give it a twelve month trial. Coincidentally at this time he had met his future wife, Eliza Archer, at the Regent Hall.

The matter was finalised by General Booth who called for Slater to speak to him after a meeting at the Regent Hall. Slater recorded it thus:

'Draw that chair up, I want to speak to you. Where do you live?'

I told him my address.

'You have been gaining your living by teaching?'

'Yes'

'What do you teach?'

'Violin and piano'

'Do you know anything of brass?'

'Yes, but not sufficient to teach'

'You have also been working as a lecturer? On what subject?'

'The lives of great composers, and different aspects of human character'

'Can you transpose and do you know thorough bass?'

'Yes, have had letters from MacFarren'

'You write shorthand?'

'Yes, Pitman's system...as to transposition I can do it in any key'

'Are you married?'

'No, but I entertained the idea for the future'. (October 4, 1883)

The next day Slater met Herbert Booth, one of William and Catherine's sons, who was himself a 'natural' musician : Slater's wage was to be 25/- per week. By October 22<sup>nd</sup> the new musical department of the Salvation Army was inaugurated with Herbert Booth having oversight. Slater was excited about the possibilities of the job,

It is a fact that the position of chief writer of Army music is within my reach. I should be stirred by the possibility of writing for so large a number of people throughout the world. Also that it is upon the noblest of subjects that I have to write music. (July 25, 1884)

His mother was less pleased. In fact she was greatly distressed and thought he was throwing away his prospects (*War Cry*, 30 December, 1939).

### **3. A Salvationist Musician**

My main focus in this section is on the educational achievements of Slater as Head of the Salvation Army's Musical Department, but first it is necessary to outline briefly the musical background of the organisation in which he had chosen to work. (10)

The musical life of its early days was chaotic. Slater's description of what he encountered on his first visit to the Grecian Corps provides an apt example:

There were four brass instruments and a big drum on the stage, a few tambourines, a triangle and a violin. The playing was only just passable. The young man with a thin voice sang a hymn to the tune of 'Hiding in Thee', and a female sang a song about heaven. To the last there was no accompaniment and as she started in a high key the gallery folks made forms of bet on the difficulty of reaching the high notes. To the first song the violinist made an attempt at a sort of pizzicato as accompaniment, a few notes vamped, and a note or two given by the cornet. Another song by a bass singer was given but it was quite a failure. (4 October, 1882)

Eventually however it was the brass band which was to dominate the musical life of the Salvation Army (see Holz 2006). The reasons for this were manifold, but included its suitability for work in the open air and for leading marches, and for its militaristic associations. Also many early Salvationists had been members of brass or volunteer bands, and brass bands were a current popular musical form to which people could relate. Choirs (songsters) developed more slowly than bands, but came to complement them within Salvationist worship. (11) By 1912 it was reckoned that there were 840

Senior Bands in Great Britain with over fourteen thousand bandmen, in addition to seven thousand songsters (*Bandsman and Songster*, August 1912, pp. 549-50).

The most significant regulation concerning bands was passed on May 27, 1885:

From this date no Band will be allowed to play from any music excepting 'The Salvation Army General Band Book'- the Journals published by us from time to time and other music issued from Headquarters. Quicksteps and introductions are strictly prohibited. (*War Cry*, 27 May, 1885)

Holz (2006) provides a judicious estimate of its significance: 'That this order created difficulties would be a gross understatement. By this edict, Booth was to gain absolute autocratic control' (p. 89). The implication was that the Salvation Army would be entirely self-sufficient as far as its repertoire was concerned. It was Slater's task to facilitate this. In fact by his own reckoning by the end of 1910 he had written literally hundreds of songs and band pieces which became the basis of the Salvationist repertoire. Consideration of Slater's compositions and arrangements falls outside the scope of this paper, but certainly merits attention (see Holz 2006, and Steadman-Allen 1965/6, for discussion of Slater's compositional techniques and achievements).

