

Music in England, 1760-1840

(Note: I wrote this term paper during the summer semester of 2011 as part of the seminar 'Fairest Isle, all isles excelling – English culture, society and ways of life 1760–1840' taught by Prof. Dr Josef Johannes Schmid (History, University of Mainz). It is a translation from German and was written for a non-British audience.)

Introduction

Around 1800, London's vibrant concert life surpassed that of Paris and Vienna. Operas and other musical entertainments were staged regularly in the many theatres, and in the pleasure gardens – particularly Vauxhall and Ranelagh – in summer. During Lent, oratorios were also performed. Music lovers could choose between competing concert series, Italian opera, and artful music in plays, masked plays, and pantomime. This rich musical culture also impacted small English towns. Most had an amateur music society that regularly held orchestral concerts and staged musical performances in theatres, as well as taking part in opera productions.

There was also usually a brass band belonging to the local vigilante group, providing an additional musical ensemble. The works of George Frideric Handel, in particular, were immensely popular. No theatre could afford not to include his works in its programme. Performances of his works remained popular well into the 18th century. While Handel was one of the few foreign musicians to travel to England and settle there in the 17th century, from the second half of the 18th century onwards, more and more foreign musicians came to London to demonstrate their skills and secure an income during the summer months when theatres on the continent were closed. Other musicians also moved from the European mainland to England to live and find permanent employment there.

The French and American Revolutions only peripherally touched the island: exiled French aristocrats and those from the newly founded United States came to England. They were welcomed by the English upper classes, including the gentry and nobility. Democratic ideology seemed to have brought about little change in England. It was the Industrial Revolution that directly affected England and transformed society.

Technological innovations created new employment opportunities, drawing large sections of the rural population to London and newly emerging cities such as Manchester. Consequently, the urban population almost doubled during the 18th century. New social classes emerged as a result of the Industrial Revolution: entrepreneurs, bankers, and other capital owners gained wealth and influence. In the German states, these people were known as the 'economic bourgeoisie'. The flourishing of humanist ideals in the cities also gave rise to a further social class that embraced these ideals: the educated middle class. These two 'middle classes', as

they were termed in England, transformed the previously distinct English social strata of landowning upper-class and working lower-class people in the countryside.

This paper examines how social change affected the English music scene, primarily in London as its flourishing centre, between 1760 and 1840. Consequently, particular attention is paid to the audience rather than the musicians. To this end, London's musical culture is first illustrated using opera and oratorio performances as examples before examining the social composition of opera house audiences. First, the upper class and its customs are presented, followed by a closer examination of the social changes brought about by the subscription system and the new operatic form of opera buffa. Next, the role of music in private settings and salons, and its social dynamics for the nobility and middle classes, is illustrated. The distinctive English glee club tradition is also described. The concluding chapters examine changes in Anglican and Catholic liturgical practices and their musicians.

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Subsequently, the role of music in private settings and salons is illustrated, as are the social dynamics for the nobility and middle classes. The distinctive English glee club tradition is also described. The concluding chapters examine changes in Anglican and Catholic liturgical practices and the role of musicians.

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Unfortunately, most of the literature focuses primarily on Handel's life and music. However, further literature deals with the social phenomenon of musical culture. Examples include Fiske's *Music in Society and English Theatre*, Faulstich's *Buergerliche Mediengesellschaft*, Wood's *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain 1770–1840*, and *Italian Opera at the*

King's Theatre in the 1760s. The Role of the Buffo by Willaert, and above all, the studies by Hall-Witt in Fashionable Acts. Indeed, musical culture during the reigns of King George III and George IV is no longer merely an overlooked topic in English literature, extending beyond Handel's oratorios. However, outside England, very few have engaged with the history of English music in the 18th and 19th centuries.

London's Musical Culture

The English House of Hanover was a family with a passion for music. They supported musicians and learnt to play instruments themselves. King George II supported George Frideric Handel, and his son, George III, who succeeded him to the throne in 1760, was also a fan of Handel's music. In fact, even before his coronation, George III had been taking flute lessons from Franz Wiedemann for several years. Furthermore, he regularly attended operas and oratorios in London theatres throughout his life. Following George III's appointment of Luigi Cherubini as 'Composer to the King' in 1785, the royal family frequently attended 'early music concerts' at the Tottenham Street Rooms. From 1764, his wife, Charlotte, learnt to play the harpsichord under the tutelage of Johann Christian Bach. This connection was arranged by Carl Friedrich Abel.

At that time, Abel was already a member of the royal chamber orchestra, the Chapel Royal, and Bach was also admitted to this group. Another Chapel Royal member, William Boyce, wrote an anthem for the wedding of George III and Charlotte. George III and Charlotte's eldest son, George Frederick Augustus, the Prince of Wales – who would later become George IV – was taught the cello by John Crossdill from 1782. That same year, George IV met the composer Thomas Attwood, who was three years his junior and was performing at a concert in Buckingham Palace.

