



FREE AMERICA!
Early Songs of Resistance and Rebellion

July 12, 2026
Meetinghouse, Alna, ME

Like a Beautiful Morning

- O Zion Arise** Shaker: Betsy Smith's Hymn Book (South Union, Kentucky, ca.1840)
- Yankee Doodle, or The Lexington March** Broadside (18th c.)
- Liberty Tree** text by Thomas Paine (1737-1809)
from *The American Patriotic Songbook* (Philadelphia, PA, 1813)
- Free Americay!** text after Joseph Warren (1741-1775)
music adapted from The British Grenadiers (18th c.)
from *The American Patriotic Songbook* (Philadelphia, PA, 1842)

The Public is invited to sing the refrain along with us:

*Then guard your rights, Americans!
Nor stoop to lawless sway,
Oppose, oppose, oppose, oppose,
For free Americay.*

- Chester** William Billings (1746-1800)
from *The Singing Master's Assistant* (Boston, MA, 1778)

Gone for a Soldier

- Johnny has gone for a soldier** Anglo-Irish Ballad (18th c.)
- The Cuba March,** Anglo- American March (18th c.)
with
The New Union Jeremiah Ingalls (1764-1838) from *The Christian Harmony* (Exeter, NH, 1805)

Jolly Soldier	<i>The Social Harp</i> (Philadelphia, PA, 1855)
Saw you my Hero	Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, MA, ca. 1790)
Boston March	Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, MA, ca. 1790)
David's Lamentation	William Billings (1746-1800) from <i>The Singing Master's Assistant</i> (Boston, MA, 1778)

Repentance

Prince William's March	from Moses Kimball's manuscript (Newburyport, MA, ca. 1790)
My Body Rock 'Long Fever	from <i>Slave Songs of the United States</i> (New York, NY, 1867)
Thirst for Gold	text from <i>The American Musical Miscellany</i> (Northampton, MA, 1798) music adapted from <i>Russia</i> , Daniel Read (1785)
Didn't my Lord Deliver Daniel	<i>ubiquitous in various spiritual song books</i>
Hebrew Children	from <i>The Sacred Harp</i> (Atlanta, GA, 1911)
Repentance	Shaker Song Notated by Otis Sawyer (1815-1884) from a manuscript (Sabbathday Lake Shaker, ME, 1840)

Columbia: An Angel

The Appletree	Jermiah Ingalls (1764-1838) from <i>The Christian Harmony</i> (Exeter, NH, 1805)
Trumpet of Peace	Shaker: A Sacred Repository of Anthems and Hymns (Canterbury, NH, 1852)
Unnamed Dance Song	Shaker Song (Sabbathday Lake, ME, ca. 1840)
Rise Columbia!	adapted from Thomas Arne (1710-1778), Rule Britannia text by Robert Treat Paine (1731-1814) music from <i>The American Musical Miscellany</i> (Northampton, MA, 1798)
Friendly Union	text by John L. Peasey (?) from <i>Hymn and Spiritual Songs</i> (Portsmouth, NH, 1823) music <i>The Cuba March</i> (Anglo-American March, 18 th c.)
Yankee Doodle, or The Lexington March	Broadside (early 19 th c.)

The Public is invited to sing the refrain along with us:

*Yankee Doodle, Ha, Ha, Ha,
Yankee Doodle Dandy,
Freedom's voice is in the song
Of 'Yankee Doodle Dandy'.*

The Boston Camerata

Anne Azéma, mezzo-soprano, director
MaKayla McDonald, soprano
Camila Parias, soprano
Deborah Rentz-Moore, alto

Phillip Bullock, bass-baritone
Joel Frederiksen, bass
Daniel Hershey, tenor
Ryan Lustgarten, tenor

Kelsey Burnham, flutes
Andrew Koutroubas, cello
Eric Martin, fiddle

assisted by
Dave Cabral, Sarah McConduibh, Heather Taskovics, fifes
& Kyle Forsthoff, drums

Many of these works are anonymous, or of uncertain authorship. Names of composers or early transcribers are given when known, as well as the identities of early written source(s), when known, on which we have relied.

The Boston Camerata's 2026 production of *Free America!* was created through close collaboration between Artistic Director Anne Azéma and Music Director Emeritus Joel Cohen (S.A.C.E.M.)

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Historic Alna is supported by Bath Savings, Sherwin-Williams, Gallagher, Villeneuve & DeGeer

In loving memory of Randall Thompson and Sr. Frances Ann Carr

www.bostoncamerata.org

THE BOSTON CAMERATA
Anne Azéma, Artistic Director

FREE AMERICA! EARLY SONGS OF RESISTANCE AND REBELLION

Program Notes

This musical program celebrates many of the ideas that had fostered the young American Republic, and which to this day continue to be debated and even in some quarters, decried. Union, Liberty, Democracy were the unifying ideals of this federation: a desire for a new social harmony, a new system of common beliefs, on a new soil which was often equated to the Promised Land.