In order to grasp Slater's educational influence within the movement, it is necessary to mention the struggle between those like himself who wanted to expand musical horizons for Salvationist composers and bandmen, and those who regarded instrumental music with deep suspicion, and who were antagonistic to new forms of expression. The latter I call musical Calvinists (originally Calvinists had attempted to curtail the opportunities for musical abuse by restricting the use of music in worship to simple and pure singing). Slater's musical opponents in the Salvation Army wanted to restrict instrumental music solely to the accompaniment of singing, and if there was to be any independence from this, the music should be highly referential, based upon the repertoire of Salvationist songs, so that the congregations could conjure up the words in their memories when listening to the band. There is no doubt that Slater saw himself as a musical liberal and reformer within the Salvation Army attempting to push the musical and hence the educational boundaries of the repertoire. His diaries are full of his day-to-battles with authority, particularly with the International

Headquarters Music Board, formed in 1896 by William Booth to administer and control Army music (see Appendix C).

Slater's most vocal critic was actually a man he admired, Commissioner George Railton, an early ally of William Booth, although later becoming estranged from him (see Watson, 1970). Railton entered Slater's office where Slater was talking with George Mitchell, Bandmaster of The International Staff Band. Railton said:

You are the two fellows I want to see. If you only saw the country [the Army, he meant, in different parts] as I see it, you would see all the harm the new music is doing. It is killing, or has done so, the open air singing and is doing spiritual harm to the bandsmen, so that they do not pray or speak (30 December, 1909)

Slater asked him what he would suggest and reported his reply:

He would go back to the early style regardless of consequences. There should be no note that was not connected with a word, and side and bass drums with six or eight instruments were all that were needed in a band. So he considered all the musical progress and development of the Army a great and regrettable mistake. He said the General never allows modern band music in his meetings ...Commissioner Railton considered a sort of condemnation was virtually passed on such pieces. (ibid)

This was a classic restatement of the Calvinist view. Later, somewhat characteristically, Railton exclaimed to Slater 'You are the man! I want to give you a blow between the eyes, then leave you. You have caused this state of things' (6 March, 1913). This caused Slater to observe that many of the chief officers

have no belief in the moral or religious value of music...They find fault with bands playing beyond five minutes in a meeting, and then submit to that amount being afraid to face the consequences of creating disaffection among the bands. They think the bands are as thieves in taking any time out of a meeting. (ibid)

But it was increasingly Slater's view that music in the Salvation Army could move away from being purely referential:

Music could create the moods, the feelings required for the work of the Army Sunday night meetings...Tender feeling is the same whether the object were wife, child, or Saviour. And so music could rouse the kind of feeling wanted, although not giving ideas of spiritual objects (4 September, 1913).

It is against this backdrop of Slater's battle to develop music that was challenging for composers, arrangers and players, within the limits set by regulation, that his educational achievements can be judged. There was a genuine fear amongst Salvationist leaders that if music gained too powerful a hold, the musicians might be diverted away from the true goal of the Army, which was evangelism. Slater recorded that an influential officer, Commissioner Coombs 'dwelt upon the dangers of educational advance in the Army, and the regrettable movement on the Army in the direction of entertainment' (30 October, 1901). This suspicion coloured views about the provision of musical instruction, as was evident in a discussion between Slater and Bramwell Booth, William's eldest son and successor, who agreed that bandsmen needed training to do their work well, however

this ...need not be put before our men at once...they might be urged to seek such perfection, while we were fully aware of the price that would have to be paid for it. (27 March, 1899)

Right from the start, Slater was intent on meeting the educational needs of Salvationist musicians. He pointed this out in a letter to Bramwell Booth, 'The department set itself to meet the music educational needs of the Army, not waiting for any instruction to do so, but went on at its own initiative (Feb. 6, 1909). In a later diary entry for the following year (31 December, 1910) he itemised his educational publications. They included his *First Lessons in Music*, *First Lessons in Harmony*, *The Salvation Army Dictionary of Music*, and Tutors for Concertina, Autoharp, Piano, Drum and Fife, Soprano Cornet, Cornet, [Tenor] Horn, Baritone [Horn], Bb Trombone, G Trombone, Euphonium, Eb Bombardon and drums.