George IV developed such a close friendship with Attwood, who was 17 at the time, that he not only wrote the Coronation Mass ('I was glad') for his coronation, but also for that of his brother William, who succeeded him ('O Lord, grant the King a long life'). During his reign, George IV maintained his own chamber orchestra, which rehearsed at Carlton House, and to which John Crossdill was also admitted. Between 1765 and 1781, Bach and Abel organised concerts in Soho Square, performing not only their own compositions, but also contemporary music from the German states. Due to the support given to visiting composers, there were repeated outcries among the English population in the 18th and 19th centuries. They accused patrons and the English royal family of favouring foreign musicians. They claimed that these musicians were taking jobs away from equally talented English musicians.

The London Theatres

In London, there were three royal theatres authorised to stage dramatic performances, i.e. operas, under the Licensing Act of 1737. They were named after the streets on which they were situated: Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the King's Theatre on Haymarket, the latter of which was owned by the King. Later, the Little Theatre on Haymarket was added.

Although ballets and divertissements were also performed here, they were only presented as afterpieces following an opera or play. Following several fires in London theatres at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, rendering them unusable, the Pantheon was granted a temporary licence to stage operas. Until the Theatre Regulation Act of 1843, all other theatres and pleasure gardens were only permitted to stage genres such as melodramas, burlesques, ballets and pantomimes. Between October and June, opera performances were held two to three times a week in the aforementioned theatres. Rehearsals for the evening performance began at 10 am for the musicians. Performances themselves began at various times between 5 pm and 7 pm, lasting several hours and sometimes continuing until midnight. Doors opened one hour before the performance began. Half an hour before the performance began, the orchestra would start entertaining the audience with music.

The Musicians and their Income

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, composers were not freelance artists, but were employed by a noble or ecclesiastical court, or by a theatre. Alternatively, they received financial support from patrons, but this made them dependent on their musical preferences, whims and the prevailing musical fashions. Although most composers came from the middle classes, when in the service of aristocratic families, they were merely regarded as part of the higher domestic staff. While musicians' incomes were higher than those of manual labourers, they were significantly lower than those of composers, librettists, watchmakers or jewellers, whose crafts were considered more valuable. Samuel Wesley remarked on the relatively low pay: 'I have every day more and more cause to curse the day that ever my poor, good father suffered music to be my profession [...] The whole is a degrading business for any man of spirit or ability.' Ultimately, a composer's salary depended on their reputation and the demand for their work. The Society for the Support of Musicians in Distress (founded as the Society for the Support of Musicians in Need as early as 1738) was transformed into the Royal Society of Musicians by George III through a charter in 1789. However, this did not ultimately alter musicians' salaries; in fact, the pay gap steadily widened until 1820, and could change rapidly for any given musician depending on supply and demand. Composers' remuneration also fluctuated considerably as it was subject to the same market-regulating factors.

The Lenten Oratorios

As operas were not permitted to be performed on Wednesdays and Fridays during Lent, music lovers hired theatres for these two days throughout the seven-week period in order to stage Lenten oratorios as an alternative.

An oratorio performance consisted of three concert sections. First came the oratorio as the main work, followed by a mixed programme of sacred music and concluding with secular music. Solo recitals were performed between the sections. Oratorios usually began at 6:30 pm and lasted three hours. Unlike the impresarios of the opera houses, the oratorio impresarios ran the theatre as an administratively and financially independent enterprise on those two weekdays. This presented opportunities and risks, as while they kept all the takings, they also had to cover the expenses. A poorly attended performance could deplete their financial resources. High admission prices ensured the exclusivity sought by the upper classes, satisfying their desire for 'pleasing variety' through changes to the staging. John Christopher Smith and Charles John Stanley's attempt to expand the programme with contemporary and original compositions failed, as audiences stayed away. Attendance figures rose again with the revival of Handel's oratorios.

Consequently, almost all the oratorios performed until the 1790s were by Handel. A seat in the boxes cost half a guinea, while seats in the upper and lower galleries cost 5s and 3s 6d respectively. Initially, Lenten oratorios were performed only at Covent Garden, and they were all the more appealing to the aristocratic audience because the King also attended. This ensured a steady income for the two oratorio impresarios, Smith and Stanley. Although they faced repeated competition from other theatres in the 1760s, it was not until the 1790s that Samuel James Arnold at Drury Lane established himself as a genuine rival. He won over his audience with significantly lower prices: box seats cost 5s, stalls cost 3s, the upper gallery cost 2s and the lower gallery cost 1s. Smith and Stanley did not initially match these prices. It was only when Smith and Stanley moved to Drury Lane for the oratorio series two years later, and Arnold in turn took over Covent Garden, that the two long-established oratorio impresarios reduced their admission prices slightly. The price for box seats remained at half a guinea, while seats in the stalls were reduced to 5 shillings, those in the upper gallery to 3 shillings and 6 pence, and those in the lower gallery to 2 shillings. The reasons for the change of theatres have not been recorded, but it seems likely that the rent at Covent Garden had become too expensive for Smith and Stanley.

