



# A Passion for Opera

THE DUCHESS AND THE  
GEORGIAN STAGE



BOUGHTON





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# A Passion for Opera

THE DUCHESS AND THE  
GEORGIAN STAGE

PAUL BOUCHER  
JEANICE BROOKS  
KATRINA FAULDS  
CATHERINE GARRY  
WIEBKE THORMÄHLEN



BOUGHTON

## 2 OVERTURE LA BUONA FIGLIUOLA, Sig<sup>ro</sup> Piccini.



Published to accompany the exhibition  
*A Passion for Opera: The Duchess and the Georgian Stage*  
Boughton House, 6 July – 30 September 2019  
<http://www.boughtonhouse.co.uk>  
<https://sound-heritage.soton.ac.uk/projects/passion-for-opera>

First published 2019 by The Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust

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ISBN: 978-1-5272-4170-1

Designed by pmgd  
Printed by Martinhouse Design & Marketing Ltd

Cover: Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), Lady Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch, 1767. Portrait commemorating the marriage of Elizabeth Montagu, daughter of George, Duke of Montagu, to Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch. (Cat.10). © *Buccleuch Collection*.  
Backdrop: Augustus Pugin (1769-1832) and Thomas Rowlandson (1757-1827), 'Opera House (1800)', in Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London* (London: Ackermann, [1808-1810]).  
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Inside cover: William Capon (1757-1827), The first Opera House (King's Theatre) in the Haymarket, 1789. The image was painted shortly before the opera house perished in a fire in 1789. Advertised above the door are some of the current season's productions: *La buona figliuola* by Niccolò Piccinni, and a 'Benefit for Signora Sestini'. © *London Metropolitan Archives*.



## DEDICATED TO HER GRACE THE *Duchess of Buccleuch*

**E**lizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch (1743-1827), was a pivotal player in Georgian high society and a lifelong lover of opera. *A Passion for Opera: The Duchess and the Georgian Stage* uses the rich resources of the Montagu Music Collection at Boughton House and the archives of the Buccleuch family to delve into the world of Georgian operatic culture and the women who inhabited it. We explore Elizabeth Montagu's experience of going to the opera, investigate the family's interactions with opera stars such as Angelica Catalani and Nancy Storace, and consider their efforts to establish opera 'at home' in Edinburgh as well as in London. We introduce the singing masters and dancing mistresses who taught and performed with the family, and reveal rare evidence of how operatic music was performed in aristocratic homes.

The exhibition is the result of a partnership between the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, the University of Southampton and the Royal College of Music. The organisers would like to thank His Grace, the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry, the Trustees of the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council of Great Britain for their generous support. We are grateful to Scott Macdonald, Head of Collections and Conservation, Charles Lister, Property Manager at Boughton House, Kathryn Price, Collections Assistant, Sarah Richardson, Buccleuch Marketing Manager and Alan Smith, Custodian at Boughton House, for their help and advice. Our particular, heartfelt gratitude goes to Crispin Powell, Archivist at the Buccleuch Living Heritage Trust at Boughton House, for his substantial contribution to our research.



UNIVERSITY OF  
**Southampton**



**BOUGHTON**





At the Opera. - Sand 1791.  
Printed Oct. 4<sup>th</sup> 1791. by H. Humphrey, No. 18, Old-



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## Abbreviations

<b>NRS</b>	National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh
<b>MMC</b>	Montagu Music Collection
<b>Cat.</b>	In the main text refers to exhibition catalogue numbers as they appear in the Catalogue, p. 121.

# Theatre Royal, Drury-Lane.

This present WEDNESDAY, December 5, 1798,  
Their Majesties Servants will perform a New Comedy in five acts called

## A Word for Nature.

The Characters by

Mr. A I C K I N,  
Mr. S U E T T,  
Mr. B A R R Y M O R E,  
Mr. B A N N I S T E R, Jun.  
Mr. R. P A L M E R,  
Mr. D O W T O N,  
Mr. H O L L I N G S W O R T H,  
Mr. E V A N S, Mr. W E B B,  
Mr. F I S H E R, Mr. R I D E R.  
Miss P O P E,  
Miss B I G G S,  
Mrs. W A L C O T.

The Prologue to be Spoken by Mr. BARRYMORE.

And the Epilogue by Mr. BANNISTER, Jun.

To which will be added (11th time) a New Musical Drama,  
in Two acts, called The

## CAPTIVE of SPILBURG.

The Musick entirely new by

D U S S E K.

With new Scenery, Dresses, and Decorations.

The Characters by

Mr. B A R R Y M O R E,  
Mr. K E L L Y,  
Mr. S U E T T,  
Mr. W A T H E N,  
Miss B E N S O N,  
Mr. C A U L F I E L D, Mr. M A D D O C K S,  
Mrs. C R O U C H,  
Mrs. B L A N D.  
CHORUS of SOLDIERS, by  
Messrs. Danby, Wentworth, Brown, Tett, Denman, Atkins, Fisher, Aylmer,  
PEASANTS.

Messrs. Arne, Roffey, Wentworth, Jackson, Maddocks, Menage, Menage, Jun.


In the course of the Piece A DANCE, by

Messrs. Roffey, Whitmell, Wells, Garman, Johnston, Goodman, Gauron.

Messrs. Brooker, Daniels, Brigg, Byrne, Vining, Luciet, Drake, Riches.

And a New HORNPIPE by


Signora B O S S I D E L C A R O.

 Books of the Songs to be had at the Theatre.

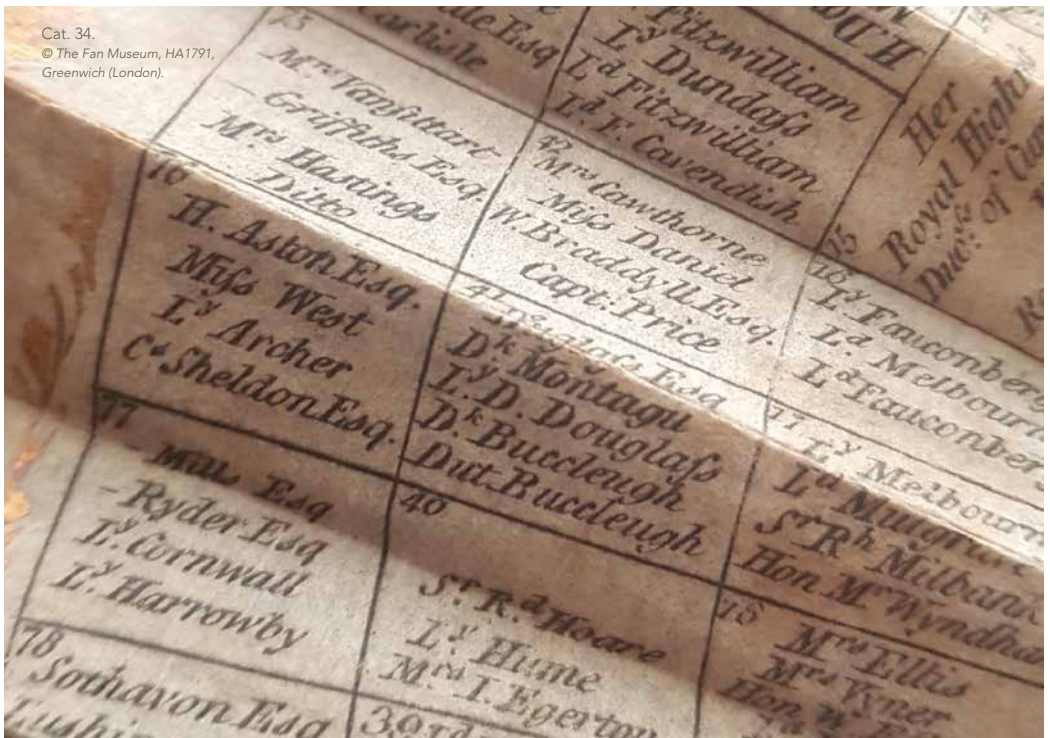
Printed by C. Lowndes, next the Stage Door.

*Vivant Rex et Regina.*

To morrow, (for the first time this Season) The Comic Ballet of LITTLE FANNY'S LOVE, with the Musical Entertainment of The SHIPWRECK.

 The BEGGAR'S OPERA, in which a YOUNG LADY made her Second Appearance on any Stage, in the Character of Polly, having been approved with most unbounded applause, due notice will be given of its next representation.

An Original Drama from the German of ZOEBUE, never published in this Country, is in preparation, and will be speedily produced.



21. May 1803

Her Grace The Duchess of Buccleuch  
 to J. Watkins,  
 Optical, Mathematical, & Philosophical  
**INSTRUMENT MAKER,**  
 To their Royal Highnesses,  
**THE DUKES OF YORK AND CLARENCE,**  
**AND THE HON. EAST INDIA COMPANY.**  
 Charing Cross London.

To a large gilt Portable Opera, } £3. 3. 0  
 with Aromatic Glasses.

Recd Watkins





## Notes on Contributors

**Paul Boucher** Since working as a boy soprano with Benjamin Britten and The English Opera Group, Paul Boucher has spent his life in music. After studying the violin in Moscow, he performed internationally with some of today's leading ensembles, founded a festival in France and a music education project in inner London. Since 2009 he has been creative and research director of the Montagu Music Collection at Boughton House, aiming to document and bring back to life the immense variety of music scores collected over the centuries by the Montagu and Buccleuch families. In 2019 he launched a new series with Melvyn Tan – "Music and Word" – at the Bloomsbury group's historic country centre, Charleston Farmhouse in East Sussex.

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**Jeanice Brooks** is Professor of Music at the University of Southampton. Her books include *Courtly Song in Late Sixteenth-Century France* (Chicago, 2000) and *The Musical Work of Nadia Boulanger: Performing Past and Future Between the Wars* (Cambridge, 2013). Her current book project, *At Home with Music: Sounding the Domestic in Georgian Britain*, explores music in the material and ideological construction of the home.

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**Katrina Faulds** is a postdoctoral research fellow at the University of Southampton, where she also completed her PhD in 2015. Her research interests include dance and dance music in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, along with concepts of grace.

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**Catherine Garry** is a PhD candidate at the University of Southampton. Her thesis explores the domestic consumption of Italian opera in Georgian Britain, focusing in particular on ideas of cultural transfer, vocal pedagogy, and the relationship between Italian culture and elite identity. During 2018/19 she has worked as a curatorial assistant to Paul Boucher in preparation for the exhibition at Boughton House.

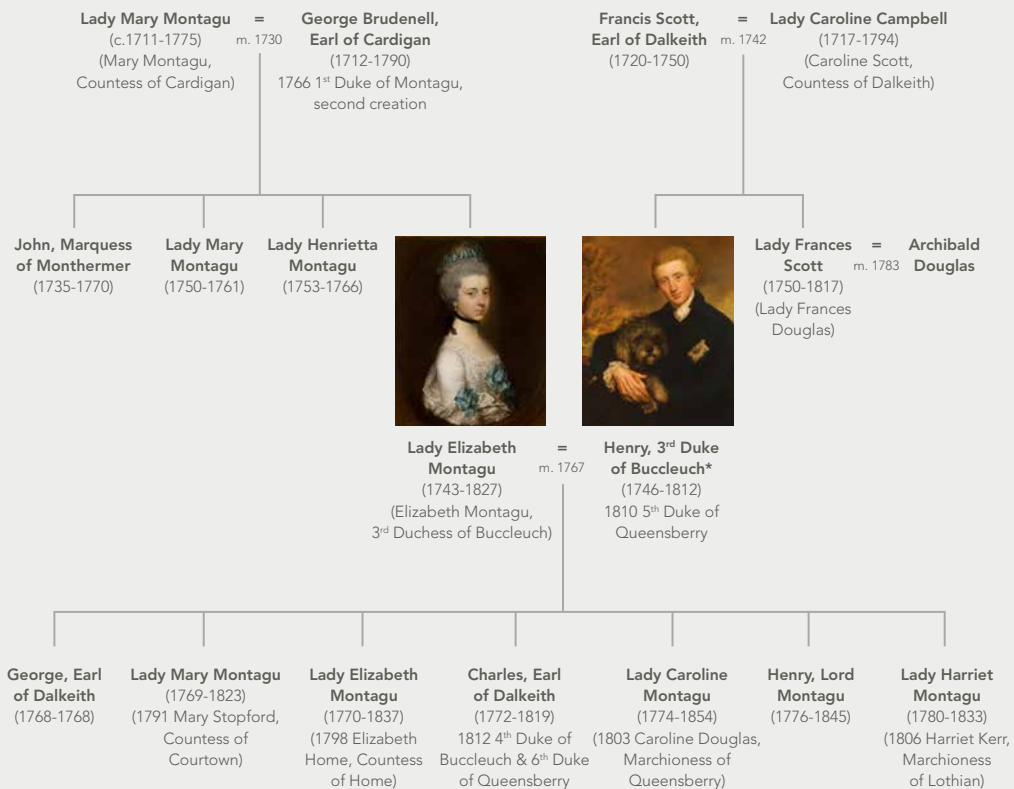
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**Wiebke Thormählen** is the Area Leader in History at the Royal College of Music in London. Her research focuses on the formulation of music as a language of emotions and its particular role in domestic social activity, and in educational theories and policies since the eighteenth century. She has recently co-edited the *Routledge Companion to Music, Mind and Well-being*.





# Montagu-Buccleuch Family Tree



\* Henry's and Frances's four other siblings, all of whom died before Henry's marriage in 1767, have not been included here.





## INTRODUCTION

# Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

Paul Boucher with Crispin Powell

**L**ady Elizabeth Montagu, the daughter of Lady Mary Montagu of Boughton House and George Brudenell, Earl of Cardigan and later Duke of Montagu, from nearby Deene Park, was born in 1743, at Cardigan House, Dover St, London. She was baptised in St. George's Hanover Square, the local parish church which Handel also attended. She died in 1827 aged 84, the last bearer of the sole Montagu surname. Her long, privileged life both north and south of the border spanned three Georgian kings and the inevitably unstable reign of a Prince Regent; her lifetime was marked by rapid changes in scientific thought, artistic practice and social structure. She was highly educated and culturally engaged but she also endured much sorrow, losing not only her parents and husband but also her two sisters, her brother and three of her children.

At the turn of the nineteenth century elite women could exert significant creative and artistic influence as spectators, patrons and amateur performers of opera and ballet. This had been a strong element in Elizabeth's own upbringing which she then bequeathed to her daughters, producing a vibrant culture of music in her main residences at Montagu House in London, Dalkeith Palace near Edinburgh, and her country villa in Richmond on the Thames. Her musical life and her independent patronage of musicians, artists and artisans provide a unique view of the world of opera, dance and music theatre of the Georgian period.

### Early Musical Experiences

Elizabeth's early years seem hardly to have been documented, although we know from receipts for lessons and other archival documents that, alongside a broad classical education (she chose to name her young spaniel 'Pompey'), this was a highly musical childhood. Her mother played the harpsichord, taking lessons with John Ernest Galliard (?1666/1687-1747), a noted Huguenot musician and colleague of Handel.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth herself may initially have been taught by Joseph Abington, who acted as a music master in the household of her maternal grandfather, John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Montagu, in the 1740s and seems

**Fig. 1.1:** Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792),  
Portrait of Lady Elizabeth Montagu,  
Duchess of Buccleuch, 1755.  
© Buccleuch Collection.

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to have had a lengthy association with the family.<sup>2</sup> Her experience of music would soon embrace opera and ballet, perhaps an inherited passion. Duke John and Elizabeth's great-grandfather, Ralph, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Montagu, helped finance John Vanbrugh's original Queen's (later King's) Theatre in the Haymarket in 1705, and the family maintained a connection with the same theatre well into the nineteenth century. In 1749, when Elizabeth was a small child, Handel was commissioned by Duke John to create the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* for George II, to celebrate the end of the War of the Austrian Succession. The Montagu arms were emblazoned over the entrance to the musicians' gallery at the centre of Giovanni Servandoni's fantastic temporary pavilion in Green Park, part of which famously caught fire on the night. One can so easily imagine her right there, aged six, or at least watching the extraordinarily elaborate fireworks display from a safe distance at a window in the Queen's Library of St. James's Palace with her grandfather and parents.

**A**T the Great Room in Spring-  
Garden, near St. James's Park, Tuesday, June  
5. at Twelve o'Clock, will be performed a grand Con-  
cert of  
**Vocal and Instrumental MUSIC.**  
For the Benefit of Miss MOZART of Eleven, and Ma-  
ster MOZART of Seven Years of Age, Prodiges of Na-  
This Method is therefore taken to shew to the  
Public the greatest prodigy that Europe or that even  
Human Nature has to boast of. Every Body will be  
struck with Admiration to hear them, and particular y  
to hear a young Boy of seven Years of Age play on the  
Harpfichord with such Dexterity and Perfection. It  
surp asses all Understanding or all Imagination; and it is  
hard to say whether his Execut on upon the Harpfichord,  
and his playing at Sight, or his own Compositions,  
are most astonishing. His Father brought him to En-  
gland, not doubting but that he must meet with Suc-  
cess in a Kingdom, where his Countryman Handel re-  
ceived during his Life-time such particular Protection.  
† Tickets, at Half a Guinea each, to be had of Mr  
Mozart, at Mr. Couzin's, Hair-Cutter, in Cecil-  
Court, St. Martin's Lane.

Fig. 1.2: *Public Advertiser*,  
1 June 1764. 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>  
Century Burney Collection.  
© The British Library Board.



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## Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

Entertainment culture expanded rapidly from Elizabeth's youth in the 1760s through the end of the eighteenth century, and Georgian London hosted performances by leading composers from all over Europe while becoming the home of a burgeoning instrument trade. Although currently her earliest known Mozart acquisition is a set of duets, not bought until the mid-1780s, Elizabeth possibly heard the young Wolfgang himself, performing in 1764 either at Buckingham House or at his Spring Garden concert – a stone's throw from Montagu House (fig. 1.2).<sup>3</sup> The premiere of his first symphony took place at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, with which Duke John was closely associated. The Mozart family were also taken to see the nascent British Museum located in Montagu House in Bloomsbury, the magnificent old home which the family vacated in 1733. One would also like to believe that she heard Haydn on one of his two historic visits to London in the 1790s. In 1768, Johann Christian Bach (1735-1782) reportedly gave the first solo performance in public on the piano in England. London had become a hub for piano manufacture, particularly by emigrant artisans. One such craftsman was Johannes Zumpe (1726-1790), for whom J.C. Bach may have been an agent. By 1777, Elizabeth was the owner of a square piano by Zumpe, which was similar to the instrument used by Bach for his concert (Cat. 30).<sup>4</sup>

### Marriage and Family Life in Scotland

Two of the great families of the day came together when on 2 May 1767, at her parents' home in London, Lady Elizabeth Montagu married Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch (1746-1812), in a perfect love match. Henry was, of course, a good catch: he was of the highest social standing and had the wealth that came with this; he was well travelled and highly educated and had recently returned from a three-year tour abroad with the celebrated and hugely influential economist and philosopher Adam Smith. Elizabeth was equally noble and wealthy, and according to Dr Alexander Carlyle (1721-1805), rector of Inveresk and a key member of the Church of Scotland Synod, she was a considerable beauty as well:

The Duchess at that time was extremely beautiful; her features were regular, her complexion good, her black eyes of an impressive lustre and her mouth, when she spoke, uncommonly graceful. The expression of her countenance was that of good sense and serenity; she had been bred in too private a way, which made her shy and backward, and it was some time before she acquired ease in company, which at last enabled her to display that superiority of understanding which led all the female virtues in its train, accompanied with the love of mirth, and all the graces of colloquial intercourse. Her person was light, though above common height, but active and elegant.<sup>5</sup>

The Rev. John Marriott (1780-1825), poet and friend of Sir Walter Scott, wrote later that 'There is a plainness and unaffected simplicity in her manner that has

---

quite won my heart'.<sup>6</sup> While on honeymoon at Sudbrook, the Duke wrote to his friend Earl Fitzwilliam, 'I think it will be my own fault if I am not the happiest man in the world. She has every quality to make marriage the happiest state of life'.<sup>7</sup>

The marriage coincided with the beginnings of Edinburgh's New Town, a masterpiece of planning which was to transform the entire look of the ancient city and mirror the development of Edinburgh into one of the great intellectual centres of Europe. The wedding itself was celebrated by the townspeople of Dalkeith, the Buccleuch family seat, and on other Buccleuch estates, with illuminations, bonfires, bell ringing and 'every demonstration of joy'.<sup>8</sup> The decision to establish Dalkeith Palace, just outside Edinburgh, as their main residence was a surprise to many, who had anticipated that they would choose London as a permanent base. The classical sandstone palace, which gave a nod to William of Orange's palace of Het Loo in the Netherlands, had been built in 1702 by Anna Scott, the widow of the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Monmouth and Buccleuch, the eldest illegitimate son of Charles II. However, by 1767 the impressive building needed significant restoration in order to adapt it for contemporary, stylish living. Beyond the necessary structural repairs and redecorations, a new servants' bell system was installed, along with piping for fresh water, and the library was expanded. The Gallery became the principal reception room of the palace and was used for dancing, music and other more official functions. It held many of the family's showpiece paintings as well as the late Duke of Monmouth's magnificent Boulle cabinets. Outside, an ice-house was built and the formal gardens gave way to a more contemporary, natural landscape. A magnificent oriel window, designed by the Scottish architect James Playfair, was installed in the library in 1776, allowing more natural light for reading and affording a panoramic view of the new vista from inside the palace. In 1792, the Scottish neoclassical architect Robert Adam created an elaborate stone bridge to celebrate the union of the Montagu and Scott families and estates, and to enhance the carriage approach to Dalkeith Palace from Edinburgh.

Despite legal restrictions which generally placed a woman's property into her husband's hands, families as prominent as the Montagus acted to ensure that both their name and properties were protected as they descended through the female line. Elizabeth's father had become the first Duke of Montagu of the second creation, taking his wife's name in recognition of the prestige and wealth of the Montagu family. Elizabeth herself retained control of an independent fortune within a marriage marked by mutual respect and affection. She had learnt book-keeping and carefully monitored her incomings and outgoings. Her accounting knowledge was further developed after the premature death of her brother in 1770, making her the heiress apparent to her father's enormous estates and properties at the age of 27, with all the implied responsibilities. Letters between Elizabeth and Henry Buccleuch are full of business and show her keen interest in managing her affairs; as Henry commented in October 1775 on sending news about her estates: 'I am sure in a very short time you will

understand your affairs as well as any man in England'.<sup>9</sup> Life changed in 1790 when Elizabeth's father died and she came into her Montagu inheritances, including Montagu House in Whitehall, Ditton Park, Blackheath and Richmond. Keeping a keen eye on each of the houses, she took it upon herself in 1791 to sack Robert Stanley, the steward at Boughton House, for neglect. She retained firm control over this vast range of estates, keeping meticulous records of expenditure until late in her life.

The Montagu-Buccleuch marriage produced six surviving children, whose presence gave new impetus to life at Dalkeith. Duchess Elizabeth was among the first women of her rank to give birth in private, under what we would consider to be normal circumstances. Lady Mary Coke commented that the duchess was 'perfectly well, in her great room with all the windows open, & no one thing that conveys the idea of a lying inn [sic] Lady'.<sup>10</sup> George, her first son, died in infancy in 1768, but her daughter Mary was born the following year, Elizabeth in 1770, Charles, Earl of Dalkeith in 1772, Caroline in 1774, Henry in 1776 and finally Harriet in 1780 (fig. 1.3). It was clearly a family that thrived on mutual esteem, good humour and love. Shortly before his death, Duke Henry provided his children with a touching tribute to his duchess: 'your mother my dear wife [is] the best friend you have in this world, her superior sense and tender affection for you entitle her to your utmost affection. I hope she will live long beloved by her children and grandchildren. She has been the best wife, the best mother and kindest friend that ever God created in this world'.<sup>11</sup>

### Travels Abroad

Just three years before the French Revolution, in 1786 - the year of Robert Burns's first poetry and Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* in Vienna - Elizabeth traversed the Continent, her first trip abroad since spending time in France with her parents as a child. Most of her near male relations had undertaken some version of the Grand Tour, the Continental European travel that was a staple of elite masculine education. Her brother John Brudenell, Lord Monthermer's stay in France and Italy in the 1750s lasted for almost a decade and was marked by the extensive acquisition of art and antiquities. Duke Henry's tour (1764-1766), under the supervision of Adam Smith, was mainly spent in Paris, while the later travels of their son Lord Dalkeith, future 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch, (1790-93) represent a distinctive version of the tour that included travel to Scandinavia and Russia as well as the traditional European destinations.<sup>12</sup> Theatre, operas, concerts, and private musical entertainments in both foreign and expatriate circles were a significant part of the experience, regularly described in letters home to Britain. Monthermer's tutor Henry Lyte, for example, reported their disappointment in the famous Allegri *Miserere* performed by the Sistine Chapel choir in Rome, and delight in hearing the great castrato Gaetano Majorano – known as Caffarelli – and other opera singers in Naples.<sup>13</sup>



**Fig. 1.3:** Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch and her daughter Lady Mary Scott (1769-1823), c.1772.  
© Buccleuch Collection.



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## Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

Though young women were generally excluded from this form of education through extended independent travel, Elizabeth's own version of the Grand Tour as Duchess of Buccleuch, accompanied by Henry and her elder daughters, extended through 1786-1787. Her excitement can be gauged by the carefully kept travel journals in which she documented every day of her trip.<sup>14</sup> The group paused in Paris for a fortnight to visit churches and monuments including the Bastille, the Tuileries Palace and the Palais Royal, where she admired the collection of paintings. Sightseeing during the day was followed by excursions to the theatre, Opéra or the Comédie Italienne every evening; Elizabeth attended Pierre Corneille's *Le Cid* and Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera *Armide*, and was particularly impressed by the performance of Nicolas Dalayrac's sentimental opera *Nina* at the Comédie. A day's excursion took the family to the Palace of Versailles, which had so inspired her great-grandfather Ralph Montagu, Charles II's ambassador to Louis XIV. Here they saw the Queen as she returned from Mass and the young Dauphin with his siblings, but Elizabeth was unimpressed: 'a sickly ugly boy and has a very silly countenance. The room we waited in before we were admitted to see them was as dirty as possible, all sorts of people in it spitting in every corner'. They also visited Marie-Antoinette's favourite refuges from court, the Petit Trianon and the Hameau, 'rather a paltry thing for a Queen'.

The tour continued through France and Italy via Rome to Naples, then a separate kingdom. The return was through Rome again for Holy Week, across to the Adriatic coast and Venice, then on to Switzerland and down the Rhine. Onward travel through France and Italy was marked by music in all the major cities: Elizabeth heard Giovanni Paisiello's *Il rè Teodoro in Venezia* in Milan, attended further operas in Florence and Parma, was invited to music parties at the residences of cardinals in Rome, and toured churches and convents in search of good sacred music performances. Driven by her keen interest in old master paintings, architecture and sculpture, Elizabeth followed an itinerary in Rome that only the most dedicated of sightseers would have countenanced, encompassing virtually every church, palace or villa and every possible antiquity. On one day they squeezed in 14 churches. In her journal, Elizabeth assiduously listed all the paintings and sculptures she saw that she regarded as significant, occasionally musing that they were similar to or 'a copy of one at Whitehall'.

The schedule of musical tourism was equally busy: in Naples, during one span of fewer than 36 hours, Elizabeth went to two private concerts, the opera, and the ceremony of a nun taking the veil. She had hopes of witnessing some fine music-making in Italy but was often disappointed. In Milan she was unimpressed by La Scala, and she found Leonardo's *Last Supper* 'in very bad condition'. At the opera in Florence she commented:

These audiences, as usual, talked almost the whole time and we had a lady and two gentlemen in the box who talked without ceasing so that I could hear but very imperfectly being at a great distance from the stage. The dance, or the pantomime, for it was not much like dancing,

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lasted almost as long as one of the sets of the opera. The decoration and drapes, the best I have seen in Italy. We did not get home 'til past ten and the opera was not near over, after which there was to be another long dance and the whole is never at an end 'til between eleven and twelve. It begins soon after seven. (Travel Journals, 12 November 1786).

