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Cover Page Footnote

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Sonic Congregating

The Hymn as National British Spectacle

Erin Johnson-Williams

Hymn singing as an expression of national identity pervades mass sporting events in Britain. From the use of “Abide with Me” at the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympic Games (and, annually, at the opening of the Football Association (FA) Cup Final and the Rugby League Challenge Cup Final), to recent discussions by the England Rugby Football Union (RFU)¹ about banning “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement, hymns sung at British sporting events strategically frame quasi-religious notions of class, character, and nation.

Singing hymns—which I define here as any song with a Christian text that the *community of singers perceives to be* “a hymn”²—in secular public spaces in Britain has its roots in the nineteenth century, when the rise of mass choral movements intersected with the growth of new, commercialized forms of public entertainment, including sport. Academic studies of hymn singing have, however, largely focused on more narrow definitions of “congregational” music and, as such, the ongoing use of Victorian hymns as a form of nationalist expression in secular Britain is ripe for exploration. While there is growing interest in the intersections between sport and music, a consideration of the sport hymn as a distinct form of what I call here “sonic congregating”—where a quasi-spiritual “congregation” is formed through mass singing in an otherwise secular environment—remains to be explored. Drawing on definitions of “the congregation” in congregational

music studies, Victorian constructions of social control that underpinned mass hymn singing in the late nineteenth century, and contemporary British media reports about hymns and the Black Lives Matter movement more recently, I suggest that the current moment provides a crucial opportunity to consider the hymn’s power to reinforce overlapping associations of national identity and belonging in the otherwise secular world of professional sport.

I focus largely on the British context because of the virtually unbroken tradition of sonic congregating around hymns in public spaces from the nineteenth century until today. The implications for hymn singing at commercialized sporting events around the world are, of course, vast, particularly in nations that are former British colonies. I suggest that acts of ritualized public hymn singing, particularly the highly celebrated patriotism associated with a Victorian hymn like “Abide with Me”—which, as I explore below, has long carried connotations of monarchism and British militarism—have become sites where massed hymn singing creates a sonic fantasy of a *more religious and unified time past*, rather than a *secular and (dis)unified present*.³ In the context of Brexit and Black Lives Matter, such nostalgic associations are also caught up within racialized ascriptions to a time in Britain’s history when massed gatherings were less racially diverse, more people went to church, hymns were a part of every child’s state education, and the empire was at its height. These fantasies are complicated, of course,

by the many conflicting meanings that imperialism held and still holds for British sporting fans past and present, particularly when considering the intersectionality of race and class as expressed through “respectable” crowd behavior.⁴

I propose the framework of sonic congregating for understanding ritualized hymn singing outside of the church. Sonic congregating is also in dialogue with (or, perhaps, a musical counterpart of) the notion of a “civic religion” for an increasingly secular country that, nevertheless, still has a monarch as the “Supreme Governor” of the Church of England.⁵ Dave Russell has helpfully explored the idea of sport hymns as a mode of civic religion, arguing that since the 1920s, the annual singing of “Abide with Me” at the FA Cup Final has become “one of the most notable expressions of religious sentiment in an increasingly secular society and one that bathed football [soccer] in a highly respectable glow.”⁶ Likewise, I suggest that sonic congregating at large national sporting events can indeed foster quasi-religious experiences that are distinct from the singing of other (often more spontaneous, and physically embodied) genres, such as chants and popular anthems (through which singers will gesticulate, jump, yell, clap, and cheer, which they do far less when coming to a relative mutual calm for singing “hymns”).⁷ Sonic congregating therefore privileges a quasi-sacred idea of Britain’s past through hymn singing, while implying that belonging to a community of secular singers is “open.” And yet, due to the highly ritualized way in which hymns are encoded as a way to lend social respectability and gravitas to high-profile matches (in particular, rugby and football/soccer),⁸ hymns can also be alienating for

those fans who fall outside of the national or religious traditions that are reflected. Sonic congregating, therefore, risks “sounding” – and reinforcing – potentially harmful, racialized constructions of the Victorian hymn as being tied to an imperial past, as well as creating, for many of its singers, a comforting, often emotional and quasi-spiritual opportunity to belong to an “imagined community” of united Britons.⁹

Decolonizing and Recolonizing the British Hymn

The disruptive potential of massed singing has a long history of raising anxieties about secular crowd control. The gradual “silencing” of the concert audience in the nineteenth century was, for example, one way to regulate the behavior of musical gatherings along the lines of class, respectability, and gender.¹⁰ Within liturgical circles, the rise of congregational singing in nineteenth-century Britain, and the correlated growth of massed choral singing movements,¹¹ placed the hymn within a largely institutionalized framework of socially acceptable public singing where it was framed by the Church of England as an accessible genre that was majestic and appropriate for the highest social classes, while also being suitable for “untrained” voices. Singing Victorian hymns – which, as every British subject was made well aware in public education discourses by the end of the nineteenth century, were also sung by the royal family¹² – was therefore a means of controlling crowds through a simple, disciplining genre of repetitive, stately melodies that also indelibly bore connotations of “respectable” class behavior and monarchism (associations that still persist in the body language of British and Commonwealth citizens, not only in

the UK but around the world, solemnly “rising” to sing hymns en masse, whether at sporting events, royal funerals, or in comedy sketches).¹³ Hymnic nostalgia is furthermore nurtured around the utopian notion, as the history of Victorian hymns by Ian Bradley implies, that there would have been a time in British history when virtually “everyone” would have known all the standard hymns and could have joined in (a fantasy that perhaps attempts to override religious, regional, and racial differences).¹⁴ Effectively, a strong case can be made that the disciplining of the (singular and corporate) body associated with British hymns—particularly those understood to be “British” rather than “Welsh,” “Scottish,” or “Irish”—reinforces many of the same class-based hierarchies that are explored in Anna Bull’s sociological study *Class, Control and Classical Music*, which exposes how musical practice in Britain is still indelibly linked to Victorian notions of social class.¹⁵ Despite—or, indeed, perhaps because of—the fact that “British” singing at sporting events has long been marketed as a way to celebrate national unity, I suggest that sport hymn singing profoundly struggles to reflect a Britain that really includes everyone, because a top-down projection of “hymnic respectability” only reinforces hierarchies and inequalities.

It is here where the musical features of the Victorian hymn play a particularly interesting role in terms of broader conversations about sport, nationalism, and British “character.” Amid fears that other categories of crowd noise—such as jeering, taunting, booing, chanting, and drowning out rival fans by singing club anthems as loudly as possible—might cause disruption and contribute to “hooligan” behavior,¹⁶ a hymn like “Abide with Me”

is often programmed at the start of large football and rugby league events, where, alongside the national anthem (which is also a hymn),¹⁷ such acts of programming may be read as a way to encourage the “proper” musical respectability (and, indeed the sanctification) of the audience away from disruptive conduct. In the context of calls for “silencing” English football fans for singing (secular) songs too disruptively,¹⁸ it is noteworthy that the genre of the hymn has largely retained an aura of respectability, reverence, and patriotism. The fact that, in large events like the FA Cup Final, members of the British royal family stand to sing the hymn over any other genre of music also furthers the association of “Abide with Me” with class-based notions of musical respectability. Numerous videos of sport-match singing, for example, show a dramatic change in body language between fans who jump and sway raucously when they sing popular football chants, versus the crowd standing in reverent, composed unity for the deliberate, measured, and repetitive tones of a hymn.¹⁹ Aesthetically, the (no-frills) Victorian hymn with largely stepwise melodies and “lots of notes of equal value” has likewise been framed by musicologist Derek Scott as part of racialized histories of English music, heavily associated with nationalist characteristics like honesty, chivalry, and patriotism.²⁰ The soundscape of “Abide with Me”—with its solemn, stately melody that is easy to sing (based on largely stepwise, simple intervals that tend to connote solemnity rather than the popular “chanting/yelling” of raucous football chants) also debatably operates in these contexts as a way to coerce the crowd into a kind of “respectable, British” conformity.

Where massed hymn singing complicates these quasi-religious modes of respectability

is often along the lines of race and class, particularly when hymns are not programmed but sung spontaneously by the crowd. A significant distinction to make about notions of “British” nationalism writ large (which, I suggest, is indelibly linked to notions of [neo]imperialism) is that in the context of Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, hymn singing often becomes more about local identity than British nationhood.²¹ In contrast to English-language hymns like “Abide with Me” and “Jerusalem,”²² for example, popular Welsh sport hymns like “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah” (often known colloquially as “Bread of Heaven”) and “Calon Lân” resist a narrative of British (neo)imperial unity by representing local Welsh pride and even anti-English sentiment, permeating not only rugby union and football matches but even pre-game hymn-singing flash mobs on city streets and in train stations (clips of which are now popular on YouTube). The description below one video even describes a hymn flash mob in Cardiff as an attempt to “counteract the whispers of ‘Swing Low’ finding their way around the Welsh Capital” (“Swing Low” being widely understood to refer to the “England rugby union team”).²³ The Welsh hymn flash mob videos accordingly toe the line between celebrating nostalgia for an old musical tradition and alienating the opposition.