The pinnacle of admiration for Handel's oratorios was reached at the Handel Commemoration in Westminster Abbey in 1784, which featured 525 amateur musicians. Following this, there was a steady decline in performances of Handel's oratorios, and a decline in oratorios as such in the first decades of the 19th century. Instead, 'concerti spirituali' – shorter orchestral works based on chorales or hymns – became increasingly popular. In addition to vocal soloists, instrumental soloists also performed. Typical solo instruments were the organ, violin, oboe, flute, cello, horn, bassoon and clarinet. These were performed instead of complete oratorios. This combination of oratorios and 'concerti spirituali' was known as 'Favourite Selections'.

From 1815 onwards, enthusiasm for the Lenten oratorio series waned, and only a few theatres managed to turn a profit for a short while. Between 1820 and 1840, there were therefore frequent changes in the management of the Lenten oratorios at both opera houses, with entire concert series being cancelled. Various attempts to attract larger audiences proved unsuccessful. In the 1840s, the Lenten oratorios finally disappeared from theatres altogether.

Music in Public Spaces

The Aristocracy: Seeing and Being Seen

In the 18th century, operas and oratorios reflected the distinct social classes of the time. Within aristocratic society, they served as a subtle barometer of power relations and social structures. In the 1780s, this high-society circle was an exclusive group. The theatres were small and intimate enough to serve as effective meeting places. 'To see and be seen' was the motto. As well as providing cultural enrichment, attending the opera was an opportunity to cultivate and expand one's social connections.

The limited size of the auditorium and the manageable number of boxes facilitated this. People could easily observe one another. Members of high society knew each other well enough to attribute social significance to even minor changes in others' behaviour. Who was talking to whom? Were there signs that a personal relationship was developing? Could people even detect a cooling of existing relationships? Who stood out because of their expensive new clothes, and who was clearly unable to afford any? New visitors immediately stood out within the close-knit group. The event was also an opportunity to signal political connections, gather information and track changes and news within the upper class's social network. The social aspect was clearly at the forefront of opera, with the performance and music providing the setting for gatherings. The 18th-century opera-going public was 'event-oriented' (Hall-Witt) and considered themselves to be part of the entire spectacle.

The singers performed their arias and vocal embellishments, to which the audience responded with cheers or boos. The audience was interested in the music, not the composers or singers. Only the names of well-known singers were printed. Before the performance began and during the intervals, the audience consulted the opera's libretto. These contained the texts of the operas with English translations, but not the names of the composer or singers. They cost 1s 6d in the 1780s and 2s from 1805 to the 1820s.

The singers' reputations rose and fell with the audience's reaction. Their musical performance was not the only thing that was judged; their choice of songs and the variety in their delivery were also considered. Singers were expected not only to shine vocally, but also to perform their songs differently each time. Composers and singers achieved this required novelty by constantly reworking existing musical material. Opera singers would even incorporate arias from other operas or pasticcios to perform a particular song from a different work and thrill

the audience. As opera libretti were not considered sacred or protected, anyone could alter another artist's musical composition and perform it in its altered form without permission – a practice that was exploited unashamedly and extensively.

To reduce the length of performances, three-act operas were often condensed into two acts.

The impresario's art lay not only in maintaining a permanent cast of talented performers, but also in tailoring the programme for each performance to suit the audience's preferences.

Planned performances were announced one or, at most, two days in advance: in the evening during the performance, between the main play and the afterpiece, and the following morning in the press. One or two newspapers had the privilege of publishing the programme and paid the theatres for this right.

Social status could be discerned not only from visitors' clothing, but also from their customary seats in the theatre auditorium. Those who could not afford to pay half a guinea, along with the less well-off guests in simpler attire, took their seats in the gallery. Meanwhile, wealthy citizens and the lower nobility sat in the boxes and stalls of the front tiers. High courtesans sat in the upper tiers. They used the performance to draw attention to themselves and generate interest. The stalls were occupied by a mix of nobility, upper-class and middle-class people, as well as journalists and artists – the latter two groups gained admission via the free list.

The Change: The Subscription

Members of the nobility secured their seats by subscribing. Their names were entered into the subscription lists on display and they paid the fee for opera performances for an entire season in advance. This guaranteed subscribers the same seat and provided the impresario with financial security. However, not everyone could afford the price, which is not specified in the literature, but was certainly high, even for members of the nobility. Many of them had previously been invited to subscribe by their patrons.

Until the end of the 18th century, subscribers preferred box seats. This largely unchanged, consistent circle of seat holders was a fundamental feature of opera subscription culture. As subscribers were almost always the same people year on year, new visitors immediately stood out and were closely observed. Equally noteworthy were absent subscribers and the presumed reason for their absence. Such observations served as indicators of financial changes within families and provided insight into social ascent or decline. Around a quarter of all English aristocrats were subscribers to one of the London opera houses. In effect, the opera house functioned as a semi-private club, with subscribers constituting the theatre's main source of income. Recognising the opportunity for higher revenues, the theatres enlarged their auditoriums from the 1790s onwards.

