

The first edition of Burney's *General History of Music* (1776 – 1789) in South African Libraries

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Two complete sets of the first edition of the first general history of music published in English, A General History of Music from the earliest ages to the present period by Charles Burney, 1776 – 1789, can be found in the libraries of the University of South Africa and the University of KwaZulu-Natal (Pietermaritzburg). A third, mixed set, containing a second edition of the first volume, and first editions of the other three volumes, is in the library of the University of Cape Town. The provenance of the books is largely unknown and they are unknown and unused. The physical appearance of the books is a source of information on printing, publishing and binding practices of the 18th century. Regarding content, Burney's History remains a wellspring of observation and insight into 18th century musical life and practice.

Keywords: Burney; History; Music; Libraries; South Africa

The books

One of the slightly more than 1000 sets of *A General History of Music from the earliest ages to the present period* by Charles Burney, printed in 1776 – 1789, the first general history of music published in English, is in the archives of the library of the University of South Africa, unknown and unused. It is one of two complete sets of this work in a South African library. The other set is in the library of the University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg. One of the books of a set in the library of the University of Cape Town is in second edition .

The set at Unisa consists of four light brown, leather bound quarto volumes in very good condition, measuring 284 x 219 x 4.1 (Vol. 1), x 4.3 (Vol. 2), x 4.9 (Vol. 3) and x 5.1 (Vol. 4). The set at the University of Natal has roughly the same dimensions, is also in very good condition, but has marbled paper covers, mainly brown, with some red and black with leather spines and cover edges. The set of the University of Cape Town was probably bound in house. The Unisa set were bought by the University in 1963 for £25 (about R50 at the time). At first sight this seems to be an exorbitant sum, especially since, firstly, it was by far the most expensive book bought by the library of the University of South Africa that year (Library register, 1963)², and, secondly, the Department of Music, for whom the book was bought, had been allocated only R400 for books for the entire year (Minutes of 19 February 1963)³. When one studies the catalogues of sales of rare books, beginning with that of the library of Samuel Johnson, Burney's friend, in 1785, until today, however, one has to come to the conclusion that Prof. P.R. Kirby, who was instrumental in obtaining these books (Library register, 1963), was aware of a bargain.

In the sale catalogue of Samuel Johnson's library of 1785 the first two volumes appear as Item 49. According to the added notes there is an inscription by Samuel Johnson in Vol. I: 'Given by the author to Sam: Johnson May 16, 1782' (Fleeman, 1975:61).⁴ They were bought by Malone, who added Vols. III (1789) and IV (1789) and noted in Vol. II, p. 246, where Samuel Johnson had corrected an error of Burney, changing '250' to '220', 'These figures were set down by Dr Johnson, who never suffered any error in calculation to pass unnoticed'. The books appear in Malone's (Sotheby) catalogue of 26 November 1818 as 'No. 286 (4 vols)' and were sold to Cuthell for £4-16s. They appear again in a Sotheby's catalogue of 10 April 1924 as No. 402 and were sold to Marrot for £25. In February 1929 they appear in Catalogue 23 of Elkin Matthew as No. 46 (*illus.*) and were sold to the New York Public Library (Berg Collection) for £425. In Catalogue No. 73 of 1941 of 'Rare books, manuscripts and autograph letters in English literature' offered for sale by William H. Robinson Ltd. of Pall Mall, there appears as No. 58:

Burney (Charles, 1726-1814). Autograph letter, signed 'Charles Burney'. *Four pages*, 4to. £4. Charles Burney, the author of the *History of Music*, is chiefly famous as the father of Fanny Burney (afterwards Madame

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2. The second most expensive book was an 'Encyclopedia of Physics' which was bought for R28.00. A Larousse encyclopedia was bought for £8-00. Other books generally averaged around R2,00.

3. It has to be noted that according to the minutes of another meeting, held on 14 June 1963, the Department of Music showed a shortfall of R1000!

4. Burney later told the story that Dr. Johnson, who was completely unmusical, had said to him: 'The words are well arranged, sir, but I do not understand one of them'. (Lonsdale, 1965: 182).