I shall briefly discuss four of the most significant of these educational publications. *The Home Pianoforte Tutor* (1904) was a lavish production with gilt edging. It was clearly aimed at a more general market than the Salvation Army, indeed its Salvationist provenance appears to be successfully hidden. The tutor's sub-title specifies its audience, *Specially intended for use in Christian Homes...Including no matter of any kind which is not in keeping with the character of Christian homes*. Its organisation is typical of Victorian/Edwardian music tutors: it commences with facts

about musical notation, followed by an introduction to the piano and its mechanism, and then matters of technic. It is only in the last section dealing with repertoire, that its evangelical colours are nailed to the mast, including such favourites as ‘Stand up for Jesus’, ‘Saints of God’, ‘It’s true there’s a beautiful city’, ‘Jesus loves me’, and ‘Salvation for all’. The tunes are organised progressively in order of difficulty. The preface reminds the book’s readers of its fundamental purpose:

Every step onward, in learning pieces under such circumstances, would thereby be an increase of the pupil’s ability to minister to the religious life and exercise of the home.

*First Lessons in Music* (n.d. [c.1906]) was designed for class teaching or for private study. It is essentially a rudiments primer covering notes and time, staves and clefs, beating time, and musical terms. The book was often used as a preliminary to practical instruction. In its successor in the series, *First Lessons in Harmony* (1908a) Slater ranged from intervals and consecutives up to chromatic chords. He advised his readers to analyse the harmonies in the Salvation Army Tune Book, and Bach’s 371 four-part chorales. To go deeper he recommended Prout’s *Harmony*, or Riemann’s *Harmony Simplified*, two highly influential texts in nineteenth century musicology. The *First Steps* series were set books for the Bandmasters’ courses, and Slater thought their style was appropriate for the task: ‘I have reason to think that the simply and definitely classified and tabular form of the material herein has been proved by the exam’ (1909).

*The Salvation Army Dictionary of Music* (1908b) Slater reckoned was one of his longest and most difficult tasks. In his Prefatory Note, he pointed out that it did not aim to cover the whole field of music, it offered little on the historical and antiquarian aspects of the subject, and on matters of theory it restricted itself to meet the special needs of Army bandsmen and songsters. In so doing Slater admitted it may not meet the needs of the professional musician. But Slater was unusually modest about the *Dictionary*’s scope. In fact, it is crammed with entries on general musical matters (e.g. Acciaccatura, analysis, composition, false relation, the Gamut, passing discords etc) side by side with entries relating to the Salvation Army (history of Army

bands, the Musical Board, Junior Bands, Original Army Music etc). Everything a Salvationist musician might need was probably contained within its covers. Prior to its publication Slater was rather muted, admitting that it

was among the big things I have done which have had the best of my energy, and I think this one has brought the least evidence of its being found useful and of appreciation. (3 April, 1906)

In these four publications Slater demonstrated a sure competence in compiling sound pedagogical texts, albeit in a quite traditional format.

As part of his educational mission Slater instituted a system of examinations and competitions. By November of 1904, he was proposing a set of examinations for Bandmasters with three sets of certificates (11 November, 1904). A formal series of examinations in music was established in the following year in order to strengthen instruction. 259 entries were received, answering 10 questions on Salvation Army regulations and 10 on musical topics. Slater noted that he was kept busy marking 380 examination papers in all (3 April, 1905). The examinations took place in various centres. There was an entrance fee, the examination was observed by the Corps Officer, and a cup of tea was provided between the different sittings. The different classes included Elementary and Intermediate Rudiments, and Elementary and Intermediate Harmony (*Bandsman and Songster* 1, 4 May, 1907, p. 8). After the 1908 examination Slater provided a commentary:

In harmony study...the nature of intervals and the matters relating to consecutives were the causes of numerous stumbles. Many seemed to be lacking the idea that each scale, both in harmony as well as melody, is a self-contained system...As to Italian terms in music, a good number of errors were made, for which there is no justification. (*Bandsman and Songster* 3, 27 March, 1909)

These examinations in turn were supported by encouraging the development of libraries for the use of Salvation Army bandsmen (*Bandsman and Songster* 3, 11 August, 1909, p. 4). The list of recommended texts is impressive in scope: Croger's *Notes on Conducting*, Crowest's *The Story of Music*, Lussy's *Musical Expression*, Parry's *Summary of Music History*, Peterson's *Catechism of Music*, Prout's *Harmony*, and Slater's *First Steps* series.(12)



Slater believed that a regular series of compositional competitions could encourage musical self-improvement amongst the Army's musicians (*Bandsman and Songster* 13 February, 1899-1900, p. 8). They would also boost the repertoire of published material, as the prizewinners' entries were published in the *Band Journal*. An early one was the Original Tune Competition, which attracted 32 entries, with the majority of writers being new to composition (*Local Officer* 3, 1899-1900, 423). Two tunes were accepted as prizewinners of five shillings each. There was a brief critique of the overall quality:

Several writers show independence of musical thought, while others only give reflections of memories of well-known tunes. Many fail on the ground of rhythm. They do not provide fitting accents in their music to match those of the song. Most writers, however, have put down their melodies correctly, and that is a real sign of considerable musical progress. (p. 423)

There were other competitions, including for the best march and the best 'selection'. But at times in his diary Slater confided his disappointment with the fruits of them. In 1905 he was invited by the Bandmaster of the Staff Band to hear the marches that had been sent in:

It was one of the most painful experiences in music I have ever had, and I left the room depressed in mind, and exhausted in body from the effects of what I had listened to. (23 August, 1905)

By 1909 he thought the music submitted for the Musical Selection Competition was 'feeble without any real distinction...and while the part writing is less painful than formerly it is not of merit' (9 December, 1909). But the situation was that if competitions were dropped, there should be something done by the Salvation Army to train its composers and arrangers for the future. Even so, he asked rhetorically 'is not the power to create, a very rare commodity?' (ibid).

However, in spite of these reservations, the foundation of examinations and competitions ensured that opportunities for instruction and learning were available for Salvationist musicians, many of them unschooled in any formal sense.

Although in many ways Slater was ‘a back room boy’, he did exercise a teaching ministry throughout his life, spending many Sundays preaching at Salvation Army corps, while also keeping his pulse on the maintenance and development of musical standards. The following outline of a talk he gave to young band boys on spiritual lessons from music, demonstrates how he grounded the experience of music making within a Christian framework:

As the Great Staff was at the back of the notation of music, God was at the back of our life. ‘C’ was the main key, so Christ the chief fact in the plan of God. Keys were all modifications of notes from the ‘C’ key, and so were our different motives. The various notes making up our scales were like the qualities making up [our] nature. Music was the result of choice of notes from a scale, and the music of our lives must be the result of choice. Melody was like the outer side of life, harmony the inner, both necessary, both should agree. Force marks so needed to give variety to music, were like the troubles and trials and temptations of life, all aiding in working out satisfactory life music. (23 January, 1910)

We should perhaps not be surprised that in spite of his punishing work commitments, Slater’s regimen of reading and study continued unabated throughout his Salvationist career, although he complained that as he generally left home for the office at 8.15 a.m. and arrived back at 6.15 p.m., ‘It is 7 p.m. before I am free for study, and I find then not in good brain state for work’ (20 November, 1890). Nevertheless, he had a rigorous reading regime. In 1890 he was concentrating on French literature, including Pascal (Thoughts, Provincial Letters) Comte, Montaigne (Essays), Fénelon, Molière (plays), and was also working on a study of Schubert songs including features in the accompaniments, voice parts, forms and modulations. Slater’s passion for Dante, Shakespeare and Wagner lasted for all of his working life, but his attempts to publish his extensive Wagnerian studies came to nothing (13)