However, this altered the familiar atmosphere. Attending a performance no longer felt like a guaranteed way of commanding full attention in public. The larger auditoriums meant that

new people, largely unknown to existing subscribers, were flooding into theatres. Increasing industrialisation had resulted in the emergence of a wealthy bourgeois upper class with its own power structures and sense of power. This class sought entry into what had previously been an exclusive high-society circle, and had the financial means to pay in advance for weekly opera visits, either directly or through personal connections.

An increasing number of prospective patrons were bypassing the subscription system in order to secure a box seat, and the black market was booming. Booksellers were even offering tickets for privately owned boxes, since a third of the aristocracy could no longer afford the doubled admission prices due to mismanaging their estates and the inflation caused by war. These price rises led to repeated riots, known as the 'Old Price Riots'. The atmosphere at the opera became more public and impersonal. It became considerably more difficult to classify the audience according to their social standing, since wealthy members of the middle classes could afford more ostentatious attire and more expensive seats than impoverished noblemen. Later, and still before the turn of the 19th century, boxes were built on either side of the stage due to the ongoing high demand for opera house seats. Men with social or political ambitions were particularly keen to rent a seat here, as it allowed them to position themselves prominently as patrons of a performer or impresario. The upper classes tried in vain to maintain their previous influence and standing within the opera network. However, due to the increasing commercialisation of opera and the decline in the number of aristocratic spectators, the subscription system gradually lost its significance, and by the 1830s it had become obsolete.

By 1850, aristocrats were still flocking to opera performances. However, the make-up of the audience had changed. While female patrons, society ladies, fashionable dandies and military officers continued to attend the opera, active politicians and mistresses were scarcely to be found on the subscription lists.

The Transformation: The Opera Buffa

In opera seria, with its tragic plots centred on aristocratic heroes, aristocratic opera-goers could easily see themselves reflected in the characters and identify with them. In contrast, opera buffa featured amusing, farcical plots and non-aristocratic heroes. While aristocrats were unable to identify with the heroes of opera buffa, the bourgeois audience was fascinated by them. Even beyond the turn of the 19th century, opera buffa was held in low esteem and disparaged in reviews and music historiography. The King's Theatre was the London venue for opera buffa. Although it had been part of the programme since 1760, it did not become a permanent fixture until 1773. The theatre's impresaria, Colomba Mattei, devised a clever, cost-effective programme that would serve as a model for later opera buffa programmes at other theatres. It featured a balanced variety of performances, with opera seria at weekends and opera buffa on weekdays. Mattei engaged well-known composers as resident artists who

created arrangements and pasticcis specifically for the theatre's singers. Foreign opera buffa performers, who had travelled from the European mainland, often took charge of organising the productions. They procured scores for instrumentalists and singers, liaised with the resident composer and librettist, and performed as singers themselves. In doing so, they drew on operas with which they were already familiar. Therefore, newly composed operas were rarely included in the programmes of London's opera houses. It usually took ten to twenty years after their world premiere on the European mainland for operas to be performed in England. During the 1810s, Mozart's operas dominated the programme at the King's Theatre.

Music in the Private Sphere

In the Private Salon

Towards the end of the 18th century, the music industry experienced a boom, aided by the invention of new machinery that made printing sheet music faster and cheaper. For 'connoisseurs' and 'enthusiasts' – contemporary terms for music-loving laypeople – sheet music would be engraved approximately one to two months after the premiere of an opera, concerto or symphony, provided it had been successful. Around 1800, a vocal score of an opera cost 10 shillings and 6 pence, a vocal score of an overture cost 6 shillings, and six sonatas cost 10 shillings and 6 pence. Several pages of a vocal score would appear weekly in some music journals as instalments for just 1s 6d or 2s 6d. Readers had to buy successive instalments until they had the complete work.

However, the delay was worthwhile, as this method was often cheaper overall than buying the complete work. Orchestral works were arranged for a small number of instruments or for a solo instrument. The most popular genre of piano music in the late 18th century was the accompanied piano sonata. Thanks to improvements in manufacturing techniques, pianos became affordable to a far greater number of people from the end of the 18th century onwards. Arrangements of orchestral compositions, known as piano reductions, meant that people could play stage works on their own, singing along where appropriate, thus recreating concert and opera experiences on a small scale in the comfort of their own homes. Piano sonatas, in turn, were often written as teaching pieces for piano students. While guides to learning to play the flute or violin — the most popular instruments of the 18th century, played mainly by men — had already been available since the 18th century, from the beginning of the 19th century, English amateur musicians were also able to acquire such guides for playing the piano.

