

# Music composed for NH's grand hotels revived

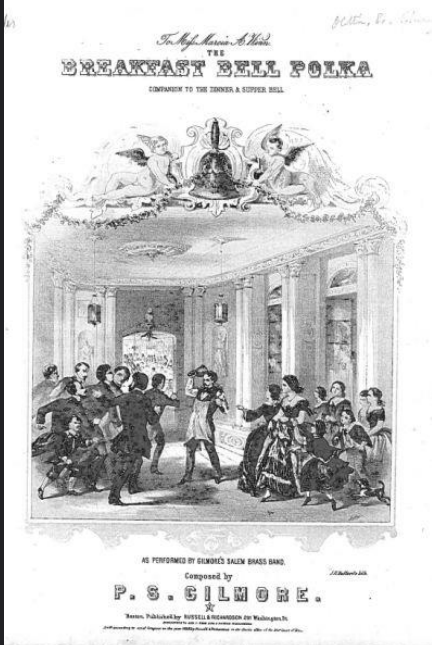
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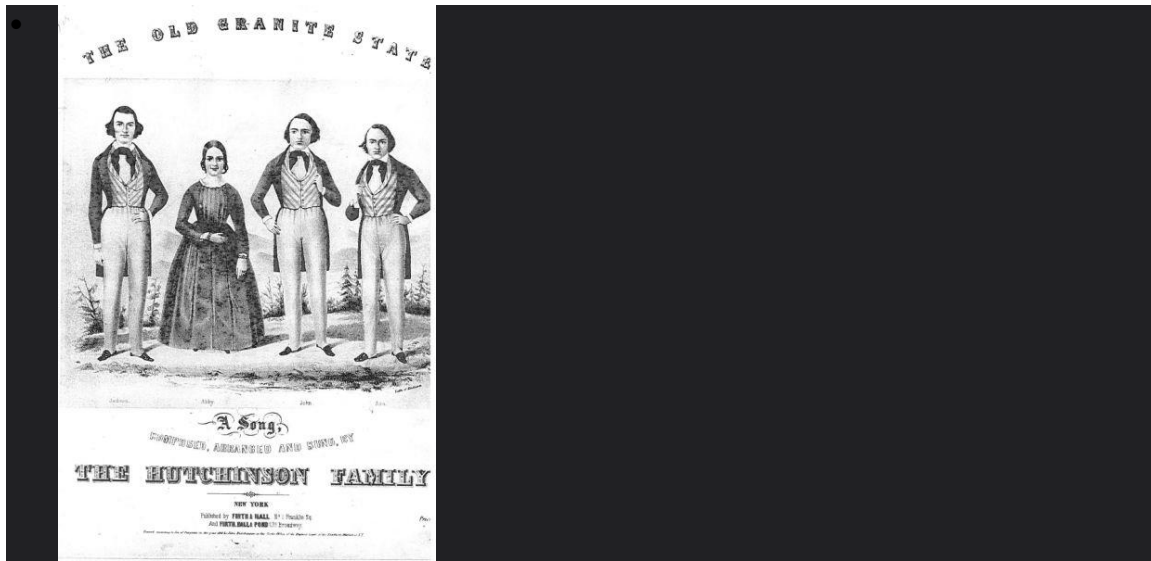
HOLLY RAMER

Associated Press June 17, 2013



Mt. Kearsarge House, N. Conway, N. H.





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**In this undated handout photo provided by Rick Russack of White Mountain History a band poses for a photo at the Mt. Kearsarge House in North Conway, N.H. More than a century after orchestras at New Hampshire's grand hotels played music composed especially for them, Plymouth State University is bringing back some of the long-lost tunes. (AP Photo)**

In this undated handout photo provided by Rick Russack of White Mountain History a band poses for a photo at the Mt. Kearsarge House in North Conway, N.H. More than a century after orchestras at New Hampshire's grand hotels played music composed especially for them, Plymouth State University is bringing back some of the long-lost tunes. (AP Photo)

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PLYMOUTH, N.H. (AP) — More than a century after guests at the Crawford House awoke to the "Breakfast Bell Polka," Plymouth State University is reviving some of the long-lost music composed specifically to entertain guests at New Hampshire's grand hotels and keep them coming back for more.

The resorts that drew thousands of wealthy summer tourists from Boston and other cities in the late 1800s were feasts for the senses: The Profile House menu featured scalloped oysters and "saute of giblets," while the Flume House invited guests to inhale cool mountain breezes "loaded with the perfumes of the forest and wild flowers." And music was everywhere, said Catherine Amidon, director of the Museum of the White Mountains at Plymouth State.

Songs were composed for the hotels' in-house bands and orchestras, and guests were sent home with sheet music souvenirs. The hope was that hearing the music during the off-season— and looking at the scenic prints and paintings many tourists also took home — would inspire guests to plan return trips, Amidon said.

"A lot of those compositions were lost but what has survived has been piano solos because they rewrote the music for people to play at home in the winter on their home pianos," she said. "It was part of the whole explosion of tourism."

At Amidon's request, Plymouth State music professor Mark Stickney spent months researching the music and creating new arrangements for the songs, some of which were performed Wednesday in Boston, likely for the first time in decades. Stickney, who has worked on a similar project involving the music of Newport, R.I., delved into the Library of Congress and other repositories of public domain music to track down songs like the "Glen House Galop" and the "Mount Washington March." He studied old photographs of the hotels, then used high-tech computer software to create new arrangements.

Of the roughly 20 pieces he turned up, Stickney said, he's partial to the three meal-time polkas composed for the Crawford House, because the composer, Patrick Gilmore, was prominent at the time and the music is simply fun. That was evident, he said, when the piano and clarinet duets he arranged based on the music were performed last week at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts.

"The genuine glee on these people's faces was unreal," he said. "It was kind of surprising, in a good way."

Clarinetist Matthew Marsit said he appreciated the opportunity to play styles of music such as polkas and waltzes that have faded away.

"It was obvious they were crafted originally with someone with skill writing for instruments," he said. "They brought forward a little bit of playful challenge, and Mark just set them beautifully. It really allowed for a lot of musical conversation between me and (Constance Chesebrough) on piano."

Marsit and Chesebrough performed before and after a panel discussion about the grand hotels, against the backdrop of an "Art of the White Mountains" exhibit at the Boston museum. And while the focus was on the past, Amidon said, the goal also was to get audience members thinking about their future travel.

"People now don't necessarily plan a year in advance, but here it is June. Hopefully this is a good time for people to think about coming up," she said.