In Rome she visited St Peter's ('which far exceeded the idea I had formed of it') and the Vatican, 'where we were almost thawed with cold, but were much pleased both with the paintings and marbles. We went in the evening, by invitation, to a great concert at Cardinal Bernis'. The noise of the company, as usual, quite got the better of the musick'. She seems to have shared her brother's opinion of the music in the Sistine Chapel, commenting on the *Miserere*: 'a very striking piece of music but upon the whole a tiresome thing as the fine part does not last half an hour and there is a great deal of chanting'. Other experiences were more rewarding: in Venice at the Pietà, where Vivaldi had been so active earlier in the century, they heard some 'excellent music, the performers all female'. In Naples, at the San Carlo Theatre – then the epicentre of European opera – she was particularly pleased by Paisiello's *Le gare generose*, which the family would see a few months later in London when it premiered there as *Gli schiavi per amore*.

## Enlightenment Culture, Patronage and Philanthropy

Elizabeth's life coincided both with the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution, a time of historic transitions, social reform and increasing religious tolerance, when Britain was keen to assimilate the best of European culture, institutions and ideas. The thinking in science, philosophy, architecture, literature, economics, politics, medicine and music transformed rapidly, and new theories were frequently disseminated in popular formats. Exceptional, unsung women were now feeling able to step into the discourse, rubbing shoulders with some of the greatest innovators and thinkers of the day and making increasing contributions of their own. Scotland, importantly, was having its own Enlightenment, which would transform society and produce its own exceptional figures. Duke Henry was outstanding in his friendship and patronage of some of the great Scottish thinkers - Adam Smith, Thomas Telford, the Adam brothers, David Hume, William Chambers, the Earl of Dundonald, George Steuart, Alexander Carlyle – and together with his wife he would observe the gradual rise of Edinburgh's New Town, a visible and lasting emblem of the Scottish Enlightenment.

Elizabeth's prominence and engagement with music in various forms led several composers, especially those influential in Edinburgh's music scene, to dedicate works to her. *Lady Betty Mountague's Minuet* appeared in the *London Magazine* in 1762, when she would have been 19 (fig. 1.4). This was very likely dedicated to her or perhaps to her distant relative Elizabeth Montagu, daughter of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Halifax. Whatever the truth, this was the beginning of a new trend and over the years that followed much music was dedicated to her and to

**Lady BETTY MOUNTAGUE'S MINUET.**



Fig. 1.4: 'Lady Betty Mountague's Minuet', *The London Magazine: Or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*, December 1762, 668.

her family. The list of composers includes Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780), Joseph Hurka de Monti (c.1753-1823), Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812), the Gow family, Joseph Dale (1750-1821) and most notably Domenico Corri (1746-1825), who dedicated not only *A Select Collection of Choice Music for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte* (c.1790) to Elizabeth, but also his remarkable *The Singers Preceptor* (1810), which distills a whole lifetime's experience of vocal pedagogy into one of the most important singing treatises of the day.

Like the Montagus earlier in the century, the Buccleuch family also patronised one of London's most exclusive theatrical establishments. They paid a subscription for a box at the King's Theatre for many years, which is clearly

King's



Theatre.

THE NOBILITY, GENTRY, AND THE PUBLIC, ARE MOST RESPECTFULLY INFORMED, THAT  
IN AID OF THE FUNDS OF

## The Scottish Hospital,

*Of the Foundation of KING CHARLES THE SECOND, in 1665 and in 1676, and Re-incorporated  
by HIS PRESENT MAJESTY in 1779,  
(CLEAR OF ALL EXPENCES WHATSOEVER.)*

Under the Patronage and actual Direction of a COMMITTEE, consisting of

His Royal Highness the DUKE of CLARENCE and St. ANDREWS, President,  
And their Royal Highnesses the DUKES of KENT, SUSSEX, and CAMBRIDGE,

The Duke of Montrose,  
The Duke of Buccleuch,  
The Duke of Bedford,  
The Duke of Somerset,  
The Earl of Hardwicke,  
Lord Viscount Melville,  
Admiral Lord Keith,

Lord Dundas,  
The Hon. William Maule, M. P.  
Sir John Anstruther, Bart. M. P.  
Sir James Shaw, Bart. M. P.  
General Wemyss,  
General Campbell, M. P.  
Lyndon Evelyn, Esq. M. P.

William H. Freemanble, Esq. M. P.  
Charles Grant, Jun. Esq. M. P.  
Joseph House, Esq. M. P.  
Reginald George Macdonald, Esq.  
of Clarsnald,  
William Salis, Esq.;

### Patronesses,

The Duchess of Buccleuch,  
The Duchess of Bedford,  
The Duchess of Montrose,  
The Marchioness of Queensberry,  
The Marchioness of Stafford,  
The Marchioness of Exeter,  
The Marchioness of Douglas,  
The Countess of Galloway,  
The Countess of Loudon and Moira,

The Countess of Selkirk,  
The Countess of Aboyne,  
The Countess of Hardwicke,  
The Viscountess Melville,  
Lady Saltoun,  
Lady Montague,  
Lady Dundas,  
Lady Keith,  
Lady Bruce,

Lady Aston,  
Lady Emily Murray,  
Lady Margaret Fordyce,  
Lady Caroline Stuart Wortley,  
Lady Amelia Campbell,  
The Lady Mayores,  
Mrs. Crawford Bruce,  
Mrs. F. Hope.

*There will be represented at this Theatre,*

On THURSDAY, the 18th of JUNE next, 1812,

And for the First Time in this Country, the celebrated Opera of

## LE MARIAGE DE FIGARO,

THE MUSIC BY MOZART.

To be performed by

### MADAME CATALANI,

Signor FISCHER, Signor NALDI, Signor RIGHI, Signor MARTINI,

Signor DI GIOVANNI,

Madame BIANCHI, Signora GRIGLIETTI, Signora LUIGIA,

And Mrs. DICKONS,

*From the English Stage, being her First Appearance at this Theatre.*

To conclude with

## A NEW GRAND BALLET,

Composed expressly for the Occasion by Monsieur DIDELOT,

AND PERFORMED BY

Monsieur VESTRIS, and Madame ANGIOLINI,

Monsieur BOURDIN, Master BYRNE,

Miss SMITH, Miss TWANLEY, Miss PETO, Misses DAVIES,

And Madame DIDELOT, &c. &c.

All Applications for Boxes, as well as Tickets for the Pit and Gallery, are to be addressed to the COMMITTEE of the SCOTTISH HOSPITAL, at the Opera-House; where they will meet in the Great Concert Room for the dispatch of Business, on Monday the 8th, Friday the 12th, Saturday the 13th, Monday the 15th, Tuesday the 16th, and Wednesday the 17th Instant, from the Hours of Twelve to Four o'Clock; and by whom the whole of the Boxes will be arranged and filled up, and all the Tickets issued.

J. BRETTELL, Printer, Marsh-Market, Golden-Square, London.

Fig. 1.5: Playbill for a King's Theatre performance of Mozart's opera *Le mariage de Figaro* (London: Brettell, [1812]).  
© Houghton Library, Harvard University.



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## Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

illustrated in seating plans from the 1780s. The box, number 41, was quite close to that of the Duke of Cumberland. They took on a larger double box in the remodelled theatre of 1791 after a fire destroyed the original building. With a permanent family box, Elizabeth was used to high-quality performances and kept up to date with all the latest opera and ballet productions. She enthusiastically purchased hot-off-the-press the new scores circulating in fashionable London and Edinburgh, hired the most famous Italian teachers to instruct and play for her daughters, and provided vital support to singers, dancers and instrumentalists through her patronage. She may also have been present much later, newly widowed, at the London premiere of Mozart's *Le mariage de Figaro*, which was staged as a charitable performance at the King's Theatre in 1812 in aid of the Scottish Hospital (fig. 1.5). It was supported by notable royal and aristocratic patrons, including her son and daughter-in-law, the new Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, who are featured prominently on the advertising poster.

Beyond music, Elizabeth's interests were wide-ranging, and her private accounts reveal a strong, independent patronage of artists and craftsmen. In February 1797, with support from the duchess, Hugh William Williams ('Grecian Williams'), the Scottish landscape artist and friend of Turner, provided scenery for a performance of *The Capture of the Cape of Good Hope* at the Edinburgh Circus. The act, produced by Jones's Royal Circus troupe from London, included acrobatics, tumbling, and 'equestrian exercises'.<sup>15</sup> In 1813, he dedicated his 'View of Dunkeld' to Elizabeth, and several of his landscapes still hang at Drumlanrig Castle. James Stevenson Harvey, an impoverished pupil of Sir Henry Raeburn, also benefitted from her patronage and referred to her as 'the very best friend I ever had'.<sup>16</sup> Musical connections included the marine painter John Christian Schetky (son of the composer Johann Schetky) who Elizabeth assisted in his earlier years, and Alice Bacchelli, wife of Domenico Corri, who painted the Duke of Buccleuch.<sup>17</sup> The list of artists Elizabeth supported is long and includes Alexander Carse (*The Arrival of Country Cousins* and *A Group of Peasants Listening to an Itinerant Musician* now at Bowhill House), Thomas Heaphy (the Duke's portrait), Sir Thomas Lawrence (her own portrait; fig. 1.7), Alexander Nasmyth, Thomas Sandby, John Wilson (drawings of Dalkeith), and Mr Murphy (Lady Mary's portrait). Elizabeth also purchased items from female artists: Miss Smith for a miniature of Sir Walter Scott; Madam la Vau for her own portrait; Mrs Alston for 'a flower piece' and other pictures; Miss Buchannan for views of Kirkstall Abbey; Madame Beaurepaire for Lady Harriet's picture; and Miss Anne Forbes for a portrait of the duchess in 1774. Her encouragement of artists was immortalised in a lavishly decorated print by Michelangelo Pergolesi in his *Designs for Various Ornaments*, published between 1777 and 1801.

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Duchess Elizabeth's own artistic taste encompassed both classical works she encountered on her Grand Tour and home-grown satire. In Rome, she probably bought Xavier della Gatta's view of Naples that hangs with her brother's views in the Italian Room at Bowhill House. She was clearly no prude when it came to art because she admired 'a most Beautifull [sic] statue of a drunken fawn asleep' when she visited the Barberini palace in Rome.<sup>18</sup> Later, she purchased miniature versions of classical sculpture in biscuit porcelain by the Rome-based engraver and porcelain manufacturer, Giovanni Volpato, and probably had him produce one of the same naked, drunken faun. These were likely displayed on her 'Wedgewood' chimneypiece, which was salvaged from Montagu House early in the twentieth century and taken to Holker Hall in Cumbria, where it remains. Her sense of humour is evident through a large collection of caricatures she assembled with the help of her librarian, John Stewart, from the 1790s to the 1810s. She carefully pasted dozens of satirical prints into large leather-bound volumes that now reside in the Smoking Room at Bowhill House. Many are by the celebrated James Gillray and published by his partner, Hannah Humphrey. Perhaps with some glee she annotated the drawings with the name of each unfortunate subject and added the occasional comment (fig. 1.6). Opera was fair game for the satirists and many prints in her collection have singers and musicians as their targets.



**Fig. 1.6:** James Gillray (1756-1815), 'The Pic-Nic Orchestra' (London: Humphrey, 1802).  
© Buccleuch Collection.

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## Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

The Enlightenment was also provoking a revolution in reading. Literature was evolving rapidly from the age of classical poetry to the age of romantic prose embodied in the work of Goethe, ETA Hoffman, Choderlos de Laclos, de Sade and Schiller on the Continent, and Austen, Mary Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron, Scott and Keats at home. The library at Dalkeith Palace had its own extensive, eclectic collection of books and Elizabeth's reading habits are recorded in the library lists, culminating in Sir Walter Scott's fictional and romantic *Waverley* novels of 1814, which were bringing the distant history of the Scottish Borders back to life and making Scott the most famous and influential European novelist of his generation. Also popular with Elizabeth were Maria Edgeworth, the controversial author of *Castle Rackrent* satirising absentee Irish landlords; the Scottish essayist, poet and satirist Elizabeth Hamilton; and John Dickinson, the American politician, whose second series of letters focused on American relations with revolutionary France. She was also reading widely in French, in the family tradition of her Montagu grandfather and great-grandfather, whose households had a distinctly French bias. Many of her books were bound by William Sancho, whose father Ignatius was employed by the Montagu family.

The connection to France was also expressed through the duke and duchess's support for refugees fleeing the Napoleonic wars. Deeply shocked and unsettled by the executions of the French royal family and a large part of the aristocracy, Elizabeth willingly hosted and encouraged the exiled French royalists and artists who were pouring into the country, mirroring her great-grandfather's support for the Huguenot refugees a century before. Among them were the painter Henri-Pierre Danloux, from whom she commissioned a family group portrait for Dalkeith Palace in 1798, the Vicomte de Vaudreuil, and Charles Philippe, Comte d'Artois, brother of Louis XVI and later restored as Charles X. In 1789 he was allowed a suite of rooms at Holyrood House and became a close friend of the family and a popular figure in society.

Philanthropy was always an important priority for the duchess and she continued this generosity throughout her life. She funded apprenticeships for Geddington-born Edward Bradley under the well-known painter Thomas Christopher Hofland, and for Thomas Hellyer, the son of a land steward at one of the Montagu estates. The family supported William Sancho and his mother after Ignatius's death, and helped another young man to establish a career in India. Along with her husband, Duchess Elizabeth was particularly sympathetic to the disabled and distressed, supporting the Blind and Deaf and Dumb Asylums, the blind organist John Alexander, and helping Thomas Carley, who had been born without hands, to become a school master and poet at Grafton Underwood. Their support of numerous charities, including several organisations that helped musicians, is evident in their account books, along with frequent payments to those who were widowed and beggars who were in penury. Scottish artist William Bonnar recognised the continuing generosity of Duchess Elizabeth in *The Benefactresses*, a painted tribute showing Elizabeth and her daughter-

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in-law Harriet, Countess of Dalkeith, in a cottage interior, visiting a widow and her children. She commissioned a new altar paten in 1817 with a chinoiserie decoration of trees, flowers, birds, insects and pagodas, and she gifted Ralph Montagu's magnificent ambassadorial silver gilt flagons to the chapel at Ditton Park, where she had previously instructed the rebuilding of the house and chapel entirely in Gothic revival style.



**Fig. 1.7:** Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), Portrait of Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch. © Buccleuch Collection.

### Final Years

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, Elizabeth's life was irrevocably changed. The death in 1810 of 'Old Q' - William Douglas, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Queensberry, second cousin once removed to Duke Henry - brought the addition of the Queensberry Dukedom to Henry's titles, bringing with it Drumlanrig Castle and estate, which needed considerable attention. But Elizabeth's life changed even more dramatically in 1812 when Henry died and her son, Charles, became the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch and 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Queensberry. At this point, as was the custom, the Dowager Duchess, now 68, relinquished her life in the various great family houses and went to live in her villa in Richmond on the Thames. Seven years later, the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke died, leaving the dukedom to her grandson, Walter Francis,

who was just 13 at the time. Elizabeth lived out her remaining years mostly in London and Richmond, frequenting and supporting the opera wherever possible.

When Elizabeth Montagu died in 1827, Sir Water Scott wrote, 'She was a woman of unbounded beneficence to, and even beyond, the extent of her princely fortune. She had a masculine courage, and a great firmness in enduring affliction, which pressed on her with continued and successive blows in her later years', referring to Elizabeth's sorrow at outliving her husband and several of her children and grandchildren.<sup>19</sup> Her obituary in the *Gentleman's Magazine* remembered her as 'the good Duchess' for her great acts of charity, estimating that she and the duke had been giving about £30,000 (close to £3 million today) annually to charity.<sup>20</sup>



### Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Dr Emma Purcell, Tamar Moore and Dan Bochman for generously sharing their recent research.

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- <sup>18</sup> Personal journal kept by 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch. Entry on 28 February 1787 (private collection).

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## Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch

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Thomas Campbell (1791-1858), Monument to Elizabeth Montagu, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch, 1827. St Edmund's Church, Warkton.

Photograph © Tom Arber.







## CHAPTER 2

# Staging the Home: Music in Aristocratic Family Life

Jeanice Brooks

**M**usic is at the heart of family representation in the group portrait commissioned by Elizabeth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch, from the French emigré artist Henri-Pierre Danloux. Completed in 1798, the painting depicts Duchess Elizabeth's second daughter Lady Elizabeth at the harp in the act of performance, while her parents listen attentively (fig. 2.1). Around her we see her sisters Mary, Caroline and Harriet, her brothers Charles and Henry, and two new family members – Mary's husband James and Charles's wife Harriet – whose dress both links them to and distinguishes them from the others. In the distance, the graceful arch of the Robert Adam bridge celebrates the union of the Buccleuch and Montagu lines by the duke and duchess, symbolising the couple's investment in their Dalkeith estate and more broadly in Scotland. Though the painting poses the family outside, it was destined for the walls of Dalkeith Palace; small dogs in the foreground suggest the domestic qualities of the scene. Lady Caroline, in the left corner with her drawing materials, looks directly at the viewer as if to underline the painting's status as an artistic vision of home and family, tuned to the imagined harmonies of the harp at its core.

### Sounding the Domestic

Elite self-representation through music drew on courtly attitudes toward music-making and gentility that had marked European culture since the late middle ages. Musical engagement helped to establish cultural capital, generating visible and audible performances of aesthetic sensibility, education, status and wealth (fig. 2.2). During Duchess Elizabeth's lifetime, domesticity and ideals of home and family increasingly reflected these musical associations. Aristocratic lives were measured in music: during Elizabeth's childhood, the Montagus hired fiddlers for birthdays, weddings, christenings and other family celebrations, a tradition Elizabeth and Henry would later maintain in their own home. Elizabeth's parents also hired groups of professional musicians for grander entertainments in both their town and country houses. In 1763 the Montagu accounts contain payments for a 'Band of Music' to attend their country seat at

**Fig. 2.1:** Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753-1809), Henry and Elizabeth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, with their family in the grounds at Dalkeith, 1798. © Buccleuch Collection.

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Deene, and in the following year, payment for a band appears alongside those for extra cooks and waiters for a lavish ball given in honour of the 21-year-old Elizabeth and her brother at Montagu House, an affair that Horace Walpole described as ‘magnificent’ and ‘sumptuous’ in one of his letters.<sup>1</sup> These gala occasions for music were interspersed with more informal individual and group music-making by family and household members whose performances coloured the domestic soundscape.



**Fig. 2.2:** Marcellus Laroon the Younger (1679-1772), *A Musical Party*, c.1740.  
© Buccleuch Collection.

Although the model of the nuclear family was on the rise, families such as Duchess Elizabeth’s also maintained older aristocratic household traditions. Adult children continued to live with their parents, members of the extended family often stayed for long periods, and employees such as stewards, secretaries, governesses and tutors (themselves often from gentry if not aristocratic families) and personal domestic servants participated in private family life. In many cases, these people were musically active without being considered primarily as professional musicians. The Montagu household included Ignatius Sancho (1729-1780), a significant man of letters and the first composer of African descent to publish his music in Europe. According to the biography published shortly after his death, Sancho was born on a slave ship during the Atlantic crossing, arriving in England as an orphan at the age of two to join the large



**Fig. 2.3:** Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), Portrait of Ignatius Sancho, 1768.  
© National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.

community of enslaved and free people of colour in eighteenth-century Britain.<sup>2</sup> Many black Britons were in domestic service as fashionably exotic additions to aristocratic entourages. As a boy, Sancho's capabilities caught the attention of Elizabeth's grandfather John, Duke of Montagu, and shortly after the duke's death in 1749, Sancho was appointed as butler in the household of the widowed duchess. On her own death in 1751 she left him a large annuity, regularly paid in later years by her daughter Mary Cardigan, Elizabeth's mother. By 1758, Sancho had returned to Montagu service as valet to Elizabeth's father, a position he held until 1774 when the Montagus supported him in opening a shop in Westminster.

Sancho was a constant presence in Elizabeth's early life and spent considerable time with her even after her marriage: he was in Bath with Elizabeth,



Fig. 2.4: James Gillray (1756-1815), 'A Little Music – or – The Delights of Harmony' (London: Humphrey, 1810). © Buccleuch Collection.

her new husband Henry and her parents in 1768, when Gainsborough painted his portrait along with those of his patrons, and he made at least one trip to Dalkeith in 1770 (fig. 2.3). Three of Sancho's four books of compositions are dedicated to Montagu family members, and together they provide a glimpse of the music-making that celebrated and commemorated significant moments in their lives. His first book, *Minuets, Cotillons & Country Dances . . . composed by an African* (London, [1767]) was dedicated to Elizabeth's new husband Henry and seems to have been intended to proclaim the connection, while his final musical publication, *Twelve Country Dances for the year 1779*, includes both 'Lady Mary Montagu's Reel' – created for Elizabeth's eldest daughter – and 'Lord Dalkeith's Reel' in honour of her eldest son.<sup>3</sup>

### Musical Accomplishments

For many aristocratic families, experiences of hearing music within and outside the home were intimately linked to their own activity as performers. Musical training was a central aspect of elite sociability, and although satirical prints gleefully mocked the pretensions of would-be musicians, some aristocratic performers achieved considerable expertise within the domestic settings that were the only appropriate showcase for their skills (fig. 2.4). For women especially, musical training figured alongside drawing, dance, and modern languages among the 'accomplishments', the set of socially



approved educational attainments for girls. Intense debates over female education animated books, pamphlets, journals and newspapers during the late eighteenth century. Some thinkers argued that these attainments were useless distractions from more solid learning; others advocated the inclusion of music amid a broad humanistic and scientific curriculum, while still others believed that women's education should be limited to basic reading and writing with the accomplishments regarded principally as a matter of ornamental social grace. The pleasures of music often disappear in the conduct literature and educational tracts that fostered these debates, but other sources such as letters and diaries reveal that for many young women, music could also be a cherished source of artistic expression and personal fulfilment.



**Fig. 2.5:** Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787),  
Portrait of John Brudenell, later  
Marquis of Monthermer, 1758.  
© Buccleuch Collection.

The Montagu and Buccleuch families invested heavily in musical training, especially but not only for their women and girls. Though bills from Elizabeth's own early education do not survive, fleeting references in family letters suggest that she pursued a broad curriculum with a substantial musical component. Her mother, Mary Cardigan, played the harpsichord and could supervise Elizabeth's instruction on the instrument, as Elizabeth would later do for her own daughters.<sup>4</sup> Although music was less often considered of central importance in men's education, her brother John, Lord Monthermer played the mandolin; in his Grand Tour portrait commissioned from Pompeo Batoni, a beautifully decorated Neapolitan instrument peeks out from under his arm while he holds a scrupulously rendered copy of a sonata by Arcangelo Corelli (fig. 2.5).<sup>5</sup>

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The flute and bowed string instruments were also widely considered suitable for male amateurs, and there is some evidence that Duke Henry played the violin.<sup>6</sup>

When Elizabeth and Henry settled in Scotland, a steady stream of musical instructors began to flow between Edinburgh and their home at Dalkeith Palace. Henry's younger sister Lady Frances Scott, when living with them at Dalkeith in the summers of 1770 and 1771, received harpsichord lessons every two to three days from the Scottish musician John Macpherson, who went on to teach Elizabeth's daughters Elizabeth, Mary and Caroline in the early 1780s.<sup>7</sup> But musical life at Dalkeith soon took on a distinctly cosmopolitan cast as the family employed Continental musicians drawn to the abundant opportunities provided by Edinburgh's rapidly expanding entertainment culture. A particularly significant and lasting relationship developed with the Roman-born Domenico Corri (1746-1825), who arrived in Scotland in 1771 at the invitation of the Edinburgh Musical Society. Among the most famous singing teachers of the day, Corri was the head of a family whose numerous members played a key role in musical life in both Edinburgh and London. He was instructing Elizabeth and Henry's children by 1782 at the latest; his brother Natale (1765-1822) continued teaching them after Domenico shifted operations to London in 1790, while Domenico himself continued to provide services through his music publishing business and gave lessons during the family's trips to London and Richmond. From 1789, Duchess Elizabeth also employed the Piedmontese singer and keyboard player Joseph Hurka de Monti (c.1753-1823). De Monti seems to have acted as a general musical factotum, organising instrument purchase, repair and other services in addition to teaching lessons. The Buccleuchs paid for his lodging, coal and candles in Edinburgh as well as carriage hire for his visits to Dalkeith two to three times a week.<sup>8</sup>

Though male teachers generally enjoyed greater fame and higher fees, women made substantial inroads into musical pedagogy in the late eighteenth century, their achievements mirroring those of female grammarians and other educationalists who published didactic texts specifically aimed at young women. In 1787-1788, Dalkeith saw regular visits from the Scottish music theorist and pedagogical innovator Anne Young (1756-1827) who is described in the Buccleuch accounts as 'Music Mistress'.<sup>9</sup> Young's published method books and games provide a glimpse of the principles and materials she used in teaching her private pupils: her *Elements of Music and of Fingering the Harpsichord* (Edinburgh, c.1790) unusually includes substantial amounts of music by female composers, and its appearance shortly after her employment by the Buccleuch family suggests its contents provide a reliable mirror of their children's lessons (fig. 2.6). Young would go on to create a set of successful educational board games designed to teach young women the principles of music theory. Her 1801 patent was the first ever to be granted for a board game in Britain, and her approach to learning through play was a significant contribution to new educational trends.<sup>10</sup>

In London, Duchess Elizabeth employed the harpsichordist and composer Maria Hester Park (1760-1813) as music mistress to her youngest daughter Lady Harriet in the early 1790s, at around the same time when Park befriended Haydn during his visits to the capital. The Parisian harpist Agathe Delaval (1763-after 1804) was engaged to teach the duchess's second daughter, Lady Elizabeth.<sup>11</sup> A pupil of the celebrated virtuoso Jean-Baptiste Krumpholtz, Madame Delaval arrived in London in 1790 and rapidly established herself as a composer, concert soloist and fashionable pedagogue. Her clientele included aristocrats such as the Buccleuch family, but also professionals such as Domenico Corri's daughter Sophia, who went on to become a concert soloist and harp music composer herself. Delaval's work has been immortalised in a largely hidden fashion through the inclusion of her harp in the Buccleuch family portrait by Danloux: the artist borrowed Delaval's instrument to complete the painting, noting in his diary that his meticulous rendering of the gilded and lacquered instrument was 'a labour of patience'.<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 2.6: Title page, Ann Young, *The Elements of Music and of Fingering the Harpsichord* (Edinburgh: Corri & Sutherland, [c.1790]). © The British Library Board, e.423.