As well as learning to play the piano, it was popular amongst the aristocracy to have their daughters taught to sing. Ideally, a daughter would be able to play the piano virtuously and sing beautifully. A daughter's musical ability could influence her family's social standing: a daughter with no musical talent would be difficult to marry off and would tarnish her family's

reputation. Consequently, daughters were sometimes forced to learn these skills regardless of their ability. During his stay in London in 1824, Gioachino Rossini also worked as a singing teacher and subsequently complained that 'not even £100 per lesson could compensate for the torture I endured listening to those ladies whose voices creaked horribly'.

Jane Austen criticised her contemporaries for the relentless training their children underwent. This kind of musical education turned young women into 'mechanical automata' — dogged robots devoid of feeling and sensitivity — who were driven by a discipline reminiscent of Prussian drills to learn to play music in order to conform to the aristocratic ideal, and thus to societal expectations. Jane Austen wrote about 'mechanical automata' from personal experience: she had practised the piano every morning since the age of thirteen and played for her family in the evenings. This ritual was commonplace. To demonstrate their daughters' musical skills to other members of their social class and position them for favourable marriage prospects, families would gather in their salons to make music when entertaining guests or sharing a meal. At such private and semi-public concerts, it was customary for two women to play an orchestral arrangement of the operas currently showing in London on the piano four-hands whilst a third played the harp, singing the libretto simultaneously.

By the end of the 18th century, musical education, including learning to play an instrument and singing, was no longer the exclusive domain of London's elite. The emerging upper middle classes had equal access to sheet music and educational materials thanks to music copyists. In 1798, Edgewood stated that female proficiency had become so commonplace that it could no longer be considered a distinguishing feature of a gentlewoman's education. The origins of mid-19th-century upper middle class domestic music-making can be traced back to aristocratic theatres and salons. These semi-public gatherings preserved the aristocratic courtly tradition whilst taking place in a private setting – the drawing room – for invited guests. The upper-middle-class salon served as a retreat for cultivating humanist ideals, and the piano became a characteristic piece of furniture in this room. Even in wealthy or educated upper middle-class families, great effort was made to ensure their daughters received a musical education. Conversely, while a noble family might experience social decline, musical talent in a bourgeois daughter not only brought social prestige and the prospect of a favourable marriage, it also formed the basis for social advancement — particularly if an attractive dowry was secured.

Amédée Pichot described a typical scene in a salon: 'Enter one of our coffee-rooms, and you will probably find two Englishmen seated silently in a corner, instead of engaging in conversation with one another. If, by chance, one of them, casting aside some of the national reserve, should venture to ask his neighbour a question, the latter will adopt a grave expression and, at most, offer a dry, monosyllabic reply, for two talkative Englishmen seldom meet under the same roof.'

And Charles Grenville reported: 'There is a great deal of coming and going, and eating and drinking, and a corresponding amount of noise, but little or no conversation, discussion, or

easy, quiet exchange of ideas and opinions; there is no regular social circle of men of intellectual or literary calibre to ensure a steady flow of conversation, and which, if it existed, would draw strength and support from the light presence of occasional visitors, with whatever they might individually contribute, be it much or little. The reason for this is that the woman herself, who must set the tone for her own society and influence its character, is ignorant, vulgar and commonplace.'

The bourgeois salon was distinguished from the aristocratic salon by the fact that musical performances were listened to in silence and with full attention. Research cites three reasons for this shift towards silent listening.

- Firstly, the London bourgeoisie adopted the idea from Parisian musical life.
- Secondly, the rise of the new middle class, in conjunction with opera buffa and its non-aristocratic heroes, brought about the change.
- Thirdly, changes to theatre auditoriums meant that audience members were less familiar with one another, resulting in a more formal atmosphere and less outgoing behaviour.

Private conversations during the performance became less common, probably because they were perceived as more disruptive when surrounded by strangers. Consequently, the audience's focus on the performance itself grew stronger. The aristocracy eventually adopted this etiquette, which had initially been established by the emerging middle classes. Quiet listening became increasingly prevalent, even at public musical performances, due to the steadily growing number of middle-class opera-goers.

In salons, both amateur and professional musicians performed to earn extra income. However, professional musicians took their cue from the social status of the salon hosts and sometimes waived their fee. Music salons also promoted young artists to help them reach a wider audience. These opportunities raised their profile, thus helping to further their careers.

The Glee Clubs & Masonic Lodges

The counterpart to the salon, which was predominantly attended by women, was the glee club, which admitted only Englishmen and was often founded in drinking establishments, as well as the Masonic lodge.

Glee is a specific type of musical form that was only composed in England at that time. The French academic Grosley recorded his observations on London club life while travelling through England in 1765: 'They [the clubs] are held amongst friends, who, having formed a close bond in their early days and experienced each other's loyalty, are united by a shared sense of taste, outlook on life and way of thinking.' He also pointed out the independence of such societies, which 'acknowledge no laws but those they have laid themselves'. 'Strangers, and Frenchmen above all, are excluded from these assemblies without a specific

recommendation; and yet they are met with all that respect and warm welcome, so much preferable to ceremony and compliments.'