In the wake of Black Lives Matter, conversations quickly buzzed around issues of “belonging” and decolonizing the singing of the spiritual (usually described, however, by its rugby singers as an “anthem” or a “hymn”)²⁴ “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” at rugby union matches, with an article in the *Guardian* in May 2020 bearing the headline that England player “Maro Itoje will no longer sing England anthem Swing

Low, Sweet Chariot.”²⁵ At the time, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” which had been a staple of spontaneous crowd singing at English rugby matches since 1987, was a “subject of review by the Rugby Football Union [RFU].”²⁶ While the RFU eventually decided not to ban it, they “produced a video explaining its historical context and withdrew its use from marketing and merchandising.”²⁷ Itoje, born in London to Nigerian parents, declared at the time that he would choose to stop singing the hymn because both its cultural appropriation by English rugby fans and its links to the slave trade made him feel uncomfortable.²⁸ A few months later, the *Guardian* followed up with another article specifying that “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” would not be officially banned, although its lyrics would no longer be displayed in the stadium: “Surveying 4,400 members of the rugby community, the RFU found that 74% of people, rising to 84% of those from a BAME [Black and Minority Ethnic] background, believed supporters needed to be educated about the history of Swing Low. It also found that 69% of people asked did not think the song should be banned.”²⁹

A *BBC News* article in June 2020 likewise asked: “Why is Swing Low, Sweet Chariot the England Rugby Song?,” revealing that archival footage had traced the hymn to 1987, when Black British player Martin “Chariots” Offiah was in his prime.³⁰ It appears that crowds spontaneously started singing “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” in support of Offiah, nicknamed “Chariots” because the name “Offiah” sounded like “of-fire” (in reference to the 1981 film *Chariots of Fire*).³¹ The BBC website still links to a video of the 1987 match where the hymn is spontaneously sung while Offiah is playing.³² The elephant in the

room in all of these reports, however, is the uncomfortable origin story of an almost entirely white crowd singing an African American hymn associated with slavery “at” a Black rugby player. While the pun on his last name might be framed affectionately, singing “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” at all risks sonically alienating Offiah as being associated with the racial violence done to African Americans (as sung/narrated by white British singers), and placing him in a different cultural category than the context of London that he was born into.

The swift adoption of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” by English rugby union fans after 1987 was so widespread that most singers forgot the connection to Offiah. This caused a lot of questions to be raised about “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” in the wake of conversations around Black Lives Matter and decolonization. Examples like the 2012 Twickenham match, where the English fans raucously sang “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” to drown out (and throw taunts at) the New Zealand team’s *haka* – a ceremonial ritual in Māori culture – are a reminder that the hymn can all too quickly collapse into a form of neocolonial provocation.³³ According to the RFU’s data cited above, that 31 percent of surveyed members of the rugby community *did* think that the hymn should be banned suggests that there was long history of ethnic minority fans being uncomfortable about the idea of culturally reappropriating a hymn. But even though singing “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” has declined in Britain since 2020, it has not disappeared from rugby culture. The “ownership,” therefore, of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” by English rugby union fans contributes to a framework of recolonization (making the hymn a part of British culture again) rather than decolonization (repatriating to the former

colonies what has been stolen by imperial cultures).³⁴ If, as Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang famously proposed over a decade ago in their landmark article “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor” – that decolonial work is often challenging within the institutional structures of colonialism³⁵ – then by extension, the decision not to ban “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” in the wake of Black Lives Matter has recolonized a hymn of African American slavery as a reinforcement of (largely white) British rugby union identity. It was, after all, understood by British rugby fans to be a *hymn*: and for a long time in British culture, hymns were the unassailable domain of sacred reverence that offered even the secular congregation a sense of belonging and unity.

Sonic Congregating: A Long View

The annual FA Cup Final is one of the most anticipated events in the British sporting year, with up to 100,000 people – including prominent members of the royal family – attending.³⁶ There is a program of pre-match rituals, all of which build up to the poignant massed singing of “Abide with Me” immediately prior to the national anthem and the start of the game. The same hymn has also been sung as the opening hymn for the Rugby League Challenge Cup Final every year since 1929, where it is often referred to as “the Challenge Cup final hymn.”³⁷ By bringing together “the nation,” “Abide with Me” therefore functions as a song, *understood as a hymn*, that belongs to “all” English and Welsh football and rugby league fans, allegedly bringing rivals together in advance of the competition to come. There is usually a soloist to lead the crowd, often accompanied by a brass band. A tradition rose in the early 2000s at the FA Cup Final that the soloist would be backed

by a choir of 64 singers – consisting of one fan from each of the 64 clubs featured in the third round of that year’s competition.³⁸ Tens of thousands of fans in the stands then rise to sing along, often waving flags. As can be seen in a YouTube video of “Abide with Me” at the 2015 FA Cup opening, the professional soloist, Alfie Boe, becomes almost secondary to the massed singing, performing an operatic descant on top of the main melody while the choir of football fans and the crowd carry the hymn itself.³⁹ People in the choir and the crowd are visibly moved, even to tears; the camera zooms in on fans who clearly know the words by heart. At the close of the hymn, the crowd erupts into applause and cheering. For a moment, a “sonic congregation” is formed.

I propose the idea of sonic congregating in order to play on the notion of “the congregation,” from where most hymnic traditions originated, as well as to suggest that congregating can, and indeed does, happen outside of the walls of the official church. I hold that formations of sonic “congregations” in secular contexts are *particularly* potent and powerful as a socio-musical force in British society because – on the surface at least – singers are willingly choosing to participate in hymn singing regardless of any religious affiliation. The question then becomes: why sing the hymn? The answers to this question are tied, within Britain, to a long history of using the hymn as a way to discipline working-class massed crowds to a level of respectable physical discipline that has often been associated with the social elite: restrained bodies; reverent attention; musical melodies that are slow and accessible, yet not considered “popular” like the chants that many sports fans otherwise sing.⁴⁰ I am heavily indebted here to Monique M. Ingalls’s concept of

musical “modes of congregating,” a term that she uses to describe how music works in the “active creation of various evangelical social formations that have gathered for the express purpose of worship,” which can include worship conferences, music festivals, and social media.⁴¹ Ingalls’s modes of congregating is in dialogue with Mirella Klomp and Marcel Barnard’s idea of “sacro-soundscapes,” which describe “fluid Christian ritual-musical practices in late-modern culture,” and the “sonic aspects of religions.”⁴² The latter also corresponds to the theorization of “religioscapes” (the subjective maps of diasporic communities in flux) by Elizabeth McAlister, and “sacrosapes” by Thomas A. Tweed, which he developed from the initial work on “-scapes” in the 1990s by anthropologist Arjun Appadurai.⁴³

The relative reticence of either music or sport studies to examine the hymn as a source of social power has perhaps also reinforced the infantilization of the hymn as a musical genre.⁴⁴ More recent studies of the movements of hymns outside of congregational settings, however, have emphasized the power of community singing in settings where the shared knowledge of a hymn can offer singers a unique, nostalgic sense of belonging: politically, racially, *and* quasi-religiously.⁴⁵ I depart from and expand on Ingalls’s notion of modes of congregating by looking *beyond* contexts where singers sing for the “express purpose of worship.”⁴⁶ At British football and rugby league matches, a hymn like “Abide with Me” is understood “as a hymn,” but the singers are not gathered there in the first instance for a religious purpose. To that end, Klomp and Barnard’s formulation of a “sacro-soundscape” that invites “openness toward ‘extra-ecclesial’

musical practices” is highly useful for considering the persistence of music from sacred spheres—particularly through the inscription of new, secular rituals.⁴⁷ While the musicological category of the “soundscape” has received substantial attention,⁴⁸ the uptake of soundscapes to religious studies has been somewhat more recent, and is primarily associated with contexts of organized worship.⁴⁹ The study of the hymn-as-musical-object, moreover, has traditionally fallen to the domain of hymnology, congregational music studies, or musicologists who have examined hymns in relation to church use, and it has often retained associations of conservatism or a “dying” repertoire in light of increasing turns to contemporary “worship” music.⁵⁰ I am therefore interested in how the theological “sacroscape” as explored in tandem by Klomp, Barnard, McAlister, and Tweed can work alongside Ingalls’s modes of congregating to locate quasi-sacred sonic meeting places outside of the church. In the British context, this primarily happens through the hymn in two locations: school hymn singing, which is demonstrably declining, and sport hymn singing, which is not.⁵¹ Hymn singing at British football, rugby, and cricket matches, moreover, constitutes some of the largest singing crowds in the world, with tens of thousands of participants singing together, not to mention many viewers singing along to television sets in their pubs and living rooms.⁵²

Relevant here is Klomp and Barnard’s challenge that “if practical theologians want to study religion and new quests for God in a society ‘after God,’ maximum openness is required concerning the practices they choose as their objects of study.”⁵³ I take a slightly different view: that the singing of

hymns as a form of national British spectacle at massed sporting events is not so much “after God,” but rather *alongside* a desire for (re)creating a spectacle of nostalgic unity that leaves room for the quasi-spiritual within a national framework. The ritualized programming of “Abide with Me” is often so powerful that it freezes everything else in time and space: in a video of the opening of the 1990 FA Cup Final, for example, well-known presenter Des Lynam abruptly interrupts a conversation by saying, “Got to stop you there, because it’s hymn singing time.”⁵⁴ In this instance, the hymn effectively silences the pundits, who do not dare speak during the quasi-spiritual moment of sonic congregating.

Conversely, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” is a form of sonic congregating that is far less ritualized than “Abide with Me” or “Jerusalem,” which in one sense made it easier to consider banning. “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” in the British context, also carries fewer connotations of “the nation” in its text and social use, and there is thus perhaps less of a sense of loss surrounding it. By contrast, “Jerusalem” – C. Hubert H. Parry’s famous 1916 setting of the poem by William Blake, which is often described as “England’s [unofficial] national anthem”⁵⁵ – is indelibly associated with cricket matches, but these carry far more associations of upper-class “respectable” crowd behavior and calming soundscapes, rendering the hymn virtually untouchable, if potentially acrimonious. Anthony Bateman, for example, has equated the singing of “Jerusalem” at cricket matches to a fantasy that “clearly English cricket’s pastoralism still lives on.”⁵⁶ It is noteworthy, in this vein, that “Jerusalem” is sung, and, indeed, even programmed at the opening of, rugby *union* matches,⁵⁷ which carry cultural

connotations of middle- and upper-class fans; but it is not sung at the more working-class rugby *league* games, where “Abide with Me” (the hymn for “all”) is customary. To that end, “Jerusalem” carries connotations of potential class divisions that “Abide with Me” does not, particularly for working-class rugby league followers. As British journalist Paul Mason tweeted, “Abide with Me is [the] Rugby League anthem. Generations of miners cry as they hear it.”⁵⁸ Unlike “Jerusalem” or “Swing Low,” “Abide with Me” aspires to appeal to “everyone” in Britain, whether a working-class miner or a member of the monarchy.