D'Arblay), the novelist and diarist. In this letter he thanks a correspondent 'for the Pains you have taken in order to gratify my curiosity with respect to Chinese music ... the accounts with which you have furnished me are very curious and satisfactory, and will enrich (sic) my 2nd. Volume [of the *History of Music*.]'

In 1993 in the Annual Register of Book Values the following entry appears:

Burney, Charles. A General History of Music ... London: for the author, 1776-1789. 1st edn. 4 vols. 4to. xx, [12], 522, [1 errata]; [4]. 597, [1 errata]; xi, 622 [12 index]; [4] 688, [13] pp. frontis & 9 plates in vol. 1. subscr. SI foxing. Contemp half calf, rubbed, backstrips laid down. (*Heritage*) \$1,750 [=£1,108](Cole 1993:32).

We could find no advertisement for a first edition of the *History* at the time of writing this article, but on 1 April this year (2006) there did appear an advertisement for the second edition of the *History* on the website of Antiqbook⁵, which gives some idea of the present value of a first edition, which would be more:

Burney, Charles. Mus. Dr. F.R.S. General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period. London, the author, sold by Payne & .Co. 1789, 2nd Ed. Half-leather, 4to ... Fine, orig. richly gilt spines with title pieces, sprinkled dark brown boards, all hinges weak, strengthened (sic), but firmly holding. A nice, uniform, set of the improved 2nd edition with well printed plates and generous margins. A cornerstone for every musical library, still usefull. Fine. Eur 1495.00 = appr. US \$1853.80 (= appr. R11,100 on 1 April 2006).

The Natal set was accessioned in 1965, but according to the subject librarian, Rosemary Kuhn, it is completely unknown how they acquired them (Letter, 10 November 2005). In this article we will concentrate on the set in the library of the University of South of Africa because it was more accessible to me. Many of the particulars are, of course, applicable to both sets.

Only Volumes One and Three of the set in the Unisa library show any signs of ever having been used. These signs consist in the case of Volume One of short lines drawn next to the names of nine subscribers, and in the case of Volume Three of a line drawn next to the following sentence in the 'Essay on Musical Criticism':

Prudent critics, without science, seldom venture to pronounce their opinion of a composition decisively till they have heard the name of the master, or discovered the sentiments of a professor.

There are no marginal notes or any other marks in any of the volumes apart from the signature of Robert R Hibbert, followed by the date 'September 1954', in pencil on the white flyleaf of each of the volumes. The only other marks are discolouring due to age. The volumes are identically bound in sprinkled leather, which was very popular at the time (Foot, 1993: 23). There is gold scrolling around both the outer and the inner edges of the upper and lower covers, but no other ornamentation or title. The spines of the volumes have five ridges with the title 'Burney's history of Music' appearing on red leather in the second compartment, between the two upper ridges, of each volume. There is a round gold flower-like design in each compartment on the spines of the volumes. They have identical blue marbled flyleaves, followed by white ones. The thick white, slightly cream-coloured, ridged paper is of high quality. The pages had apparently been gilt-edged, but this has become dull with age and neglect. There are catchwords on the ends of pages. Quires are marked: Vol. I: A – Xxx, Vol. II: A – Zzz, Vol. III. A – 3Z, Vol. IV: A – 4N.

The title-page to Vol. I reads: 'A General History of Music from the earliest ages to the present period. To which is prefixed, a dissertation on the Music of the Ancients, by Charles Burney, Mus. D. F.R.S. Volume the first, London', followed by the names of the booksellers. The four volumes of Burney's *General History* were printed for the author and sold by different booksellers: Vol. 1, by T. Becket (Strand), J.M. Robson (New Bond Street), and G. Robinson (Paternoster-Row, the present Trafalgar Square); Vol. 2, by J. Robson (New Bond Street) and G. Robinson; Volumes 3 and 4, by Payne and Son (at the Mews-Gate), Robson & Clarke (Bond Street), and G.G. J. & J. G. Robinson (Paternoster-Row), well spaced out about London as it then was. Vol. I was issued in 1776 and in a second edition in 1789; Vol. 2 appeared in 1782 and was reprinted c. 1811-1812; and Volumes 3 and 4 were published in 1789. A ten-page subscribers' list is affixed to Vol. I.

