



## Thirty-Eighth Annual Conference on Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain

Friday 25 November 2022

10.00 Registration

10.15 Thomas McGeary (Champaign, IL) — Music and Britons on the Grand Tour

10.45 Michael Cole (Cheltenham) — 'The First Piano in England'

11.15-11.30 Refreshment break

11.30 Anita Sikora (Bath) — Margherita Durastanti's Roman mothers in London

12.00 Yeo Yat-Soon (London) — First Encounters: Musical journeys between Europe and Asia from the dawn of the global world

12.30 Performance — First Encounters: Programme of performance including music by Sancho, Montéclair, Rameau and Amiot

13.15-14.00 Lunch and viewing *Charles Jennens: Patron & Polymath* display

14.00 Graham Cummings (Huddersfield) — Hasse's Siroe in London (1736–37)

14.30 Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson (Brentwood, Essex) — The composer Maria Hester Park and the poet Robert Bloomfield: some musical connections

15.00 Roz Southey (Newcastle) — The Music Trade and Domestic Music-Making: Two sheet music collections from late-Georgian North-East England

15.30-16.00 Refreshment break / Reports (from 15.50)

16.00 Alan Howard (Cambridge) — Eccles's Collection of Songs (1704) and John Walsh's Publishing Model in the Early Eighteenth Century

16.30 Gesa zur Nieden and Berthold Over (Greifswald) — John Walsh's Favourite Songs between Local Markets and European Perspectives

17.00 Conference ends

## **Thomas McGeary — Music and Britons on the Grand Tour**

The Grand Tour to Italy was the capstone to the education of many young British nobility, gentry, and members of upper classes. The Tour's goal was to complete the youth's education through first-hand study of the ancient and modern arts and culture of Italy. In terms of the fine arts, Britain benefitted incalculably from the fruits of the Grand Tour, and hence most attention to the activities of Britons in Italy has focused on their collecting of painting and sculpture and their study of antiquities.

The music-related activities of the Tourists have received less attention, perhaps due to the impression that the musical activities were trivial or inconsequential. Even for contemporaries, the youths' musical pursuits and activities came in for special condemnation.

Using unpublished letters, journals, and accounts, this paper will survey the musical activities of Britons on their Grand Tours, suggesting the youths' pursuit of music was not completely frivolous and contributed to the operatic system of Britain. It will survey the Tourists' attendance at operas and sacred concerts; their taking music lessons, commissioning music, and purchasing instruments; and their visits to famous singers (Farinelli and Senesino) in Italy.

The notion of historical "listening" is a current topic, and the Tourists recorded their first-hand, unmediated responses to hearing and comparing singers.

The travelers contributed to Britain's home musical and opera culture: music lovers were informed of rising singers; travelers assisted in recruiting singers for London's opera company; they provided information about opera and singers in Italy; and they improved levels of taste and connoisseurship.

## **Michael Cole — 'The First Piano in England'**

William Jackson of Exeter recalled in his 'Four Ages' of 1798, 'The First Piano in England' was an instrument shown to him by Kirckman, the harpsichord maker 'at the house of Mr. Jennings in Great Ormond Street'. It was 'of the shape and size of a Ruckers harpsichord' he says (so somewhat smaller than the instruments he was used to). Though it was 'very imperfect' he adds, 'I was much delighted with it.' He does not give a date for this encounter, but I note that John Broadwood sent a man to tune 'a harpsichord, pianoforte for Mr. Jennings' in 1773. There can be little doubt that both references can be ascribed to an instrument purchased by Charles Jennens that arrived from Italy in 1732. On the other hand, Charles Burney on two occasions claimed that first pianoforte seen in England was owned by his patron Fulke Greville – a harpsichord-shaped pianoforte that had arrived in 1739-40 in the possession of his friend Samuel Crisp. Neither was correct, regarding precedence. Investigation now reveals that another instrument sent from Florence in 1727 has a stronger claim, and in this paper we examine the history of that piano, and the surprising identity of its player, and the musical heritage we may ascribe to her.