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## At Home with Music

Musical training enabled aristocratic amateurs not only to perform for their own and other's enjoyment, but also to critique the performances they attended as spectators and to act as influential patrons. George, Duke of Montagu, regularly subscribed to benefit concerts, events for which the proceeds after costs went to individual musicians. Like visits to the opera, benefits for leading performers could be highlights of the social season and occasions to see and be seen, and they provided opportunities to hear both Italian opera stars and home-grown British talent. In 1760, Duke George may have taken the 16-year-old Elizabeth to the London subscription concerts put on by singer and instrumentalist Ann Ford (1737-1824), who had made headlines when her father had her arrested for leaving the family home to make a career performing in public.<sup>13</sup> In later life, Elizabeth herself was especially active in supporting Edinburgh-based musicians, including several members of the Corri family as well as the Corris' sometime rival Peter Urbani, the violinists George Pinto and Girolamo Stabilini, and the German cellist Johann Schetky, all of whom played key roles in the city's growing musical establishment. She was a loyal benefactor to Nathaniel Gow (1763-1831) whose father Niel brought Scottish fiddle playing to national prominence. Nathaniel carried on his father's work as a fiddler and also became a significant publisher of Scots music and leader of one of the most famous dance bands in the country. The *Caledonian Mercury* named Duchess Elizabeth at the head of the committee of aristocratic ladies who sponsored his annual balls for at least a decade between 1797-1807. She was also the leading sponsor for several concerts featuring the harp, including recitals by Mademoiselle Duparq in 1802 and Jean Elouis in 1805 and 1811, when Elouis's recital included 'the first public performance on *Two Harps* which ever took place in Edinburgh'.<sup>14</sup>

When Elizabeth appeared in newspaper advertisements and playbills as sponsor, her 'hosting' of public music not only lent the prestige of her name. It also fostered the illusion that the duchess was personally inviting spectators to attend, as if to a ball or concert in her home. And public concerts for the benefit of leading virtuosos were mirrored in private concerts by these same musicians at Dalkeith Palace. Although sometimes reported in the press, these events are harder to reconstruct than public performances; but a remarkable set of dinner books, recording who was present at Dalkeith between 1804 and 1825, provides a glimpse into the world of aristocratic concert parties (Cat. 20, 22). The books were started by Major Walter Scott, an illegitimate son of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch, who lived at Dalkeith Palace and enjoyed a warm relationship with his nephew Henry's family. He apparently began the dinner books at Duchess Elizabeth's request, and although he authored most of the entries, other members of the household contributed poems, drawings and family news. On 9 March 1805, Major Scott recorded that dinner was followed by a concert in the palace's Gallery by Pinto, Schetky, Natale Corri, and Mr Mahon (one or the

other of two brothers, John and William, who were both notable players). Corri and Pinto (who Major Scott describes as 'a remarkable fine Performer on the Violin') joined the family and guests for dinner before the music, while a further thirteen guests came afterwards for the concert only. Male members of the family maintained bands associated with the regiments they led, and the Buccleuch accounts record the purchase and repair of trumpets, flutes, bassoons, horns and clarinets for both the Duke of Buccleuch's band and his son the Earl of Dalkeith's band.<sup>15</sup> The dinner books show that in some years both bands regularly came to play at Dalkeith Palace in addition to fulfilling their regimental duties and playing for public balls and assemblies. These were often literally 'red-letter days' as Scott noted the presence of the bands in the Gallery after dinner in scarlet ink.

Within the public arena of print, musical dedications represented an idealised version of these personal relationships between Elizabeth's family and the musicians they employed. Association with an aristocratic patron lent prestige and authority to musical publications, and advertising connections with aristocratic families could help secure further patronage, more concert engagements and the ability to charge higher fees. Patrons gained renown for their cultural activities, and public acknowledgement of their musical taste and discernment. Dedications of pedagogical works could help teachers to attract further aristocratic pupils, but also presented patrons in a flattering light as diligent and accomplished musicians, capable of performing and appreciating the repertoire that appeared under their names. Domenico Corri's longstanding connection with the family was broadcast in his dedication of the second volume of his *A Select Collection of Choice Music for the Harpsichord or Piano-Forte* to Duchess Elizabeth, and it culminated in the publication of one of the most significant singing treatises of the century, his two-volume *The Singers Preceptor* (1810) (Cat. 39). Corri was also probably behind the dedications of several further works to Elizabeth's children: Lady Mary was honoured in Johann Samuel Schroeter's sonatas, printed by Corri (c.1800); Lady Elizabeth received the dedication of Corri's son-in-law Jan Ladislav Dussek's keyboard sonatas, op. 25 (c.1794), while Dussek's *Twelve Progressive Lessons for the Piano Forte* (c.1796) were dedicated to Lady Harriet. Her daughters' musical education was also commemorated in Maria Hester Park's *Divertimento* for piano and violin (c.1811, dedicated to Lady Harriet), while the relationship with Joseph Hurka de Monti was celebrated in a bouquet of dedications including his *Six Sonatas for the Harpsichord or Piano Forte with an Accompaniment for Violin* (dedicated to Lady Elizabeth), *Twenty-Four Italian Duos with Sacred Words* (dedicated to Duchess Elizabeth), and several Italian duets dedicated to the Montagu ladies that seem never to have been published but figure in manuscripts in the family music collection (Cat. 8). Individual dances such as 'The Duchess of Buccleuch's Favorite' and 'The Duchess of Buccleuch's Strathspey' as well as the entire second volume of Nathaniel Gow's *Complete Repository of Original Scots Tunes* (c.1802), dedicated to Duchess Elizabeth, suggest enticing balls at Dalkeith, while





**Fig. 2.7:** Square piano belonging to Johann Christian Bach, by Johannes Zumpe (1726-1790) and Gabriel Buntebart (1769-c.1795), London, 1777-1778. © The Cobbe Collection Trust, Hatchlands Park.

Johann Schetky's *March and Quick Step of the Second Regiment of the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers* (Edinburgh: Stewart, c.1800), dedicated to Duke Henry, represents his support of the regimental band.

### **Domesticating Music**

Just as music itself figured in the sonic world of aristocratic residences, musical materials were woven into the fabric of the domestic interior. Duchess Elizabeth and her family adorned their homes with finely crafted instruments, whose purchase created relationships with artisans and fostered regional and national economic networks. Elite residences were showcases for the latest in musical instrument manufacture, creating a crucial market for both British and imported musical luxury goods and serving as a major driver for innovation in instrument technology and design. Maintenance, tuning and repair regularly brought specialist musical technicians into the house. And the demand for domestic music generated a new abundance of repertoire for both professionals and amateurs to play at home, fuelling an explosion of the British music printing trade in the late eighteenth century and allowing aristocratic libraries to represent their owners' connoisseurship through the display of richly bound musical scores.

Keyboards in particular allowed large-scale musical works – including opera, oratorio, ballet and theatre – to be adapted for home performance, blurring distinctions between public and private and stimulating production of new instruments that advertised improvements in look and sound. During Duchess Elizabeth's lifetime the piano was first introduced to a wider public and gradually eclipsed the harpsichord as a central domestic musical technology in the late eighteenth century (fig. 2.7, Cat 30). But although she acquired a square piano by Johannes Zumpe in 1777 – a relatively early date for such a purchase – any straightforward story of replacement is complicated by evidence

that throughout the 1780s and into the 1790s, Dalkeith Palace had both a double manual harpsichord and a grand pianoforte, both in regular use.<sup>16</sup> In 1792, de Monti organised the purchase of a new 'Patent Piano forte' for Dalkeith from the leading London maker John Broadwood. The same year repairs and adjustments to the harpsichord were made, and it continued to be kept and maintained in the Gallery, the main entertainment room, all of which suggests that it was still enjoyed (and used, perhaps, for piano and harpsichord duets, a scoring that was not uncommon at the time even though it is rarely heard today).<sup>17</sup> The harpsichord was retired by around 1796, and the family's continued engagement with innovations in keyboard design and manufacture is shown by the acquisition, in 1807, of a new 'Long Grand piano forte with additional Keys in the Treble & Bass' from Joseph Kirkman.<sup>18</sup> Other purchases involved new kinds of keyboard instruments that were particularly suitable for religious music, providing opportunities to enhance the family's devotional and spiritual life. In 1809, Elizabeth purchased a patent three-barrel organ by George Dettmer for her house in Richmond, and an 1819 inventory of Dalkeith Palace shows that by then there was a harmonium in the Gallery – perhaps connected to the use of that space for sermons, a practice that began after Rev. John Marriott joined the household as tutor to Elizabeth's grandson in 1804.<sup>19</sup>

Associated particularly with French musical culture, the harp too enjoyed a major boom in the late eighteenth century, accelerated in England by the arrival of large numbers of French emigrés during the Revolution and accompanied by rapid developments in the instrument's design (Cat. 26). The family acquired a harp for Lady Elizabeth's use by 1791 at the latest; a new one was purchased in 1793 from the London firm of Longman & Broderip, who imported French harps in the late 1780s and boasted in a 1797 advertisement that they now employed 'workmen regularly brought up in the manufactories in France' to make instruments with the most up-to-date mechanisms.<sup>20</sup> Yet another harp was purchased only a little over two years later in 1795. Although portraits of young women playing harps were popular and do not necessarily indicate deep engagement with music, the regular acquisition of new instruments – and even more frequent purchase of replacement harp strings – suggest that the central position of the harp in Danloux's Buccleuch family portrait represents a real passion. This impression is strengthened by bills from the 1790s, which show the harp was often transported between Dalkeith and London to accompany the family's movements between residences.<sup>21</sup>

While instruments furnished the rooms of Dalkeith Palace, musical scores enriched its library. Duchess Elizabeth and Duke Henry were avid book collectors, and at Dalkeith they constructed a magnificent new library with large windows overlooking the Adam bridge. Reams of bills from booksellers and binders testify to their enthusiasm, and a borrowing book that records the reading of family members and guests confirms the library was well used.<sup>22</sup> They were equally energetic in acquiring music: the Montagu Music Collection includes hundreds of scores purchased by Duchess Elizabeth for her own and

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her family's use. Much of the music acquired in Edinburgh was obtained through the publishing house that Domenico and Natale Corri founded in the late 1770s, adding James Sutherland as a partner in 1780. Corri & Sutherland published both international repertoire – drawing on the Corris' extensive musical networks throughout Europe – and works by Edinburgh-based musicians. On Sutherland's death, the Corris traded in Edinburgh and London as Corri & Co., and subsequently as Corri, Dussek & Co. in partnership with Domenico's son-in-law. When the heavily indebted Dussek fled to the Continent to escape his creditors, Domenico continued publishing on his own. Regular bills with lists of music acquired by Elizabeth and her family testify to their fidelity to Corri and his businesses throughout the different incarnations.<sup>23</sup> They also purchased many scores from other purveyors, however, taking advantage of trips to London to acquire music from the firms of Robert Birchall, Longman & Broderip and several others. Bills from the 1780s and 1790s in the Buccleuch archives document especially intense activity as Elizabeth's children pursued their musical education, with regular acquisition of the latest vocal, keyboard and harp publications as well as method books and musical supplies such as blank music paper.



**Fig. 2.8:** Binding to MMC vol. 300, which includes Italian comic operas by Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi (1728-1804) and Antonio Sacchini (1730-1786).  
© Buccleuch Collection.

The Buccleuch family gathered their sheet music and scores for larger works into richly bound volumes, the musical equivalent of the more often studied paintings, statuary and other fine art objects that were collected and displayed in their home. A long series of beautifully crafted full calf folio albums devoted to different multi-volume series of music noted on the spines – ‘Serious Italian Opera’, ‘Sonatas’, ‘Songs & Rondos’ – seems to represent in part music purchased by Elizabeth before her marriage, bound up and decorated with the ducal coronet to symbolise her new role as Duchess of Buccleuch. Volumes of soprano duets, keyboard music, opera songs, Scottish traditional tunes and psalms bound with the names of Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu testify to their wide musical appetites in the 1790s, while nearly ninety further complete opera scores in English, Italian and French, mainly representing works performed in London from 1760-1820, bear witness to the family’s sustained enthusiasm for the genre (fig. 2.8, Cat. 2). Scanning the shelves at Dalkeith Palace, and handling the scores they proudly displayed, Duchess Elizabeth could imagine the sounds that created her musical life in all its many manifestations at home and in the theatre, from her childhood until the very end of her life. Today, the Montagu Music Collection at Boughton House is an eloquent material witness to the rich and varied musical world she inhabited both within and outside her home.

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- <sup>2</sup> Brycchan Carey, "'The extraordinary Negro': Ignatius Sancho, Joseph Jekyll, and the Problem of Biography', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26, no.1 (Spring 2003): 1-14.
- <sup>3</sup> Household Accounts for George, Duke of Montagu, 1767-1771, Boughton House. The entry for 24 April 1767 includes a payment of 0.5.0 'for Musack Books by Sancho', likely for the book dedicated to Henry, whom Elizabeth would marry on 2 May 1767.
- <sup>4</sup> Tessa Murdoch, ed., *Noble Households: Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great English Houses* (Cambridge: John Adamson, 2006), 32-33.
- <sup>5</sup> Paul Sparks, 'The Mandolin in Britain, 1750-1800', *Early Music* 46, no.1 (February 2018): 55-66.
- <sup>6</sup> An instrument, case, bow and strings purchased in 1783 were apparently for his use, and further purchases of violin bows, strings and rosin throughout the 1790s and later may have been for him or for one of his sons. Vouchers of John Cordery's Accounts 1783, NRS, GD224/365/31.
- <sup>7</sup> Sundry Promiscuous Payments, 1769-1770, NRS, GD224/209/5; Vouchers of John Cordery's Accounts 1783, NRS, GD224/365/20.
- <sup>8</sup> Records of payments to de Monti include: Miscellaneous Accounts, NRS, GD224/351/13 (1789, chaise hire), GD224/351/29 (1789-1790, lodging, coal and candles), GD224/351/14 (1790, lessons), GD224/351/30 (1791, chaises and lessons three times a week), GD224/351/37 (1792, lessons and commissioning harp repair), GD224/351/36 (1792, chaises, lessons and subscription copies of music), GD224/351/43 (1794, lessons 'twice a week only by Her Grace's orders'). Further regular payments for lessons and services, including commission of grand piano repair, between 1791-1795 appear in Charles Bray, House Steward to Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, Disbursements, NRS, GD224/462/2.
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- <sup>12</sup> 'Je travaille à la harpe dans le tableau de la duchesse; c'est un ouvrage de patience'. Henri-Pierre Danloux and Roger Portalis, *Henry-Pierre Danloux, peintre de portraits, et son journal durant l'émigration* (Paris: Société des Bibliophiles, 1910), 387.
- <sup>13</sup> Private Accounts for George, Duke of Montagu, 1754-1776, Boughton House. Entries for March 1760 and January 1761 show subscriptions to Ford's concerts.
- <sup>14</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 25 March 1797, 18 February 1802, 21 February 1807 (Gow); 1 February 1802 (Duparq); 26 January 1805, 14 March 1811 (Elouis).
- <sup>15</sup> A concert is mentioned on 9 March 1805 in Dalkeith Palace Dinner Books, NRS, GD224/1085/3. Payments for band instruments are documented in accounts and vouchers: NRS, GD224/15/24/26 and 27 (1799, Earl of Dalkeith), GD224/669/8 (1800, Duke of Buccleuch), GD224/15/52/15 (1801 and 1802, Earl of Dalkeith), GD224/669/13 (1806, Duke of Buccleuch).
- <sup>16</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch's Trademen's Bills, 15 February 1777, Boughton House; Vouchers of John Cordery's Accounts 1785, NRS, GD224/365/44, 1785; Miscellaneous Accounts 1790 and 1792, NRS, GD224/351/29 and GD224/351/36.



<sup>17</sup> Miscellaneous Accounts, NRS, GD224/351/37 (1792, piano purchase); GD224/351/40, (1792, putting castors on the harpsichord); GD224/351/43, (1793, repairing harpsichord); GD224/351/51 (1795, waxing the harpsichord in the Gallery).

<sup>18</sup> Vouchers, William Cuthill, Secretary to the Duke of Buccleuch, NRS, GD224/669/14; this was still in the Gallery at Henry's death in 1812, see Inventories of furniture etc. at Dalkeith House, 1812-1819, NRS, GD224/962/21/1.

<sup>19</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch's London bills 1804 and 1809, Boughton House (organ); Inventories at Dalkeith House, NRS, GD224/962/21/2 (harmonium).

<sup>20</sup> *Star*, 8 March 1797, quoted in Michael Kassler, *The Music Trade in Georgian England* (London: Routledge, 2017), 53. Harp purchases, Miscellaneous Accounts, NRS, GD224/351/31 and GD224/351/34 (1791); Bray Disbursements, NRS, GD224/462/2 (1793) and GD224/462/2 (1795).

<sup>21</sup> Miscellaneous Accounts, NRS, GD224/351/53 (1795, transport of a harp by wagon from London to Dalkeith); Bray Disbursements, NRS, GD224/462/2 (1796, transport of a harp to Montagu House).

<sup>22</sup> Dalkeith Palace Library Book 1795-1832, NRS, GD224/1063/1.

<sup>23</sup> Charles Humphries and William C. Smith. *Music Publishing in the British Isles from the Beginning Until the Middle of the Nineteenth Century*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1970), 117-118.



Cat. 26. © Private Collection.



*A Side Box at the Opera.*

Pub<sup>d</sup> March. 15. 1792. by J. W. Fores. N<sup>o</sup> 3. Piccadilly

*Theatrical*



## CHAPTER 3

# See and Be Seen: Ladies Attending the Opera

Wiebke Thormählen

**O**n 5 March 1793 Charles Bray, house steward to Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch, noted in his account books ‘2 chair mans’ for ‘Lady Elizabeth and C.’ to the opera.<sup>1</sup> That night, the King’s Theatre in London was playing *Le nozze di Dorina* under the direction of Stephen Storace, the music by the Italian composer Giuseppe Sarti supplemented by ‘some very charming and original music’ by Martini and Storace himself. The latter had inserted an aria especially for his sister, the celebrated soprano Nancy Storace. The evening was a lavish affair rounded off with ‘an entire New Heroic, Pantomimic Ballet’, a new choreography by the French dancing master Jean-Georges Noverre that promised new scenery, machinery, dresses and decorations.<sup>2</sup> The attire of the attendant ladies, extending the extravagant theatricality beyond the stage, was bedecked with laces and ribbons, feathers and silks according to the latest fashion (fig. 3.1).

Italian opera in Georgian London had been staged at the King’s Theatre since 1709, with performances running from December to June on Tuesdays and Saturdays (fig. 3.2). Throughout the 1780s, the company was managed by Giovanni Andrea Gallini and William Taylor, whose relationship was acrimonious to say the least. Gallini was a former dancer and self-styled manager with lofty ambitions for the theatre’s productions while Taylor was a banker whose financial mismanagement of the theatre nearly brought the enterprise to its knees. Gallini’s strategy, meanwhile, was to promote lavish dance performances choreographed by Noverre as part of the opera entertainment, and to hire composers and singers from the rival English opera houses to be able to compete. The invitation to Stephen Storace to direct the comic opera *Le nozze di Dorina* as well as Giovanni Paisiello’s *Il barbiere di Siviglia* indicates Gallini’s attempt to bring some of English opera’s popularity to the far more costly and usually serious Italian company.

Storace’s more natural home was a little further to the east at the Theatres Royal Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Although — strictly speaking, — they lacked the proper licence to perform them, these stages thrived on the popularity of ‘English opera’, which played six days a week. A pasticcio genre,

**Fig. 3.1:** Unknown artist, ‘Portrait of Miss Jeffrey and Mrs. Hobart in a Side Box at the Opera’ (London: Fores, 1792).

© Harry Beard Collection, Victoria and Albert Museum, London.





**Fig. 3.2:** Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), *Side Box at the Opera*, 1785.  
© Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Bequest of Grenville L. Winthrop.

English operas were cobbled together from Italian operatic numbers and German and English instrumental music, with a few original songs of a popular ilk thrown in. The licensing issue was circumvented by the inclusion of spoken dialogue. These light entertainments usually set English librettos that mimicked the storyline of a popular novel, something that helped them gain currency. Since the 1760s, collaborations between the librettist Isaac Bickerstaff and the musician-composers Thomas Arne, Charles Dibdin and Samuel Arnold brought forth the lasting successes of *Love in a Village*, *The Maid of the Mill*, and *The Padlock*. By the 1790s, Stephen Storace's successes of *The Haunted Tower*, *The Siege of Belgrade* and *The Pirates* posed a veritable threat to Italian opera with the boundaries between the two genres blurring further as star singers — not least Nancy Storace — abandoned their loyalty to one form of opera and moved across the stages to where the money and the best arias were.

Mounting opera in 1790s London was a costly affair, as was attending. The horseshoe arrangement of boxes in the King's Theatre at the Haymarket and at the Pantheon, Oxford Street granted views across the audience as much as onto the stage. Catalogues of subscribers, 'most respectfully submitted to the nobility and gentry', were issued in advance of the season's start, some of them with elaborate fold-out plans of the theatre's interior that detailed exactly who the subscribers were.<sup>3</sup> Special fans were produced for the season that mimicked these plans; subscribers' names were inserted into the boxes to allow the audience to map names onto impressive attires. A fan for the year 1788, now in the permanent collection at The Fan Museum and on loan to Boughton House during the exhibition, lists five members of Duchess Elizabeth's family as

subscribers to Box 41, located off-centre on the 'Prince's Side' of the Theatre in the second tier: beside the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, appear the names of Elizabeth's sister- and brother-in-law, Lady Douglas (Henry's youngest sister) and her husband Archibald Douglas Esq., as well as her father, the Duke of Montagu (fig. 3.3, Cat. 34). The duchess's subscription for 1782, documented in the *Descriptive Plan of the New Opera House*, had included her husband's sister, Lady Frances Scott and her cousin on her father's side, Lady Courtown; her father, the Duke of Montagu, was still among the party and a new addition came in the form of Sir James Peachey, 'Groome of the Bedchamber' in the household of King George III.<sup>4</sup>



Fig. 3.3: Opera Fan, King's Theatre for 1788. © The Fan Museum HA1791, Greenwich (London).

Opera-going had long since been a family tradition: Elizabeth's mother, Mary Cardigan, enjoyed her opera box during Elizabeth's childhood, and her daughter continued the tradition after her marriage. As was the custom, Elizabeth's family kept the same box for a number of years until the King's Theatre burned to the ground in 1789. Their interest did not wane while the company was rehoused to the Pantheon for the 1791 season, nor once the house on the Haymarket had been rebuilt, and the duchess remained a loyal subscriber throughout the troubles that befell the Italian opera in the 1790s. The subscription plan for the 1791 season at the Pantheon shows the duke and duchess holding two boxes, Nos. 45 and 46, the only bracketed double-subscription on the plan; with this, the family's space was equivalent in size to the Royal box.<sup>5</sup>

Subscriptions to an opera box at the King's Theatre came with a hefty price tag: in 1790, an individual opera ticket was advertised at 10s 6d in



Her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch C<sup>t</sup>

1794	£. by Cash paid brought from old account	£ 1314 2 1/2
January 19 <sup>th</sup>	To Mr. Mifs Stones by your Grace's order	10 - -
16 <sup>th</sup>	Paid the Opera Subscription for 1794	157 10 -
16 <sup>th</sup>	To Mr. Phillips in part of £100 of your Grace's order	50 - -
21 <sup>st</sup>	Paid one year's subscription to the small 8 <sup>th</sup> of Amputation Hospital to Christmas 1794	5 5 -
31 <sup>st</sup>	To Mr. Phillips the remainder of £100 by your Grace's order	50 - -
February 3 <sup>rd</sup>	Blackheath paid 25 days account ending Jan <sup>y</sup> 25 <sup>th</sup>	17 17 3
15 <sup>th</sup>	Richmond paid 25 days acc <sup>t</sup> ending January 25 <sup>th</sup>	14 - 8 -
11 <sup>th</sup>	Montagu House paid 25 days account ending Jan <sup>y</sup> 25 <sup>th</sup>	15 1 5
15 <sup>th</sup>	Paid Mr. Detasson for repairing Lady Horriots straw Table &c	3 3 -
	2000 (8:30 & 31) of the Annuity	2 0 -
		5 11 -
	Carried over	£ 338 19 6 1/2

Fig. 3.4: John Reynolds, House Steward to Duchess Elizabeth, Accounts for the year 1794. Payment for opera subscription for 1794. © Buccleuch Collection.

the pit and 5s in the gallery, yet on 29 May that year, Elizabeth instructed her bank, Henry Hoare & Co., to pay Ransom & Co. £252 for the new opera house subscription.<sup>6</sup> The figure suggests that the duchess paid for the double box, perhaps a gesture that was intended to provide extra support to the financially struggling company during the year of rebuilding and re-opening. In subsequent years, Elizabeth's house steward, John Reynolds, steadfastly recorded her annual subscriptions, usually at a cost of £157 10s for a single box, rising to £189 in the 1800s, and finally even £252 (fig. 3.4).<sup>7</sup> In a letter from 1787, Henry described the opera box as 'her box', a throw-away remark that is nonetheless indicative of her passion for the theatre. It is significant that until Henry's death in 1812 the duchess herself was usually noted as the primary subscriber to the box with payments coming out of her accounts.

In 1812, after his father's death, however, her son Charles, 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch, took over the box subscription, possibly to allow his mother to continue her attendance at the opera.<sup>8</sup> In April 1814, his secretary, William Cuthill, paid the sum of £210 for Box 27 for the 1814/1815 season, and Charles retained this box until at least 1817 when he paid £300 for the privilege. Extensive correspondence with his bankers at Coutts during 1817 betray the precarious situation that the opera house was in yet again, and the Duke's initial reticence to pay his dues.<sup>9</sup>

The back and forth of letters during 1817 also bear witness to the fact that the aristocracy were the financial shoulders on which the opera business rested. In return, attendance at the opera was a marker of social standing and wealth, indicating cultivation, education and class; if you occupied a box you would be counted among the ranks of the nobility and gentry. The boxes usually seated between four and six people, with some subscription plans indicating in little numbers placed in the corner of the box how many it would comfortably hold. These plans were designed to entice subscribers into paying their yearly dues and possibly into considering moving up a tier and closer to the centre, where the Royal box was located. The location of one's opera box was a significant marker of social hierarchy.

Rec London March 27 1801	200
from the D <sup>ch</sup> of Dorset for 21 operas	63
D Stopford his Sub: to the Queen	10
Do Lord Dalkeith	10 10
	283 10
paid Key notes his acct for Feb 5	95 15

**Fig. 3.5:** Account book probably belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1801-1808. Money received for opera subscription. Entry for 27 March 1801. NRS, GD224/1093/1. © Buccleuch Collection.

Inside the opera box, people would meet and converse; silence was not the norm. This sociability stretched beyond the family as people 'subcontracted' their box seats to others who were not regular subscribers. Duchess Elizabeth's accounts for 1801, for instance, show that on 27 March she received the sum of £63 from the Duchess of Dorset 'for 21 operas'.<sup>10</sup> On the same day she records that she received moneys – the sum of £10 10s each – for opera subscriptions from Lord Stopford and Lord Dalkeith, presumably for her daughter Mary and her daughter-in-law, Charles's wife, to join her in the box that year (fig. 3.5).<sup>11</sup> The following year, she let her box to a Mr Weglands for 28 nights for £84 4s 'draft on the Bank', starting in April. This system of 'borrowing' or effectively subletting boxes enhanced the social engagements across the audience and was used by some, of course, to further their position in society.

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For young ladies, being seen in the opera box was particularly important as it placed them in view of the eligible bachelors around the horseshoe, and some upcoming family liaisons were subtly announced through two young people sharing an opera box. Elizabeth's daughters were certainly regular participants in the spectacle of the opera round. During the spring of 1793, Charles Bray's account books reveal that female members of the family attended three times in March, five times in April, and three times in May. The following year, it appears that the family also came down to London towards the end of March and that the four sisters, described by Bray as 'the Ladies Montagu' went to the opera together. In fact, on 29 March 1794, Elizabeth, Caroline and Mary saw *Il capriccio drammatico* by Domenico Cimarosa, only to return the following week, on 1 April with their youngest sister Harriet in tow (Cat. 3).

Men and women met and mingled at the opera, at times using the theatre as an advantageous professional meeting place; while the men could move around the theatre, though, the ladies were not expected to leave their boxes. Instead, they waited for their visitors to attend to them, which made them the primary focus of the horseshoe spectacle. And spectatorship was as significant to opera sociability as conversation and gossip: glancing across the boxes while consulting one's fan, one could admire attires and be admired, as Rowlandson so pointedly satirised in his 'side box at the opera' (fig. 3.2). Here, the opera itself was merely the sideshow.