Post-independence America was busy making it clear that it was no monarchy. No ruler could claim unlimited power. In the process of establishing itself, the country also created its heroes: political and spiritual. After savagely defeating those opposing its founding on its own soil, along with those from distant Europe who might have had different ideas for its future (*Chester*), the Republic proclaimed that it would fulfill only its own ideals (*Liberty Tree*), follow only the best leaders in its struggles (*Jolly Soldier – Washington*), and rely only on itself to supply its needs (*Rise, Columbia!*). Having scattered the foes, its preoccupation turned to establishing a community of people with common interests (*Friendly Union*). Music and poetry actively participated in this process, delivering insights and a guiding offering of advocacy and multiple visions of the future, along with moral and spiritual authority.

Alongside the figures of the founders, war heroes and statesmen such as George Washington, we also find thinkers and spiritual leaders like Thomas Paine. Very early on, there emerges the figure of the ‘Common Man’ – an ordinary citizen, the *bona fide* force capable of ensuring the future of a country still fragmented and trying to define itself. Sailors, soldiers, and poor immigrants of all types – they all have a place in this ‘Promised Land’, each with a hope for a democratic society, for an intensely spiritual community (*O Zion, Arise*). Without these disparate but complementary protagonists, there could be no New Republic!

These song tunes and dances, in one respect are related to art music, since for the most part they are fully notated. Although closely linked to earlier European practices, these pieces largely resist easy classification and are peculiar to this region of the New World. Neither ‘ancient’ nor ‘modern’, neither ‘folklore’ nor ‘classical’, they nonetheless offer vibrant reflections of a youthful society full of vigor. This repertoire consists (above all) of music for voices: single lines in the case of the Shaker songs, in two, three, or four vocal parts elsewhere, but also for instruments alone. Each of these settings, employing straightforward texts and musical language intuited by non-professional musicians writing for non-professional use, speaks directly to the hearts and minds of the performers. These pieces often link back to earlier musical styles, derived from oral traditions, English and African, or from collections of hymns and carols originating in the British Isles. Recycled, distorted, these tunes became adopted into the customs of new communities. The military march *Prince William*, for example, is found in a texted version describing the experience of a Black American soldier during the War of Independence (1775-1783). The power of these ‘miniatures’, speaking with an artistic force emanating from their outward simplicity, is due in part to their autonomy from academic methods. The melody lines of the part-songs, most often notated in the tenor voice, were harmonized by amateur musicians such as William Billings (a tanner) or Jeremiah Ingalls (a tavern keeper). Angular, coarse, and rudimentary, full of ‘mistakes’ of part-writing and voice-leading, such pieces were anathema to the succeeding, conservatory-minded generations of composers in Boston who

aspired to write music in the style of their European contemporaries: Mozart, Haydn, and Mendelssohn. And as for the Shakers who, living apart from the world, evolved their own system of 'letteral' notation, their magnificent monodic creations remained, for the most part, utterly unknown to their fellow countrymen until the twentieth century.

The instrumental music chosen here comes from various sources, including manuscript booklets from the hands of early flutists and fiddlers. This is where we get an indication of the role such instruments played in early American musical gatherings to double the vocal parts. In the same rugged spirit, the players were on the scene to lead us to dance (*Boston March*), march into battle (*Prince William March*), or to accompany communal singing (*Yankee Doodle; Rise, Columbia!*).

These songs, whether single lines or set out with rough-hewn, frontier part-writing, speak truth to power, as a warning to those who fail to heed the admonishment: '*Here Liberty reigns as the standard of union / And all are invited to gather around.*' (*O Zion, Arise*). And Liberty's attendants – abolitionists (*Thirst for Gold*) or Boston rascals and insolent scallywags (*Yankee Doodle*) – all reaffirm the honesty and multiplicity in which will continue to lie the strength of this country. Nothing is harder to acquire than success in such an enterprise. The journey is tortuous, complicated by the scale and diversity of such a country, by the physical and moral scars accumulated in the process, still in large part unhealed.

Nevertheless, music continues to accompany the failures and the successes of this unique endeavor: '*Then guard your rights, Americans, nor stoop to lawless sway.*' (*Free Americay!*).

Anne Azéma & Joel Cohen

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A Short Production History

Early American music has been a part of The Boston Camerata's repertoire since the beginning of our recording history (1978 – *Sing We Noel*). It is with a vivid interest and joy that we have, over the years, continued to include our own North American musical heritage in concerts and recordings. *Free America! Early Songs of Resistance and Rebellion* was created in 2018, for and at La Philharmonie de Paris, where the ensemble was in residence for a series of activities focused on the musical life of Boston and North America. This program was subsequently recorded by Harmonia Mundi (2019), and performed in various contexts, including in Strasbourg, France and at Faneuil Hall, Boston, to mark the 60th Anniversary of these two Sister Cities. Right after our Alna Meeting House performance, we will return to Tanglewood in July 2026 with this timely program.