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Richard Slater retired in 1913, suffering from ‘a breakdown of nerves, overstrain’ (18 January, 1914). (14) He retired with his wife to Westgate-on-Sea, near Margate, and after a couple of years in which he thought his inventive powers had seized up, he

continued to write and to compose for the Salvation Army (see Slater 1929 a, 1929b.) He returned briefly to the Musical Department in 1923 to cover for an ill colleague. In the same year he was awarded the highest honour bestowed to Salvationists, the Order of the Founder for invaluable service in the Army's ministry of music and song'. He was in Salvationist parlance, 'promoted to Glory' on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1939.

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this study I have focused upon Slater's life an educational quest. He was representative of a relatively late flowering of the Victorian working class autodidact tradition, which was to change fundamentally around the end of the nineteenth century with the impact of compulsory education (Gardner, 2007).

Slater reflected many of the characteristic traits of the self-educated man. He had a passion for education and through it for self-discovery. The engagement with lifelong learning defined itself as an 'art of living', rather than a preparation for a life of work. Slater's pursuit of knowledge was ambitious in its range, but the ambition was for knowledge itself: 'to live was to learn, and to learn was to truly live' (ibid., p. 468).

It becomes apparent that Slater's idea of lifelong education carried with it a dual meaning of not only transforming the life of the learner, but also the life of society itself, touching the educational lives of all. Slater's sense of purpose was rooted in his engagement with the 'pseudo-science' of phrenology, with music teaching, with Working Men's Clubs and with the Salvation Army. In all of these contexts he had the desire of 'changing persons...for the good of humanity'. The Working Men's Clubs provided him with a loose institutional framework within which he might achieve his aim, the Salvation Army with a tightly controlled structure.

In some ways Slater was an atypical autodidact and phrenologist. The sense of purpose that was most frequently found within the autodidact tradition resulted in individuals engaging in political action, such as the proletarian Marxists of the early

twentieth century, or in becoming school teachers in the context of common elementary schooling from the 1870s and 1880s. Tames (1972) observed that the faltering socialist movement of the 1860s and 1870s was dominated by phrenologists. Slater, however, was no political radical, far from it, he was deeply opposed to socialism, and possessed a deep vein of conservatism.

Perhaps this accounted for his involvement with the Salvation Army and its autocratic structure, there was certainly a parallel between Slater's dismissal of socialism and William Booth's belief that socialism was anti-Christian (see Woodall 2005). For Booth, and probably for Slater, Salvationism 'was intended to ameliorate the worst features of the existing order rather than to change it' (ibid. p. 182). Consequently, what attracted Slater to the Salvation Army was the possibility of accomplishing moral victories over oneself, through adherence to such a faith. As music, he believed, had both a moral and religious dimension, it could act as a means of enlightenment and inspiration on its own terms. It was this vision that nourished him. As 'a natural pedagogue' he was proud of what he had achieved in training and instructing the musical troops of the Salvation Army:

It is impossible to point to any other body of religious people that has anything similar to show as evidence of musical progress and development. A true Salvationist is sure to be musical (*Musical Salvationist* 11, 1896-7).

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Much of the preliminary digging for this work took place in archives and libraries, and I would want to specially thank Gordon Taylor of the Salvation Army International Heritage Centre at Denmark Hill, London, for giving me much-needed help in seeking out and consulting primary source material. Also to the librarians and archivists in the following centres: Bishopsgate Institute Library; Bodleian Library; British Library; British Library Newspaper Reading Room; British Library Sound Archive; Camden Local Studies and Archive Centre, Holborn Library; Guildhall Reference Library; National Archives (Kew); South Place Ethical Society Library; University of Reading Library.

Finally, I acknowledge the support of the Finzi Trust in awarding me a Finzi Scholarship which enabled me to carry out the investigation into Richard Slater's life. I thank the Trust most sincerely.