**Fig. 3.6:** James Gillray (1756-1815), 'A Modern Belle going to the Rooms at Bath' (London: Humphrey, 1796). Elizabeth acquired a copy that now forms part of her collection of caricatures.

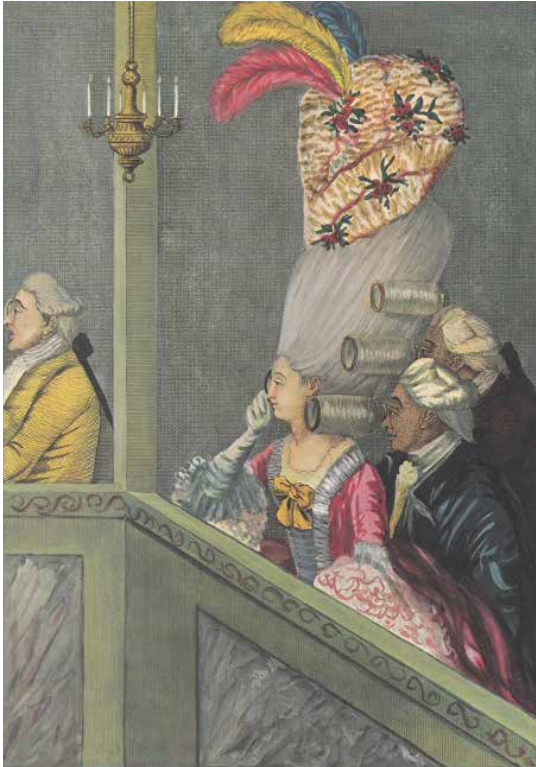
© Buccleuch Collection.



**Fig. 3.7:** Early Nineteenth-Century Monocular.  
© The College of Optometrists, London.

Another difference between men and women at the opera was their manner of arrival: women travelled to the opera in sedan chairs which were the most convenient way of getting around crowded and dirty London streets. They had the advantage of fitting through narrow passageways which would allow shortcuts to various venues. Each sedan chair was carried by two carriers, the 'chairmen'; inside their chairs – literally boxed in – the ladies were largely hidden from view. While the men would arrive in carriages or on horseback to a side entrance, ladies would enter and exit through a door at the front of the theatre so their dresses could be seen as they disembarked from their chairs without coming into conflict with horses and manure. The chairs' roofs could be opened so as to accommodate the ladies' elaborate head dresses. A caricature in Duchess Elizabeth's possession satirises this frippery of fashion (fig. 3.6).

A fashionable accoutrement to bring along to the opera, besides one's feathers and ribbons, was an opera glass to enjoy the view of all the pearls and laces on display along the boxes. Men's ogling behaviour at the opera house was satirised in countless caricatures. For the ladies, on the other hand, the opera glass – besides its ostensible function of seeing the stary cast of singers and dancers close-up – also served as an aid to hide or avert one's gaze (fig. 3.7). Elizabeth purchased a rather lavish, gilt set in May 1800 for the cost of £3 2s, a multiple of a normal pit opera ticket itself, from the first maker of optical instruments in London, Jeremiah Watkins (Cat. 36). The stinging caricature by Matthew Darly satirises this new-fangled desire for opera glasses, likening their look to the curls in the lady's hair while lampooning both the intense focus on



**Fig. 3.8:** Matthew Darly (c.1720-1778), 'The Optic Curls, or the Obliging Head Dress' (London: Darly, 1777).  
© The College of Optometrists, London.

and through them as well as the notion that these glasses permit some unique and private vistas (fig. 3.8, Cat. 32). The lady's curls adorn only the lower end of an enormously imposing tower of hair, colourfully adorned with a quasi-Turkish turban and finished off with lavish plumage in the style made fashionable by the Duchess of Devonshire. The two gentlemen behind her are equally mocked for their voyeuristic desires, so no one comes off well here.

There is a rather darker side to opera portrayed here: for all its glamour, glory and sociability, opera-going was not all glitzy entertainment. While in public, as a woman of high social standing the freedoms that Elizabeth enjoyed as she pursued her passion for opera were restricted despite her wealth and high status. Her expensive box at the opera house, when it came to it, was rather a small affair: even after its rebuilding and extension, the new King's Theatre measured only 23 metres across by 58 metres deep, so each box extended barely beyond a metre in width. The seeming vastness of the theatre stood in stark contrast to the space in which Elizabeth was actually confined. And a night at the opera was long: a normal evening's entertainment would start at



half past seven, with doors opening at half past six. A full-length *opera seria* interspersed with *divertissements* would be followed by a ballet in four parts. How comfortable would Elizabeth have been in her opera box for that length of time? Granted, people arrived late or didn't stay for the full night's entertainment but, while a man might move around the theatre, a woman was confined to her pretty box frame, visible from the other boxes like the centre-piece of a still life. What did it feel like to carry the enormous headdresses, to be literally hemmed in by one's elaborate clothing? Image after image appears to portray women so laden with dress and adornments that they seem barely able to move. And how comfortable would a journey have been in one of the small sedan chairs that would bob up and down at the mercy of the chairmen who might manoeuvre uneven streets in a hurry? Adverts for 'fur for the chairs' give an idea of the temperatures endured while travelling in these small wooden boxes. Indeed, James Gillray's caricature of the 'Modern Belle' in her sedan chair turns her into a caged bird, a beautiful peacock of the male gaze, carried by rough and ready zoo keepers. In contemporary caricatures, both male and female figures exceeding their neat compartments and transgressing the boundaries of their confinements are almost always a sign of individual debauchery and of social chaos (fig. 3.9).



**Fig. 3.9:** Robert Dighton (1752-1814), 'Return from a Masquerade - a Morning Scene' (London: Bowles, 1784).  
© Trustees of the British Museum.

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The question of how women like Elizabeth, independently rich and educationally privileged, would have experienced this tightrope walk between the joys of sociability on the one hand and the confinement of female etiquette on the other is one worth pondering. Elizabeth certainly found ways to make the opera her own by inviting its stars into her home, by patronising their benefit concerts, and by employing them as singing teachers for her daughters. Regular music purchases allowed her to experience the music on her own terms. At the same time it seems that she was well aware of the sometimes ridiculous nature of the opera house cabals: extant at Bowhill House is a whole collection of caricatures by James Gillray that she assembled and annotated with the names of the persons displayed. The collection consists of numerous images of theatrical performances and music-making. Here, she took the theatre home in the images of her favourite stars such as Angelica Catalani, but she also appears to have enjoyed the caricatures' mockery of its often ridiculous social displays and political subtexts. Her neat annotations reveal a woman engaging with the images, studying them, mapping them onto the actual theatre or onto newspaper reports and public opinions, bringing the hubbub of London's cultural life into a space over which she exerted greater control: her home.

Indeed, Elizabeth brought the opera home to Montagu House, to Dalkeith Palace and later to Richmond in her continual purchase of opera music that she would have bound elaborately in leather bindings, with 'D. of Buccleugh' gilded on the front cover. Paying for the finest music and dance teachers for her daughters, she inspired them into a similar passion for opera. Their collections include a broad range of opera dances that were performed at the King's Theatre, arranged for the pianoforte. Sets from the 1796 and 1797 season are filled with annotations through which Duchess Elizabeth's daughters relived their operatic adventures at home. Similarly, the Montagu Music Collection abounds with the songs from the popular spectacles in English opera. Here, Thomas Arne, Samuel Arnold and Charles Dibdin rub shoulders in a parade of songs and overtures arranged for the keyboard. The Ladies Montagu certainly knew what was *en vogue* in the metropolis. Italian serious and comic opera was similarly present. Niccolò Piccinni's *La buona figliuola*, the Italian favourite that William Capon pinned above the colonnades of the King's Theatre in his 1789 depiction, appears in the collection twice: in score (MMC vol. 227), and in a collection entitled 'The Song's in *La buona figliuola*' (MMC vol. 302); its sequel, *La buona figliuola maritata*, written to capitalise on its precursor's success is also part of the collection (MMC vol. 305). *The Maid of the Mill*, *The Siege of Belgrade*, and *The Duenna*, the full cast of London's opera favourites of the 1780s and 1790s, was assembled here to relive and imagine the operatic spectacle and to escape, perhaps, from the confines of social etiquette – as so many of these operas portrayed in their transgression of social norms.

Elizabeth attended Drury Lane regularly – her account books minute her payments to the box keeper for single and multiple ticket prices. Yet, her dedication to the house was less pronounced than her sense of belonging to the



**Fig. 3.10:** Augustus Pugin (1769-1832) and Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), 'Drury Lane Theatre (1808)', in Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London* (London: Ackermann, [1808-1810]). © The British Library Board, C.194.b.305-307.

King's Theatre. In his *Musical Reminiscences* of 1828, a wonderfully colourful and notoriously unreliable historical source with respect to facts, the Earl of Mount Edgumbe commented repeatedly on the unsuitability of English opera singers for the Italian stage and vice versa. While German soprano Gertrud Mara was 'rather out of place' at Covent Garden, the tenor Michael Kelly 'had retained, or regained, so much of the English vulgarity of manner' during his time at Drury Lane that 'he was never greatly liked' at the King's Theatre.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps, the unease of transferring from one stage to another applied in equal measure to the audience. The patent theatres, Drury Lane and Covent Garden, offered very few private boxes, and most of the horseshoe was given over to public boxes that did not have dividers from floor to ceiling (fig. 3.10). Here, strangers would sit beside each other – a sentiment that was very different to the intricate box visiting and strategic seating carried on at the King's Theatre. But nonetheless, the duchess and her daughters enjoyed and studied the musical performances at the patent theatres; they consumed it through their personal copies of the opera scores.

In their home, Duchess Elizabeth and her four daughters, Mary, Elizabeth, Caroline and Harriet, escaped the strict norms under which women operated in society. Singing from their opera scores brought them an emotional play-space that their societal world seldom offered. Here, the caged birds were let out of the confines of opera box and sedan chair; one can easily imagine that in re-living their favourite melodies, their voices may have taken their minds on journeys of wild imaginings as they dreamt themselves momentarily into the fictional and idealized lives of the libertine actors and singers; lives marked by notoriety, jeopardy and excitement. Here, these privileged ladies may have felt true freedom as their voices soared aloft in their imagined, opera houses. Music was so much more than a pastime.

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## Further Reading

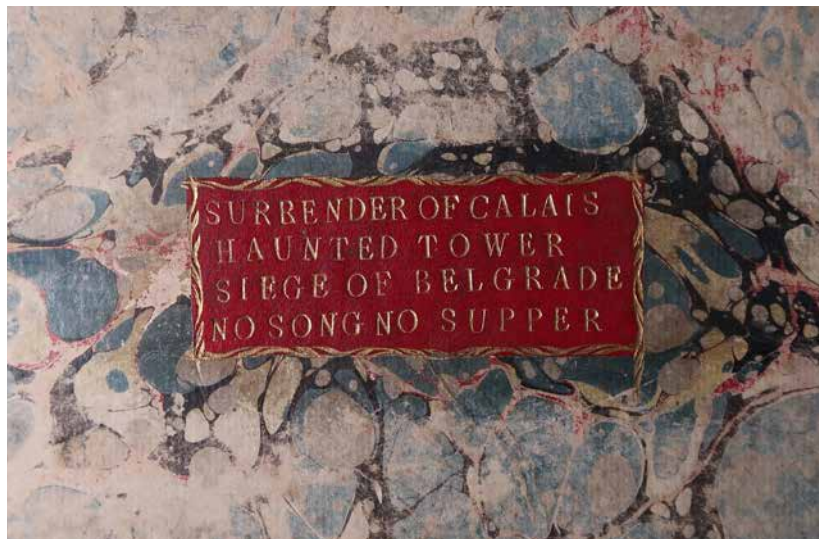
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Cat. 14. © Buccleuch Collection.

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Bray, House Steward to Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, Accounts for the year 1794, NRS, GD224/462/4.

<sup>2</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 4 March 1793.

<sup>3</sup> William Lee, *The Plan and Section of the Boxes at the King's Theatre, Pantheon, with an alphabetical list of the Subscribers* (London, 1791). It appears that Elizabeth purchased these plans at least occasionally as John Reynolds's accounts list payments for 'Mr Lee's opera book' for various years at £1 1s. John Reynolds, House Steward to Duchess Elizabeth, Accounts (1790-1809), 13 May 1803, 4 July 1806, 27 May 1808, Boughton House.

<sup>4</sup> *A Descriptive Plan of the new Opera-house, with the names of the subscribers to each box, by a Lady of Fashion* (London: T. Becket, 1782).

<sup>5</sup> Lee, *Boxes at the King's Theatre*, fold-out plan.

<sup>6</sup> Elizabeth Montagu, Private Accounts with Henry Hoare and Co. (1775-1794), NRS, GD224/1092/1.

<sup>7</sup> Further listings in John Reynolds's accounts appear for instance on 9 December 1791, 16 January 1794, 19 November 1796, 4 December 1798, 18 December 1799, 17 December 1800, etc.; John Reynolds, House Steward to Duchess Elizabeth, Accounts (1790-1809), Boughton House. His final subscription payment is listed in December 1808 at a cost of £252.

<sup>8</sup> In 1813, for instance, Elizabeth's accounts mention only a singular payment for an opera box at the price of £5 5s; Account Books possibly belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1801-1825, NRS, GD224/1093/2, 29 April 1813.

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence of Henry, Duke of Buccleuch, and Charles, Lord Dalkeith, his Son (1817), NRS, GD224/654/1.

<sup>10</sup> Account Books possibly belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1801-1808, NRS, GD224/1093/1.

<sup>11</sup> In 1776 George, Duke of Montagu pays for his share of Elizabeth's opera box, see Duke of Montagu, Private Accounts, 26 February 1776, Boughton House.

<sup>12</sup> Richard Earl of Mount Edgcombe, *Reminiscences Chiefly Respecting the Italian Opera in England from the Year 1773 to the Present Time*. 3rd ed. (London, 1828), 74-75.



Subscription ticket for the King's Theatre, Haymarket (London, 1787). Front and reverse sides.

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Proof of subscription was provided in the form of card tickets or ivory and metal coins. This one belonged to Duchess Elizabeth's uncle.





Drawn by E. J. & W. G. Dighton. At New Bond Street Dec. 1806.

Madame **CATALANI** in **SEMIRAMIDE**.  
her first Appearance in England, Dec<sup>r</sup> 13<sup>th</sup>, 1806.



## CHAPTER 4

# Stars of the Opera

Jeanice Brooks

In July 1807, readers of the *Morning Chronicle* learned that Angelica Catalani – the Italian soprano whose 1806 London debut had been the operatic event of the year – would give a benefit performance at the King’s Theatre, during which ‘by particular desire’ she would perform some of her greatest hits. Opera fragments from Sebastiano Nasolini’s *La morte di Cleopatra* and Simon Mayr’s *Il fanatico per la musica* were arranged to display the prima donna in varied guises, from tragic queen to sentimental heroine. A new scene in *Il fanatico*, ‘arranged purposely to introduce Madame Catalani in male Attire,’ embraced the gender play that was a central feature of Georgian stage culture, while inserting Giovanni Paisiello’s aria ‘Nel cor più non mi sento’ into Mayr’s score allowed her to perform elaborate variations written specially for her by Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari. As the *Morning Post* enthused in its own announcement, the performance would be ‘a delectable treat to the amateurs and the public’.<sup>1</sup> Duchess Elizabeth would no doubt have agreed: she subscribed to Catalani’s London benefit and, six weeks later, went to hear her again when a series of eagerly awaited concerts extended the prima donna’s success to Edinburgh.

Catalani’s influence and appeal reached well beyond the stage. Widely circulated portraits and engravings, both in and out of theatrical character, rendered her image available for purchase; a popular etching by Robert Dighton of Catalani as Semiramide made its way into Duchess Elizabeth’s own collection (fig. 4.1). She was pictured in the *Ladies Magazine*, and fashionable spectators could emulate her appearance by adopting Catalani-style headdresses like those advertised in the *Oxford Journal* on 18 July 1807. And though few could match her technical prowess, amateurs could aspire to make Catalani’s performances their own by purchasing scores emblazoned with her name and purporting to preserve the very versions she sang. She would later patronise a specially designed portfolio for carrying music – ‘Peck’s Portfolio’ – signing the inside covers as part of the manufacturer’s advertising campaign, in a nineteenth-century version of today’s athletic sponsorship deals.

Catalani’s performances highlight the multivalent roles of singers during Duchess Elizabeth’s opera-going life. Connections between patrons and stars underwent major transformations: while aristocratic patronage remained

**Fig. 4.1:** Angelica Catalani (1780-1849). Robert Dighton (1751-1814), ‘Madame Catalani in Semiramide. Her first Appearance in England’ (London: Dighton, 1806).

© Buccleuch Collection.

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vital to theatrical careers, new forms of public spectatorship and media culture increasingly allowed musical celebrities to become patrons themselves by conferring attention and access on their admirers. The best singers had long been at the top of the power hierarchy in the opera house, where composers catered to their abilities and singers themselves had the right to insert favourite 'suitcase arias' that were particularly flattering to their talents. Through the late eighteenth century, the increasing craze for vocal display generated competition between virtuosos, and ever greater feats of bravura singing drew breathless admiration from audiences and reviewers. Singers became the focus for both desire and emulation, their voices at the centre of media production of a star persona that transcended the opera house to affect culture beyond the stage.

On the flip side of this heady fascination were less flattering attitudes toward singers and hard economic realities. Like actors, dancers and other stage performers, opera singers engaged in what had historically been considered a disreputable profession. Public scrutiny of their behaviour on and off stage meant that perceived transgressions, particularly for women, could lead to merciless ridicule in caricatures or scurrilous denunciation in print. Reactions to castrati and foreign prima donnas show that opera singers were lightning rods for debates around national identity, and reception of foreign opera stars was often marked by xenophobia. Many singers had financial and social aspirations that spurred them in turn to emulate their audience – particularly its aristocratic members - in an effort to gain respectability and security as well as acclaim. Though opera singers' public images regularly evoked opulence and luxury, theatre was a risky business, and for every prodigy who retired in comfort, there were many others who struggled at the margins, facing penury as voices aged and fashions changed.

### **The Age of the Castrato – Giuseppe Giustinelli**

If during Duchess Elizabeth's long life the female prima donna gradually took centre stage, her youth was still marked by the dominance of castrati. Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries – particularly but not exclusively in Italy – large numbers of boys were castrated before puberty to ensure that their voices did not change. Physiology combined with rigorous vocal training allowed many castrati to develop high soprano and alto voices of superlative power, range and brilliance. They most often sang the roles of young heroes in Italian *opera seria*, serious operas usually based on stories from classical antiquity, whose plots emphasised high-flown concepts such as princely honour or conflicts between love and duty. The eighteenth century was the heyday of the most celebrated castrati of all time, including most famously the great Farinelli (Carlo Broschi, 1705-1782). English Grand Tourists marvelled at the voices they experienced during Continental travels. And when Italian opera came to London, canny impresarios lured some of these men to the capital. Handel's London operas employed a series of famous voices, and during Duchess Elizabeth's





**Fig. 4.3:** John Ainslie (fl. 1815-1835),  
Portrait of Giuseppe Giustinelli, 1820.  
© Buccleuch Collection.

By the early 1770s Giustinelli had become part of the household of the Earl of Home. He may initially have been taken on as a music teacher: family legend claimed that he lost his voice while in England and arrived nearly destitute at The Hirsell, the Home family seat on the Scottish border, to teach Lord Home the violin.<sup>4</sup> However, his name figures in a listing for an Edinburgh benefit concert in 1775, which suggests he continued to perform in public at least initially, and that Duchess Elizabeth and Duke Henry probably knew him before their daughter Lady Elizabeth Montagu married Alexander Home, 10<sup>th</sup> Earl of Home, in 1798.<sup>5</sup> Giustinelli lived with the couple both at The Hirsell and at Dalkeith. The very first entry in the

Dalkeith Palace dinner book, begun in 1804, identified Giustinelli as 'The Friend of Lord Home who has lived in his family many years' and the book shows that he was always present at the palace during the long periods when the Homes were living there.<sup>6</sup> His portrait was painted by the Edinburgh artist John Ainslie along with those of other denizens of Dalkeith, including Duke Henry's uncle, Major Walter Scott, as well as the cook Joseph Florence and the chamberlain William Tait of Pirn (fig. 4.3).

Among the domestic entertainments that took place at Dalkeith Palace is one in which Giustinelli's theatrical skills played a central role. This was 'The Mistakes of the Night', a little musical drama possibly written by Rev. John Marriott, tutor to Duchess Elizabeth's grandson, and performed at Dalkeith on 26 November 1805 by members of the household. It opens with the arrival of Apollo and the Muses to the accompaniment of music. Apollo urges the Muses to awaken the sleeping Bard, played by Giustinelli. Apollo's flattering account of the castrato's musical career – 'Sacred with Myrtle intertwin'd/ Shall Giustinelli's temples bind/Reward of blended song/T'was his to temper British fire/With soft Italia's warbling lyre' – soon yields to parody of his broken English, as the god praises Giustinelli for inspiring the Muses 'To spurn the tyranny of schools/ And boldly scorn coercive rules/ And Grammar's servile chains'. Giustinelli awakens, his protests couched in a macaronic blend of English and Italian that overflows with cliché phrases from opera arias:



*Why me do turn from side to side  
As if the Night-mare take a ride?  
Perchè non posso star tranquillo, [why may I not rest peacefully]  
With head upon so soft a pillow?  
Che nuova fiamma arde nel petto [what new flame burns in my breast]  
Driving riposa dal mio letto. [ . . . repose from my bed]*

One of the musician's solecisms, 'Perfectly not', became a family catchphrase; its appearance, underlined, in his role in 'The Mistakes of the Night' suggests it had already become a part of Dalkeith Palace lore.

Giustinelli was clearly a well-loved member of the Buccleuch connection, but his position was equivocal. His musical career provided an entrée into the domestic environment of his elite patrons, a tool for transcending differences of language, gender normativity and class, and for achieving security in old age. But what did visitors to Dalkeith or The Hirsell think of his presence? For many, too familiar contact with musicians and singers brought the possibility of taint; we see this attitude in an earlier letter from Lady Caroline Dawson to Lady Louisa Stewart, after a visit to Scotland that also included a stay at Dalkeith. Commenting on the unconventional household of Lady Hopetoun, Lady Caroline writes that her daughters, 'are brought up in an odd way too, for there's Tenducci living with them, and there is always some fiddler or singer'.<sup>8</sup> Unlike her friend Lady Caroline, Duchess Elizabeth and her family evidently did not feel that sharing family life with a castrato singer was a problem, but his roasting in 'The Mistakes of the Night' nevertheless underlined both his dependent status and the exotic foreignness of his operatic identity.

### Singing for England: Nancy Storace and Elizabeth Billington



**Fig. 4.4:** Michael William Sharpe (d.1840),  
Portrait of Ann Selina (Nancy) Storace, c.1800.  
© Courtesy of the Garrick Club, London.

The most successful lyric theatre of the late eighteenth century was not the Italian opera performed at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, but English-language musical entertainment. The Drury Lane and Covent Garden patent theatres served up a range of popular offerings, from comic and sentimental pieces featuring spoken dialogue interspersed with simple songs, to all-sung English operas including more complex music. While many leading performers in this milieu were singing actors, whose musical technique could not match that of Italian opera singers and particularly the extensively trained castrati, by this time some British singers could rival their levels of expertise.

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Nancy Storace (1765-1817) was among a generation of female singers who trained with renowned castrati and could aspire to match their vocal prowess (fig. 4.4). She belonged to a theatrical family spanning British and Continental traditions: her Italian-born father played in the King's Theatre orchestra and translated Italian opera into English, while her brother, the composer Stephen Storace, would write both Italian *opera seria* and some of the most successful English operas for Drury Lane. A child prodigy, she studied singing with the castrato Venanzio Rauzzini in Bath, and performed in one of Rauzzini's operas when only eleven. In 1778 she joined her brother in Naples, and she was soon performing both serious and comic roles all over Italy. When the Viennese ambassador heard her in Venice in 1783, he promptly engaged her for the newly organized Italian opera company in Vienna, where she was the highest paid singer in the company and where Antonio Salieri, Giovanni Paisiello, Vicente Martín y Soler and Mozart all wrote roles for her. She famously mimicked the castrato Luigi Marchesi's vocal acrobatics in Salieri's *opera seria* satire, *Prima la musica e poi le parole* (1786) but is best known today as the first Susanna in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*, premiered the same year. Mozart wrote several other compositions for her, including the dramatic concert aria 'Ch'io mi scordi di te', created for her farewell concert on leaving Vienna for London in 1787.

Storace's first London appearance on her return was in Paisiello's *Gli schiavi per amore*, which Duchess Elizabeth had recently admired in Naples. Elizabeth and her older daughters were still on the Continent, but her father, George, Duke of Montagu, and younger daughter Caroline attended *Gli schiavi* at the King's Theatre on 8 May 1787. George wrote enthusiastically to Elizabeth about Storace's performance: 'she has a fine voice and sings in admirable taste; her figure indifferent and her face ditto, but she is an incomparable actress'. Duke George was well informed: his letter also detailed that Storace was, 'so far an English woman as having been born in this country; her father played the great bass many years at the opera; she was born at Bath whither he retired'.<sup>9</sup> If his 'so far an English woman' hints at Storace's double identity, for Italian musicians in London who feared the loss of specialist operatic terrain, there was no doubt about her origins. Exulting in Nancy's success, Stephen Storace remarked that it was achieved despite 'great opposition from the Italians, who consider it as an infringement on their rights – that any person should be able to sing that was not born in Italy'.<sup>10</sup> Stephen continued that nevertheless, 'she gains ground very fast', and performances of *Gli schiavi* played to packed houses. Two of Nancy's numbers were regularly encored, including her garden scene duet, 'Piche cornacchie', with the comic bass Luigi Morelli.

Duke George was among the applauding audience demanding a repeat: his letter to Elizabeth describes the scene ('a garden, the man has a little shovel in his hand, and the woman has a pair of shears and both are introduced to a very pretty effect'); praises Morelli too as having a 'remarkable fine bass voice, acts well and is a perfect good figure'; and effusively declares, 'I think we



**Fig. 4.5:** John Collie Nixon (c.1755-1818), 'Madame Storace in *The Haunted Tower*', 1790. © Courtesy of the Garrick Club, London.

never could have been tired of it, if we had nothing else the whole night'. This delight in the stage performance was further enacted in emulative recreation, highlighting rare evidence of the process by which aristocratic amateurs appropriated the repertoire and roles of operatic professionals. Relaying his conversation with his granddaughter Caroline, Duke George reported to Elizabeth, 'I was saying to her, as we were agreeing on commending the duo in the opera, that I would desire Car. to perfect herself in it and take the music to Dalkeith that she and Sir John Clerk might sing it . . . I hope we shall give you a good sample of it in the dear Gallery'. On the back of *Gli schiavi*'s enthusiastic reception, the London firm of Longman & Broderip rapidly published favourite numbers from the work for purchase; the duet 'sung by Signora Storace and Signor Morelli' features prominently at the front of a beautifully bound volume

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of opera extracts in the Montagu Music Collection (Cat. 41). Annotations to the score suggest that Caroline worked on the piece with her vocal teacher Domenico Corri, perhaps preparing a rendition of the duet with Sir John Clerk – a music enthusiast from the nearby estate of Penicuik – to welcome her parents and siblings back to Dalkeith Palace after their Continental tour.

Though Nancy Storace returned to England as a singer of Italian opera, she soon branched out into English opera territory. The Buccleuch family followed her career from the Haymarket to Drury Lane, where she joined her brother Stephen after the King's Theatre burned down in 1789. For the next decade she was the company's leading soprano, starring in several of Stephen's most popular works, including *The Haunted Tower* (1789), *No Song, No Supper* (1790), *The Siege of Belgrade* (1791) and *The Pirates* (1792) (fig. 4.5). These pieces span the gamut of possibilities within the English style, from relatively simple songs to more complex solo and ensemble writing. The spoken dialogue between sung numbers highlighted Nancy's sparkling acting style, while her vocal ability and extensive experience in singing Italian comic opera provided scope for Stephen's most ambitious writing. The Montagu Music Collection holds scores for all these pieces, purchased at the time of the London premieres by Buccleuch family members for use in creating their own performances at home (Cat. 14).