The gradual divergence of printer, publisher and bookseller can be traced through the various forms which the imprint has taken. All three agents still appear at the end of the seventeenth century in a combination such as: 'Printed by Tho. Cotes, for Andrew Crook, and are to be sold at the black Bare in Pauls Church-yard' (Thomas Hobbes's *Griefe of the Art of Rhetorique*, 1637). It can usually be assumed that the bookshop to which buyers were thus directed was controlled by the publisher. This is confirmed by the imprint of another book by Hobbes, which runs: 'Printed for Andrew Crooke, and are to be sold at his shop, at the Sign of the Green-Dragon in St Paul's Churchyard, 1662.' It is a sign of the growing importance of the publisher over the printer that the latter's name most easily disappeared from the imprint. Thus the

5. <http://www.antiqbook.nl/boox/qui/922.shtml> accessed on 1 April 2006. It has to be pointed out that the third and fourth volumes of the set appeared for the first time in 1789. These must be first, not second editions. The second volume appeared in 1782 and I am not aware of a second edition before the 20th century. A second edition of the first volume did appear in 1789.

first edition of Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605) refers only to the publisher and the bookseller: 'En Madrid, por Iuan de la Cuesta, Véndese en casa de Francico de Robles, librero del Rey'. On the other hand, the first Shakespeare folio mentions the printers only: 'Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount, 1623'. Rarest is the omission of the publisher's name in favour of those of the printer and bookseller, as in 'Printed and sold by B. Franklin', when it is to be inferred that the publishing risk was also borne by the same man, while W.S. Landor himself paid for the production of his *Poems from the Arabic and Persian*, which came out in 1800 as 'Printed by H. Sharpe, High Street, Warwick, and sold by Messrs Rivingtons, St Paul's Church Yard' (Steinberg, 1996: 106). Burney's books, which read 'Printed for the author, and sold by Payne and son, etc.' do not fall into any of these categories. Burney paid for the printing by selling the first two volumes beforehand by subscription. He did not sell the last two volumes by subscription, but paid for them out of his pocket.

Publication by subscription was another method of excluding the publisher as a middleman and of making the profits flow directly into the author's pocket. This seems to have come in use early in the seventeenth century and the custom reached its widest application in the eighteenth century. Expensive works, like these Burney volumes, the success of which was difficult to forecast, were usually undertaken by subscription (Foot, 1993: 114).

Advertisements of the *History* in Burney's earlier books, calling for advance subscriptions, appeared during 1773 in the second edition of the *The Present State of Music in France and Italy, or, the Journal of a Tour through those Countries, undertaken to collect materials for A General History of Music*, the first edition of the *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces*, and again, two years later, in the second edition of the latter book. The advertisement for subscription appeared in this book in 1775, as follows:

London, Jan. 10th, 1774. Proposals for Printing by subscription, a General History of Music from the earliest ages to the present period. By Charles Burney, Mus.D. F.R.S. Conditions: I. That the work shall be elegantly printed in two volumes quarto, illustrated with examples of national music, and compositions of different ages, and in different styles, as well as with original drawings of ancient and modern instruments, engraved by the best artists. II. That the price to subscribers will be two guineas; one to be paid at the time of subscribing, and the other on the delivery of the second volume, in sheets. III. The first volume is in the press and will be published with all possible expedition. IV. The names of the subscribers will be printed; and the work to non-subscribers will be three guineas for the two volumes.

Subscriptions will be taken in, and receipts delivered, till the publication of the first volume, by the author, at his house in St Martin's-Street, Leicester-Fields; T. Becket, Strand; J. Robson, New Bond-street; G. Robinson, Paternoster-Row; Mess. Fletcher and Prince, Oxford; Mess. Merrill and Woodyer, Cambridge; L. Bull, Bath; and at the music-shops of R. Bremner, in the Strand; and P. Welcker, Gerrard-Street, Soho (Burney, 1969: unnumbered page; Kassler, 1979: 130, 131).

