

Source 3a.

The Rise of Town Bands

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Brass bands began in the early nineteenth century, and grew rapidly in popularity around the time of The Great Exhibition in 1851. Band musicians who were able to buy a train ticket at a special price and visit the exhibition in London would have seen and heard the saxophone, a new and exciting musical brass instrument designed and displayed by Belgian music teacher and instrument maker Adolphe Sax. Sax's instruments interested the players and in the following decades, many town brass bands in the country included the saxophone in their band.

Companies like music publishers and instrument makers were established to look after the needs of the growing number of town brass bands in Britain. Band contests also became more popular by the end of Victoria's reign, and even the famous composer Sir Arthur Sullivan supported these events.

The Salvation Army, who attracted the poor and underprivileged, also encouraged band members to attend their meetings. People were attracted by the music they played and this helped the Salvation Army reach out to more people.

Band musicians often came from a working-class background. A town band was formed in Worthing in 1851, giving their first performance in 1853 on Bedford Lawn.

Popular music was heard even more when Worthing pier was enlarged in 1888 and a new Pavilion was added which could hold over 600 people. The Worthing Pier Band of six musicians consisting of string, woodwind and brass players, was formed in 1889. The improvements made to the pier allowed concerts and plays to be performed indoors and to be given in any weather.

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