They may also have heard *The Haunted Tower* and *No Song No Supper* in 1793 in Edinburgh, where both pieces were performed by Elizabeth Billington (1765-1818), Nancy Storace's exact contemporary and the most notorious English soprano of the day. Like Storace, Billington was the precocious offspring of a musical family: her German parents were an oboist and a singer employed at the King's Theatre and Vauxhall Gardens. But unlike her compatriot, Billington achieved her first major successes as a singer of English opera. In 1786, she appeared in Thomas Arne's *Love in a Village* at Covent Garden, and she soon gained widespread acclaim as Clara in *The Duenna*, the title role in William Shield's *Rosina*, and Mandane in Arne's *Artaxerxes*. Billington dazzled her audiences with her high notes and the inventiveness and taste of her ornaments, but was less often praised as an actress, an assessment confirmed by Duke Henry, who first heard her in William Shield's *The Prophet* at Covent Garden in 1789. Writing to Duchess Elizabeth, he noted: 'She has a very pleasing & fine voice but has no Grace & acts very indifferently'.<sup>11</sup>

Billington's success was doubled by scandal, and her career illustrates the perils as well as the rewards of a career on the stage. In January 1792, she was savagely attacked in James Ridgway's *Memoirs of Mrs Billington, from her Birth: containing a variety of matter, Ludicrous, Theatrical, Musical and \_\_\_\_\_*. The redacted word hints at the main topic of this fake autobiography, a misogynistic romp through Billington's supposed sexual appetites and misdemeanours. In a move that reminds us of modern hacking, Ridgway had obtained letters from Billington, to her mother, written during the breakdown



**Fig. 4.6:** Elisabeth-Louise Vigée-Lebrun (1755-1842), Portrait of Angelica Catalani, c.1806. Sold 1991, current location unknown.

of her marriage; despite Billington's attempt to regain them through the courts, Ridgway was able to rearrange the letters into a damning narrative that seemed to support his accusations of depravity. The print was a sensation: Haydn's London diaries note that there was not a single copy left unbought by three o'clock on the day of its publication. The ensuing furore likely motivated Billington's departure for Dublin and then Edinburgh, and her subsequent voyage to Italy in 1793. In a trajectory in some ways reversing that of Nancy Storace, her move to the Continent provided opportunities to reinvent herself as a performer of Italian opera. Her *début* in Naples in 1794 launched a triumphant conquest of Italian opera houses, and on her return to London in 1801, she combined her skills in both English and Italian opera, unusually performing at both the English patent theatres at Drury Lane and Covent Garden and with the Italian company



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at the King's Theatre. At her King's Theatre debut in 1802, the *Times* noted that 'The English Opera does not allow her sufficient range for the exertion of the incomparable powers of her voice', and from 1803 she performed in four seasons of Italian opera.<sup>12</sup> In 1806, her performances included *La clemenza di Tito*, the first opera by Mozart produced in London. This would be her final season on the King's Theatre stage, where soon admiration for a new star, Angelica Catalani, would for many eclipse the memory of Billington's earlier success.

### The Dawn of the Diva: Angelica Catalani

Catalani's arrival in Edinburgh in 1807 prompted much effusive excitement from the *Caledonian Mercury*, which couched both her repute and performance in the glowing terms of nascent diva-worship. Acknowledging Catalani as the first among European leading ladies, the reviewer launched into a description of her interpretation of 'Son regina' from Marcos António Portugal's *Semiramide*, a bravura showpiece that was a regular feature of her programmes:

her debut was inexpressibly majestic and striking; it burst on the ear, like a meteor flashing on the eye; and fixed the audience in one sensation of mingled astonishment and delight. The undulating sostenuto which she introduced in this beautiful air, and which resembled rather the music of the spheres than the human voice, produced a thrill of musical ecstasy.<sup>13</sup>

Depicting Catalani as both otherworldly and dramatically present, the reviewer then praised her expressive ability using terms of elegance, beauty, sublimity and grandeur. In a final moment of poetic (and marketable) yearning, he closed his encomium to Catalani's talents by declaring her 'not only the wonder of a lifetime, but the Phoenix of the age, which may never again appear' (fig. 4.6).

The audience for Catalani's concert that evening included Duchess Elizabeth, three of her children and their spouses, and an equally star-struck Major Walter Scott. In an early example of scrapbook fandom, Scott carefully noted in the Dalkeith Palace dinner books when the family attended her concerts and recorded his approbation when he went himself. Of her first concert in Edinburgh he wrote that 'she received from the audience that just applause her great vocal abilities merit'; after another concert nine days later, he declared, 'Her acting & Singing were inimitable, of course'. This time, her efforts were tangibly memorialised through a poster of the concert that he pasted at the very front of the dinner book, immediately catching the eye of anyone who opened it. Further posters advertising performances during Catalani's more extensive tour in 1808, which the family attended assiduously, are placed at the back. In the winter of 1809-1810, the singer returned to Edinburgh for six concerts, and the advertisement for the first on 29 December – with Catalani's name in giant type – is the final item pasted into the back cover, helping to frame the entire record of this period of family life with mementos of the singer's Scottish triumphs.<sup>14</sup>

Like her London benefit, Catalani's Edinburgh programmes served as

vehicles for celebrity production. Newspaper announcements aimed to drum up excitement and capitalise on spectators' fear of missing out by claiming that a particular programme would be 'positively the last' of Catalani's Edinburgh appearances, while the mention 'by desire' attached to some numbers on the programme list emphasised her benevolent gratification of audience wishes to hear her sing particular pieces again and again. Signature numbers appeared in every concert: the acrobatic 'Son regina' displayed her bravura fire, while Paisiello's 'Nel cor più non mi sento' emphasised effortless grace. Other arias, and sometimes entire acts or scenes, were cherry-picked from operas she had performed to acclaim at the Haymarket, including serious works such as Portugal's *Mitridate* and Antonio Sacchini's *Didone*, as well as sentimental comedies such as Mayr's *Il fanatico*, Paisiello's *La frascatana* and Valentino Fioravanti's *Il furbo contro il furbo*. Fioravanti's comic duet, 'Con pazienza sopportiamo' – originally from his *I virtuosi ambulanti* but regularly inserted into other pieces including *Il fanatico* and *Il furbo* – provided the delicious spectacle of Europe's leading prima donna pretending to receive a singing lesson. Most performances concluded with a rousing rendition of 'God Save the King,' in which the Italian soprano assumed the mantle of Britannia, offering her magnificent voice on the altar of her public's national pride.

It seems inevitable that Catalani must have been a hot topic of conversation around the Dalkeith dinner table. We can thus imagine Major Scott's excitement when the prima donna herself made an appearance there in February 1810. Catalani came to dinner at the palace with her husband and Natale Corri, the organiser of her Edinburgh concerts, staying overnight and departing after breakfast the next day. After dinner, she entertained the family in the Gallery with songs, likely including the same pieces she had just performed in public but in versions accompanied by piano, resembling the domestic arrangements the Buccleuch family purchased and sang themselves. Her performance also included a series of attitudes with a shawl.<sup>15</sup> This involved posing as figures from classical antiquity, using a shawl to suggest elements of costume. Here Catalani was following in the footsteps of the fascinating and scandalous Emma Hamilton (1765-1815), whose shawl performances helped make her an international celebrity.<sup>16</sup> Emma's refashioning as genteel hostess after she became the mistress, then wife of the British envoy to Naples, Sir William Hamilton, involved lessons in feminine accomplishments including languages, singing, and dancing. The Buccleuch family regularly socialised with Sir William during their Neapolitan stay in 1786-1787, several months after Emma's arrival, and though Duchess Elizabeth's journals do not mention meeting her, during this time both Emma and the duchess's daughter Lady Elizabeth Montagu took singing lessons from the castrato Giuseppe Aprile. Lady Elizabeth's study was aimed toward private performance; Emma's vocal development instead led to talk of a career on the operatic stage. Emma was most admired, however, for the 'attitudes' she began performing later in 1787,



Fig. 4.7: Isaac Cruikshank (1764-1811) after George Moutard Woodward (1760?-1809), 'John Bull Forming a Catalini of His Own!' (London: Tegg, 1807).

© Buccleuch Collection.

in which she embodied classical figures such as Medea and Cleopatra – characters who figured in operatic plots just as they did in the statues prized by antiquarians like Sir William. On trips back to England she performed them for aristocratic patrons including the Duke of Queensberry, and engravings of her attitudes were published in 1797, shortly after the beginning of the affair with the naval hero Horatio Nelson that brought her even further into the public eye. She continued to perform them after her return to London with both Nelson and Hamilton in 1800.

Catalani introduced her own 'attitudes' into Sarti's comic opera *Gli amanti consolati* at the King's Theatre in 1808. The newspapers described the scene as 'A Lesson in Grace' and, like the interpolation of singing lesson scenes into opera performances, it functioned within the plot to demonstrate her character's refinement. The lived experience of the singing, dance and deportment lessons received by aristocratic female spectators, including Duchess Elizabeth and her daughters, was transposed to the stage. However, Catalani's performance met with mixed success: while some praised her postures as artistic and statuesque, others found her awkward. She may also have suffered from problematic associations. While some representations of Emma Hamilton's performances conveyed images of grace, brutal caricatures produced by London satirists featured lascivious images of her attitudes, underlining the voyeuristic

potential of this mode of bodily display. One further performance during a Dublin staging of *La frascatana* in 1808 was apparently Catalani's last attempt to perform the attitudes in public. She chose instead to confine her shawl performances to private settings for highly select audiences such as the one that welcomed her so warmly to Dalkeith, effecting a retransition of the domestic lesson from its stage representation back into the home.

Catalani was among the first of the international stars whose careers fed popular images of the prima donna in the nineteenth century. But her example also highlights the blurred and complex relations of public and private performance, aristocracy and celebrity in Georgian Britain. Elite women were often themselves celebrities for their beauty, wit, or connections, and they not only hosted performances but performed themselves, mixing with artists of more humble origins and staging entertainments as varied as any to be found on the public stage. In opening their homes to private performances by public stars, hosts gained the illusion of possessing celebrities and the sense of distinction that accompanied personal connection with the object of others' adulation. At the same time, they became themselves potential targets for the satirists' pens. An etching by Isaac Cruikshank represents a tubby John Bull, fiddle in hand, his score open to a song titled, 'O the Roast Beef of Old England'. Posed in front of him, a tabby cat, attired in a fashionable high-waisted and cap-sleeved gown as 'Catalini', vocalises to his exclamation, 'I don't see any reason for my part why these foreigners should run away with all the money . . . I dare say I shall get two hundred guineas a night by your mewing at private Concerts, at the houses of Ladies of distinction, and you shall have plenty of rats and mice for your own private picking' (fig. 4.7).

The caricature merrily sends up British opera aficionados and society hostesses as well as the foreign divas whose performances they consumed in their homes. From her position at the pinnacle of Edinburgh society, and as the respected matriarch of a powerful and impeccably connected family, Duchess Elizabeth had little to fear from such taunts. Indeed, she seems instead to have enjoyed them, collecting Cruikshank's image in her book of satirical caricatures and no doubt relishing the many ironies it reflected in its portrayal of the patrons and stars of her day.

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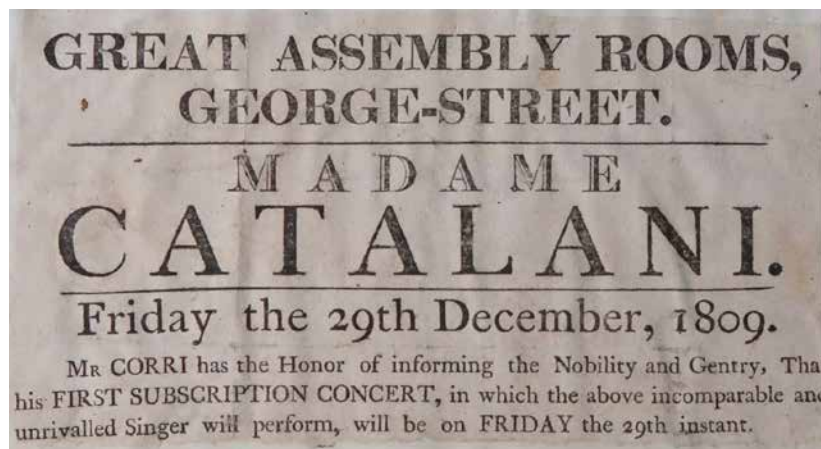
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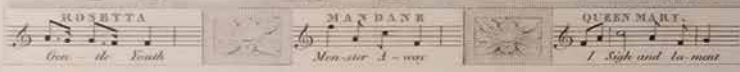
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- <sup>4</sup> Louisa Stuart, *Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart to Miss Louisa Clinton*, ed. Hon. James Archibald Home, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: Douglas, 1903), 266-270. Home's note on Giustinelli explains Stuart's letter of 9 September 1822, in which she disparages a book as, 'perfectly not, as an old opera-singer I knew used to say in his broken English'.
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## CHAPTER 5

# *The Singers Preceptor:* Learning from Italian Masters

Catherine Garry

**P**erformance of Italian opera was an important aspect of domestic life in the Buccleuch household. Members of the family not only frequently attended opera performances in London, but they also interpreted the repertoire themselves at home. Domestic performance of Italian opera epitomised the conflicts surrounding the genre's reception in Britain during the eighteenth century. On the one hand, it was considered a mark of aristocratic refinement, demonstrating accomplished skill and elite cultured taste. On the other, it was seen to represent decadence and excess; the lavish spectacle of the opera house and high cost of singing lessons were topics of eighteenth-century luxury critique. The increasing popularity of Italian opera in elite domestic spheres resulted in the demand for vocal tuition by native speakers, which contributed to discourses of both cosmopolitanism and xenophobia. Evidence in the Buccleuch archives and the Montagu Music Collection shows that Duchess Elizabeth provided her daughters, Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline, with this specialist education throughout their upbringing, enabling them to learn and perform in the 'Italian style'. Studying Italian vocal music was just one part of the family's rich engagement with Italian culture, intersecting with language learning, spectatorship, travel, and patronage of Italian musicians.

### Italian Singing Masters

The establishment of Italian opera on the London stage in the early eighteenth century rapidly led to an influx of Italian singers, composers, and librettists arriving to work in Britain. Many performers and composers also worked as pedagogues, becoming teachers to dilettanti and aspiring professionals. Teaching was not considered a lesser outlet than composing or performing; in fact, many of the most famous castrati taught alongside their performing careers, proudly declaring themselves as pedagogues, and publishing their teachings in treatises. Some of the most well known castrati of the day – including Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810) and Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (1735-1790) – were also some of the most reputable singing teachers in Britain, having migrated from the Continent to build their careers after training at Italian conservatoires. Once in Britain, they continued to move in

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the same circles, working and socialising together – mainly in the musical capitals of London, Bath, and Edinburgh – as part of the ‘inner circle’ of the British music scene.

Italian singing masters were recognised for their ability to provide specialised training for those wishing to perform Italian music. They were important agents of cultural transfer, contributing significantly to the implementation of Italian culture in domestic settings. They occupied a similar cultural space to opera stars, even if they had never been or were no longer famous performers themselves. Upper-class families sought to associate themselves with a famous singing master to show off their own awareness of fashion and culture. However, the relationship between a singing master and his client was mutually beneficial. Aristocratic patronage was particularly important for foreign musicians as they needed to develop powerful networks in new countries to retain financial stability.

Singing masters often grew extremely close to the families they worked for, sometimes even living with the family to provide intensive musical training.<sup>1</sup> Despite this, clear class distinctions remained: singing masters were professionals and therefore employees of their patrons. Gender dynamics within master-client relationships were also complex, as most singing masters were male and the majority of their clients were female. Few society women followed the example of Hester Thrale, whose second marriage to her daughter’s Italian singing tutor, Gabriele Piozzi, scandalised her friends and caused several of them to cut off relations with her.<sup>2</sup> Some of the concerns surrounding singing masters were manifested in opera libretti, using the common plot device of young men masquerading as singing teachers to allow them close access to women. Famously, such a lesson scene appears in *Le barbiere de Seville* by Pierre Beaumarchais, the source text for operas by both Giovanni Paisiello and Gioacchino Rossini.



**Fig. 5.2:** Unknown artist, Portrait of Domenico Corri and his wife, Alice Bacchelli.  
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The Corri Family

One renowned Italian singing master developed a close relationship with the Buccleuch family. Domenico Corri (1746-1825) was one of the most eminent pedagogues of the era. Born in Rome, he began musical instruction at the age of six, and moved to Naples to study with Nicola Porpora (who also taught Joseph Haydn). Corri studied alongside Rauzzini and Muzio Clementi, developing a strong friendship that lasted throughout their careers. After meeting Charles Burney, the music historian and composer, he was invited to conduct for the Edinburgh Musical Society, where his wife, Alice Bacchelli, was also invited to sing (fig. 5.2). The family moved to Edinburgh in 1771, where they remained for 18 years, reuniting with other Italian musicians, including Rauzzini and Clementi, who had also migrated to Britain. During this time, Corri established himself in both London and Edinburgh. The entire Corri family were very much at the heart of the British music scene, working as music publishers, instrument sellers, performers, composers, impresarios, and teachers (fig. 5.3).<sup>3</sup> They frequently hosted private musical soirées in their homes where they socialised with aristocrats and fellow elite musicians and composers. Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari (1763-1842), another eminent vocal pedagogue of the era, mentions visiting the Corri house in his memoirs, noting that it enabled him to become friends with ‘the most eminent professors of the metropolis’.<sup>4</sup> Not all Italian expatriates were as flattering: Mozart’s librettist Lorenzo Da Ponte regretted his association with Corri and castigated him for his lack of financial sense, describing him as ‘a man of good talent in music, but frivolous, visionary, and sometimes a liar’.<sup>5</sup>

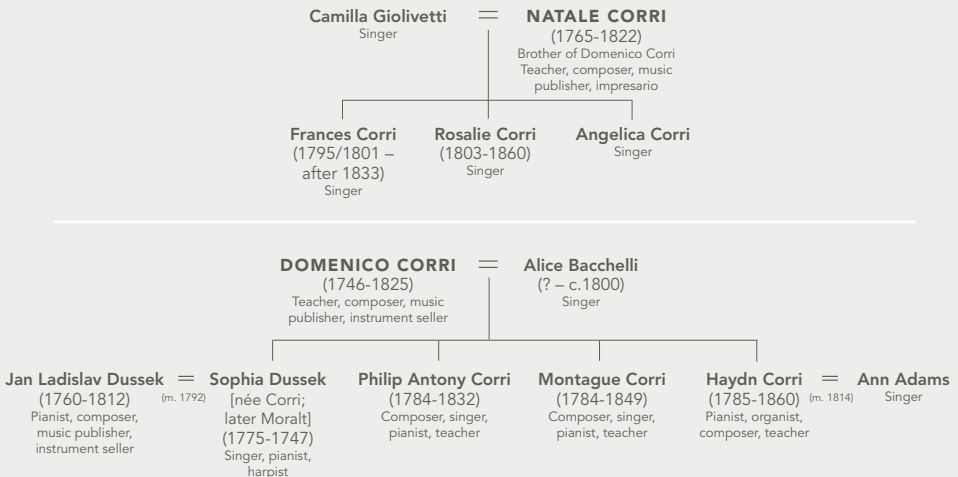


Fig. 5.3: Corri Family Tree.





Fig. 5.4: Giuseppe Aprile (1732-1813), 'Sparsi e vero il pianto' from MMC vol. 159, a manuscript volume bearing the names of Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu. © Buccleuch Collection.

Duchess Elizabeth's relationship with the Corri family likely started as early as 1771, when Domenico arrived in Edinburgh. Corri mentions the Buccleuch family at this point in his memoirs, thanking them first on the list of noble families who provided him with patronage and support:

We [...] arrived at Edinburgh, August 1771; and here I beg leave to make my most sincere and grateful acknowledgements for the liberal favour and support we received from the noble families of Buccleugh, Gordon, Hamilton, Lauderdale, Argyle, Athol, Elphinstone, Kelly, Elgin, Errol, Haddo, Hopton, Melville, Haddington, Selkirk, Breadalbane and Lothian; also, the gentlemen directors of the music society, and the Scotch nation in general.<sup>6</sup>

The two families interacted frequently, with the Corris offering a multitude of business services, and Duchess Elizabeth supporting them in return. But the most significant aspect of their relationship was the provision of singing lessons for the duchess's daughters, Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline, beginning no later than 1782. The girls received lessons from both Natale and Domenico, usually at Dalkeith Palace or George Square in Edinburgh, occurring at least weekly and sometimes more often, during the months the family were at home. Natale and Domenico enjoyed extremely generous fees for this tuition, sometimes receiving

£2 2s for each lesson. This was much higher than the standard rate, which was approximately 5s per lesson in the 1780s for lesser-known teachers, stretching up to a guinea for those well respected in the industry.<sup>7</sup> The frequency and high cost of these lessons shows that vocal tuition was a significant aspect of the family's musical life, and of Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline's upbringing and education. Duchess Elizabeth invested heavily in specialist tuition even when the family was travelling; Domenico continued to teach them in London and Richmond after he moved to the capital in 1790. During the family's Continental tour of 1786-1787, the duchess employed the celebrated castrato Giuseppe Aprile – who combined a career as an opera singer in the 1770s with an equally notable reputation as a pedagogue – to provide music lessons for Lady Elizabeth. The manuscript score of Aprile's duets in the Montagu Music Collection may be a souvenir of this time (fig. 5.4).<sup>8</sup>

### Learning in the 'Italian Style'

What happened during lessons with a famous Italian singing master? We can gain some understanding from the vocal treatises published by Domenico Corri. From the late eighteenth century onwards, vocal pedagogues increasingly published their teachings in singing manuals, to preserve their methods and also to further establish their reputations. These treatises provide insights into how Italian masters taught British amateurs to sing in the Italian style. Corri published his principal vocal treatise, *The Singers Preceptor, or Corri's Treatise on Vocal Music*, in two volumes in 1810. This was one of the most comprehensive singing manuals of the era; as Corri himself proudly claimed, it was a distillation of fifty years' experience of musicianship, teaching and performing in the Neapolitan tradition. He dedicated this treatise to Duchess Elizabeth, highlighting the significance of her patronage (fig. 5.1, Cat. 39). Corri also produced *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duets, &c.* in four volumes between 1779-1795. These volumes also feature instructions for vocal performance, alongside over 250 items of repertoire recommended to his students, spanning a multitude of genres. These very detailed publications illuminate Corri's teaching style, and allow us to compare his teachings with other singing masters of the era. Corri's claims that *The Singers Preceptor* could make Italian singing accessible to everyone, including those who could not afford singing lessons with an Italian master, was a marketing ploy, of course. Still, his note on the title page that he intends to accommodate 'the capacity of every student whether amateur or professor' implies that Corri was teaching his amateur students – including Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu – in the same manner as he would teach professionals, without simplifying the techniques.

There were many skills that Elizabeth and Caroline needed to master. Corri, like most other singing masters, chose to teach his students in a similar style and practice to the education he had received on the Continent. The 'Italian style' of singing focussed on agility and flexibility of the voice, the use of legato,

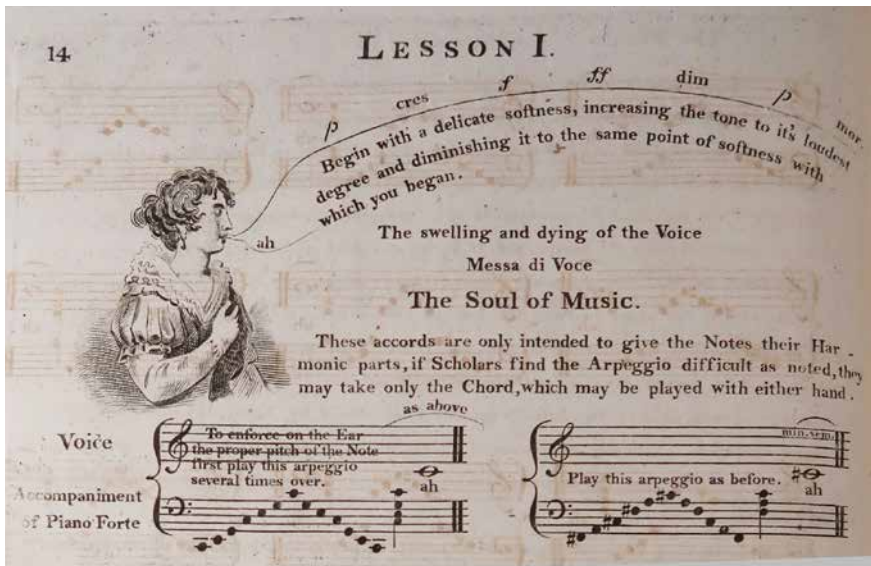


Fig. 5.5: Domenico Corri, 'The Soul of Music' in *The Singers Preceptor* (London: 1810). MMC vol. 455. © Buccleuch Collection.

and the embellishment of the vocal line with appropriate ornamentation. Other important techniques included *portamento* (sliding from one note to the next) and *messa di voce* (swelling and decreasing the volume on a single note), which Corri described as 'The Soul of Music' (fig. 5.5). Today, we call this style *bel canto*, meaning 'beautiful singing'. Its origins are closely related to the growth of *opera seria*, and its principles were largely derived from castrato singing techniques, which were gradually adopted and popularised by other voice types such as soprano and tenor. Italian masters were responsible for implementing these practices in amateur and domestic spheres.

In *The Singers Preceptor*, Corri outlines the most important requisites for singing and provides exercises to support each of these techniques, which he undoubtedly also used during lessons. Many were in the form of *solfeggi*, exercises that applied the syllables 'do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si' to the notes of the diatonic scale (fig. 5.6).<sup>9</sup> *Solfeggi* could support several aspects of vocal tuition, including intonation (meaning accuracy of pitch) and Italian pronunciation. Corri believed that intonation was the most fundamental aspect of vocal performance, arguing that it formed a foundation for all other techniques. However, many singing masters disagreed over the functionality of the *sol-fa* syllables. Some pedagogues, including some Italian singing masters, discouraged use of *sol-fa* altogether, preferring their students to sing on a simple open vowel. Corri's inclusion of *solfeggi* in his treatise reflects his commitment to the traditions of Italian style, and the training he received at home.

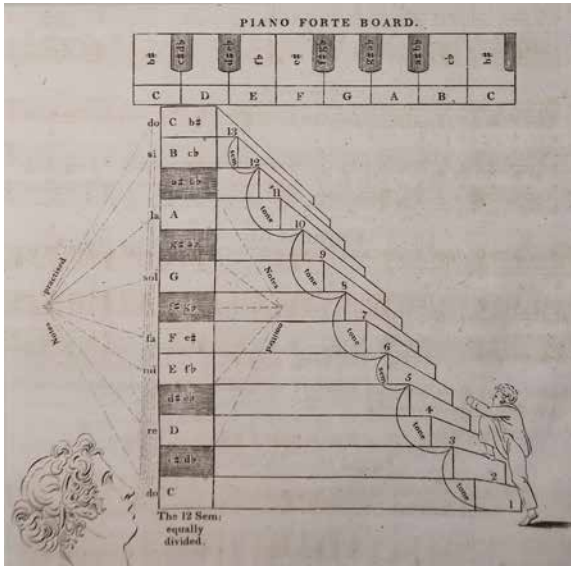


Fig. 5.6: A diagram to aid lessons in vocal intonation from Domenico Corri, *The Singers Preceptor* (London: 1810). MMC vol. 455. © Buccleuch Collection.