Among the subscribers four members of the royal family supported Burney – the Prince of Wales, Prince Frederic, the Duke of Gloucester, and the Duke of Cumberland. There were foreign royalties – the Elector of Bavaria, the Electress dowager of Saxony, and the Elector palatine. These royalties headed Burney's list and then came the general alphabetical arrangement (with the nobility exhibited at the head of each letter), including nine Dukes and Duchesses, twenty Earls and countesses, ten Viscounts and Viscountesses, eighteen miscellaneous Lords and Ladies, six 'Barts', twenty-five Honourables, five foreign princes and counts, and three members of the Demidoff family, bracketed with the general designation 'Russian noblemen'. Only one knight is found in the list: Sir John Hawkins. There are four bishops and two Deans. Burney must have had some influential friend in India: not only is 'Hon. Warren Hastings, Governor General of Bengal', a subscriber for three copies, but Madras is represented, and the President, Secretary, and four Members of the Council of Calcutta took amongst them a dozen copies. Continental literature is represented by Diderot, Rousseau, the Abbé Roussier, Metastasio, and Baretti; and Britain by Johnson, Horace Walpole, Mason, Anstey, and a few others. Actors and artists are represented by Garrick, Reynolds, and George Dance. Many of Burney's personal friends and the families of himself and his wife are included. There are several institutions – one Oxford college (All Souls) and one Cambridge college (King's), three local book societies and one or two literary societies; the Public Library of Chester; the Derbyshire Mineral Musical Society; the Fakenham, Norfolk, Musical society; the Halifax Musical society; the Manchester Musical society; and the Nottingham New Musical society. Burney's fellow musicians are numerous. Just a few are: Farinelli, C.P.E. Bach, Ebeling, Marpurg, Martini, Galuppi, Giardini, Hasse, Hiller, Jommelli, G. Mancini, the three official professors of Music in Britain (Oxford, Cambridge, and Gresham College), over thirty organists of cathedrals and churches in London and the provinces, and the organ builders: Green and Snetzler. (Burney, 1776; Scholes, 1971: 295; Scholes, 1978: 139).

Burney's list of subscribers has been called the most formidable collected for any English work during the 18th century (Stevenson, 1950: 71).

Until the 1820's, printed books reached the public in the same state in which handwritten books had left the medieval scriptoria, namely in sheets loose or loosely stitched together; it was up to the bookseller or the private book-buyer to have the sheets bound into covers made of boards and coated with leather and or vellum. The main difference in book production after the invention of printing was the possibility of producing, comparatively easily and comparatively quickly, duplicate copies of the same text. This led to an increase in the number of books available, which in turn led to an increased demand for the binder's skill. No publisher, printer or bookseller would go to the expense of having large numbers of books bound without being sure that he could sell them. It was exceptional that a publisher sent forth his products already bound, and this was done only with cheap editions destined for the poorer customers who could not afford to have their books treated by professional bookbinders and with certain types of books, such as school books, popular editions of the classics and certain religious or devotional books, which sold sufficiently well for a publisher to have a considerable quantity ready bound in stock (Foot, 1993: 114; Steinberg, 1996: 14).

Burney's four volumes were sold in sheets as was customary at the time: the bindings reflect the taste of the buyer. This is evident from the difference in the bindings of the Natal and Pretoria sets. The bindings of the Unisa set is contemporary with the printing of the final volumes (1789). The bindings of the Natal set are less expensive, and might also be later. The fact that the books are bound in paper casts doubt on the date of binding. In the late 18th century covering the boards with vellum was more customary than using paper. Paper might have been used because, again, it would have been less expensive, however. About 1820 leather was gradually being replaced by the cheaper cloth (Steinberg 1996: 140). Although it has proved impossible to establish the identity of the original subscriber to the set belonging to University of South Africa, the nature of the bindings indicate that he or she was wealthy and possibly titled. The bindings are in the same style as that done for King George III by James Campbell in 1781, as shown in *Studies in the History of Bookbinding* by Mirjam M. Foot, p. 230, although without the crown and royal isignia and less ornate.