By contrast, Mark Falcoux notes that “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” has been more divisive around definitions of loyalty to local region versus nation:

The 2003 victory of the English men’s rugby *union* team in the World Cup final in Sydney, Australia, occurred during the early hours of an English morning. Later that very same day in Huddersfield in the north of the country, the national rugby *league* team similarly lined up to face Australia in a test match. As the kick off approached, a small section of the crowd began to sing ‘Swing low sweet chariot’, a song synonymous with the rugby union team, in response to the victory on the other side of the world earlier that morning. The faint strains of the song, however, were quickly booed by a larger section of the crowd, and it was not heard again at the game, thus demonstrating that England’s rugby victories may be neither shared nor celebrated by all in the nation, but instead exist within uniquely nuanced contexts.⁵⁹

What the above quote also reflects is the fact that the working-class, northern English rugby *league* fans would have seen the imposition of a hymn associated with the

more upper-class rugby *union* culture in their own region as an invasion of their territory, and an effective silencing of their working-class identities, more than as an invitation to celebrate international victories.

The risks of a hymn getting booed down, of course, are higher when the hymn is sung spontaneously rather than programmed as part of a highly ritualized annual event. There is a reason why “Abide with Me” is so popular in Britain that it can be found on albums like *England, My England*, released by the Choir of King’s College, Cambridge, as well as recorded by Elton John on the *Carnival: Rainforest Foundation Concert* album (1997).⁶⁰ And, of course, Emeli Sandé sang it emotively at the opening of the 2012 London Olympics. The hymn’s social placement provides a sense of continuity with an imagined time past when the nation was less secularized, without placing an evangelical burden on its singers to buy into organized religion itself. As Russell notes, the presence of brass band music and hymns at football matches from the 1920s onward endowed the FA Cup Final “with an ‘Englishness’ that married military spectacle, a disciplined urban levity and powerful popular religiosity.”⁶¹ While some scholars emphasize that hymn singing at British sporting events is “strange” or even “inappropriate as [a] symbolic cultural representation,”⁶² I suggest that the framework of the sonic congregation offers an explanation for the unique appeal of “congregating” *around* a hymn that does not necessarily involve ascribing to religious practice itself, but which carries with it subliminal social ideologies around belonging and cultural unity. While the idea of sonic congregating could relate equally to other forms of debatably secular hymn singing such as school singing or the

rising popularity of more grassroots shape-note (Sacred Harp) gatherings,⁶³ the vast scale of internationally televised singing in British sport takes a hymn like “Abide with Me” (and its attendant projections of British culture) to global audiences, while projecting an image of national unity, past and present.

The second part of my subtitle for this section—“a long view”—promised that I would consider the historical roots of sonic congregating, partly because the nostalgia that fuels sport hymns is firmly rooted in the notion that these hymns have been embedded within British culture for generations. The roots of sonic congregating in Britain go back to the mass singing movements of the nineteenth century, and are inextricable from the concurrent rise of modernization and secularization since the Industrial Revolution.⁶⁴ This temporal distancing is important for understanding the layers of nostalgia that build up around hymns like “Abide with Me,” and it can also work to *excuse* contemporary singers from engaging with discussions about what nationalist musical rituals mean in a postcolonial context.

The nineteenth century was the prime era for early instances of sonic congregating. Victorian hymn singing outside of the church was largely understood to complement and even enrich sacred singing, as well as reinforcing, through sport, ideas around the national benefits of community singing and physical fitness.⁶⁵ The rise of singing competitions also helped to increase the popularity of certain hymns across multiple denominations, thereby uniting the nation in terms of a sense of shared sung sacred texts.⁶⁶ As Charles McGuire, among others, explores, the mass singing movement in the Victorian era saw the spread of sacred hymnody

reach far beyond the confines of churches in Britain, and out into the international mission field, where hymns were often sung outside of worship services.⁶⁷ The rise of arguably populist notation systems such as tonic sol-fa, moreover, saw the increased amalgamation of sacred and secular singing genres, where militarism, imperialism, and the secularization of hymnody went hand in hand.⁶⁸ The Victorian singing movement was also indelibly linked to constructions of nationalism (the greatness of the nation as evidenced by larger and larger crowds singing relatively “accessible” music), social class (the singers of these hymns often being linked to the working classes and to colonial converts, thus rendering “the singing crowd” to be part of a national/imperial machinery), and race (the rise of the Victorian singing movement being concurrent with British imperial expansion, and constructions of British progress through sport and militarism).⁶⁹ At the root of the Victorian singing movement, consequently, was the idea that massed hymn singing outside of the church equalled social good and reflected the robust fitness of the nation, but only as long as the repertoire and its execution were within the bounds of social decorum.

The rise of sonic congregating around a nostalgic British past grew steadily from the interwar period in the early twentieth century. Russell identifies a specific interwar “community singing movement” as a “distinctive feature of English popular musical life in the mid-1920s.”⁷⁰ Tied into a deep nostalgia for those lost in the Great War, the singing movement—which went by the slogan “Set Britain Singing,” first made famous by the Community Singers’ Association in 1925—was linked to educational movements as well as to post-war rehabilitation initiatives that

saw community singing as a significant component of healing the nation.⁷¹ As Russell notes, this movement was typified by songs and hymns that were associated with the Great War, such as “Abide with Me,” with its lyrics about suffering and bravery in the face of death, and its strong associations with the soldiers who died in battle.⁷²

What was distinctive about the interwar singing movement was the swift investment in the public press for printing and disseminating song texts (including hymn texts) in advance of sporting events, so that massed crowds of spectators who had no opportunity to rehearse would be able to sing together. Many newspapers, in particular the *Daily Express*, took credit for the community singing that occurred at football matches from the mid-1920s.⁷³ Russell notes that “football fans had certainly sung before matches in an impromptu fashion since the late nineteenth century, but there is no evidence of *formal* singing having taken place before this time.”⁷⁴ The *Daily Express* was swift to capitalize on the idea that singing at massed sporting events would help to unite the nation: “All classes will join in one song, and singing at will they will find they are united by indissoluble bonds of co-operation and sympathy.”⁷⁵ A fantasy of massed singing in a secular context was therefore endowed with the idea that singing would be a way to unify a nation still healing from the Great War.

“Abide with Me” was ultimately one of the *Daily Express*’s most successful campaigns. A hymn that, from 1861, “rapidly became one of the most popular of all British hymns, associated most closely with funerals and other commemorations of loss,” became from the early twentieth century onward “arguably more closely

associated with community singing than any other single piece of music.”⁷⁶ It would have been very well known by the end of the nineteenth century by most British citizens, and as Jeffery Hill notes, its regular use at funerals only increased its popularity after the Great War.⁷⁷ There is widespread belief that the hymn was included in the program at the 1927 FA Cup Final at Wembley Stadium at the request of King George V and Queen Mary. Despite some evidence that George V simply liked the hymn instead of actually requesting it, Russell suggests that this idea has gone down so deeply in the lore surrounding the hymn that “Abide with Me” is now indelibly associated with the monarchy, and, since 1927, “royal initiation of the [‘Abide with Me’] ritual has been taken for granted.”⁷⁸ As argued by Hill, moreover, since the stadium itself was built as part of the British Empire Exhibition (1924–25), “the Cup Final acquired characteristics more usually associated with state ceremony than with sport. The presence of the monarch, and the presentation to him of the teams, was the principal feature of the Cup Final’s new status.”⁷⁹ From 1927 the BBC also started broadcasting the FA Cup Final, and “Abide with Me,” followed by the national anthem, became an annual tradition, which was televised from 1938 onward.⁸⁰ The 1927 rendition of “Abide with Me” was clearly very moving, with members of the packed crowd removing their hats to stand and sing, coming into a stillness that had not been there for the secular popular songs sung previously. An existing recording reveals a sombre and stately sound of almost entirely male voices raised in harmony.⁸¹

The *Daily Express* swiftly capitalized on this national spectacle, and for many years

published a song sheet with lyrics in advance of the FA Cup Final, so that spectators could arrive with the words (or would have time to memorize them in advance). This tradition also ensured that football fans would be more likely to purchase the *Daily Express*. An example of one of these song sheets from 1932 is provided in Figure 1 (next page), which shows a full-page spread entitled “Cup Final 1923: Community Singing at Wembley Stadium.” The lyrics for ten songs are provided, and “Abide with Me” holds a prime place as the final song. Notably, it is the only hymn: the other songs include popular standards like “Tipperary” (with its military associations) and “Clementine.” The song sheet was effective in simultaneously securing a large readership for the *Daily Express*, and enshrining—indeed, canonizing—a repertoire of popular songs for football crowds to come together: the different clubs from across the country ostensibly united in song for a moment of brief musical unity before the start of the game. Where the genre of the hymn is different is that it is given a privileged place as the final song and, notably, shifts the tone from the jovial and popular to the reverent and sacred.⁸²

I suggest that the move from the popular songs to “Abide with Me” marks the moment when community singing became a sonic congregation. Significantly, the sacralization of the hymn as having such a privileged “place” on the *Daily Express* song sheet is also enmeshed within the commercial network of the newspaper’s marketing strategies. That there is a link between the history of programmed massed hymn singing at the FA Cup Final and the commercial world in which the FA Cup was created is unsurprising: as Ken

McLeod notes with regard to more recent contexts, “both mainstream popular music and professional sports are typically viewed as being driven by commercial gain and so subject to the economic imperatives of capitalist production.”⁸³ What is worth asking, however, is what the *Daily Express* sought to gain by sacralizing its song sheet with such a famous hymn—by then over half a century old—in the first place, and one so deeply associated with King George V. “Abide with Me,” as Hill suggests, struck the perfect tone of reverence and moral uplift that would convince the fans that there was a spiritually meaningful experience to be had in the stands:

‘Abide With Me’ was a popular hymn at funerals. It dealt with the subject of death. Why sing it at a football match? The answer is that it was popular, it was felt that it fitted well into the community singing, and it was an easy tune to follow for an untrained and vast (100,000) audience; above all, it seemed to catch the mood of the times. It related strongly to the feelings of loss among members of the crowd and the listening public, many of whose loved ones would have perished in the Great War that had come to an end only a few years before. It is hardly surprising that the singing of ‘Abide With Me’ was experienced as a deeply moving event, a moment of remembrance that expressed the shared grief of a nation.⁸⁴

In this construction, it was almost inevitable that the ideal musical genre for such secular congregating would be a hymn. For those who still sing the hymn at the new Wembley Stadium almost a century later, it represents perhaps even more potently a continuity with the nation’s past, despite all that has changed.