Arguably the most significant and complex skill that Elizabeth and Caroline had to learn was the ability to ornament. During the eighteenth century, it was the norm to ornament vocal lines with embellishments, to add variety and aid expression. The most commonly used ornaments of the era, as outlined in *The Singers Preceptor*, were the *trillo* (or the 'Cadenza Shake'), the *mordente* (the 'Short Shake'), the *appoggiatura* ('The Grace'), and the *gruppò* ('The Turn'). Generally, composers did not notate ornamentation in their scores, thus the performer was responsible for deciding when it was appropriate to ornament, in a seemingly improvisatory manner. What was on the page was therefore only the groundwork for what was expected during a performance. Ornaments in a piece of vocal music were comparable to jewels worn by aristocratic ladies to complement their dresses; they added further interest and decoration, showing off elite refinement and taste. At the same time, too much ornamentation might be considered showy and vulgar. Corri criticised singers for using ornamentation in excess, which he noted had become common within professional spheres. As Corri explained:

Ornaments should ever be in subordination to the character and design of the composition, and introduced only on words which will admit of decoration, without destroying the sentiment; nor, indeed, should they ever be introduced, but by singers capable of executing them with precision and effect.<sup>10</sup>

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In essence, performers were expected to ornament, but not too much or too little. The use of ornamentation was also expected to seem effortless. It was the responsibility of the singing master to teach students how and when it was appropriate to ornament, and Elizabeth and Caroline therefore relied heavily on Domenico and Natale for this guidance.

There is extensive evidence in the Montagu Music Collection of the influence of Corri's teachings. Much of the printed sheet music is highly annotated, with pencil and ink markings throughout the scores. These not only show how the performers were interacting with the scores – most likely with the help of Domenico and/or Natale – but also allow us to identify the repertoire they were working on during their lessons. The most heavily annotated vocal scores in the collection are miscellaneous volumes of opera arias, duets, and songs. These were mainly accumulated by Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline and therefore provide a vivid picture of the performance skills and musical experiences of the two girls. Some of the annotations show specific correlations with Domenico's teachings, such as breath markings that are unique to his treatises. Other markings are corrections of mistakes in the printed score; for example, an incorrect note, or a missing sharp or flat sign, providing further evidence of an experienced hand. However, the majority of annotations in the Montagu Music Collection are ornaments. Some scores are considerably more ornamented than others, indicating that they were studied in more detail. In general, the appropriate use of ornamentation and the inclusion of repertoire with highly embellished and virtuosic vocal lines suggests that Elizabeth and Caroline were performing Italian operatic music to an extremely high standard.

### **Learning the Italian Language**

Another important aspect of vocal performance highlighted in *The Singers Preceptor* is 'articulation of the words and sounds'.<sup>11</sup> Diction and pronunciation of the Italian language were some of the biggest challenges facing British amateur performers of Italian opera. Language was an inescapable aspect of performing Italian vocal music, and proper delivery was crucial for an accomplished performance; correct pronunciation was essential, and understanding the meaning of the text enabled performers to display the appropriate emotions. Language learning was a fundamental aspect of elite education, and eighteenth-century Britain had seen a renewed interest in the Italian language.<sup>12</sup> There were many reasons for this; some were practical, such as the development of commerce and travel, whilst others were social, reflecting fashions in education and patterns in the consumption of luxury goods, including opera. The Buccleuch family interacted with the Italian language on their tours to the Continent, and by consuming Italian opera both abroad and in London. The duke and duchess also hired specialist Italian language masters to provide tuition for their children on several occasions. For example, the Buccleuch records show that in 1790-1791 they paid £25 for 74 Italian language lessons over a six-month





Fig. 5.7: Title page, Angelo Tarchi, *Pupille venose del caro mio bene. A favorite song in the opera of Virginia* (London: Longman & Broderip, [1786]). MMC vol. 321. © Buccleuch Collection.

period (7 August 1790 – 25 February 1791) at Dalkeith Palace, suggesting that the children were receiving several Italian lessons a week during this time.<sup>13</sup> Italian language masters played a similar role to Italian singing masters in the dissemination of Italian culture in domestic environments. They were responsible for a significant aspect of their clients' education and they were one of the most direct means by which Italian culture travelled into British homes, acting as agents of cultural transfer.

In some regards, the language training received by members of the Buccleuch family had little connection to their musical training. However, general understanding of the Italian language – in particular, of the rules for pronunciation – would have contributed significantly to their understanding and delivery of Italian operatic music. There is also evidence to suggest that Domenico and Natale Corri supported language learning by providing assistance with understanding the Italian texts of their pupils' vocal music. British music publishers often printed mistakes in Italian texts, including incorrect spellings, grammar, and other misprints and errors in phrases or words. Despite the Buccleuch children's Italian language training, it was unlikely that they would have realised these errors existed; most were minor inaccuracies that only native speakers or those equally fluent in the language would have spotted. However, their impact could be extremely significant, often changing entire words or sentences. Some errors made by printers were so severe they changed the meaning of the text entirely. For example, in Angelo Tarchi's 'Pupille vezzose del caro mio bene' the word 'vezzose' is misspelt as 'venose' throughout, both in the title (fig. 5.7) and in the

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text of the aria. This changes the meaning from 'beautiful eyes of my dear' to 'venous eyes of my dear'. The annotated correction of the title page in particular suggests the annotator – almost certainly an Italian native speaker, and likely one of the Corri brothers – was extremely frustrated by this blunder. It is unlikely that the English performer would have realised the misprint unless guided by an Italian singing master, but performing the aria with this mistake would have had a considerable effect, perhaps leading to amusement or ridicule if Italian speakers were in the audience. This highlights the significance of Italian singing masters; they safeguarded the reception of Italian vocal music in domestic spheres.

But what happened if you didn't have an Italian singing master to guide you? Corri's treatises were supposedly intended to guide students 'without the presence of a master'; they provided more detailed instructions than any Italian vocal treatise published previously in Britain. For example, he composed his own ornamentation for each item of repertoire in *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duets, &c* (which he claimed was 'innovative' in its format), and had these printed in the scores. At the beginning of this publication, Corri provided a key for all performance markings, including ornamentation. Corri's presentation of ornamentation in this manner was uncommon for the era, and contrasted with vocal treatises published by his contemporaries. In fact, it was met with opposition from some of his friends and fellow singing masters, including Rauzzini. It shows how vastly opinions could differ between singing masters. Although Corri was one of the most reputable pedagogues of the era, his teachings and practices did not necessarily represent those of his contemporaries. Also, the extent to which we can use vocal treatises as reliable sources is debatable; firstly, because singing masters may have had selfish motivations for publishing them, and secondly, because the expense of these treatises means that relatively few amateur performers would have purchased them. The main consumers of treatises were likely professional singers, followed closely by singing teachers (especially native Britons), whose own teaching could benefit from Corri's education and experience in Italian vocal traditions.

The Corri brothers' teachings undoubtedly played a significant role in the vocal education of Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline. Their tuition was an essential part of their upbringing and of the family's broader engagement with Italian culture. Duchess Elizabeth ensured that her daughters received the best possible tuition in the Italian style, enabling them to become extremely skilled vocalists with the ability to perform the most popular Italian operatic music of the day. This has wider significance for our understanding of theatre culture in the Georgian era. Members of the Buccleuch family clearly had a deep understanding of Italian opera and its conventions, and they took this knowledge with them to the opera house. They witnessed Italian opera performances not just as spectators, but also as vocalists themselves, which enabled them to appreciate the performance from a more informed perspective. On stage, they saw music lessons dramatised as parts of narratives; what happened in domestic

spheres was reflected in the opera houses and vice versa, reinforcing the blurred boundaries between public and private spheres. The strong connection between the stage and the home only highlights further the significance of Italian singing masters and their crucial role as agents of cultural transfer, helping to bring Italian opera into the domestic lives of Britain's aristocratic elite.

His Grace the Duke of Buccleugh 10 9 Corn

Attending the Ladies Montague at  
 Dalrymple house on Sat. the 29<sup>th</sup> Oct.  
 the 3<sup>rd</sup> & the 13<sup>th</sup> 2<sup>nd</sup> the 20<sup>th</sup> & the 23<sup>rd</sup>  
 2<sup>nd</sup> the 27<sup>th</sup> Nov. the 4<sup>th</sup> & the 11<sup>th</sup> & the  
 17<sup>th</sup> & the 24<sup>th</sup> Dec. the 3<sup>rd</sup> at 11.6 each time - £ 17-6-6

Attending in George Square on  
 Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup> 1<sup>st</sup> 9<sup>th</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> 23<sup>rd</sup> 30<sup>th</sup> 6<sup>th</sup> 13<sup>th</sup> 20<sup>th</sup>  
 27<sup>th</sup> 24<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> for two hours at 7/ - - - - - 2-16--

Expences of Drivers & Trumpets - - - - - -- 14-6

Hire of Chairs from Dr. Eight times of 3 - 4 -

£ 24 - 1 - -

Received the above  
 James Clerk  
 Dr. 5 Dec: 1783

Cat. 40. © Buccleugh Collection.

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## Further Reading

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Binding to MMC vol. 333. © Buccleuch Collection.

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- <sup>2</sup> Letter from Frances Burney to Susanna Phillips, 28 November 1784, in *Frances Burney: Journals and Letters*, eds. Peter Sabor and Lars E Troide (London: Penguin, 2001), 205.
- <sup>3</sup> Not all of their business ventures were successful; in fact, Domenico and Natale were both imprisoned for bankruptcy at various points in their lives.
- <sup>4</sup> Deborah Heckert, ed. *Pleasing and Interesting Anecdotes: An Autobiography of Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari (1763-1842)*, trans. Stephen Thomson Moore (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon Press, 2017), 133-134.
- <sup>5</sup> Lorenzo da Ponte, *Memoirs*, trans. Elisabeth Abbott, ed. Arthur Livingstone (New York: New York Review of Books, 2000), 308.
- <sup>6</sup> 'Life of Domenico Corri' in Domenico Corri, *The Singers Preceptor; or, Corri's Treatise on Vocal Music* (London: 1810), 2.
- <sup>7</sup> Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 136.
- <sup>8</sup> Payment for lessons to Domenico and Natale Corri are documented in the following accounts and vouchers: NRS, GD224/351/60 (1797-1798); GD224/351/62 (1796-1797); GD224/351/68 (1798); GD224/462/2 (1792-1795); NRS, GD224/365/20 (1782-1783); GD224/365/31 (1783-1784); GD224/365/44 (1784); GD224/365/50 (1785); GD224/365/59 (1785-1786). Lessons with Aprile are documented on 31 December 1786 in a personal journal kept by 3<sup>rd</sup> Duchess of Buccleuch (private collection) and in MMC vol. 159.
- <sup>9</sup> Brianna Robertson-Kirkland, 'Are we all Castrati? Venanzio Rauzzini: The Father of a New Style in English Singing' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 2016).
- <sup>10</sup> Corri, *The Singers Preceptor* (London: 1810), 3.
- <sup>11</sup> Corri, *The Singers Preceptor* (London: 1810), 1.
- <sup>12</sup> Jason Lawrence, 'Who the Devil Taught Thee so Much Italian?' *Italian Language Learning and Imitation in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).
- <sup>13</sup> Bill for James Garden. Miscellaneous accounts, NRS, GD224/351/30 (1790-1791).





M<sup>DE</sup> HILLIGSBERG, in the Ballet of KEN-SI & TAO  
Performed for her Benefit the 11<sup>th</sup> of May 1801.



## CHAPTER 6

# Opera Dances

Katrina Faulds

**A** glance at any advertisement for the King's Theatre during the late eighteenth century shows that dance was an integral part of an evening at the opera. It was common for a *divertissement* (a danced interlude which was often not named) to be staged after the first act. A complete ballet with its own title and topic performed at the conclusion of the opera then usually rounded off the evening's entertainment. In the early to mid 1790s, the balletic repertoire produced at the theatre was the work of Jean Dauberval (1742-1806), Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810) and Charles-Louis Didelot (1767-1837), three of the greatest choreographers of their time, in addition to James Harvey D'Egville (born c.1773) and Giacomo Onorati. These Continental influences were reflected by the dancers themselves, many of whom had French or Italian origins.

The music composed for these ballets was published in arrangements, usually for solo piano, which sometimes included accompaniments for violin, flute and tambourine. These publications were issued singly or in groups of favourite opera dances for a given season. They often included the names of the dancers but gave virtually no indication of plot or staging. The Montagu Music Collection contains several volumes of opera dances, some of which bear the names of Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu. Markings on the music, ranging from simple crosses and note corrections to more extensive annotations, show that the scores were used for music-making as purely instrumental compositions away from the stage. Some items have been marked 'Dalkeith House', indicating that although the ballets were performed in London, they became part of the musical household in Scotland.

This connection between the theatre and the home was not just played out through scores and the performance of ballet music at the piano, but also through the experience of dance. The Montagu daughters received dancing lessons concurrently with their music tuition, sometimes from professional dancers who appeared on the stage. The family regularly attended balls in Dalkeith town and Edinburgh, including those hosted by Natale Corri (1765-1822) and Nathaniel Gow (1763-1831), both of which Duchess Elizabeth patronised. They also employed Gow to play for balls at Dalkeith Palace.<sup>1</sup> The shared vocabulary of social and theatrical dance in the eighteenth century was

**Fig. 6.1:** Pierre Condé (1767/8-1840) after H. de Janvry (fl. 1793-1800), 'Mde. Hilligsberg in the Ballet of Ken-si & Tao' (London: Thompson, 1801).  
© New York Public Library.

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built on the principles of grace, elegance and ease, a code of motion that also permeated the performance of everyday movements. When Duchess Elizabeth and her daughters observed dance in the theatre, therefore, they were doing so from a highly trained and deeply felt standpoint.<sup>2</sup> Their own dance education enabled them to appraise the dancing they saw, drawing on their kinaesthetic knowledge of the art, and bringing this insight with them as they played through the dances at the keyboard.

### Spectatorship

Dancers were stars in their own right, who were admired for their elegance and grace. One such dancer was Madame Parisot, who was praised in the *Monthly Mirror* in 1796:

Madame Parissot [sic] is not one of those elegant dancers who captivate by neatness of step, gracefulness of motion, or the bounding ease with which they trip from one extremity of the stage to the other; her merit consists in the astonishing display of *attitude*, than which nothing more various and ingenious has ever been exhibited...She possesses considerable taste, and, by a singular adjustment of her arms, which are to *her* what a rope-dancer's balance is to *him*, she indulges in all the fantastic positions which art and fancy can suggest.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, female dancers in particular were the subject of voyeuristic satire. One spectator who evidently admired Parisot's attitudes was the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Queensberry (1725-1810), known as 'Old Q', who was a relative of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch. He was known as a notorious rake and 'supreme dictator of the Opera-house', and at least two contemporary caricatures show Old Q peering under the dress of Parisot whilst her leg is raised in the air.<sup>4</sup> Parisot appeared in Onorati's ballet *Alonzo e Cora* in 1796, which the Buccleuch family saw several times that year.<sup>5</sup> A print of the ballet by James Gillray, held within the Buccleuch collection, depicts her alongside Charles-Louis Didelot and his wife, Marie Rose Paul (fig. 6.2).

The focus on dancers' bodies that is satirised in the Old Q caricatures is also evident in the journals and correspondence of the Buccleuch family, showing that they were comfortable critiquing the quality of dancing in theatres across Europe. The connection with dance had been strong along the Montagu line, with Duchess Elizabeth's grandfather maintaining a troupe of French actors and dancers at the Little Theatre in London.<sup>6</sup> In 1786, during her Grand Tour to France and Italy, Elizabeth wrote about a performance of Christoph Willibald Gluck's opera, *Armide*, which the family saw in Paris: 'The spectacle is finer than anything I ever saw, the dancing incomparable. I saw Mademoiselle Guimare whom I think the best. She danced with Vestris and suits him vastly well, he dances better than ever'.<sup>7</sup> Auguste Vestris (1760-1842) was one of the greatest dancers of the late eighteenth century; the artist Elisabeth Vigée Le



Fig. 6.2: James Gillray (1756-1815), 'Modern Grace, or the Operatical Finale to the Ballet of Alonzo e Caro' (London: Humphrey, 1796). © Buccleuch Collection.

Brun described him as 'the most amazing dancer to be seen, such was his grace and lightness... He rose toward the sky in such a prodigious manner that he was believed to have wings'.<sup>8</sup>

Such athletic ability was also evident when Duchess Elizabeth attended the opera in Bologna, but her commentary pertaining to her visit makes it clear that physical virtuosity displayed by female dancers was inappropriate in her eyes. Remarking upon 'some of the most wonderfull [sic] jumping I ever saw', she vented her opinion: 'one Woman in particular did such things as I believe no woman ever attempted before, she was much applauded, no great proof of the taste of the audience for nothing could be more disgustfull [sic].'<sup>9</sup> Female dancers were again the focus of attention 16 years later when Lord Henry Montagu wrote to Elizabeth from Paris. Describing a performance of the ballet, *Télémaque*, he remarked, 'Many fine women dancers performed, their nakedness surpassed anything I have yet seen, perfect and entire Adam and Eves'.<sup>10</sup> His tone, however, suggests little of the distaste expressed by his mother.

The manner in which dance music was published in the late eighteenth century and its proliferation in domestic collections suggests that the notion of spectatorship extended beyond the stage. The inclusion of dancers' names, either as a list at the front of the score or above individual dances, immediately brings to life what is otherwise an inanimate object. The star status of dancers



Fig. 6.3: Extract from Cesare Bossi, *Little Peggy's Love, the Favorite Scotch Ballet* (London: Longman & Broderip, [1796]). MMC vol. 172. © Buccleuch Collection.

meant that their names and bodies were familiar not only to spectators in the theatre, but also to anyone who perused the daily newspapers. The sheer quantity of both social and theatrical dance music in domestic collections is testament to its popularity as a genre and also its cultural importance. Dance was a key component in the education of both elite men and women so as to train their bodies to move with the requisite gentility. Spectatorship was central to the process of instruction as teacher and student would observe each other, while onlookers would enjoy the gradual development of physical deportment from the sidelines. Dance music was the aural correlate of this physical activity, a necessary component that allowed dance to take place. Both dance instruction and dance music thus provided routes for opera dances to enter the home.



## Bringing Ballet into the Home

The Buccleuch family had many opportunities to see the same ballets multiple times during repeat visits to the opera. One such example is *Little Peggy's Love*, produced at the King's Theatre and choreographed by Didelot, which was advertised as a ballet 'in the Scotch style'. The stars of *Little Peggy's Love* were Didelot himself and Madame Hilligsberg (d. 1804), who was taught by Auguste Vestris's father in Paris before appearing at the King's Theatre in 1787. She was known for performing in trouser roles and by the end of the eighteenth century one newspaper critic regarded her as 'the first rank among the dancers of London'. *Little Peggy's Love* was first performed at Hilligsberg's benefit on 21 April 1796. Two days later, members of the family went to the first of at least 11 evenings at the theatre during which *Little Peggy's Love* was performed.<sup>11</sup>

The Montagu Music Collection includes a keyboard copy of the score for *Little Peggy's Love* in a volume of opera dances from 1796. It belonged to Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu, and uniquely, it contains extensive hand-written annotations that include dancers' names and details about the plot, suggesting that they may have written these directions as they watched (fig. 6.3 and Cat. 43). The score was advertised by music sellers Longman & Broderip around two weeks after the family first saw the production, so they would have had at least another four opportunities to write on the score after it was published. Although it is not the only ballet in the collection that has been annotated, the indications on the score are extensive, and it is possibly the only record that describes how this ballet was staged.<sup>12</sup>

Despite some disquiet about the impropriety of genteel women employing the attitudes and athleticism of ballet dancers, it is clear that high-profile theatrical stars taught aristocratic girls how to dance. *The Mirror of the Graces* vehemently objected to the practice, claiming:

The consequence is, when a young lady rises to dance, we no longer see the graceful, easy step of the gentlewoman, but the laboured, and often indelicate exhibitions of the posture-mistress. – Dances from *ballets* are introduced; and instead of the jocund and beautifully-organized movements of hilarity in concord, we are shocked by the most extravagant theatrical imitations...in place of dignity and grace, we behold strange wheelings on one leg; stretching out the other till our eye meets the garter; and a variety of endless contortions...<sup>13</sup>

Notwithstanding Duchess Elizabeth's known objections to exhibitionism in female dancers, an account book entry from 1799 shows that Madame Hilligsberg was employed to give Lady Harriet Montagu 14 dancing lessons.<sup>14</sup> Although the precise content of the lessons remains unknown, given that Harriet was 18 at the time and that the family had previously engaged several dance teachers, it is likely that Hilligsberg was hired to finely polish her deportment and social dancing skills.



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However, Hilligsberg's interaction with another aristocratic family offers a different possibility, and illustrates the close connection that existed between theatrical and domestic dance. Early in 1799, the Countess of Shaftesbury held a fête in celebration of Twelfth Night at the family's London home. Her ten-year-old daughter, Lady Barbara Ashley Cooper, invited guests to watch two theatrical works; amongst the audience was the Countess of Cardigan, the second wife of Duchess Elizabeth's uncle. In a purpose-built theatre, constructed by stagehands from Drury Lane, a performance of *Little Peggy's Love* took place. Overseeing the production was Madame Hilligsberg, who had been rehearsing with the performers for the previous few weeks:

This little fairy groupe rivalled the Opera House and Drury-lane in the correctness and spirit, the characteristic gestures and deportment of their performance. Lady Barbara was wonderfully happy in *Jamie* [her character]... Hilligsberg had instructed her to turn in her toes, and adopt aukward gestures and attitudes, in which she was so successful, that a stranger could scarcely have believed her to be so graceful and accomplished as she really is in her own character.<sup>15</sup>

It is likely that two male personas were performed by young ladies in the production, including Lady Barbara's character. *The Mirror of the Graces's* grumbling about ballet dances suggests that such a performance was not an isolated event. It is unclear whether the Montagu daughters ever attempted a similar production, either in London or at Dalkeith Palace, but their scores suggest this as a possibility. At the very least, Hilligsberg may have taught Lady Harriet some of the reviled ballet dances.

### Theatrical and Social Dance

Further evidence of crossover between ballet and social dance is apparent through theatrical performances that the Buccleuch family attended. In 1779, a performance that Duchess Elizabeth sponsored at the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh comprised a comedy and a pantomime, the latter finishing 'with a COUNTRY DANCE by the characters'.<sup>16</sup> The country dance was one of the most enduring dances of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and would have been a regular inclusion in balls at the time the production took place. Some 27 years later, Duchess Elizabeth and her daughters, Ladies Elizabeth and Harriet, went to see the play of *The Jealous Wife* at the Theatre Royal. The ballet that evening, performed by dancers from Covent Garden, was *The Scotch Ghost, or Little Fanny's Love*.<sup>17</sup> Amongst the dances were a strathspey, a 'Scots Hornpipe' and a reel. Collections of strathspeys and reels were common in late eighteenth-century Scotland, particularly those published by the Gow family, who were renowned for the provision of dance music. A bill from 1792 indicates that Duchess Elizabeth purchased two copies of 'Gows Reels', while Lady Caroline bought a 'new Sett' of them six years later.<sup>18</sup> The family's attendance at Gow's balls meant that the dances performed as part of *The Scotch Ghost* were very



39  
COILLIONS: All's Well that Ends well.

All round: Right hand & Left 4. lead up, turn their Ladies once round into their Places the other 4. do the same? Every Gent turns his Partner.

The Tuning of the Shrews

All round: Each turn his Partner, Ballance, turn each others Partners: Ballance, a Right Step; Every Gent turn his Partner into her Place.

Merry Wives of Windfore

All round: 4. Co. turn each others Partners: Chaise all 8. turn their Partners into their Places, Then Chaise again all by 8 then turn their Partners again into their Places.

Fig. 6.4: Extract from Charles Dibdin, *The Overture, Songs, Airs, and Chorusses, in the Jubilee or Shakespear's Garland as Performed at Stratford upon Avon... To which is added a Cantata called Queen Mab or the Fairies Jubilee* (London: John Johnston and Longman, Lukey & Broderip, [1775 or 1776]). MMC vol. 209.

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real to the ears, eyes and feet of Duchess Elizabeth and her daughters.

This connection between social and theatrical dance was also played out through music publications. Music from well-known country dances was either included in ballet scores or tunes from ballet were later used for country dancing, ensuring crossover between the genres. A dance from *Little Peggy's Love*, which the annotated score in the Montagu Music Collection indicates was danced by Hilligsberg, and Charles and Rose Didelot, appears on a dance fan for 1797 and also in a 1798 country dance compilation, under the name of *Mad.<sup>m</sup> Hillisberg's Reel*. In reverse, *The Scotch Ghost* incorporates the tune for *Lady Baird's Fancy* towards the end of the ballet, which was known as a country dance prior to the ballet's existence.<sup>19</sup>

A more explicit reference to the links between social dance and theatre occurs in connection with David Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee in Stratford-upon-Avon. To celebrate the rebuilding of Stratford's town hall, a three day 'Jubilee in Honour and to the Memory of Shakespeare' took place in 1769. Garrick conceived an entertainment featuring not only an ode to Shakespeare, but also a collection of songs (*Shakespeare's Garland*) set to music by Charles Dibdin. Along with Dibdin's cantata *Queen Mab*, the songs were performed during a concert which featured two of Drury Lane's successful artists, before the evening concluded with a ball.<sup>20</sup> The score of *Shakespeare's Garland*, which is in the Montagu Music Collection, incorporates several dances as part of a pageant, including a 'Tambourine Dance' and 'Dance of the Graces'. At the rear of the publication is a series of minuets, country dances and cotillions allegedly performed at one of the balls, complete with dance figures, many of which bear titles relating to Shakespeare's plays (fig. 6.4). Social and theatrical dance thus stood toe-to-toe in several different ways.



**Fig. 6.5:** Tambourine made by Joseph Dale (1750-1821), London, 1800-1809.

Heini Schneebeili © Horniman Museum and Gardens.

## Dancing with a Tambourine

Tambourine dances were frequently included in theatrical programming in the late eighteenth century, either as afterpieces or integrated within the context of a ballet plot. In 1799, Madame Hilligsberg received praise for her 'exquisitely graceful' performance of a tambourine dance in the ballet of *Télémaque*. The production was a revival of Jean Dauberval's work, containing dances choreographed by James Harvey D'Egville. The *Morning Chronicle* noted that the performance 'abounds with Dancing; and the numerous *Pas de Deux* between DIDELOT and HILLIGSBURG, with the groupes, which are enlivened by the finest morsels of Music, make it a richer entertainment in point of Dancing than we ever saw'.<sup>21</sup> The article continued to lament that while not enough was seen of Rose Didelot, 'both HILLIGSBURG and DIDELOT, in their fatiguing parts, never once ceased to interest and delight the Spectators'. A keyboard reduction of the music is in the Montagu Music Collection, but the publication gives no indication as to which of the dances was performed with a tambourine.

Two further ballets in the same volume capitalise on the popularity of the tambourine as a domestic instrument at the turn of the nineteenth century. *Hylas et Temire*, which also premiered at the King's Theatre in 1799 during Madame Hilligsberg's benefit, featured Madame Laborie performing with a tambourine (fig. 6.5, Cat. 38).<sup>22</sup> The score features Lady Caroline Montagu's name on the title page, which is also clearly marked 'Dalkeith House'. It includes an integrated tambourine part above the piano stave for the tambourine dance, and Madame Laborie's name has been marked in pencil on the score (fig. 6.6, Cat. 44). A more extensive tambourine part was included in *Achille et Deidamie*, which premiered at the King's Theatre on 31 January 1804. Arranged for the slightly larger ensemble of piano or harp with flute and tambourine accompaniment, the title page includes the handwritten date of July 9<sup>th</sup> 1804. Unlike in *Hylas et Temire*, where use of the tambourine was confined to the actual tambourine dance, it plays a more pervasive role in *Achille et Deidamie*, forming a penetrating component of the aural fabric of the domestic performance.