Several glee clubs were founded in the second half of the 18th century: the Madrigal Society in 1741; the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club in 1761; the Anacreontic Society in 1766; the Glee Club in 1783; and Concentores Sodales in 1798. However, only composers were eligible to join the latter. The best known and most influential of these was the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club of London, founded in 1761 and known simply as the Catch Club. Between 1763 and 1794, its secretary, Thomas Warren, published a collection of the club's songs, including catches, canons, and glees. From that same year onwards, the club awarded various annual prizes for the best glees, catches, and canons. After Thomas Linley the Elder and Samuel Webbe the Elder founded the Glee Club in 1787, the Catch Club lost its prestige. By this time, Samuel Webbe Sr. was already the best-known and most popular glee composer. He composed more than 200 glees, publishing them in nine volumes of Canons and Glees from 1764 onwards.

Music played a central role in Masonic lodges, a tradition that had remained unchanged since their foundation. Loyalty and patriotism reinforced the lodges' ideology.

Making music together added a sense of solemnity to lodge meetings and fostered a convivial spirit after the official proceedings. Masonic gatherings usually ended with a cheerful atmosphere of fellowship involving wine and song. This music symbolised the nature of Masonic lodges: individuals set aside their own interests in favour of the community and merged into a harmonious whole. Similarly, individual chords come together to form a perfect, harmonious whole within the rules of diatonic harmony.

The glees in question particularly well represent this blend of contrasting musical forms and patriotism, combining starkly contrasting sections with disparate contrapuntal lines to form a perfect unity and a sense of 'Englishness'. Consequently, glees were the most frequently sung pieces in Masonic lodges. Musical performances during Masonic ceremonies called for quiet, contemplative listening.

The minutes of a Preston's Lodge of Antiquity meeting on 5 March 1777 recorded the musical pieces performed during the gathering. The programme for the musical portion of the dedication ceremony of a Freemasons' Hall on 23 May 1776 listed the pieces performed, which included older Masonic songs as well as pieces by John Abraham Fisher. The entrance procession was accompanied by the 'March in D', followed by an introduction which concluded with the 'Anthem in C', 'To Heaven's high Architect all praise', set to the tune of 'Rule, Britannia!'. After the Grand Secretary's opening speech, the programme featured an ode to Freemasonry entitled 'Wake the Lute and Quivering Strings'. The actual initiation ceremony, accompanied by 'solemn music' on the organ, was repeated three times. During the ceremony, all non-members, as well as women, were required to leave the room. This was followed by Fisher's anthem in A major, 'Behold, how good and joyful', with text from Psalm 133; the Grand Chaplain's prayer; Handel's coronation anthem 'Zadok the Priest'; and

Fisher's ode 'What solemn sounds on holy Sinai rung', before the festive assembly departed in a procession.

Among the most active members of the lodges were musicians, impresarios and music dealers. They were most frequently found among the membership of four London lodges: the Somerset House Lodge, the Lodge of Antiquity, the Lodge of the Nine Muses, and the Pilgrim Lodge. The Somerset House Lodge counted the most influential musicians among its members. The Covent Garden impresario John Abraham Fisher had been a member since 1768. From 1778 onwards, the lodge began appointing musicians as honorary members or 'serving brethren', meaning they were exempt from paying an admission fee or a monthly subscription. Consequently, the lodge's membership included numerous musicians, as well as many impresarios and music dealers. Consequently, the lodge amassed a large collection of music prints.

The Lodge of Antiquity also counted notable musicians such as Samuel Wesley, Samuel Webbe and Benjamin Henry Latrobe amongst its members. The Lodge of the Nine Muses, London's only German-speaking lodge, primarily comprised German and Italian musicians, including Luigi Borghi, Felice Giardini, Johann Christian Bach, Carl Friedrich Abel and Wilhelm Cramer. The Pilgrim Lodge brought together German and Austrian musicians, as well as other compatriots who held positions as diplomats, city merchants or members of the royal household. German-speaking musicians in this lodge included Anton Kammell, Johann Peter Salomon and Christoph Papendiek, for example.

Sacred Music

Music in cathedrals and parish churches

Since the introduction of Anglicanism, services have been held daily in cathedrals. Hymns were sung by both the congregation and a skilled, four-part cathedral choir. Consisting of between four and sixteen boys and between five and twelve adult singers, the cathedral choir was seated in the choir stalls on both sides of the chancel: on the north side ('cantoris') and on the south side ('decani'). To this day, choral works are usually composed for two choirs, while the cathedral choirs perform the Psalms in their entirety. Although instrumental ensembles may also take part, the organ is usually the only instrument used in the service, providing accompaniment for the choir.