## FOOTNOTES

\* The reasons I chose to study Slater's life were both personal and academic. I had been brought up in a strongly Salvationist family, and had gained much from my participation in the Army's musical culture. It triggered a lifelong fascination with the way music is transmitted both in informal and formal educational settings, and my research subsequently has ranged from ethnographic studies of traditional music in different cultural contexts, to historical studies of music education. I hope that this study of Richard Slater, which I have written as an informed outsider, will provide a starting point for a wider historical investigation into the historical roots of the musical culture of the Salvation Army.

1. The 24 volumes plus index which comprise the Slater diaries are a rich resource, although as Steedman (2007., p. 8) astutely observes 'too much documentation poses its own problems': at least half of the volumes are over 500 pages long. The diary was completed retrospectively in 1908, out of the various scattered sources, including notebooks that Slater had collected. Although he had intended to compile a chronological account, instead he 'picked out a year here, and another there, as fancy or interest led me' (March 30, 1908). The diaries after 1908 are more chronologically ordered (although not completely). For the researcher, reading the diaries is rather like being on a dizzying switchback, going constantly forward and then back. I dictated relevant sections into a sound recorder, and then transcribed them verbatim. The transcript consists of 107 single spaced typed pages, comprising over 70,000 words.

2. With reference to quotations in this article from the diaries, sometimes Slater provides the exact date of an entry, at other times he simply gives the year. In the introduction and first section of this study, quotations are taken from Slater's retrospective account of his early life.

3. The Sacred Harmonic Society was London's outstanding large-scale choral society, whose home was the Exeter Hall between 1832-89 with its own orchestra (Scholes, 1947, pp. 24-8).

4. Henry Russell (1812-1900), whose songs include ‘Cheer boys cheer’, ‘A life on the Ocean wave’, ‘Oh! Woodman spare that tree’ (see Scholes, 1947, p. 511).
5. Listed as a Baptist chapel in 1854, in Slater’s time it was being run by the London City Mission.
6. Sir George MacFarren (1813-1887). Described by Scholes (1947, p. 101) as ‘this heroic man’. Slater’s diaries contain two letters sent by Slater to MacFarren, but I have been unable to trace MacFarren’s letters to Slater.
7. Unfortunately the details of Slater’s article were printed erroneously, and he wrote to the editor asking that corrections be published (November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1883). The editor published an apology saying ‘we take the earliest opportunity of correcting them, in justice to the energy and earnestness of our correspondent’ (*Musical Times* 24, December 1<sup>st</sup> 1883, p. 658).
8. Some of the London Working Men’s Clubs Slater worked in included: Clifden Club (Hackney), Cobden Working Men’s Club (Kensal Road), Commonwealth Club (Bethnal Green), Eleusis Club (Chelsea), Hammersmith Club, London Tailors Club (Gordon Square), North London Club, Progressive Club (Notting Hill Gate), St Pancras Working Men’s Club, Westminster Democratic Club.
9. Research on the Salvation Army has principally focused upon the influence of William and Catherine Booth, the growth of the movement in its early years, the social class of its membership, connections with popular culture, militarism and teetotalism, the relationship between its evangelism and social work, the role of women, and the possible alliance with socially radical movements (also see Murdoch 1994, Hattersley 1999, Walker 2001, Woodall 2005).
10. Studies of the musical life of the Salvation Army include Boon (1966, 1978, 1985), Herbert (2000), Holz (2006, 2007), and Steadman-Allen (1965/6).
11. There were four main contexts in which bands and songsters operated (Herbert, 2000): in the open-air to attract unbelievers; in ‘Holiness Meetings’ in which the emphasis is upon prayer and spirituality; in ‘Salvation Meetings’ intended for the unconverted; and in ‘Festivals’, the Salvationist equivalent of concerts.
12. Lussy’s theories of musical expression, for example, were regarded as one of the most important contributions to music psychology and psychological aesthetics (see *New Grove*).
13. Slater continued to work on his Wagnerian project: he believed a great collection of facts needed to be made, ‘as on such a basis most subjects in this line of study must be handled’ (6 Feb, 1898). He had marked out the headings under which to collect facts, some were straightforward (time signatures, motif index), others however could not be dealt with so straightforwardly. His plan was to publish his studies in 1913, the