Dance, therefore, was a pervasive part of the operatic experience, both in the theatre itself and in the home. The Buccleuch family engaged with dance in a number of ways. Commenting on the performance of individual dancers showed an awareness of aesthetic style and a developed sense of bodily propriety. The annotation of ballet scores in particular, not just with the names of dancers, but also with characters and references to stage action, shows a keen interest in the art-form as a whole. Although it is unclear whether such annotations led to semi-staged domestic performances or acted more as an *aide-mémoire*, the investment in transcribing such details highlights how the experience of dance was not just confined to the theatre. The close connection between theatrical and social dancing, whether through the performance of social dance on the stage or learning the movements of ballet as part of social dance pedagogy, demonstrates that an understanding of theatrical dance

was more integrated than a simple visit to the opera would suggest. Indeed, tambourine dancing involved a specific type of bodily movement on stage, which was transformed into a different (although no less graceful) kind of movement in playing the tambourine at home.

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation. At the top, the title "Mad<sup>me</sup> Laborie" is written in cursive. Below it, the tempo "Allegretto Grazioso" is printed. The score is divided into three systems. The first system is labeled "Tamburino" and "Piano Forte". The second system continues the piano part. The third system features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth notes, marked with "ff" and "pp". The bottom of the page is labeled "Hylas et Temire".

Fig. 6.6: Tambourine dance from Cesare Bossi, *The Favorite Divertissement: Hylas et Temire* (London: Goulding, Phipps & D'Almaine, [1799]). MMC vol. 174. © Buccleuch Collection.

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- <sup>3</sup> 'Italian Opera' in *The Monthly Mirror: Reflecting Men and Manners. With Strictures on their Epitome, the Stage*, vol. 1 (February 1796): 246.
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- <sup>11</sup> See Philip H. Highfill, Kalman A. Burnim, and Edward A. Langan, *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, vol. 7 (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), 320-321. The family attended the theatre between 23 April and 30 July 1796; see Bray Disbursements, NRS, GD224/462/4.
- <sup>12</sup> The score was advertised by Longman & Broderip in the *Star* at least as early as 14 May 1796. Jennifer Thorp has discussed the presence and potential implications of the annotations in her paper, 'Celebrity patrons: the Montagu family and dance throughout the eighteenth century', at the 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Oxford Dance Symposium, 15-16 April 2014.
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- <sup>16</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 22 February 1779.
- <sup>17</sup> Dalkeith Palace Dinner Books, NRS, GD224/1085/3. Entry on 19 July 1806; see also *Caledonian Mercury* on the same date.
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- <sup>19</sup> *The New Dance Fan for 1797*, West Sussex Record Office, Add Mss 16923; *Twenty Four Country Dances for the Year 1798* (London: Cahusac & Sons, [1798]) and *Twelve Country Dances. With their Bases for the Year 1794* (London: Cahusac, [1794]).

<sup>20</sup> Todd Gilman, *The Theatre Career of Thomas Arne* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2013), 471-492 and Carola Oman, *David Garrick* (Bungay: Hodder and Stoughton, 1958), 295-297.

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*Montagu*      *Dalkeith House*      *Montagu*

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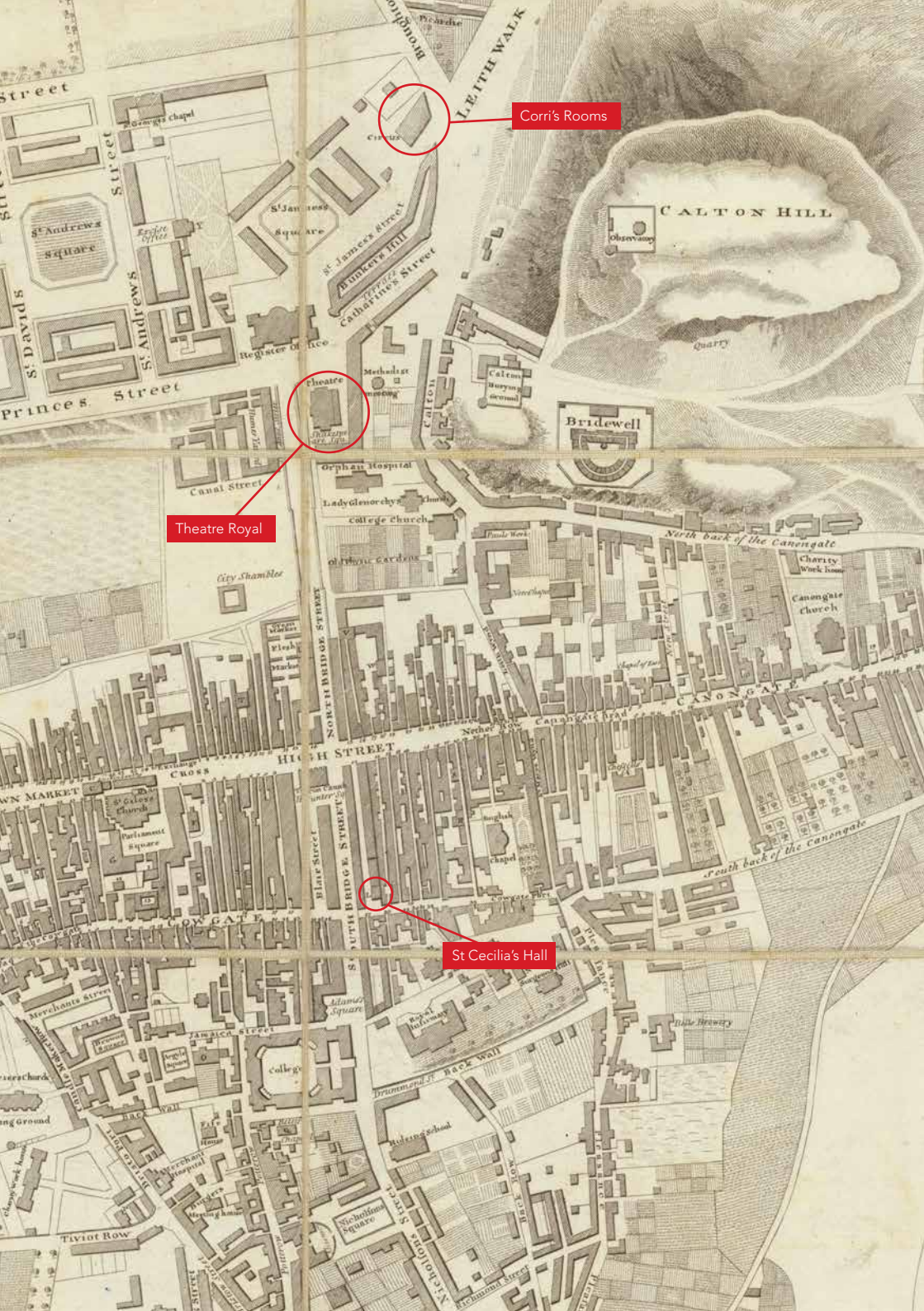
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Corri's Rooms

Theatre Royal

St Cecilia's Hall



## CHAPTER 7

# Opera in Edinburgh

Katrina Faulds

**E**dinburgh was the primary hub for Enlightened activity in eighteenth-century Scotland. When Duchess Elizabeth arrived in the late 1760s, a rich and thriving intellectual, artistic, economic and scientific culture was already in place. The growth of urban society, epitomised by the development of Edinburgh's New Town in 1767, was also linked to ideas about polite sociability. Politeness as a concept, central to eighteenth-century elite society, embraced not just decorum or etiquette, but also improvement, sociability and generosity. Within this context, leisure activities in public spaces were a source of both entertainment and refinement. Women's practice of such sociability was considered to be beneficial for polite culture at large.

Duchess Elizabeth's contribution to Edinburgh's cultural landscape can be seen through the lens of keen artistic interest, sociable engagement and public-spirited generosity. Her fingers and those of other family members were regularly in the metaphorical pies of leading cultural institutions, supporting some of the city's most prominent performers. An abundance of newspaper advertisements attests to her individual patronage of plays, concerts, balls, assemblies and assorted entertainments that included tight-rope dancing, visual spectacles and equestrian exercises, as well as opera. Such patronage could be seen simply as a personal choice to support the city's musical and cultural environment, but it also reflects her influence within Scottish society. Duchess Elizabeth rarely supported London opera houses or concert venues in such substantial ways, which makes her contribution to Edinburgh particularly meaningful and integral to sustaining its artistic fabric.

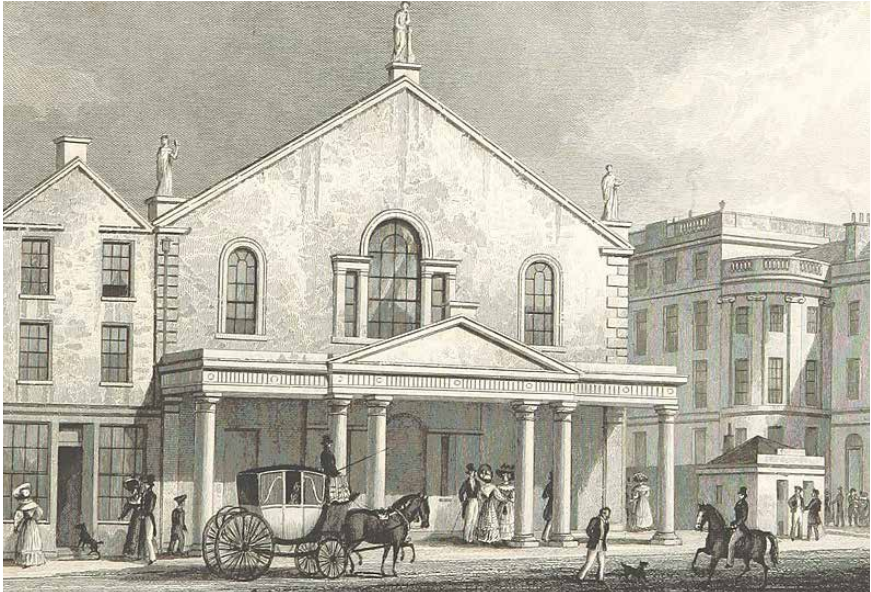
The experience of opera in Edinburgh was different to that in London. Edinburgh had no opera house to match London's King's Theatre, and indeed no institution solely dedicated to opera at all. Instead, opera filtered through the city's broader musical cracks: English operas were staged in conjunction with plays, while extracts from Italian opera occurred in programmes mounted by the Edinburgh Musical Society and in other professional concerts. This split is somewhat evident in the performing forces, as English operas were performed by the resident company or visiting theatre artists, while Italian opera singers were recruited from abroad. With the exception of interpolated Scots songs and the occasional home-grown opera, there was nothing particularly Scottish about

**Fig. 7.1:** Extract from a plan of Edinburgh by Thomas Brown and James Watson (Edinburgh, 1793).  
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opera in Edinburgh. In this context, opera can be thought of as comprising specific flavours that seeped into the city's aural landscape, intermingled with other artistic endeavours. Duchess Elizabeth's engagement with opera in the city was mediated through three venues that she frequented and knew well: the Theatre Royal, St Cecilia's Hall, and Corri's Rooms, each of which was a cornerstone of Edinburgh's musical life.



**Fig. 7.2:** Theatre Royal, Edinburgh from Thomas H. Shepherd, *Modern Athens, Displayed in a Series of Views, or Edinburgh in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Jones & Co., 1829).

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## Theatre Royal

Duchess Elizabeth's residence in Scotland coincided with a real blossoming of Scottish theatre, from its illegal status in the mid-eighteenth century through to its prosperity in the 1820s. Theatrical performances had been stifled by the disapproval of the church and the regulations of the 1737 Licensing Act, which required a Royal Patent for the performance of spoken drama. As Edinburgh was without such a patent, an ingenious subterfuge was devised, which closely linked music and theatre: performances were advertised as concerts, with plays inserted 'gratis' between the musical items. The development of the New Town provided a vehicle for finally obtaining the desired Royal Patent, which was included in an act of Parliament to enable the broadening of Edinburgh's boundaries. The first legal performance of a play

was given at the end of that year, and in 1769, the new Theatre Royal opened in Shakespeare Square. Adorned by a statue of Shakespeare himself, as well as the Comic and Tragic muses, it remained a central part of Edinburgh's cultural life until it was demolished in 1859 (fig. 7.2).

Despite a chaotic succession of managers, the theatre sought to attract renowned performers from London and abroad. One of the earliest stars was the castrato Giusto Ferdinando Tenducci (1735-1790), who visited Edinburgh in the late 1760s. Tenducci had sung in Thomas Arne's opera *Artaxerxes* when it premiered at Covent Garden in 1762. Although slightly pre-dating the opening of the new Theatre Royal, Tenducci reprised his role in Edinburgh at his own benefit performance in 1769, during which he was also due to sing some Scottish airs. Subsequently, luminaries such as Dorothy Jordan (1761-1816), Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), John Kemble (1757-1823), Elizabeth Billington (1765-1818) and Angelica Catalani (1780-1849) all graced the Edinburgh stage. Over a period of twenty days in 1793, Billington performed in no fewer than eight English operas that were, so to speak, the genre's 'top hits' across the past 65 years: *Love in a Village* (first performed in 1762); *The Haunted Tower* (1789); *Inkle and Yarico* (1787); *The Maid of the Mill* (1765); *No Song No Supper* (1790); *The Beggar's Opera* (1728); *Rosina* (1782) and *The Duenna* (1775).<sup>1</sup> These were among the most popular English operas of the late eighteenth century.

Performances of opera at the Theatre Royal were overwhelmingly devoted to English compositions. A mixture of spoken word and song, English operas often incorporated borrowings from the works of other composers, including Italian opera. A standard evening in the 1770s consisted of a play followed by a farce. Opera typically occupied the latter position, although at times it was also the main event, particularly if star singers were involved. Enduringly popular operas included Charles Dibdin's *The Padlock* (1768) as well as the works included on Billington's Edinburgh tour. Many others, such as Arne's *Thomas and Sally* (1760), William Shield's *The Flitch of Bacon* (1778) and Samuel Arnold's *The Surrender of Calais* (1791), experienced a more limited popularity through the end of the century and beyond. *The Flitch of Bacon* was performed in 1779 during Domenico Corri's (1746-1825) short tenure as manager, which was a relatively speedy turn-around given that the opera only premiered in London in August the previous year.<sup>2</sup>

Despite the prominence of English opera, there were some minor attempts at staging works that had Scottish connections. One local offering included *The Highlander's Return* (1777), an 'Interlude of SPEAKING and SINGING' partially composed by the German cellist Johann Schetky (1737-1824), who arrived in Edinburgh in the early 1770s and remained there for the rest of his life. The music for *The Wives Revenged*, which appeared in the 1778-1779 season, was attributed to Domenico Corri, but the production may have been Dibdin's, given that he produced an afterpiece of the same name some months earlier.<sup>3</sup> The most frequently recurring home-grown opera was Allan Ramsay's *The Gentle Shepherd* (1729), which Corri also staged in 1779. It consisted largely



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of pre-existing Scottish airs and thus was a northern counterpart to John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera*.

Some very tangible links exist between opera culture in late eighteenth-century Edinburgh and the Montagu Music Collection. With the exception of *The Highlander's Return* and *The Wives Revenged*, reduced scores of all the other works mentioned above appear at least once, if not several times, in the collection. Two volumes in particular deserve special attention. One is beautifully bound in full leather, with the Buccleuch coronet and 'D. Buccleugh' engraved in gold on the front cover. It is part of a series of Italian and English operas and instrumental music that are bound in a similarly luxurious fashion. The contents comprise *The Maid of the Mill*, *The Duenna* and *Rosina*, all sung by Billington in 1793 (MMC vol. 307). The second volume contains *The Surrender of Calais*, *The Haunted Tower*, *The Siege of Belgrade* (an opera by Stephen Storace which was performed in Edinburgh in the 1790s and experienced a renaissance in the 1820s) and *No Song No Supper*. The title page of the latter includes the handwritten name of 'Elizabeth Montagu' (Cat. 14).

Both Duchess Elizabeth and Duke Henry supported theatrical performances at the Theatre Royal as part of their broader engagement with artists. In 1792, Elizabeth sponsored a production of *No Song No Supper* and *Inkle and Yarico*, featuring Stephen and Elizabeth Kemble, while four years later *Rosina* was staged with Thomas Holcroft's comedy *The Road to Ruin* under her patronage. Surviving bills from Corri & Sutherland's music publishing business in Edinburgh show that she purchased scores for *Rosina* and *Inkle and Yarico* in 1783 and 1787 respectively, and thus was familiar with the music long before the productions she supported. It is worth noting that *Rosina* formed part of a long list of items bought by the duchess for the 'Young Ladies', when her children were three to fourteen years old (Cat. 15). Both bills also show that the operas were acquired relatively quickly, within four to six months of their London premieres.<sup>4</sup>

This engagement with theatre as a cultural institution extended beyond both opera as a form of entertainment and the Theatre Royal as a space for theatrical performance. Entries in the Buccleuch dinner books show that members of the family regularly attended the theatre both in Edinburgh and Dalkeith. On 25 March 1805, Duchess Elizabeth and two of her daughters, Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline, went to the Theatre Royal to see *The Honeymoon*, a play by John Tobin, which again was a performance 'under the patronage' of the duchess. Part of the entertainment included 'several Feats of Agility' by a Mr Ireland, presumably the same who visited Dalkeith Palace in 1806 and performed with his company 'various feats of Horsemanship & Tumbling to the satisfaction of every one present'. The following year, the family saw a series of plays in Dalkeith town, including George Colman the Younger's *The Heir at Law* and Thomas Morton's *Speed the Plough*. Other guests to the family residence included Siddons, who 'delighted the Company after tea by reading some part

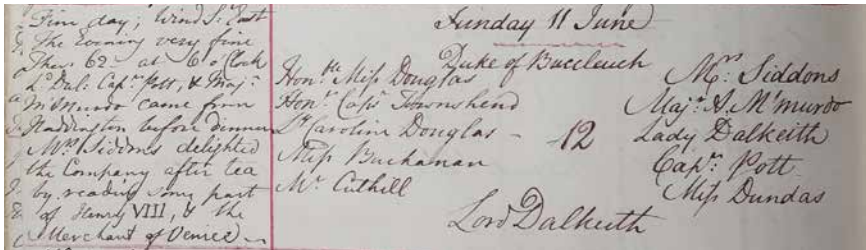


Fig. 7.3: Dalkeith Palace Dinner Book. Entry for Sunday 11 June 1809. NRS, GD224/1085/5. © Buccleuch Collection.

of Henry VIII, & the Merchant of Venice' (fig. 7.3), in addition to Catalani, who attitudinised in the style of Roman statues.<sup>5</sup> In each case, performances that existed in the public realm were literally transplanted into the domestic domain, lending a fluidity to how the family consumed theatre.

### St Cecilia's Hall

Looking back at the vibrant life of the Edinburgh Musical Society, the violinist and music publisher George Thomson remarked, 'The concerts of St Cecilia's Hall formed one of the most liberal and attractive amusements that any city in Europe could boast of'.<sup>6</sup> The Hall was associated with the Edinburgh Musical Society, one of the most important Scottish musical institutions in the eighteenth century, and one that Thomson was intimately familiar with. Founded in 1728, it held weekly concerts for gentlemen subscribers, in addition to a number of public concerts that were open to ladies. The Society was part of a growth in civic development during the early eighteenth century, in which the proliferation of clubs and societies across Britain, promoting an extraordinary array of interests, was characteristic of Georgian sociability. Institutions such as the Select Society (and later Poker Club), Philosophical Society of Edinburgh and Royal Society of Edinburgh ensured that the city was 'a brilliant centre of associational life'. The vast majority of such societies were only open to male membership, and the Edinburgh Musical Society was no exception. In some ways it was an earlier cousin to institutions such as the Anacreontic Society and Bath Harmonic Society, and it was part of a general mushrooming of musical societies in the provinces.<sup>7</sup>

From 1762, the home of the Edinburgh Musical Society was St Cecilia's Hall, a purpose-built venue after a design by architect Robert Mylne. Edward Topham described the hall in 1775, at a time when the Society was employing a large number of musicians:

It is rather too confined; but in every other respect the best accommodated to Music of any room I ever was in. The figure of it is elliptical, and the roof is vaulted, and a single instrument is heard in it with the greatest possible advantage.<sup>8</sup>

The Society combined both instrumental and vocal music, employing a convivial approach in which gentlemen amateurs played in conjunction with professional performers. Topham dryly noted that 'Though the band is a good one in general, yet I cannot say much in favour of the vocal performers'.

The Society was a markedly different institution from the Theatre Royal, yet it also served as a conduit for bringing opera into the city. Concerts comprised two to three acts which combined oratorio, instrumental works, opera and Scots songs, thus situating operatic performance within a broader cultural context. The opera extracts were overwhelmingly, although not exclusively, from Italian repertoire. A surviving index of music owned by the Society includes a large number of Italian songs and published opera selections, while copies of Italian vocal repertoire were regularly purchased between the 1760s and 1780s. Complementing this approach was the Society's ambitious pursuit of foreign performers, most notably Tenducci, Domenico Corri, and his wife, Alice Bacchelli. While these singers undoubtedly brought repertoire from their native Italy via London, in an unusual cultural exchange, Tenducci and Bacchelli were also celebrated for their performance of Scots songs. The concerts thus presented a musical and linguistic melting pot, in which opera was just one of several strands.

No. 11,768.] EDINBU

A CONCERT, 272

*Under the Patronage of*  
**HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF BUCCLEUGH,**  
 And by Desire of the Governor and Directors  
 of the Musical Society,

**MADAME CORRI'S ANNUAL CONCERT**  
 Is fixed for  
**TUESDAY the 7th inst. in St Cecilia's Hall.**  
**PLAN OF THE CONCERT.**

**ACT I.**

Handel's Grand Overture, from the Occasional Oratorio,  
 with Kettle Drums and Trumpets, accompanied on the  
 Organ, by Mr CORRI.

New Rondo, as sung by Signora Danti, in the Opera of *La  
 Zenobia in Palmitis*—Madame CORRI.

Concerto Violincello—Mr SHETKY.  
 Song—Mr URBANI.  
 Scotch Song—Madame CORRI.

**ACT. II.**

Song—"Sweet Bird,"—Madame CORRI,  
 Accompanied on the Violin—by Mr STABILINI.

A New Medley for the full Band, in which is introduced  
 the Celebrated Storm from Paisiello's much-admired Ope-  
 ra of the *Barber of Seville*—with a variety of Scotch Airs,  
 &c. the whole compiled and arranged for the occasion by  
 Mr CORRI.

Bravura Song—Madame CORRI.  
 Violin Concerto—Mr STABILINI.

*To conclude with*

An **ORIGINAN RUSSLAN DUET**, with Italian words,  
 Madame CORRI and Mr URBANI.

To begin at 7 o'clock, and to conclude in time for the As-  
 sembly.

Tickets (3s.) to be had of Madame Corri, No. 2,  
 Shakespeare Square, and at all the Music Shops.

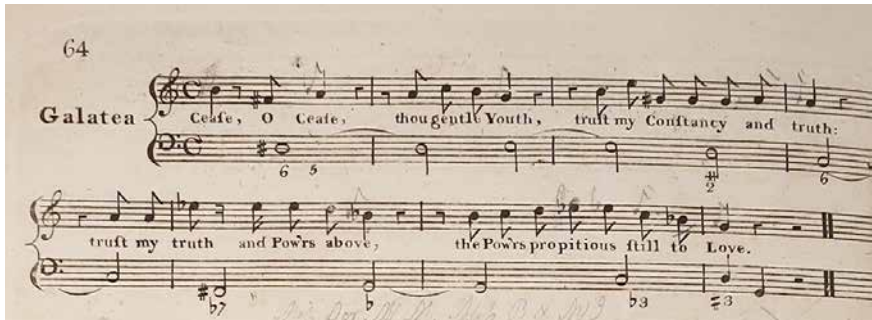
Fig. 7.4: Advertisement for a Benefit of Camilla Giolivetti, *Caledonian Mercury*, 4 February 1797.  
 © The British Library Board. All rights reserved.  
 With thanks to The British Newspaper Archive.

The Buccleuch family maintained a long-standing association with the Edinburgh Musical Society. Duke Henry was a member from 1771 and took on the role of Governor in the mid-1790s, shortly before the Society's dissolution. Some of the musicians employed by the Society were well known to the family, including Natale Corri (1765-1822), Nathaniel Gow (1763-1831), Schetky and Joseph Hurka de Monti (c.1753-1823). In some cases, performance for the Society was arranged through family intervention and patronage: in 1789, Duchess Elizabeth requested that de Monti be allowed to effectively audition for a place in the Society's concerts; de Monti was ultimately given approval to perform and the board acceded 'to Monti's singing when the Duke of Buccleuch...honoured the Society with [his] company'.<sup>9</sup>

Although membership of the Society was formally limited to men, Duchess Elizabeth lent her patronage to at least two concerts produced under the auspices of the Society in the 1790s. This can be viewed as part of the broader inclusion of women as audience members in the Society's ladies' concerts, as well as their potential influence on programming.<sup>10</sup> Both of the concerts Duchess Elizabeth patronised were for the benefit of Camilla Giolivetti, who was the wife of Natale Corri. In 1797, Giolivetti sang a rondo from the opera *Zenobia di Palmira*, which was possibly Pasquale Anfossi's 1789 composition, while Natale Corri produced an orchestral medley that featured the storm from Giovanni Paisiello's *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (1782) (fig. 7.4). The previous year, Giolivetti's concert opened with the overture from one of Christoph Willibald Gluck's operas based on the story of Iphigenia, and closed with a song from Handel's masque, *Acis and Galatea* (1718/1732). A novelty in the middle of the concert was *The Siege and Surrender of Valenciennes* by Natale Corri, a battle piece which on this occasion incorporated 'Trumpets, Bassoons, Flageolets, Kettle-drums, &c'. A copy of the music, for the more subdued forces of piano or harpsichord with violin accompaniment, appears in a volume of 1796 opera dances belonging to Ladies Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu.<sup>11</sup>

The Montagu Music Collection holds several items from the Edinburgh Musical Society library, including a thematic index (MMC vol. 32), and scores of operas and oratorios. While it is unclear when these items became part of the collection, they speak to both the family's interaction with the Society and the Society's interest in opera. The index is confined to instrumental music, but there are a number of operatic connections. The first item consists of overtures by the 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kelly (1732-1781), who was Scotland's most recognised composer in the mid- to late-eighteenth century. Several of his overtures were performed before operas and they were embedded in the programme when Tenducci sang at St Cecilia's Hall in 1769.<sup>12</sup> The index also features Gluck's overture to his tragic opera *Iphigénie en Aulide* (1774), music for which is in the collection, as well as 'Handels Overtures from all his Operas & Oratorios for violins &c in parts'.

Handel featured prominently in the Society's musical holdings and public concert repertoire, and his music almost entirely makes up the remainder



**Fig. 7.5:** Recitative 'Cease, o Cease, thou gentle Youth' from George Frideric Handel, *Acis and Galatea* (London: Randall, [1769]). MMC vol. 33. © Buccleuch Collection.

of the Society's items in the Montagu Music collection. Published scores of a number of his operas are either distinctively stamped with the Society's name or annotated to indicate its ownership. Several of Handel's works were also owned by Gilbert Innes, who was a Director of the Society from 1782 to 1796 (including during Duke Henry's governorship), and whose professional associations with the duke included positions with the Royal Society of Edinburgh and the Royal Bank of Scotland.<sup>13</sup> A score of *Acis and Galatea*, which was regularly performed at ladies' concerts across at least forty years, contains Innes's signature inside the front cover. It was clearly used, as it includes additional musical notation, indications of performers' names and which sections were to be excluded from performance (fig. 7.5).