The parts of Morning Prayer set to music are: 1) Venite (Psalm 95); 2) Te Deum or Benedicite; and 3) Benedictus (Luke 1:68) or Jubilate Deo (Psalm 100). During the Communion Service, these are the responsories to the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Sanctus and the Gloria, and in Evening Prayer, the Magnificat and the Nunc dimittis. As Morning Prayer had ceased to be held daily by the 19th century, and the choir's participation

in High Mass was severely restricted, composers turned their attention to Evening Prayer. The Book of Common Prayer prescribed the order of the Anglican service.

The importance of churches as employers of musicians diminished noticeably during the 18th century. In response to the secularisation of the Church and society, men such as John and Charles Wesley, John Berridge, George Whitefield, John Fletcher, Henry Venn and the Countess of Huntingdon launched an Evangelical Revival in the mid-18th century. They relied on Methodist-Pietist methods such as personal conversations, salvation through Bible study, strict self-discipline and spiritual songs. These new hymns were characterised by melodies featuring stepwise intervals. This made the hymns easier for those with less musical ability to sing from the sheet music whilst still being interesting for more accomplished singers. Unfortunately, many bishops preferred a life of luxury and worldly pleasures to their liturgical and pastoral duties.

They regarded church music as a waste of money and reduced the size of cathedral choirs so drastically that they could scarcely fulfil their function. St Paul's choir was hit hardest, being reduced from 42 singers to six. In 1849, Sebastian Wesley summarised: 'No cathedral in this country possesses, at this day, a musical force competent to embody and give effect to the evident intentions of the Church with regard to music.'

In rural parishes, church music largely consisted of simple unison chants with easily recognisable melodies that did not include high or low notes which were difficult to sing. The Creed, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed were usually spoken, while prose psalms, hymns of praise and responsories were recited in metre, as the melodies in the Book of Common Prayer were too rhythmically challenging. Most churches lacked an organ. Most parishes had a choir of lay singers, who were criticised in contemporary reports for their lack of musical ability. As in towns, the standard of worship in rural areas also reached its lowest point during the 18th century, with only a few clergymen continuing to fulfil their ecclesiastical duties.

Reports of nepotism and 'passe-temps' such as hunting and shooting are commonplace. Only 40 per cent held a Sunday service in their parish. Consequently, Holy Communion was often administered only once every three months in many parishes. Some parish churches were used so rarely that they became mouldy and dilapidated. Even where Sunday services continued to be held, however, they were regarded as tedious. However, around the turn of the 19th century, some rural parishes experienced a musical revival, with songs conforming to contemporary principles of composition and harmony being composed, copied and disseminated. Anthems, liturgical chants and hymns were increasingly incorporated into rural parish services.

Throughout the 18th century, the proportion of churches with an organ rose from 30 per cent to 80 per cent. However, it was not until the Church Building Act of 1818 that most provincial churches could afford to acquire a harmonium or pipe organ. Alongside the hymns sung by the congregation, the repertoire of church choirs was modernised too. From the end

of the 18th century, choirs were occasionally led by itinerant singing teachers, who taught them the latest psalmodies. These were copied by the singing teachers and exchanged amongst themselves. However, as there were still no permanent choir directors or trained organists, little changed for the majority of parish churches until the end of the 19th century.

Embassy Chapels

Until 1791, public worship was illegal for Catholics. For a long time, the embassy chapels – those of embassies from predominantly Catholic countries – were the only places in London where a Catholic Mass could be celebrated. Within the protected confines of an embassy compound, the Catholic faith could be practised without fear of persecution. These churches were therefore open not only to embassy staff, but to all Londoners and English citizens. However, it was not until the Catholic Relief Acts of 1778 and 1791 that most of the penal laws against Catholics were repealed. The last prohibitions were finally abolished in 1829 by the Catholic Emancipation Act, meaning the unique status of the embassy chapels gradually became redundant.

Once public Catholic churches were available again, the embassy chapels became 'anachronistic relics' of a bygone era. The three largest were located in the embassies of Portugal (74 South Audley Street, from 1747), Bavaria (Warwick Street, from 1788) and Sardinia (Duke Street, now Sardinian Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields). Evidence of the musical repertoire of the embassy chapels can be found in the writings of Carl Barbandt, who served as organist at the Bavarian embassy chapel for a time. Some 60 years later, an anonymous reviewer in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* wrote of Vincent Novello's 1766 collection *Sacred Hymns, Anthems, and Versicles* that it was 'the first attempt to introduce a deviation' from Gregorian chant.

Until now, only Gregorian chants had been sung in embassy chapels. Barbandt's new compositions marked the first departure from this norm. His collection is divided into two parts. The first part contains simple compositions for High Mass on major liturgical feasts, as well as new settings of 'Domine salvum fac' as a prayer for the king, 'Tantum ergo' and 'Dies irae'. The second part consists of 55 hymns for Vespers and Compline. The amateur musician William Mawhood served as organist and chorister in all three of the aforementioned embassy chapels in London. His diary entries from February 1767 to September 1790 offer detailed insights into the musical repertoire of these three chapels, including the dates, locations, and liturgy.