centenary of Wagner's birth. Slater sent to Novello's his 514 pages of manuscript on *Mastersingers*, the result of over forty years work (25 April, 1912). Just over a month later he received a rejection note (13 June, 1912). He consoled himself by recollecting that Wagner had suffered numerous disappointments in his own life. Slater's next step was to submit his collection of 100 songs to Novello, and his Wagner studies to other publishers. (14 June, 1912). Unfortunately all this was to no avail, and he turned down the offer of the editor of the *Musical Times* to issue a condensation of the work (17 December, 1912).

14. Much of his diary entries from 1910 until his retirement focused upon his desire to receive what was financially due to him for the copyright of all of his music. The Salvation Army authorities however possessed a signed declaration from Slater renouncing all claims on copyright. He accused the individual who gave him the form to sign, of entrapment. Slater offered to appear in a Court of Inquiry over the matter (21 December, 1910). His claim was turned down by Bramwell Booth in 1914, and for Slater 'my hopes were dashed to the ground'. Watson (1970, p. 247) points out that 'the copyright of all written works of serving officers is vested in the Salvation Army...Railton helped frame the rule that stands to this day'. Part of Slater's case was that Herbert Booth, William's son, had managed to secure for himself a settlement on leaving the Army in 1902:

'I know that a considerable sum was allowed to Mr H.H.Booth on account of his claims on his songs...The threatened legal proceedings were prevented thereby' (3 April, 1910)



**APPENDIX A: Slater's open-air phrenology venues (April-August 1878)**  
 (August 18<sup>th</sup>, 1878)

Date	Time	Place	Subject
April 6	evening	Cobden Statue	Nature of phrenology
June 2	morning	Midland Arches	Phrenology and self education
June 2	evening	St Pancras Club *	Character and teachings of phrenology
June 9	morning	Midland Arches	Reasons for belief in phrenology
June 23	morning	Midland Arches	Value as well as truth of phrenology
June 30	morning	Midland Arches	Discovery and truth of phrenology
July 3	evening	Cobden Statue	Discovery and truth of phrenology
July 4	evening	Claremont Square	Discovery and truth of phrenology
July 6	evening	Hampstead Road	Discovery and truth of phrenology
July 7	morning	Midland Arches	Man's nature and empire
July 7	evening	Regent's Park	Man's nature and empire

July 14	morning	Midland Arches	Phrenology and perfection of character
July 14	evening	Regent's Park	Discovery of phrenology
July 21	morning	Midland Arches	Teachings of phrenology
July 21	evening	Park Street	Teachings of phrenology
July 28	morning	Midland Arches	The Science of Character
July 28	evening	Park Street	Phrenology and Self culture
July 31	evening	Claremont Square	Character and teachings of phrenology
August 18	morning	Midland Arches	Phrenology and its moral influence
August 18	evening	Park Street	Phrenology and its moral influence

\*St Pancras Club, an indoor venue

## **APPENDIX B: Phrenological Organs**

The Faculties to which Slater refers are described by Samuel Wells (after O.S.Fowler) in his list of Phrenological Organs ([www.bc.edu/bc\\_org/avp/cas/fnart/phrenology/organs.html](http://www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/cas/fnart/phrenology/organs.html)) as follows:

### **Domestic Propensities**

*Amativeness*: Conubial love; attachment of the sexes

*Philoprogenitiveness*: Parental love

### **Selfish Propensities**

*Combativeness*: Self-defense; love for discussion; the energetic go-ahead disposition