### **Anita Sikora — Margherita Durastanti's Roman mothers in London**

As McGeary argues in his study with the title *Virtue and liberty: Italian opera and Roman self-imagining in Britain 1720-1742* (2008, *LISA E-Journal*, 6 (2), pp. 36-60), London's opera goers in the 1720s showed great interest in plots based on the Roman Republic's history because they modelled themselves on idealised Republican values of ancient Rome. In this context it is little known that Roman singer Margherita Durastanti featured as a mother in two operas, both set in Republican Rome, that give these values a central role. In *Coriolano* by Attilio Ariosti (1666-1729) in 1723 and *Calpurnia* by Giovanni Bononcini (1670-1747) in 1724, both adapted from earlier librettos sources by Nicola Francesco Haym (1678-1729), the plots are structured around the mother role. In my presentation I argue that both operas belong together, the former focusing on the mother-son bond, the latter on a mother-daughter relationship. I also show that in both operas Durastanti's arias explore various affects that go along with a mother's duty to keep her family's emotional life in check while the recitatives display a mother's civic heroism that prioritises nation over personal maternal desires. With one exception, Durastanti's arias in these operas have not been performed since the eighteenth century. Therefore, this lecture will include some audio representation of her arias by London Early Opera under the direction of Bridget Cunningham.

### **Yeo Yat-Soon — First Encounters: Musical journeys between Europe and Asia from the dawn of the global world**

European keyboard instruments first reached Imperial China when the Italian Jesuit missionary Matteo Ricci brought the Ming dynasty Wanli Emperor the gift of a clavichord in 1601. By the 1650s, another missionary, Matteo Ripa wrote that the Qing dynasty Kangxi Emperor had "harpsichords and spinets in great numbers in all his palaces". By the early 18th century, the main conduits for cultural exchanges between China and Europe shifted from religion to commerce. A sustained period of peace and stability led to a huge increase in trade. The main Chinese exports of ceramics, tea and silk were all highly prized in Europe. To control maritime frontiers the Qing Dynasty introduced the "Canton System" in 1760, whereby all foreign trade was restricted to one south-eastern seaport: Canton (modern day Guangzhou). The first attempt by a European country to establish diplomatic relations with China was made in 1793 to try and open up the China market. This was the Macartney Embassy, sent by King George III to the Qianlong Emperor. This presentation will explore music associated with each of these periods, including 17th century music from Italian and Chinese sources, a unique a piece performed by a Cantonese merchant who visited London in 1756, arrangements of Chinese music brought back to London by members of the Macartney Embassy, and transcriptions of Chinese music made by Jean Joseph Marie Amiot, a Jesuit resident in Beijing, who was the Qianlong Emperor's translator and advisor to the Macartney Embassy.

### **Graham Cummings — Hasse's Siroe in London (1736-37)**

Hasse's opera *Siroe* was composed for the Teatro Malvezzi, Bologna, and first performed there on 2 May 1733 with two of Italy's most famous singers, Farinelli and Vittoria Tesi, performing the principal roles. It was a setting of Metastasio's text, but much revised. That it achieved some 26 performances with the composer directing 19 of them is testament to its immediate popularity.

This paper will focus on the presentation of *Siroe* in London in 1736, where it opened the last of the four seasons (1733–37) during which London's two Italian opera companies, namely Handel's and the rival 'Opera of the Nobility', had been locked in aggressive competition for the city's relatively small opera audience. This opera, which was performed by the Nobility company, had 13 performances, but the last five required the audience enticement of one of Orlandini's comic intermezzos.

The paper will address the following questions:

- (i) How significant was the influence of Farinelli and his patron, Thomas Osborne, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Leeds, in the selection and transference of *Siroe* to London?
- (ii) Did the choice of a libretto, whose source was Metastasio, set a precedent for the remainder of the Nobility company's 1736 – 37 season?
- (iii) What changes were made to Hasse's score to ensure its popularity in London?
- (iv) What significance did *Siroe* have in the 'operatic war' between London's two opera companies?