CUP FINAL 1932

Daily Express

COMMUNITY SINGING at WEMBLEY STADIUM, APRIL 23

1

JOHN BROWN'S BODY

John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring
in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring
in the grave,
John Brown's body lies a-mould'ring
in the grave,
His soul is marching on !

Chorus—
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
Glory! Glory! Hallelujah!
His soul is marching on !

It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e,
It isn't any trouble just to s-m-i-l-e,
So smile when you're in trouble,
It will vanish like a bubble
If you s-m-i-l-e.

Chorus

2

LOCH LOMOND

By you bonnie banks, and by you
bonnie braes,
Where the sun shines bright on
Loch Lomon',
Where me and my true love were
ever wont to gae,
On the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch
Lomon'.

Chorus—
Oh! ye'll tak' the high road and
I'll tak' the low road,
And I'll be in Scotland afore ye,
But me and my true love will never
meet again,
On the bonnie, bonnie banks of Loch
Lomon'.

3

PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES

Pack up your troubles in your old
kit bag
And smile, smile, smile!
While you've a lucifer to light your
lag,
Smile, boys, that's the style.
What's the use of worrying?
It never was worth while,
So, pack up your troubles in your old
kit bag,
And smile, smile, smile!
*(Reproduced by permission of
Messrs. Francis, Day & Hunter, Ltd.)*

4

LOVE'S OLD SWEET SONG

Just a song at twilight, when the lights
are low,
And the flick'ring shadows softly come
and go,
Though the heart be weary, sad the
day and long,
Still to us at twilight comes Love's old
song,
Comes Love's old sweet song.
*(Reproduced by permission of
Messrs. Boosey & Co., Ltd.)*

ARSENAL

v.

NEWCASTLE UNITED

* * *

SINGING CONDUCTED BY

T. P. RATCLIFF

with the Band of H.M. Welsh
Guards under the direction of
Capt. Andrew Harris, L.R.A.M.

By permission of Col. R. E. K. Leatham, D.S.O.

5

COCKLES AND MUSSELS

In Dublin's fair city, where girls are
so pretty,
I first set my eyes on sweet Molly
Malone,
As she wheel'd her wheelbarrow
through streets broad and narrow,
Crying, Cockles and Mussels! alive,
alive oh!

Chorus—
Alive, alive oh! Alive, alive oh!
Crying Cockles and Mussels alive,
alive oh!

She died of a fever, and no one could
save her,
And that was the end of sweet Molly
Malone,
Her ghost wheels her barrow through
streets broad and narrow,
Crying, Cockles and Mussels! alive,
alive oh!

Chorus—
Alive, alive oh! Alive, alive oh!
Crying Cockles and Mussels alive,
alive oh!

6

DAISY BELL

Daisy, Daisy,
Give me your answer do!
I'm half crazy,
All for the love of you!
It won't be a stylish marriage,
I can't afford a carriage,
But you'll look sweet on the seat
Of a bicycle built for two!
*(Reproduced by permission of
Messrs. Francis, Day & Hunter, Ltd.)*

7

MY BONNIE

My Bonnie is over the ocean,
My Bonnie is over the sea,
My Bonnie is over the ocean,
O bring back my Bonnie to me.

Chorus—
Bring back, bring back
Bring back my Bonnie to me, to
me;
Bring back, bring back,
O bring back my Bonnie to me!

8

TIPPERARY

It's a long way to Tipperary,
It's a long way to go;
It's a long way to Tipperary,
To the sweetest girl I know.
Good-bye, Piccadilly,
Farewell, Leicester Square,
It's a long, long way to Tipperary,
But my heart's right there.
*(Reproduced by permission of
Messrs. B. Feldman & Co.)*

9

CLEMENTINE

In a cavern, in a canyon,
Excavating for a mine,
Dwelt a miner, forty niner,
And his daughter Clementine.

Chorus—
Oh my darling, Oh my darling,
Oh my darling Clementine,
Thou art lost and gone for ever,
Dreadful sorry, Clementine.

Drove she ducklings to the water,
Every morning just at nine,
Hit her foot against a splinter,
Fell into the foaming brine.

Chorus

How I missed her, how I missed her,
How I missed my Clementine,
But I kissed her little sister,
And forgot my Clementine.

Chorus

10

ABIDE WITH ME

Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me
abide;
When other helpers fail, and comforts
flee,
Help of the helpless, O abide with me.
Swift to its close ebbs out life's little
day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass
away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O Thou, Who changest not, abide with
me.
Hold Thou Thy Cross before my
closing eyes;
Shine through the gloom, and point me
to the skies.
Heaven's morning breaks, and earth's
vain shadows flee;
In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me.

NOTE: Whichever team you support in to-day's great struggle for the Cup, you will be eagerly interested to compare your impressions with those of the acknowledged experts in football criticism who will sum up the game in the "Daily Express" on Monday. Read the "Daily Express" on Monday and it will convince you—as it has already convinced the great majority of football enthusiasts—that it is far and away the best newspaper for football news.

Figure 1: "Cup Final 1932: Community Singing at Wembley Stadium, April 23." *Daily Express* (April 23, 1932). Getty Images.

“Abide with Me” now also has a global reputation of being associated with British sport.⁸⁵ Russell notes that while there are increasing fears that football is too “commercially driven,” fans are swift to “demonstrate its sense of history and social responsibility” in order to justify programming the hymn (accordingly counteracting criticisms of commercialism).⁸⁶ Although there are certainly worries that modern renditions focus more on the soloist than on the crowd—the most extreme case of this being the entirely solo performance by Emeli Sandé standing alone on the roof of Wembley in 2020 due to Covid restrictions⁸⁷—the hymn continues to endure in a post-Covid world, with emotional videos posted of the masked (for Covid precautions) fans singing along at the 2021 Cup Final.⁸⁸ To that end, I challenge Russell’s claim that “the singing of the hymn has become meaningless for many of those who hear it.”⁸⁹ Rather, perhaps the focus *away* from the ownership of the hymn by the crowd and onto a soloist by television cameras has robbed many sporting fans of the sonic congregating that they were yearning for (or that they do, indeed, experience). Compelling here is Hill’s suggestion that fans often want the hymn “back” from the soloist:

[I]n 2007, at the first Cup Final to be played in the ‘new’ Wembley, the divas Sarah Brightman and Lesley Garrett gave, with the benefit of microphones, a powerful rendition of the old Victorian hymn ‘Abide With Me’. As the television cameras panned the faces of massed spectators, however, the music might have seemed to be evoking a less-than-cherished response. Some people, to be sure, were seen to be singing along. But many were not. They possibly felt (as had the organisers of a supporters’

lobby the previous year) that songs, if they were to be sung at all, should be performed by the assembled crowds themselves, and not by professional musical stars.⁹⁰

A legacy from the singing movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the *ownership* of the hymn in the context of the large British crowd was always traditionally the crowd itself: there had been no soloist in front of King George V in 1927 (this was likely linked to the fact that, at the time, the match was not yet televised, and the “production” of the event did not rely on the spectacle of a solo celebrity).

The issue of fans taking “ownership” of the hymn brings us back to the issue of musical respectability and crowd control. There is a long legacy in English sport, and in football in particular, of what Back, Crabbe, and Solomos have termed the “racist-hooligan couplet,” where disorderly crowd behavior and singing out noisy, racist slogans go hand in hand.⁹¹ Moreover, this “racist-hooligan” model is ultimately racialized, since English, and Scottish, Welsh, and Irish fans—communities that *do* have their own sung traditions that shape their sporting identities—often try to disassociate themselves from “English” singing.⁹² The category of the hooligan is therefore the opposite of sonic unification. Within discourses of “hooligan singing,” the hymn has long emerged as a disciplining mode. For example, the rise of hooliganism in English football is indelibly associated with a decline, from the 1970s, of a willingness to participate in sport hymn singing, which was linked to fans protesting the ways that individual clubs were treated “as hooligans” by the media. As noted by Roger Penn and Damon Berridge, “during the 1970s, crowds at

Wembley became increasingly reluctant to sing either the hymn *Abide with Me* or the national anthem. Often they would drown these out with their own songs such as ‘You’ll Never Walk Alone’ when Liverpool were one of the finalists.”⁹³ A turning point, Penn and Berridge argue, was the 1982 Falklands War, which “initiated a remilitarization of the Cup Final and a recalibration of its ideological traditions,” which has only “intensified since the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan and has been paralleled at other major footballing events such as the Play Offs at Wembley that complete the season in England.”⁹⁴

In this framework of renewed patriotism, more subliminal forms of nationalist racism are deemed appropriate, *if* expressed through the social uplift of a hymn, rather than a more openly racist “hooligan” chant with explicit neo-Nazi themes.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, recent structural interventions into football singing have notably drawn on the technologies of space to mediate *unwarranted* singing that does not carry the respectability of sonically congregating around a hymn. For example, in the 1990s, Arsenal fans “pressured the club to attempt a ‘singing area’ where fans would be less severely policed in an attempt to recreate some kind of atmosphere at Highbury.”⁹⁶ Further north, when the new West Stand was built at Manchester United, a 15,000-person standing section that had previously been nicknamed a “singing” area was replaced with more executive seats. The fan magazine *United We Stand* ran a mocking article entitled “The End of the Stretford? No, Just the Singing.”⁹⁷ The fans—who usually stood to sing anyway—felt that they had effectively been told to sit down and be quiet.