*Destructiveness*: Executiveness; propelling power; the exterminating feeling

*Acquisitiveness*: Economy; the disposition to save and accumulate property

*Cautiousness*: Prudence; carefulness; watchfulness; solicitude

### **Aspiring and Governing Organs**

*Self-Esteem*: Dignity, manliness; love of liberty; aspiring and commanding disposition

*Firmness*: Decision; stability; perseverance; fortitude; unwillingness to yield

### **Moral Sentiments**

*Conscientiousness*: Justice; integrity; sense of right and duty

*Hope*: Sense of immortality; expectation

*Spirituality*: Intuition; perception of the spiritual; the prophetic cast of mind

*Benevolence*: Kindness; sympathy; desire to good; philanthropy

### **Perfective Faculties**

*Ideality*: Love of the perfect and beautiful in nature and art; refinement; ecstasy

*Mirthfulness*: Wit; fun; playfulness; humour

### **Perceptive Faculties**

*Individuality*: The desire to see; ability to acquire knowledge by observation

*Form*: Memory of shapes, forms, faces, the configuration of things

*Size*: Ability to judge of size, length, breadth, height, depth, distance etc.

*Order*: Method; system; arrangement; neatness and convenience

### **Literary Faculties**

*Tune*: Love of music, and perception of harmony; power to compose music

### **Reasoning Faculties**

*Causality*: Ability to reason and comprehend first principles

## **APPENDIX C: Slater and the International Headquarters Music Board**

The brunt of Slater's wrath was frequently the International Headquarters Music Board, which had been brought into being in 1896, as a controlling body to administer

and control musical output. This had been formed by William Booth, as a response to his outrage at hearing a band playing at a big event what he deemed to be unsuitable music, including 'Rule Britannia' (Boon, 1985).

However a breakthrough was made on September 4<sup>th</sup> 1901, when the Music Board, presumably at Slater's instigation submitted a memorandum to William Booth requesting certain changes in music publication policy (Holz, 2006). Booth, somewhat surprisingly, agreed that band music might be allowed to have original material for which no words had been composed or intended. Slater and his departmental colleagues were to provide models of such work. The Army's hierarchy was nervous. Commissioner Howard \* who had put the case 'feared he had put the advanced view in so good a light as to have led the General to have taken so much of what the musical department had been contending for, as to have gone beyond what the Commissioner thought to be prudent' (15 September, 1901). Commissioner Coombs\*\* dwelt upon the dangers of educational advance in the Army, and the regrettable movement in the Army in the direction of entertainment' (30 October, 1901). Slater subsequently published pieces that included introductions, episodes and links.

However, by 1904, the year of an International Congress in London, the Board felt that progress had gone too far in the line of advanced music: introductions and episodes were not wanted, only links were required to bring about changes of key, and to join up pieces in different styles (13 January, 1904). Slater was ordered to cut out such extraneous material in his works such as introductions, episodes and finales, and to return to the old style of Army music. He was frustrated:

The Board is evidently against the advance of Army band music, and yet it gives no principles to guide our labour, and is without a policy, but merely clings to the past plans in fear of venturing beyond beaten tracks (30 March, 1904).

A crisis occurred in 1908 when William Booth attended a band festival at the Crystal Palace, and was furious at the choice of music, none of which was less than twelve months old, and some of it, was described as 'long, difficult, taxing...a little too much for some listeners' (Boon 1985, p. 34). Again, Slater was told to return to a simpler musical style, with more of them having a clear straightforward melody. Episodes and finales would have to be cut.

All this made Slater fearful:

Efforts may be made to get rid of me, so to free the Army from a supposed so-subtle foe. Or I may be so placed as sent on foreign service...The General is narrow on music and some other things, is cruel...he acts on personal moods, whims, uncontrolled desires, and not on all round and soundly reasoned principles (30 March, 1908).

\* T.Henry Howard, succeeded Bramwell Booth as Chief of the Staff (the Army's second-in-command) (Boon, 1985)

\*\* Thomas Coombs was British Commissioner (the leader of the Army in the UK)

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