### **Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson — The composer Maria Hester Park and the poet Robert Bloomfield: some musical connections**

The labouring-class poet Robert Bloomfield (1766-1823) achieved overnight fame with the publication of his poem *The Farmer's Boy* in 1800. By this time he had come to know and value the advice of Thomas Park, a poet, editor and antiquarian, who was the husband of Maria Hester Park (1760-1811). She was a successful composer, mainly of keyboard music, with 13 opus numbers to her name by 1801. Although Bloomfield had been a farmer's boy in his home county of Suffolk, he was not strong enough to become a farm worker and so trained as a shoe-maker in London. He enjoyed music, and as a young man played the violin. From about 1800 Bloomfield experimented with making Aeolian harps, and these became an extra source of income for him. Maria Hester published a sonnet in praise of the Aeolian harp and its maker, a useful advertisement, and she also became a trusted advisor about the music composed by Robert's brother Isaac, a journeyman bricklayer. This paper will look at a surviving Aeolian harp made by Bloomfield, the publication by subscription of his brother's set of six anthems for country churches without an organ, and the interesting personal connections that stemmed from these aspects of Bloomfield's life, including the musical Sharp family so memorably portrayed by Zoffany and the erstwhile child prodigy William Crotch.

### **Roz Southey — The Music Trade and Domestic Music-Making: Two sheet music collections from late-Georgian North-East England**

This paper introduces two late-Georgian binders' volumes of sheet music held at the Literary and Philosophical Society in Newcastle-upon-Tyne which provide insight into the musical activities of two amateur music consumers from the North-East of England. The collections include music from local and national presses, composers and publishers; evidence from these collections, alongside that for the music trade in Newcastle at the period, allows an exploration of the routes through which the compilers might have acquired their music. The collections can also be placed in the wider context of contemporaneous surviving binders' volumes to consider how they illuminate engagements by two North-East amateur music consumers with both national and local musical cultures.

## **Alan Howard — Eccles's Collection of Songs (1704) and John Walsh's Publishing Model in the Early Eighteenth Century**

Reviewing Eric Harbeson's edition of John Eccles's *Judgment of Paris*—part of the ongoing *Works of John Eccles* published by A-R within their *Recent Researches in the Music of the Baroque Era*—Bryan White recently called for a careful appraisal of the composer's anthology *A Collection of Songs for One Two and Three Voices* (1704) in order to understand better its relationship with other sources. In this paper I address White's challenge through close analysis of the 1704 Songs, focusing on those songs that Walsh had already published prior to Eccles's collection. It is this aspect that makes the Songs fundamentally different from Purcell's *Orpheus Britannicus* (1698) or Blow's *Amphion Anglicus* (1700), which were both typeset *ex nihilo*. By contrast, about a third of the 1704 Songs had not only been previously published by Walsh, but were also reprinted from the very same plates, with frequent corrections and compositional revisions as well as a consistent approach to peritextual materials. As such, the Songs offers a unique window onto the editorial process in the latter stages of its preparation. After considering the publication history of the Songs, I show that Eccles must have taken a proactive role in preparing the publication, examining his musical input in detail. I also examine the broader implications for Walsh's working methods, in particular the relationship between his separate song-sheets of c.1700 and the composite publications that increasingly dominated his catalog in the first two decades of the new century.

## **Gesa zur Nieden and Berthold Over — John Walsh's Favourite Songs between Local Markets and European Perspectives**

For a long time, the production and consumption of the music prints produced by the London based firm John Walsh (father and son) has been the object of philological research on 18<sup>th</sup>-century opera composers such as Handel, Hasse or Johann Christian Bach, based on the catalogues by Smith, Humphries, Hunter and Baldwin/Wilson. More recently, Walsh prints have been further investigated adopting cultural-historical views, whether through their use of performance material in concerts and salon music-making, or as memory objects of opera performances and performers (Burrows, Aspden, Burden). Synthesizing these findings, a planned British-German research project will look systematically into Walsh's *Favourite Songs* to answer the following questions: are there any patterns regarding the selection of arias? Who purchased the prints? What is known about the use of Walsh-printed arias in the salon and the concert room? How might they be contextualized with apposite print music production in Hamburg, Paris and Amsterdam?

In our paper, we will briefly outline the project and initial findings. Berthold Over will focus on the possible intentions and concepts behind the aria selections; Gesa zur Nieden will contextualize the prints from a European perspective. The first aspect seems to be guided by discourses around opera and preferred musical styles in London (exemplified by Handel's *Catone*, *Orlando* and *Alcina*). Seemingly, the *Favourite Song* prints were not only a means to advance and promulgate fashions from the London music market, but a conduit for a European-wide transmission of music and aesthetic tendencies sought-after by transnational 18<sup>th</sup>-century composers and taken up in the editions by Jean-Joseph Vadé and Johann Christian Bach.