In this vein, when fans have felt silenced in their singing, it is often in tandem with a silencing of working-class behavior rather than singing itself—a silencing of the “wrong kind” of songs, which were usually associated with secular disorderly violence. The singing that *is* still encouraged, and indeed officially programmed by powerful institutions like the Football Association, is in an unbroken tradition where the Victorian hymn works as an expression of national respectability and social discipline. This lineage has been so accepted, reified, and taken for granted that it has become what Penn and Berridge describe as a form of “invisible nationalism.”⁹⁸ The hymn in massed British sporting events today still works, in part, as it did in the early twentieth century, when it was advertised by the *Daily Express*: it fosters (one could almost say, sponsors) an imagined community of the ideal fan—respectable, reverent, loyal, and patriotic. Through this imagined community, the ideal hymn-singing fan not only behaves in an orderly fashion, but also ascribes to a long association between hymn singing, decency, and a nostalgic, wholly affirmative fiction of British nationalism itself.

Coda: Abiding Away, 2022

For all the assurances of continuity that it appears to offer, “Abide with Me” has widely different resonances in global contexts. For many in Britain, it is the sound of nostalgia for a once-great empire, and for fallen heroes in a series of tragic wars. It is reminiscent of a time when children in all British state schools sang hymns as part of a standard primary education, securing the validity of the hymn for future generations.⁹⁹ It is warm

and welcoming – but only if you buy into it. On the one hand, the conversations around the programming, censorship, and singing of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” in 2020 opened the door to talking about the potentially problematic racial, social, and nationalistic issues raised by hymn singing in sport. On the other hand, the fact that “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” was really an “American” hymn that felt, to many singers, largely divorced from contemporary British culture, also stood in the way of a comparable dissecting of “Abide with Me,” with its formal pre-match programming. Future conversations about Black Lives Matter and sport hymn singing, therefore, still have room to turn *inward*, to examine why British fans are singing hymns at all – and what modes of social behavior are associated with them. And because the Black Lives Matter movement – and, indeed, “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” itself – originated in America, various conservative commentators have even used the cultural distance of the USA to try and downplay the relevance of decolonization to British contexts.¹⁰⁰

A fitting postscript to this discussion comes from the enduring – and far more conflicted – presence of “Abide with Me” in the postcolonial world, where resistance to the sonic congregation is stark. Under the headline “Why British Hymn ‘Abide with Me’ Was Scrapped from Key Indian Ceremony,” *Classic FM* news reported that the hymn, a long-time favorite of Mahatma Gandhi, was to be replaced with the Indian patriotic song “Ae Mere Watan Ke Logon” at the Indian Beating Retreat Ceremony, an annual military parade that is a trademark of independence celebrations.¹⁰¹ The hymn was supposed to be scrapped from the ceremony in 2020, but, after a backlash,

had been added back in at the last minute, where it was “the only non-Indian tune played.”¹⁰² The 2022 government decision to permanently scrap “Abide with Me” was labelled as part of an “ongoing process of decolonising India.”¹⁰³ The *Classic FM* article then links to the widely diverging reactions on social media, where many defenders of the hymn claimed that since “Abide with Me” was part of India’s colonial history, its deletion robbed listeners of reflecting on its historical importance. The difference, of course, between the conversations currently happening in India about musical decolonization and those taking place in the UK is that Britain has yet to decolonize its *own* forms of congregating power through sound: it is all too easy to (attempt to) topple the legacies of “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” because there is an overarching sense that, in the end, the African American spiritual was not a British hymn anyway. It would be quite another matter – indeed, it might be an example of what ethnomusicologist Shzr Ee Tan describes as the “messy” challenge of decolonization¹⁰⁴ – to think even beyond the text, tune, and provenance of a hymn like “Abide with Me” to consider *how* and *why* it has the emotive power that it does to unify fans under a nationalist performance of harmony; and, furthermore, to consider the impact that this has on the image of Britain in the wider world.

In discussing the places where Christian singing has gone public, Ingalls has described the process of “sonic permeation,”¹⁰⁵ or a mode of congregating where church music breaks out of church walls.¹⁰⁶ As a way to close this discussion, it is important to consider how singing hymns at sporting matches is always part of a fantasy that hymns offer a projection of spiritual unity

and national conformity in a secular world. The sonic congregating offered by the football or rugby hymn therefore creates its own landscape of belonging for many of the fans who travel to be there, or who tune in via televisions (and smartphones) from around the country and the world. Inasmuch as football and rugby hymn singing fosters a national fantasy that *imagines* place and, indeed, envisages an idealized Britain of the past, sport hymn singing also complicates the direct attachment to land that has hitherto pervaded a lot of writing on the religious “sacroscape.”¹⁰⁷ And yet, if we draw on the open definition of congregational music given by Andrew Mall, Jeffers Engelhardt,

and Monique M. Ingalls—that it “ranges across boundaries of region, nation, and ecclesial tradition, creating sonorous ways for participants to create, maintain, and challenge individual and communal identities”¹⁰⁸—then there may yet be a way to understand the tearful, emotional experiences of FA Cup Final fans to “Abide with Me” as valid, even spiritual.¹⁰⁹ Sonic congregating leaves—indeed, invites—room for social and spiritual uplift through the rituals of hymn singing in secular spaces. The question for the future is whether such forms of hymnic uplift will work to either disrupt or reinforce a nation’s ideological legacies. The sonic congregation has the potential to do both.

NOTES

1 I would like to thank Ed Johnson-Williams, Philip Burnett, and the two anonymous reviewers for their excellent advice and feedback on this article.

In the sections below, I distinguish between rugby *union* and rugby *league* in England. The fans for each would usually differ sharply along social class and geographical (north/south) lines, as well as sometimes (even) clashing over which hymns they sing.

2 The definition of the Protestant hymn provided by the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* is: a “sacred lyric of original content for use in worship.” Nicholas Temperley, “Hymn: IV. Protestant,” in *Grove Music Online—Oxford Music Online* (last updated October 16, 2013), www.oxfordmusiconline.com (accessed September 29, 2022). I hold to this definition by looking at communal songs that had an “original content” of worship but are now sometimes used outside of worship contexts. All the examples of “hymns” I discuss are widely referred to as hymns by their singers. These include “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” which, strictly speaking, is an African American “spiritual” rather than a “hymn,” but is usually referred to by British rugby union fans as a hymn, which is why I discuss it here in these terms. I will consider the complexities of cultural appropriation with “Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” below.

3 The text of “Abide with Me” was written by the Anglican clergyman Henry Francis Lyte, and the tune, *EVENTIDE*, was penned by composer William Henry Monk. See Leon Litvack, “Abide With Me; Fast Falls the Eventide,” *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology*, <http://www.hymnology.co.uk/a/abide-with-me-fast-falls-the-eventide> (accessed September 27, 2022).

4 On the wide-ranging and often conflicting modes of understanding Britain’s past (not all of them related to monarchism or the empire), see Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985). See also Sally Tomlinson, *Education and Race from Empire to Brexit* (Bristol and Chicago: Policy Press, 2019).

5 See Andrew Parker and Nick J. Watson, “Sport, Religion and English National Identity,” in *Sport and English National Identity in a Disunited Kingdom* (London: Routledge, 2002), 140–51; and John Wolffe, “Protestantism, Monarchy and the Defence of Christian Britain, 1837–2005,” in *Secularisation in the Christian World*, ed. Callum G. Brown and Michael Snape (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2016), 57–74.

6 Dave Russell, “‘See, the Conquering Hero Comes! Sound the Trumpets, Beat the Drums’:

Music and Sport in England, 1880–1939,” in *Sport, Music, Identities*, ed. Anthony Bateman (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 18.

7 By contrast, most of the popular songs associated with sporting fans in Britain are sung more spontaneously than the “programmed” hymns. On football supporters’ anthems and chants, see Mike McGuinness, “‘Friday Night and the Gates Are Low’: Popular Music and Its Relationship(s) to Sport,” in *Sporting Sounds: Relationships Between Sport and Music*, ed. Anthony Bateman and John Bale (London and New York: Routledge, 2008), 179–92.

8 In the remainder of this article I will use the term “football” to refer to the sport more widely known in North America, parts of Southern Africa, Australia and New Zealand as “soccer,” as is the custom in the UK. For a helpful summary in terms of terminology, see John M. Cunningham, “Why Do Some People Call Football ‘Soccer’?”, *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (July 20, 2016), <https://www.britannica.com/story/why-do-some-people-call-football-soccer> (accessed September 29, 2022).