From the mid-1760s at the latest, Samuel Webbe the Elder, Barbandt's assistant, was the most important figure in Catholic church music in England at the Bavarian Chapel. In October 1775, Webbe succeeded George Paxton as organist at the Sardinian Chapel, and he served as organist at the Portuguese Chapel from 1776 until at least 1797 or 1798 whilst continuing to work at the Bavarian Chapel. He thus held control over the musical

organisation in the three most important embassy chapels of that time. In the second half of the nineteenth century, a reviewer wrote in the *Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review* that Webbe's masses had attained a universal character and had not lost their popularity by the mid-nineteenth century.

Webbe gave free lessons in church music in the Sardinian Chapel on Fridays. Among his pupils were Samuel Wesley and Vincent Novello, who went on to have a similarly significant influence on the embassy chapels. Samuel Wesley mainly composed motets, hymns and psalm settings, and had been working at the embassy chapels since at least September 1778. Novello had been composing works for the Roman liturgical rite since November 1780, and sang in the choirs of the Sardinian and Portuguese chapels.

It was there that he met Webbe the Elder and became friends with his son, Samuel Webbe the Younger. Soon afterwards, he became assistant to the organist of the Sardinian Chapel. His compositions, including *A Collection of Sacred Music* (1811 and 1825), also became a key part of the liturgy at the chapels. Both Novello and Wesley were active during the heyday of Catholic church music in England, between the Second Catholic Relief Act of 1791 and the closure of the Portuguese Embassy Chapel in 1824. During this period, Wesley composed his most popular work, *'In Exitu Israel'* (1810), while Novello published his two-volume *'A Collection of Sacred Music as Performed at the Royal Portuguese Chapel in London'* (1811), which provides evidence of his compositional output at the Portuguese chapel.

The lively correspondence between Novello and Wesley, spanning from May 1811 to December 1825, contains a wealth of information about musical life and the repertoire of the early 19th-century embassy chapels. This includes details of music to be performed, reports on services conducted by Wesley while Novello was away, Wesley's comments on the chaplains, and other matters concerning the chapels. During this heyday at the beginning of the 19th century, it is noteworthy that the embassy chapels also established themselves within Anglican circles as venues for excellent musical performances.

The Bavarian embassy chapel, for instance, became known as 'the shilling opera', as soloists from King's Theatre performed here during services. In her biography, Novello's eldest daughter, Mary, wrote about her father: 'It became fashionable to attend services at the Portuguese chapel, and on Sundays, South Street was filled with carriages waiting outside while their owners packed into the small, candlelit space inside.'

Conclusion

The English music scene in the Georgian era was changing in every respect. The upper classes, who were enthusiastic about Handel's works and opera seria, had their desire for variety and novelty satisfied by alterations to well-known and popular musical works, which rarely corresponded to the original. Attending the opera also satisfied their craving for performance and self-expression. For many years, opera was almost like a family member, until several factors eroded this over the course of a few decades. Following the expansion of London's opera house auditoriums, an ever-increasing number of middle-class people began attending opera performances as spectators.

Having become wealthy and influential as a result of the Industrial Revolution, they were often able to purchase season tickets for an entire season of opera performances.

Alternatively, a patron might provide them with a box seat that had previously belonged to a nobleman. These wealthy capitalists often possessed more than an impoverished nobleman. For upper-class audience members, the expansion of the auditorium and influx of new faces meant the traditional opera-going experience began to fade: they recognised fewer and fewer people and could no longer see everyone. Furthermore, unlike the middle classes, they could not identify with the new genre of opera buffa.

The well-educated and arts-interested section of the emerging middle classes were rarely found amongst opera-goers. Instead, they performed opera arias on the piano or other instruments at home, forging connections with like-minded individuals. It was through these connections that a visit to the opera might be arranged, though this was not a frequent occurrence. However, families could gain prestige and influence by ensuring their daughters received a good musical education, thereby developing links with the gentry.

Glee clubs and Masonic lodges constituted a distinct form of musical group which tended to be rather self-contained.

From the late 18th century onwards, church music underwent reform in both urban and rural areas. Newly composed hymns that were easy to learn and sing were intended to counteract the advancing secularisation of the Church of England. Many clergymen neglected their pastoral duties, lingering in their benefices instead of celebrating services. They regarded expenditure on new music or a choir as a waste. This behaviour was detrimental not only to church music, but to church attendance in general. The reforms aimed to restore the prestige of church services, particularly church music. Until the Catholic Relief Act, Catholic embassy chapels were closed communities.

Following the repeal of this Act, renowned English composers were appointed as organists. Many of these composers converted to the Catholic faith in order to secure these posts. They composed new works for worship services in keeping with the contemporary style, which largely replaced previous liturgical melodies. Alongside the decline of Anglican church music, Anglicans increasingly recognised the rich musical development of services in embassy chapels.

Changes in public musical events reflected the flourishing English music scene, as well as the shifting social composition and changing significance of social classes: the upper classes lost some of their influence and prestige to the rising middle classes.

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