### Corri's Rooms

After the decline of the Edinburgh Musical Society at the turn of the nineteenth century, Natale Corri became one of the most important figures in Edinburgh's musical life. In a sense, he combined the operatic activities of both the Theatre Royal and the Society. In 1798, he staged a concert performance at St Cecilia's Hall of extracts from Michael Kelly's 1798 dramatic romance, *Blue Beard*, employing singers from the Theatre Royal. But Corri's merging of these domains was broader than this. In the aftermath of the Society's collapse, he produced several series of subscription concerts, the format of which closely replicated the Society's combination of instrumental and vocal repertoire. He also sought to bring leading singers to Edinburgh and promoted the performance of Italian opera. In 1803, Corri transferred his concert series to the Edinburgh Circus in Leith Walk. Although the Circus underwent a number of incarnations and for a short time held the patent for the Theatre Royal, for part of the early nineteenth century it was known as Corri's Rooms.

The Buccleuch family was intimately connected with Corri's musical enterprise in a variety of ways. Duchess Elizabeth's account books and the family's Dalkeith Palace dinner books show that they attended Corri's concerts

and supported Edinburgh-based musicians who performed at Corri's Rooms (fig. 7.6). On 19 February 1805, Elizabeth sponsored a benefit concert for Girolamo Stabellini, who had previously been leader of the orchestra for the Society. The programme included Giolivetti singing 'Hope told a flattering tale', the English version of Paisiello's 'Nel cor più non mi sento', which by this time was associated with at least four different operas (including *Artaxerxes* and *Inkle and Yarico*), and was incorporated into Domenico Corri's *A Select Collection of the Most Admired Songs, Duets, &c.* Just six days later, Duchess Elizabeth and the Earl and Countess of Dalkeith, amongst others, patronised a benefit concert for the clarinetist Mr Mahon. Among the vocal items were 'Down by the river there grows a green willow' from Storace's staged drama *The Iron Chest* (1796), and 'A smile from the girl of my heart' from *The Woodman* (1791) by Shield.<sup>14</sup>

Date	Description	Amount	Date	Description	Amount
1804	162 12		1817	154 10	
7 -	to the Society	30	7	to Lockhart for a pension on	10 10
11	192 12		12	to Corri for his sub. & five benefice tickets	17 17
	particulars -			to Peter Campbell (with 100 £)	5
	Corri's Concert	2 2		an old man at Langton	1 1
	Benefit	1 1	14	to Miss Manning 36 y. Ind. 10	14 8
	from	2 2		Collection at the Church for the	2 2
	to Dalkeith Corri's sub. & benefice	3 3	17	Capt. Brown for the twins	2 "
	to Dal. do	3 3		travelling expences tickets	4 "
	a 10th gown	2 0		expences for Country	1 15
	Sub. Duress. Repositions	5 5		for 2 Poles & Coals	2 10 6
	to Home a 10th gown	2 0		travelling exp. at do	" 10 6
	a debt to L <sup>d</sup> Montagu	1 13 6		Stabellini's benefice	1 1 "
15 -	Duke Corri's Benefice	1 1		Mr. Hume's sub. to Mr. Dalkeith	3 " "
	Rec'd from sheep for a dinner London	2 17 10 6		to Corri's benefice	1 1 "
		10 " "		to Keithy do	1 1 "
		275 10 6		expence Repositions for myself	10 " "
				to Dalkeith	5
				Mr. Hume's sub. Mariner	2 2 6
				Bill at the Repositions	30 10 "
				different disbursements	275 10 6
				unaccounted for	

Fig. 7.6: Account book probably belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1808-1817. NRS, GD224/1093/2. © Buccleuch Collection.

Duke Henry and Duchess Elizabeth's eldest son, the Earl of Dalkeith, had a particular association with the fabric of Natale Corri's concerts. In 1802, a public spat arose between Corri and Peter Urbani, who ran a rival concert series. The orchestra for Corri's concerts consisted of local musicians, with star performers recruited from London. Urbani accused Corri of abandoning local



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performers, which prompted an apparent rebuttal from the musicians themselves, declaring they would support Corri's concerts. One of the signatories was C.F. Hartman, who endorsed the statement on behalf of the Earl of Dalkeith's band.<sup>15</sup> This suggests that members of the band played for Corri's concerts at least during the approaching 1803 season, if not in previous seasons as well.

Corri was instrumental in bringing two of Europe's finest sopranos to Edinburgh, as part of his broader efforts to ensure that Italian opera was heard. For his 1802 subscription series he engaged Gertrud Mara (1749-1833), a German singer renowned for her range and beauty of sound. Although her repertoire consisted largely of items from Handel's oratorios, she included Italian operatic arias as well as one of her signature songs, 'Hope told a flattering tale'. Corri was also intimately involved in each of the visits that Catalani made to Edinburgh, hosting her concerts, selling tickets and inevitably directing from the piano. The performances Catalani gave at Corri's Rooms in 1807 were specifically advertised as containing 'favourite Songs, Duets, &c. from the Operas performed last winter at the King's Theatre', while her 1808 tour brought 'Grand Serious and Comic Operas' to Edinburgh.<sup>16</sup>

The Buccleuch family supported Corri's endeavour by heavily patronising Catalani's performances. They saw nearly every concert in 1807 and 1808, which comprised select Italian arias as well as larger operatic extracts. Corri was keen to capitalise on Catalani's presence in the city, and in 1812 wrote to the 4<sup>th</sup> Duke of Buccleuch (the former Earl of Dalkeith), requesting his support to obtain a licence for the performance of Italian opera in Edinburgh. Acknowledging the Duke's opinion 'that a regular Italian Opera in this City would be a very precarious undertaking', he pressed his case by arguing that 'the intention of wishing to possess [sic] such a license, is to use it only when favourable opportunities [sic] come in the way, such as the present (Catalani being here)'.<sup>17</sup>

Corri's pursuit of Italian opera in the second decade of the nineteenth century saw him transplant performers from London, much as he had done for Catalani in her earlier concerts. In 1811, he enlisted 'the celebrated ITALIAN COMPANY, from the King's Theatre, Haymarket, London, to [perform] ITALIAN OPERAS, complete in all their parts'. Amongst the repertoire was Mozart's *Così fan tutte* (1790). Seven years later, Corri again brought several artists from the King's Theatre to Edinburgh, including the French soprano Joséphine Fodor and Corri's daughter, Frances, who was a pupil of Catalani. Corri oversaw the production of several 'Grand Musical Entertainment[s]', which included a melange of extracts from Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (1787) and *Le nozze di Figaro* (1786), along with items from Simon Mayr's *Il fanatico per la musica* (1798), and Rossini's *Tancredi* (1813). During her benefit at the end of the series, Frances Corri sang 'Nel cor più non mi sento', complete with variations by Catalani.<sup>18</sup>

The experience of opera in Edinburgh for the Buccleuch family was therefore a rich assortment of musical moments. It was facilitated through the family's interest in and patronage of several different institutions that together contributed to the operatic fabric of the city. Both English and Italian opera were

part of their musical encounters, but while the former made up the principal repertoire of the Theatre Royal, the latter was available more often in the form of extracts brought to the public in concert performances. A constant theme for all venues was the desire to attract performers from London and further abroad, so as to give Edinburgh's musical life a distinctly cosmopolitan feel. As part of her broader cultural patronage that at times extended into Dalkeith Palace itself, Duchess Elizabeth was particularly active as a consumer and sponsor of opera performances across the city. Opera 'at home' in Edinburgh was therefore both multifaceted in its appearance, and personal in its cultivation.

Her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch for  
Young Ladies B. of Com. & Shakespeare

1780	July 14	To Long in pair American	- 6
		To Schubert's Sonata	1 -
		To Opera of Rinaldo	8 -
	21	To Bourgeois & Morsio	1 -
		To Third Part of Dessein Gray 6 <sup>o</sup>	1 -
	28	To Kelly's 2 Oboes	4 -
		To Schubert's 4 <sup>th</sup> Sonata Grand	3 -
		To Haydn Master and Schobert	2. 6
	Aug 8	To 1 <sup>st</sup> Part of Hauff's Weis at 8 <sup>o</sup>	4. 8
	Oct 6	To Pachy's Actum from Denver	- 6
		To Dutch best Violin	5. 8 -
		To Double Mounted Case for 20	1. 11. 6
		To best Violin Bow	- 10. 6
		To Ball Clarified Horn	- 1 -
	11	To 2 <sup>d</sup> Violin & Strings	- 8
	20	To 1 <sup>st</sup> Part of Hauff's Weis at 8 <sup>o</sup>	- 5 -
	28	To Violin 2 <sup>d</sup> 3. 4. 5.	- 1. 4
	Nov. 21	To Richard's 2 <sup>d</sup> Sonatas	- 3. 6
	Dec. 10	To Coris Act of Inguing	7. 6
1784	18	To 2 <sup>d</sup> New songs	1 -
1785	12	To Greenwood Song	- 6
		To Native piece	- 6
		To Amos Amos w. Variations	1 -
		To Schubert's sonata	5 -
			<u>110. - 2</u>

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## Further Reading

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Cat. 11. © Buccleuch Collection.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Billington's astounding feat of performances is advertised in the *Caledonian Mercury*, 21 February to 14 March 1793.
- <sup>2</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 24 March 1779. Corri appears to have managed the Theatre Royal between November 1778 and May 1779.
- <sup>3</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 March 1777; 28 December 1778; and 9 and 20 January 1779; see also James C. Dibdin, *The Annals of the Edinburgh Stage with an Account of the Rise and Progress of Dramatic Writing in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Richard Cameron, 1888), 174. Charles Dibdin's production premiered in London in September 1778.
- <sup>4</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 20 February 1792 and 29 February 1796. The bill for *Inkle and Yarico* is included in Miscellaneous Accounts 1787, NRS, GD224/351/5.
- <sup>5</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 23 March 1805; see also the entries on 25 March 1805 and 21 July 1806 in Dalkeith Palace Dinner Books, NRS, GD224/1085/3; and entries on 7 and 12 February 1807, and 11 June 1809 in NRS, GD224/1085/5. Lady Harriet Montagu had seen Siddons perform in Edinburgh on 10 June 1809.
- <sup>6</sup> Robert Chambers, *Traditions of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, London and Dublin: W. & R. Chambers, W.S. Orr and J. McGlashan, 1847), 239.
- <sup>7</sup> Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies 1580-1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 2. For further information on musical societies, see Elizabeth Chevall, 'Clergy, Music Societies and the Development of a Musical Tradition: A Study of Music Societies in Hereford, 1690-1760', in *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh (Aldershot and Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 35-53; Brian Robins, 'The Catch Club in 18th-Century England', *Early Music*, 28, no. 4 (November 2000): 517-529 and 'The Catch and Glee in Eighteenth-Century Provincial England', *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 141-160.
- <sup>8</sup> Edward Topham, *Letters from Edinburgh; Written in the Years 1774 and 1775: Containing some Observations on the Diversions, Customs, Manners, and Laws, of the Scotch Nation, During a Six Months Residence in Edinburgh* (London: J. Dodsley, 1776), 376-377.
- <sup>9</sup> Brian Bonnyman, *The Third Duke of Buccleuch and Adam Smith: Estate Management and Improvement in Enlightenment Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 153 n. 16; Jennifer Macleod, 'The Edinburgh Musical Society: its Membership and Repertoire 1728-1797' (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2001), 33, 37, 249, 304 and Appendix D.
- <sup>10</sup> Macleod, 'Edinburgh Musical Society', 58-59.
- <sup>11</sup> Sonia Tingali Baxter, 'Italian Music and Musicians in Edinburgh c.1720-1800. A Historical and Critical Study' (PhD diss., University of Glasgow, 1999), 1:284. The score is included in MMC vol.172.
- <sup>12</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 4 January 1769 and David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 2003), 48. Johnson indicates how Kelly's overtures were performed but gives no source for this.
- <sup>13</sup> Macleod, 'Edinburgh Musical Society', 246, 298.
- <sup>14</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 16 and 23 February 1805.
- <sup>15</sup> John Leonard Cranmer, 'Concert Life and the Music Trade in Edinburgh c.1780 – c.1830' (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 1991), 55.
- <sup>16</sup> For Mara, see *Caledonian Mercury*, 14, 21, 28 January and 11, 15, February 1802. For Catalani, see *Caledonian Mercury*, 29 August 1807; 5 November 1808; and Cranmer, 'Concert Life', 51-52.
- <sup>17</sup> Account Books possibly belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1801-1817, NRS, GD224/1093/1-2; for attendance, see also Dalkeith Palace Dinner Books, NRS, GD224/1085/5; and letter from Natale Corri to William Cuthill, Edinburgh, 31 October 1812, NRS, GD224/652/2/2.
- <sup>18</sup> *Caledonian Mercury*, 17 October and 2 November 1811; 29 August and 10 September 1818, as well as Cranmer, 'Concert Life', 70.



George Barret, *View of Dalkeith Palace*, c.1770.  
© Buccleuch Collection.



The Duchess of Buccleugh's Favorite.

By Nath. Gow.

15

Slow

The Countess of Dalkeith's

Strathspey

16







# Catalogue

## Catalogue

MMC items are held at Boughton House. Buccleuch Collection.

Archival documents from the Buccleuch Collection now on deposit at the National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, are listed below with relevant NRS shelfmarks.

### Luggage (Entrance) Hall

#### 1. Sedan Chair

Reconstruction of a late eighteenth-century sedan chair. Made by Calum Flanders (spring 2019).

### Stewards' Hall

#### 2. MMC vol. 300

Volume of Italian comic operas by Pietro Alessandro Guglielmi (1728-1804) and Antonio Sacchini (1730-1786) in a luxurious full leather binding. The front of the volume contains the Buccleuch coronet and 'Opera's D. Buccleugh' in gold tooling on the label. This is part of a series of volumes bound in a similar fashion.

#### 3. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/462/4

Account Book belonging to Charles Bray, House Steward to Henry, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Buccleuch, 1793-1802. Opened to reveal the entries for April 1794 which show his payments for 'chair men' to take members of the family to the opera at the King's Theatre in London.

#### 4. MMC vol. 302

Niccolò Piccinni, *The Song's, in La Buona Figliuola* (London: Bremner, [c.1767]). This opera was based loosely on Samuel Richardson's popular novel *Pamela, or Virtue Rewarded* (1740). After its premiere in Rome, it rapidly conquered the major European stages, playing at the King's Theatre, Haymarket in 1766. It became the Italian opera most frequently performed at London's King's Theatre in the eighteenth century.

#### 5. *Captive of Spilburg* Playbill

Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812) and Michael Kelly (1762-1826), *The Captive of Spilburg* (musical drama after Prince Hoare), 1798. The playbill advertises a performance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 5 December 1798. Private Collection.

#### 6. Bill from Corri, Dussek & Co. for the purchase of music addressed to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1799.

It shows the purchase and return of Kelly and Dussek's musical drama *The Captive of Spilburg*. Boughton House.

#### 7. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/1093/2

Account Book probably belonging to the Duchess of Buccleuch, 1808-1817. It shows payment for a box at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane on 29 April 1813.

#### 8. MMC vol. 284

Joseph Hurka de Monti, *Sacred Music. Twenty-Four Italian Duos, with Sacred Words by Sig<sup>r</sup> Mattei. Composed and Most humbly Dedicated to Her Grace the Dutchess of Buccleuch* (Edinburgh: Author's publication, n.d.). It is likely that this copy was specially bound for presentation to its dedicatee, Duchess Elizabeth. The book is covered in a rich

Opposite top: Cat. 20. © Buccleuch Collection.

Opposite bottom: 'The Mistakes of the Night', anon. ms, 1805. © Buccleuch Collection.

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and elegant tree calf binding, made using a new marbling process developed in the late eighteenth century in which the leather was treated with coppers and salts of tartar to resemble a tree trunk with branches.

**9. MMC vol. 159**

Manuscript music volume bearing the names of Elizabeth and Caroline Montagu, including vocal duets by Giuseppe Aprile (1732-1813).

**10. Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), Portrait of Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch, 1767.**

Boughton House.

**11. MMC vol. 492**

Manuscript music volume bearing the name of Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe, which includes two versions of *The Dutchess of Buccleugh's Minuet* by the Scottish composer Thomas Alexander Erskine, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Kelly.

**12. MMC vol. 253**

William Shield, *Rosina. A Comic Opera, as performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden* (London: Dale, [1795?]).

**13. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/365/31**

Bill from Domenico Corri addressed to the Duke of Buccleuch, for singing lessons for the Montagu daughters at Dalkeith Palace and George Square, Edinburgh, 15 August 1783.

**14. MMC vol. 334**

Volume of English operas by Samuel Arnold (1740-1802) and Stephen Storace (1762-1796), containing *The Surrender of Calais*; *The Haunted Tower*; *The Siege of Belgrade*; and *No Song No Supper*.

**15. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/365/31**

Bill from Corri & Sutherland addressed to the Duchess of Buccleuch for the purchase of music, instruments and musical supplies. It includes the opera *Rosina* and the 'Dukes best Violin', 1783-1784.

**16. MMC vol. 78**

Stephen Storace, *The Haunted Tower, a Comic Opera in Three Acts. As Performed at the Theatre Royal Drury Lane* (London: Longman & Broderip, 1790).

**17. The Haunted Tower Playbill**

*The Haunted Tower*, Storace, 1789.

The playbill advertises a performance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, 6 January 1806. Private Collection.

**18. John Ainslie (fl. 1815-1835), Portrait of Giuseppe Giustinelli, 1820.**

Drumlanrig Castle.

**19. MMC vol. 74**

Michael Arne, *The Overture, Songs, & Duets in the Opera of Almena. Perform'd at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane ... adapted for the Voice & Harpsichord* (London: Author's publication, [1764]), featuring 'Hail source of light' sung by Giuseppe Giustinelli.

**20. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/1085/5**

Dalkeith Palace Dinner Book. Entry for 3 February 1810, showing Angelica Catalani's performance of attitudes with a shawl in the gallery. The book also contains concert posters and advertisements for her Edinburgh performances.

**21. Bowhill Book of Caricatures.**

The book is assembled like a scrapbook and contains a large collection of contemporary caricatures lampooning political, social and cultural life. Some include handwritten annotations.

**22. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/1085/3**

Dalkeith Palace Dinner book. Entry for 9 March 1805. The dinner book records a private concert in the Gallery, performed by George Pinto, Johann Schetky, Natale Corri and one of the Mahon brothers.

**23. Letters of the Late Ignatius Sancho, An African....To which are prefixed, Memoirs of his Life, vol. 1 (London: Nichols, 1782).** The frontispiece shows an engraving made by Francesco Bartolozzi (1727-1815) of Thomas Gainsborough's 1768 portrait of Ignatius Sancho. Boughton House.

**24. Samuel Scott (1702-1772), View of the Thames from Westminster Bridge with Montagu House.** Boughton House.

**25. Henri-Pierre Danloux (1753-1809), Henry and Elizabeth, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, with their family in the grounds at Dalkeith, 1798.** Bowhill House.

**26. Single action Crochet mechanism pedal harp, unconfirmed maker, Paris, c.1780.** The Buccleuch family would have heard harps of this type when visiting Paris and Versailles on their continental tour of 1786-1787. In the 1790s they purchased several harps, including one instrument from the Longman firm, who regularly imported harps from France. Private Collection.

**27. Grand piano by John Broadwood and Sons, London, 1816.** Performed upon and signed by the pianist and composer, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858). The Cobbe Collection Trust.

**28. MMC vol.178**  
Johann Baptist Cramer, *Ninth Divertimento, for the Piano Forte, Containing an Appropriate Prelude, and Pastoral Rondo, Composed & Dedicated to Miss Helen Fitzgerald* (London: Mitchell, n.d.).

**29. Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), Portrait of Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch (1743-1827).** Bowhill House.

**30. Square piano belonging to Johann Christian Bach by Johannes Zumpe (1726-1790) and Gabriel Buntebart (1769-c.1795), London, 1777-1778.** Duchess Elizabeth owned a Zumpe of this kind. These instruments are usually associated with music-making at home, but J.C. Bach played a similar instrument in a public concert in 1768. This may indeed have been the first time the piano was used to play solos in a public performance in London. The Cobbe Collection Trust.

**31. MMC vol. 285**  
Johann Christian Bach, *The Favourite Songs in Orione* (London: Walsh, 1763).

**32. Matthew Darly (c.1720-1778), 'The Optic Curls, or the Obligeing Head Dress' (London: Darly, 1777).** Engraving. The College of Optometrists, London.

**33. Opera Fan, The Plan of The Opera House for 1798 (HA255).** The fan shows the subscribers to the opera boxes for the current season. Duchess Elizabeth and five members of her family are seated in box 16, in the second tier close to the centre. The Fan Museum, Greenwich, London.

**34. Opera Fan, King's Theatre for 1788 (HA1791).** These elaborate fans were beautiful accessories, but they also served as adverts to increase opera box subscription. Duchess Elizabeth occupies box 41, a subscription she had held for several years. Her box is located in the second tier, only a few boxes along from the Royal box. The Fan Museum, Greenwich, London.

**35. Three Monoculars or 'Antique Spyglasses', Early Nineteenth Century.** Opera glasses such as these were popular items to take to the opera house, both to see singers, actors and dancers up close and to spy on audience

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members in other boxes. Duchess Elizabeth purchased a similar item from the firm of J. Watkins in 1803. The College of Optometrists, London.

**36. Voucher from Jeremiah Watkins for the purchase of large gilt portable opera glasses for the Duchess of Buccleuch, dated 21 May 1803.**

Boughton House.

**37. Watkins Trade Card from 1791.**

Francis Watkins used these trade cards in English and French to advertise his glasses and optical instruments. Duchess Elizabeth bought her spyglasses from his nephew J. Watkins who took over the business. The College of Optometrists, London.

**38. Tambourine made by Joseph Dale (1750-1821), London, 1800-1809.**

In response to the fashion for the tambourine in both domestic and stage performance, Dale and his son invented a new type of tambourine which they patented in 1799. Horniman Museum and Gardens. MT361-1998.

## Unfinished Wing

**39. MMC vol. 455**

Domenico Corri, *The Singers Preceptor, or Corris Treatise on Vocal Music... Dedicated to Her Grace the Duchess of Buccleuch* (London: Silvester and Longman, Hurst, Rees & Orme, 1810).

**40. NRS, Edinburgh, GD224/365/31**

Two bills from Domenico Corri to the Duke of Buccleuch for music lessons for the Montagu daughters at Dalkeith Palace and George Square, Edinburgh, dated 5 December 1783 and 23 January 1784.

**41. MMC vol. 321**

Giovanni Paisiello, *Piche cornacchie e notte*. Sung by Sig<sup>ra</sup> Storace & Sig<sup>ra</sup> Morelli in the Opera of *Gli schiavi per amore* (London: Longman & Broderip, [1787]).

**42. Spitalfields Silk Shawl, c.1815.**

Private Collection.

**43. MMC vol. 172**

Cesare Bossi, *Little Peggy's Love. The Favorite Scotch Ballet, Performed at the King's Theatre, Composed by Mr. Didelot* (London: Longman & Broderip, [1796]).

**44. MMC vol. 174**

Cesare Bossi, *The Favorite Divertissement. Hylas et Temire as performed at the King's Theatre, Composed by Mr D'Evville, with the much admired Pas Seul Danced & performed on the Tambourine by Madm. Laborie* (London: Goulding, Phipps & D'Almaine, [1799]).

**45. Francesco Bartolozzi (1728-1815) and Benedetto Pastorini (1746-after 1807) after Nathaniel Dance (1735-1811), 'A Stranger at Sparta' (London, 1781).**

The image depicts Auguste Vestris (1760-1842), one of the most renowned French dancers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Boughton House.

## List of Reproductions

**1)** Joshua Reynolds, Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch and her daughter Lady Mary Scott, 1772. Bowhill House. Buccleuch Collection.

**2)** James Gillray (1756-1815), 'A Modern Belle going to the Rooms at Bath' (London: Humphrey, 1796). The original appears in item 21.

**3)** Playbill for a King's Theatre performance of Mozart's opera *Le mariage de Figaro* (London: Brettell, [1812]). Houghton Library, Harvard University.

**4)** William Capon (1757-1827), The first Opera House (King's Theatre) in the Haymarket, 1789. London Metropolitan Archives.

**5)** Augustus Charles Pugin (1769-1832) and Thomas Rowlandson (1756-1827), 'Opera House (1800)', in Rudolph Ackermann, *Microcosm of London* (London: Ackermann, [1808-1809]). The British Library Board.

**6)** John Collie Nixon (c.1755-1818), 'Madame Storace in *The Haunted Tower*' (1790). This caricature depicts the singer Nancy Storace (1765-1817) in the opera of *The Haunted Tower*, composed by her brother, Stephen Storace.

**7)** James Gillray (1756-1815), 'At the Opera' (London: Humphrey, 1791). British Museum.

**8)** James Gillray (1756-1815), 'An Old Encore at the Opera' (London: Humphrey, 1803). The original appears in item 21.

**9)** George Barret (1730-1784), View of Dalkeith Palace. Bowhill House.

**10)** Samuel Freeman (1773-1857) after Adam Buck (1759-1833), 'Madame Catalani' (London: Holland, 1807). Harry Beard Collection, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

**11)** Richard Newton (1777-1798), 'The Birth of the Rose' (London: Holland, 1796). This image likely depicts the dancer Marie Rose Didelot (née Paul). The original appears in item 21.





R. NEWTON  
del et fecit

THE BIRTH OF THE ROSE,

London, Bailey & Co. 1750, Oxford St.



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Figs. 1.2; 2.6; 3.10; 7.2; 7.4

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Images: Cover Page; p. 4; 9; 11; 29; 58; 74; 87; 88; 103; 116; 118; 119; 120; 126; 128; Inside Back Cover

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Figs. 3.5; 7.3; 7.6

Images: p. 115; 120

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Fig. 2.7

### **The College of Optometrists, London**

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Figs. 3.7; 3.8

### **The Fan Museum, Greenwich (London)**

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Fig. 3.3

Image: p. 9

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Figs. 4.4; 4.5

### **Harvard Art Museums**

Fig. 3.2

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Fig. 6.5

### **Houghton Library, Harvard University**

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Fig. 1.5

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Fig. 3.3

Image: Inside Cover

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Fig. 2.3

### **National Library of Scotland**

Fig. 7.1

### **New York Public Library**

Fig. 6.1

### **The Performing Arts Collection / ArenaPAL**

Fig. 3.8

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Fig. 3.9

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Fig. 5.2

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Fig. 3.1



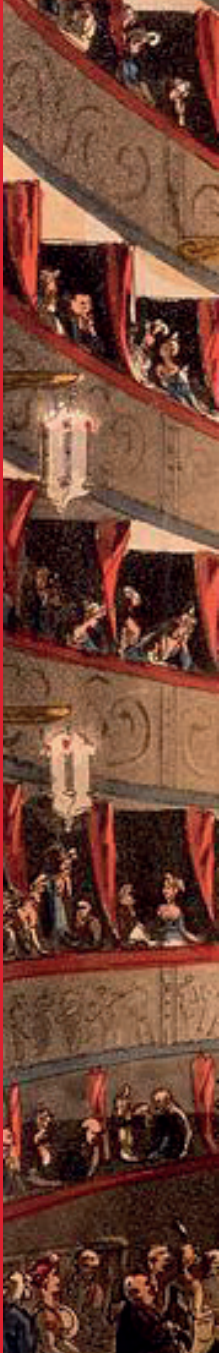




James Gillray (1756-1815), 'A Bravura Air – Mandane' and 'An Old Encore at the Opera' (London: Humphrey, 1801 and 1803) from a volume of caricatures collected by Elizabeth Montagu, Duchess of Buccleuch (Cat. 21).  
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*an Old Encore, at the Opera!*



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