9 The idea of the “imagined community” was most famously developed by Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983). In relation to British sport, Anderson’s idea of “imagined communities” has been used by Daniel Fitzpatrick, “‘Football Remembers’: The Collective Memory of Football in the Spectacle of British Military Commemoration,” *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 16/1 (2023): 57–79; and Ben Carrington, “‘Football’s Coming Home’ But Whose Home? And Do We Want It?: Nation, Football, and the Politics of Exclusion,” in *Fanatics: Power, Identity and Fandom in Football*, ed. Adam Brown (London: Routledge, 1998), 101–23.

10 See Phyllis Weliver, *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction, 1840–1910: Class, Culture and Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006). The Victorian “crowd”—and the need to silence it—is also discussed in John M. Picker, *Victorian Soundscapes* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

11 See Charles McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-fa Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

12 On state-funded music education, discipline, and social class in late nineteenth-century Britain, see Erin Johnson-Williams, “Musical Discipline and Victorian Liberal Reform,” in *Music and Victorian Liberalism: Composing the Liberal Subject*, ed. Sarah Collins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 15–36.

13 Royal funerals are the prime example of such ambiguities between nation, empire, and “respectable” hymnic behavior. The first hymn sung at the funeral for Queen Elizabeth II on September 19, 2022, “The Day Thou Gavest, Lord, Is Ended” by John Ellerton (1826–1893), sung to Clement Scholefield’s (1839–1904) tune ST. CLEMENT—a favourite of the queen while she was alive—was a Victorian hymn found in many missionary hymnals. It is still sung widely across the postcolonial world today. The text for this hymn notably includes the lines: “So be it, Lord; thy throne shall never / like earth’s proud empires, pass away / thy kingdom stands, and grows for ever / till all thy creatures own thy sway.” While a few news reports on the queen’s funeral picked up on the metaphor of the passing of the queen and the fading of “earth’s proud empires,” no media coverage that I have yet found has noted that, due to the nineteenth-century popularity of this hymn with Christian mission educators, it would have been commonly sung in schools and churches across the British Empire, and therefore in choosing this hymn, the funeral organizers were participating in the curation of a musical moment where effectively many of people in the countries affected by the British Empire would (or “should”) have been able to sing along to these words. Belonging and ownership of the hymn are therefore set by the status quo: those who don’t know the words are automatically outsiders. The now-famous British TV clip of Mr. Bean not knowing all of the words to “All Creatures of Our God and King” is funny precisely because the normativity of the hymn for a middle-class, white British man is subverted when he can’t remember the words, revealing a culture in which generations of British children had “good hymn-like” behavior drilled into them. Indeed, the Mr. Bean sketch thrives on the idea of the hymn as both mundane and disciplining; and yet it goes without saying that the elderly middle-class white congregation who know (how) to behave to this hymn in the “proper” way are all insiders to this kind of performance of classed respectability. See “Mr Bean (1990): Singing Hallelujah in Church,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_mz1Uqjaog (accessed February 17, 2023).

14 As Ian Bradley suggests in a rather extended metaphor, “Hymns played much the same role in Victorian culture that television and radio soap operas do today. Popular at all levels of society . . . [f]amiliar, pervasive and subtly addictive . . . [t]hey exerted a powerful if largely subliminal effect on language, values and attitudes.”

Ian Bradley, *Abide with Me: The World of Victorian Hymns* (London: Faber and Faber, 1997), xi.

15 Anna Bull, *Class, Control and Classical Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

16 As I discuss below, concepts of “hooliganism” in British sport have also been often tied to ideas of racism and xenophobia, but also to the notion that working-class men need disciplining from above. See Les Back, Tim Crabbe, and John Solomos, “Racism in Football: Patterns of Continuity and Change,” in Brown, *Fanatics*, 71–87.

17 Indeed, the British national anthem appears in every Church of England hymn book, although in practice it is perceived as more of an anthem than a “hymn.” For further theorizations, see Stanley Waterman, “National Anthems and National Symbolism: Singing the Nation,” in *Handbook of the Changing World Language Map*, ed. Stanley D. Brunn and Roland Kehrein (Cham: Springer, 2020), 2603–18. Of course, now that the words of the British national anthem have recently changed from “God Save the Queen” to “God Save the King,” new questions are arising about how British sporting crowds will use the change in lyrics to negotiate a sense of renewed (or ambiguous) national/neoperial belonging. For example, the fact that some Welsh fans recently booed “God Save the King” raises questions as to the success of the anthem as a way to provoke national unity from a country that has long been colonized by England. See, for example, Carlo Simone, “Qatar World Cup: Why Did Some Fans Boo ‘God Save the King?’,” *Sutton & Croydon Guardian* (November 30, 2022), <https://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/national/uk-today/23158740.qatar-world-cup-wales-fans-boo-god-save-king/> (accessed February 17, 2023).

18 See Ollie Irish, “We’re Not Singing Anymore: Who Silenced English Football Fans?,” *Who Ate All the Pies* (November 26, 2010), <https://www.whoateallthepies.tv/feature/56319/what-happened-to-noisy-fans-in-english-football.html> (accessed September 27, 2022).

19 See, for example, the difference in crowd body language between the singing in the two following videos, which showcase singing a “popular” song at the FA Cup versus the ritualized reverence of standing for “Abide with Me”: “Liverpool Win the FA Cup! One Kiss Is All It Takes at Full Time Whistle,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5hjqSnliKk> (accessed February 17, 2023); and “Abide with Me: The FA Cup Final Hymn Sang [sic] by Mary-Jess,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yu6Wb5tbYrU&t=5s> (accessed February 17, 2023).

20 Derek Scott, “In Search of Genetically Modified Music: Race and Musical Style in the Nineteenth Century,” *Nineteenth-Century Music Review* 3/1 (2006): 13.

21 These divisions are deep-seated and have continued to morph over several generations. See, for example, Gareth Morgan, “Rugby and Revivalism: Sport and Religion in Edwardian Wales,” *International Journal of the History of Sport* 22/3 (2005): 434–56.

22 There has been a fair amount of scholarly work on the notion of the hymn “Jerusalem” as representing and fostering a mode of neoimperial nationalism. See, for example, Jason Whittaker, *Jerusalem: Blake, Parry, and the Fight for Englishness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2022); Åke Bergvall, “The Blake Syndrome: The Case of ‘Jerusalem,’” *Literature/Film Quarterly* 41/4 (2013): 254–65; and Susan Matthews, “Jerusalem and Nationalism,” in *William Blake*, ed. John Lucas (London: Routledge, 2013), 80–100.

23 “Male Voice Choir Flashmob: Wales vs England RBS 6 Nations 2015,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iPqepdQhR8> (accessed September 29, 2022). “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah,” by the famous Welsh hymn writer William Williams Pantycelyn (1717–1791), is perhaps the best-known Welsh hymn in English, and is widely sung across Wales as well as the English-speaking world. See Alan Luff, “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah (Redeemer),” *The Canterbury Dictionary of Hymnology* (accessed September 29, 2022). The emotive singing of “Calon Lân” at Welsh rugby union matches has been discussed by Wesley G. Moons et al., “I Feel Our Pain: Antecedents and Consequences of Emotional Self-Stereotyping,” *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology* 45/4 (2009): 760–69. For further examples of the Welsh hymn-singing flash mobs, see “Male Voice Choir Flash Mob Wales v England 6 Nations 2015,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FsjPSekQ7lw> (accessed September 27, 2022); and “The Welsh Are Coming,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HdLcbsZtv8> (accessed September 27, 2022). See also Mike McGuinness, “‘Friday Night and the Gates are Low’: Popular Music and Its Relationship(s) to Sport,” in Bateman and Bale, *Sporting Sounds: Relationships Between Sport and Music*, 184; and Martin Johnes, “Anglo-Welsh Football Relations,” in *Sport and English National Identity in a Disunited Kingdom*, 184–97.

24 See note 2 above. The cultural appropriation of African American spirituals by white musicians, both within and outside of the United States, has a long history: see Sandra Jean Graham, *Spirituals and*

the Birth of a Black Entertainment Industry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018).

25 “Maro Itoje Will No Longer Sing England Anthem Swing Low, Sweet Chariot,” *The Guardian* (May 26, 2022), <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2022/may/26/maro-itoje-will-no-longer-sing-england-anthem-swing-low-sweet-chariot-rugby-union> (accessed September 20, 2022). In academic scholarship, Jonathan Long and Karl Spracklen have remarked that “England rugby union fans singing *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, which previously seemed strangely idiosyncratic, acquires different connotations in light of the Black Lives Matter movement.” Jonathan Long and Karl Spracklen, “Music and Sport: Exploring the Intersections,” *Sport in Society* 24/1 (2021): 2.

26 “Maro Itoje.”

27 Ibid. For the documentary, see “The Story of Swing Low, Sweet Chariot” (October 24, 2020), <https://www.facebook.com/OfficialEnglandRugby/videos/the-story-of-swing-low-sweet-chariot/477042229876715/> (accessed September 27, 2022).

28 “Maro Itoje.”

29 Gerard Meagher, “No Ban on England Fans Singing Swing Low, Sweet Chariot at Twickenham,” *The Guardian* (October 8, 2020), <https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2020/oct/08/no-ban-england-fans-singing-swing-low-sweet-chariot-twickenham-rfu> (accessed September 27, 2022).

30 Caroline Lowbridge, “Why Is Swing Low, Sweet Chariot the England Rugby Song?,” *BBC News* (June 19, 2020), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-51646140> (accessed September 27, 2022).

31 Ibid. Offiah himself told the BBC that he had been unaware of this connection, but that people had been singing “Swing Low” at him for some time. Notably, *Chariots of Fire* ends with a rendition of the hymn “Jerusalem.”

32 Ibid.

33 See “NZ Haka Drowned Out by Swing Low at Twickenham,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBQH3UWZTm0> (accessed September 27, 2022).

34 I borrow my definition of decolonization from the renowned article by Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society* 1/1 (2012): 1–40. Tuck and Yang throw out the challenge that the lived process of decolonization is about repatriating the theft of empire, and should not be misappropriated as a metaphor for other social justice projects. For an overview of conversations around music and decolonization in contemporary

Britain, see William Fourie, “Musicology and Decolonial Analysis in the Age of Brexit,” *Twentieth-Century Music* 17/2 (2020): 197–211; and Shzr Ee Tan, “Special Issue: Decolonising Music and Music Studies,” *Ethnomusicology Forum* 30/1 (2021): 4–8.

35 Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization Is Not a Metaphor,” 3.

36 The Prince of Wales is the president of the FA, emphasizing further links between the monarchy and the ritualized singing of “Abide with Me” immediately prior to the national anthem, “God Save the Queen/King.”

37 See “Abide with Me | 1983 Rugby League Challenge Cup Final,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nylMOAUlu4U> (accessed September 27, 2022).

38 See Roger Penn and Damon Berridge, “Football and the Military in Contemporary Britain: An Exploration of Invisible Nationalism,” *Armed Forces & Society* 44/1 (2018), 124–25.

39 “FA Cup Fans Choir and Alfie Boe Sing Abide with Me,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_VuQFZ5cPE (accessed September 27, 2022).

40 For further discussion, see Gary Armstrong and Malcolm Young, “Fanatical Football Chants: Creating and Controlling the Carnival,” in *Football Culture: Local Contests, Global Visions*, ed. Gerry P. T. Finn and Richard Giulianotti (London and Portland: Frank Cass, 2000), 173–211.

41 Monique M. Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation: How Contemporary Worship Music Forms Evangelical Community* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 27.

42 Mirella Klomp and Marcel Barnard, “The Scenery: Dwellings in a Sacro-Soundscape,” in *Playing On: Re-Staging the Passion After the Death of God*, ed. Mirella Klomp (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 55, 69.

43 See Elizabeth McAlister, “Globalization and the Religious Production of Space,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 44/3 (2005): 251; Thomas A. Tweed, *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 61; and Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 33–43.

44 Victorian hymns were long associated with children’s musical cultures, and with “simple” musical education, either for children themselves or, in the case of British imperialism, for an infantilized idea of the colonial convert. On British hymns for children, see Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, *British Hymn Books for Children, 1800–1900: Re-Tuning the History of Childhood* (London: Routledge, 2016). Part of the

relative silence about sport and singing in scholarship has to do with the lack of what most historians would look to as a traditional research “archive”: as Jeffrey Hill notes with regard to singing at sporting events, it was often so taken for granted, and the emphasis in sporting journalism was usually so much on the sport itself, partly because “very few press reports go into any detail about the singing.” Jeffrey Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport: ‘Abide with Me’ and the FA Cup Final in the 1920s,” in Bateman and Bale, *Sporting Sounds: Relationships Between Sport and Music*, 167. Most of the scholarship on sport and music, furthermore, does not distinguish the hymn as a sacred genre separate from other forms of crowd singing or crowd noise. See, for example, Jonathan Bale and Anthony Bateman, “Introduction: Sporting Sounds,” in *ibid.*, 1–12; Costas I. Karageorghis and Peter C. Terry, “The Psychological, Psychophysical and Ergogenic Effects of Music in Sport: A Review and Synthesis,” in *ibid.*, 13–36; Jeffrey O. Segrave, “Music as Sport History: The Special Case of Pietro Metastasio’s *L’Olimpiade* and the Story of the Olympic Games,” in *ibid.*, 113–27; Anthony Bateman, “Introduction: Sport, Music, Identities,” in *Sport, Music, Identities*, ed. Anthony Bateman (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 1–10; Ian Nannestad, “‘Bubbles,’ ‘Abe My Boy’ and ‘The Fowler War Cry’: Singing at the Vetch Field in the 1920s,” in *ibid.*, 28–37; Anthony Bateman, “*Playing Away*: The Construction and Reception of a Football Opera (Interview with the Composer Benedict Mason),” in *ibid.*, 66–78; and Dave Laing and Andy Linehan, “Soccer Sounds,” *Popular Music History* 8/3 (2013): 307–25. See also the essays, particularly those on sport, in *Empire and Popular Culture*, ed. John Griffiths (London: Routledge, 2022); and Ian Nannestad, “Pack Up Your Troubles: Football and Community Singing,” *Soccer History* 22 (2010): 3–7.

45 On the exportation of the hymn to colonial contexts, and the racializing, “silencing,” and “disciplining” of British hymns past and present, see Erin Johnson-Williams, “Enclosing Archival Sound: Colonial Singing as Discipline and Resistance,” in *Intersectional Encounters in the Nineteenth Century Archive: New Essays on Power and Discourse*, ed. Rachel Bryant Davies and Erin Johnson-Williams (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 115–36; and Becca Whitla, *Liberation, (De)Coloniality, and Liturgical Practices: Flipping the Song Bird* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020).

46 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation*, 27.

47 Klomp and Barnard, “The Scenery,” 53.

48 Note that music studies first borrowed the term “soundscape” from anthropology: see Steven

Feld, “Waterfalls of Song: An Acoustemology of Place Resounding in Bosavi, Papua New Guinea,” in *Senses of Place*, ed. Steven Feld and Keith H. Basso (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1996), 91–136.

49 See, for example, Dorothea E. Schulz, “Soundscape,” in *Key Words in Religion, Media and Culture*, ed. David Morgan (New York: Abingdon, 2008), 176–86. On the mobile soundscapes of colonial hymns, see Philip Burnett, “Music and Mission: A Case Study of the Anglican-Xhosa Missions of the Eastern Cape, 1854–1880” (Ph.D. diss., University of Bristol, 2020).

50 The main literature here includes Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation*; Jonathan Dueck, *Congregational Music, Conflict and Community* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2017); Mark Porter, *Contemporary Worship Music and Everyday Musical Lives* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge 2018); and the essays in *Studying Congregational Music: Key Issues, Methods, and Theoretical Perspectives*, ed. Andrew Mall, Jeffers Engelhardt, and Monique M. Ingalls (London: Routledge, 2021); *Making Congregational Music Local in Christian Communities Worldwide*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls, Murial Swijghuisen Reigersberg, and Zoe C. Sheridan (London: Routledge, 2018); and *Christian Congregational Music: Performance, Identity and Experience*, ed. Monique M. Ingalls, Carolyn Landau, and Tom Wagner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).

51 The decline of singing hymns in British state schools today has stoked ongoing controversies over religious tradition versus secularism. See, for example, Nicola Woolcock and Kaya Burgess, “Don’t Sing Hymns That Are Too Preachy, Church of England Schools Told,” <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/dont-sing-hymns-that-are-too-preachy-church-of-england-schools-told-h6b6f69b3> (accessed September 12, 2022); and Zoe Tidman, “‘Frankly, It Was Awful’: Schools Pass on One Britain One Nation Day Singalong Promoted by Government,” <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/schools-obon-day-song-b1873055.html> (accessed September 27, 2022).

52 This point has been made by Barry Richards, who notes that the singing of “Abide with Me” at British sporting events “extends far beyond its immediate participants in the physically present crowd, to what is now a vast and global television audience.” Barry Richards, “‘Abide with Me’: Mediatised Football and Collectivised Mourning,” in *Media and the Inner World: Psycho-Cultural Approaches to Emotion, Media and Popular Culture*, ed. Caroline

Bainbridge and Candida Yates (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 19.

53 Klomp and Barnard, “The Scenery,” 69.

54 “Abide with Me—FA Cup Final Hymn—Manchester United FC v Crystal Palace FC—12th May 1990—Wembley,” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hqHqC8PLJfU> (accessed September 27, 2022).

55 See Siena Linton, “Why ‘Jerusalem’ Is Played for Winning English Athletes at the Commonwealth Games,” *Classic FM* (August 2, 2022), <https://www.classicfm.com/composers/parry/jerusalem-england-commonwealth-games/> (accessed September 29, 2022).

56 Bateman, “Introduction,” 4.

57 See Tom Herbert, “What Are the Lyrics to Jerusalem and Why Is It Sung Before England Rugby Matches?,” *Evening Standard* (February 6, 2020), <https://www.standard.co.uk/sport/rugby/what-are-jerusalem-lyrics-england-rugby-a4354381.html> (accessed September 29, 2022).

58 Paul Mason, Twitter (July 27, 2012), <https://twitter.com/paulmasonnews/status/22896231073409433> (accessed September 29, 2022).

59 Mark Falcou, “Rugby League and the Negotiation of Englishness,” in *Sport and English National Identity in a Disunited Kingdom*, 79 (emphasis in the original). See also Thomas Fletcher and Jim Lusted, “Connecting ‘Englishness,’ Black and Minoritised Ethnic Communities and Sport: A Conceptual Framework,” in *ibid.*, 95–109.

60 For more, see Litvack, “Abide with Me.”

61 Russell, “‘See, the Conquering Hero,’” 18. For further reading on football and British militarism, see Penn and Berridge, “Football and the Military,” 116–38; Danny Fitzpatrick, “‘Poppies in the Field’: The Spectacularisation of Military Remembrance in British Football,” in *Football, Politics and Identity*, ed. Martin J. Power, James Carr, Daniel Parnell, Paul Widdop, and Stephen R. Millar (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 57–76; and Fitzpatrick, “Football Remembers.”

62 Long and Spracklen, “Music and Sport,” 2.

63 On diasporic Sacred Harp singing, see Kiri Miller, *Traveling Home: Sacred Harp Singing and American Pluralism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008); and on other forms of organized hymn singing outside of the church, see Andrew Mall, “‘Beer & Hymns’ and Community: Religious Identity and Participatory Sing-Alongs,” *Yale Journal of Music and Religion* 6/2 (2020): 33–52. See also Andrew Mall, “Music Festivals, Ephemeral Places, and Scenes: Interdependence

at Cornerstone Festival,” *Journal of the Society for American Music* 14/1 (2020): 51–69. There is also a venerable tradition of pub singing in Britain, which intersects with hymn singing in notable ways, particularly during the Christmas season, where regional communities (most famously around Sheffield, South Yorkshire) carry out annual rituals of pub carol singing. See, for example, Andy Turner, “Break Forth in Song! Village Carols from the Blue Ball Inn, Worrall,” *Folk Music Journal* 10/1 (2011): 160–61.

64 As McLeod notes, many have linked the ideas of modernization and secularization in western society since 1800. Hugh McLeod, “Introduction,” in *Secularization and Religious Innovation in the North Atlantic World*, ed. David Hempton and Hugh McLeod (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1.

65 On the connections between music, exercise, and physical health—particularly as a way to “raise” the working classes to fitness and eventually the army—see Johnson-Williams, “Musical Discipline”; and Jennifer Sheppard, “Sound of Body: Music, Sports and Health in Victorian Britain,” *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 140/2 (2015): 343–69. On the rise of “muscular Christianity,” see Hugh McLeod, “Muscular Christianity: American and European,” in Hempton and McLeod, *Secularization and Religious Innovation*, 195–211.

66 The idea of hymn singing as forming a “community” was entrenched in early childhood musical education in Victorian Britain: see Alisa Clapp-Itnyre, “Community in Children’s Hymn Singing,” *Victorian Review* 41/1 (2015): 26–31. See also John Wolffe, *God and Greater Britain: Religion and National Life in Britain and Ireland, 1843–1945* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 177.

67 See Charles McGuire, “Christianity, Civilization and Music: Nineteenth-Century British Missionaries and the Control of Malagasy Hymnology,” in *Music and Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Martin Clarke (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 79–96; and Grant Olwage, “Discipline and Choralism: The Birth of Musical Colonialism,” in *Music, Power, and Politics*, ed. Annie J. Randall (London: Routledge, 2004), 25–46.

68 See Erin Johnson-Williams, “Secularising the Sacred, Sanctifying the Commercial: Tonic Sol-fa and the Professionalisation of Evangelical Hymnody,” in *Scripture and Song in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, ed. James Grande and Brian Murray (forthcoming, London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023).

69 According to John Lowerson, in nineteenth-century Britain “the Social Darwinism game was

at its most complex . . . on home ground. The peaking of the language of manly virtue coincided roughly with the growth from the 1880s of radical questioning of the simplistic assumptions of utilitarian progress. . . . the cult of sport on the whole expressed suspicion of middle-class intellectual interests as well as of the demands of an emerging labour consciousness. Even those who noticed the victims of social injustice tended to offer manly sport as the absolute panacea.” John Lowerson, *Sport and the English Middle Classes, 1870–1914* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 20.

70 Dave Russell, “Abiding Memories: The Community Singing Movement and the English Social Life of the 1920s,” *Popular Music* 27/1 (2008): 117.

71 Russell notes that the Community Singers’ Association “began its campaign with a series of six ‘sings’ within London, culminating in a concert at the Albert Hall that was broadcast by the BBC.” Russell, “Abiding Memories,” 119.

72 Ibid., 117.

73 Ibid. Russell notes that although the *Daily Express* was the “national paper most associated with community singing,” others that were also very invested in the singing movement at the time included the *Daily Herald*, the *News Chronicle*, and *Sporting Life*. These publications were “keen to compete for the rights to sponsor the Cup Final singing in the 1930s and other major football events.” Ibid., 124.

74 Ibid., 120 (emphasis mine).

75 *Daily Express* (October 4, 1926), as quoted in *ibid.*, 126.

76 Ibid., 127.

77 Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport,” 166.

78 Russell, “Abiding Memories,” 127; see also Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport,” 165–66.

79 Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport,” 165. Elsewhere, Hill reminds us that the first Wembley Stadium was known initially as the “Empire Stadium,” which long cemented associations between the scale of the location and the imperial spectacle of the British Empire Exhibition. Jeffrey Hill, “Sport, History and Imagined Pasts,” in *Sport, History and Heritage: Studies in Public Representation*, ed. Jeffrey Hill, Kevin Moore, and Jason Wood (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012), 11.

80 Hill, “Sport, History and Imagined Pasts,” 12.

81 See Columbia Records, “Abide with Me: Football Cup Final, Wembley 1927,” *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/details/78_abide-with-me_92000-voices-daily-express-community-

singing-wembley-stadium-hm (accessed September 27, 2022).

82 Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport,” 166.

83 Ken McLeod, *We Are the Champions: The Politics of Sports and Popular Music* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 78.

84 Hill, “Sport, History and Imagined Pasts,” 12. For more on the idea of memorializing, survivals and legacies in football culture, see Jason Wood, “Survivals and Legacies: Sport, Heritage and Identity,” in Hill, Moore, and Wood, *Sport, History and Heritage*, 183–94.

85 One anecdote even mentions that “Abide with Me” was played to General Kitchener by a Sudanese band: see MacDonald, *Language of Empire*, 88. André Odendaal also cites examples of hymns being used in colonial South African sporting events: see André Odendaal, “South Africa’s Black Victorians: Sport and Society in South Africa in the Nineteenth Century,” in *Pleasure, Profit, Proselytism: British Culture and Sport at Home and Abroad, 1700–1914*, ed. J. A. Mangan (London: Frank Cass, 1988), 201.

86 Russell, “Abiding Memories,” 131–32.

87 See “Emeli Sandé—Abide with Me (FA Cup Final 2020),” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ibDJupKxU> (accessed September 27, 2022).

88 “Abide with Me at the 2021 FA Cup Final,” <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/2VZpFq-qpVY> (accessed September 27, 2022).

89 Russell, “Abiding Memories,” 132.

90 Hill, “War, Remembrance and Sport,” 164.

91 Back, Crabbe, and Solomos, “Racism in Football,” 63.

92 See Gerry P. T. Finn and Richard Giulianotti, “Scottish Fans, Not English Hooligans!: Scots, Scottishness, and Scottish Football,” in Brown, *Fanatics*, 189–202. For more on Scotland football culture and singing, see: Joseph M. Bradly, “‘We Shall Not Be Moved’! Mere Sport, Mere Songs?: A Tale of Scottish Football,” in *ibid.*, 203–218; and Stuart Whigham, “Sending ‘Proud Edward’s Army Tae Think Again’: A Scottish Perspective on the Quest for an English Identity in Sport,” in *Sport and English National Identity in a Disunited Kingdom*, 170–83. On the separate identities of Irish fans, see Marcus Free, “‘Angels with Drunken Faces?: Travelling Republic of Ireland Supporters and the Construction of Irish Migrant Identity in England,” in Brown, *Fanatics*, 219–32; and Katie Liston and Matt Deighan, “‘Show Respect to Our Anthem’: Identity Politics and National Team Football in Northern Ireland,” in Power et al., *Football, Politics and Identity*, 11–27.

93 Penn and Berridge, "Football and the Military," 123.

94 Ibid.

95 See Back, Crabbe, and Solomos, "Racism in Football," 63.

96 Adam Brown, "United We Stand: Some Problems with Fan Democracy," in Brown, *Fanatics*, 51.

97 *United We Stand*, as quoted in Brown, "United We Stand," 61.

98 Penn and Berridge, "Football and the Military," 125.

99 Notably, schoolchildren in Northern Ireland gained press attention for singing "Abide with Me" in honor of the recent death of Queen Elizabeth II. See "Pupils from Broughshane Primary and Hazelbank Sing Hymn 'Abide with Me' to Honour Late Queen," *ITV News* (September 19, 2022), <https://www.itv.com/news/utv/2022-09-19/watch-primary-schools-unite-for-tribute-to-late-queen> (accessed September 27, 2022).

100 For a summary of recent discussions, see "What's Taking the Knee and Why Is It Important?," *BBC News* (November 21, 2022), <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/explainers-53098516> (accessed February 17, 2023).

101 Sophia Alexandra Hall, "Why British Hymn 'Abide with Me' Was Scrapped from Key Indian Ceremony," *Classic FM* (January 31, 2022), <https://www.classicfm.com/music-news/abide-with-me-scrapped-indian-ceremony/> (accessed September 27, 2022).

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

104 "Decolonisation is messy and always situational. It is often conducted with ambivalence alongside hope, compromise and vulnerability in the need to go off-piste and rogue. It requires willingness to learn and bounce back from mistakes. It is always a work-in-progress, and as much about learning how to find and shape voices-in-the-making even as it is about reclaiming stolen platforms." Tan, "Special Issue," 6.

105 Ingalls, *Singing the Congregation*, 154.

106 Ibid., 168. Relevant here is also Manuel A. Vásquez's work on a "networks approach" to studying expressions of religion in motion: Manuel A. Vásquez, "Studying Religion in Motion: A Networks Approach," *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 20 (2008): 151–84.

107 See, for example, Veikko Anttonen, "Landscapes as Sacrosapes: Why Does Topography Make a Difference?," in *Sacred Sites and Holy Places: Exploring the Sacralization of Landscape through Time and Space*, ed. Sæbjørg Walaker Nordeide and Stefan Brink (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 13–32.

108 Andrew Mall, Jeffers Engelhardt, and Monique M. Ingalls, "Introduction: Interdisciplinary and Epistemic Diversity in Congregational Music Studies," in Mall, Engelhardt, and Ingalls, *Studying Congregational Music*, 1.

109 As Mall notes, if "the express purposes of modes of congregating is to worship God, then of course the shifting of attention in these ways is heretical. But when we decouple these activities, we make space for other purposes of congregating that are nonetheless rooted in belief and religious experience." Mall, "Beer & Hymns," 49.