Directions are given to the book-binder at the end of Vol. I.

There are ... twenty-six double pages marked with asterisms. These were occasioned by the late arrival of Mr. Bruce's communications, and by other additions to the text, occurring after the Press was broken up; and this method of inserting them was preferred to that of giving the reader the trouble of turning to a *Supplement*. As the sheets last printed will not be sufficiently dry to bear beating immediately, the purchasers of this volume are entreated to let it remain sewed, or in boards, for a few months (Burney, 1776:520).

The number of 'double-pages' given is incorrect. The 'double-pages' are two sequences of pages with duplicated numbering, where the first page-numbers are marked with asterisks and the page-numbers then repeated although the text continues, pages 81 – 86, and 217 – 232, twenty-two in all. For some reason, Burney counted four too many. It is clear that Burney did not decide, or did not receive permission, to include the letter of James Bruce in its expanded form until his chapter on Egyptian Music had been printed. Burney could have added the letter on the double-pages at the end of the chapter but, to give it the prominence which he felt it deserved, he inserted it in the middle (Burney, 1776: vol. I; Lonsdale, 1965:493). James Bruce (1730 – 94) the explorer, had recently returned from Africa and his adventures were the subject of great interest and speculation. It was therefore a triumph for Burney to obtain from Bruce a long account of the state of Abyssinian music, accompanied by a copy of an ancient drawing of a harp which Bruce claimed to have discovered in a cave near Thebes (Lonsdale, 1965: 160).

The work is dedicated to Queen Charlotte in a three-page address written by Dr Samuel Johnson but signed by Burney (Scholes, 1971: 292; Lonsdale, 1965: 182). An extract reads:

To the Queen. Madam, the condescension with which your Majesty has been pleased to permit your name to stand before the following History, may justly reconcile the author to his favourite study, and convince him, that whatever may be said by the professors of severer wisdom, the hours which he has bestowed upon music have been neither dishonourably, nor unprofitably spent ... To those who know that music is among your Majesty's recreations, it is not necessary to display its purity, or assert its dignity ... however the inhabitants of the British empire may differ in their opinions upon other questions, they all behold your excellencies with the same eye, and celebrate them with the same voice, and to that name which one nation is echoing to another, nothing can be added by the respectful and humble gratitude of, MADAM (sic), your Majesty's most obedient and most devoted servant, Charles Burney (Burney, 1776: iii-v).

Steinberg comments that the fulsomeness of a dedication usually stood in inverse ratio to the literary discrimination of the person to whom it is dedicated. In very few cases can a genuine connection between the dedicatory page and the following text be assumed. Dedications were, on the whole, indicative only of the kind of people from whom the author expected some tangible reward (1996: 109). This is certainly the case here, as is evident from Burney's list of subscribers. He was aiming for subscriptions from the nobility, which he did obtain.

If Burney, by his dedication, solicited favours from Queen Charlotte, he did not get it. Although, according to his daughter Fanny, the Queen received it 'with even peculiar graciousness', he was the one who 'never thenceforward failed paying his homage to their majesties, upon the two birth-day anniversaries of those august and beloved sovereigns' (D'Arblay, 1987: 71-72). There is no evidence of any further acknowledgement from the royal side.

In his 'List and Description of Engravings' in the first volume of the *History* Burney lists nine plates, explaining that three engravings by Francesco Bartolozzi from designs by Cipriani had originally served as tickets for fashionable concerts. They serve no purpose and Burney was doubtless hoping to appeal to his more general readers who would appreciate a handsomely produced book and who might be less interested in the other six plates of ancient musical instruments (Lonsdale, 1965: 493). Volume II has a Bartolozzi engraving opposite the title-page. The frontispiece to Vol. III is also an engraving by Francesco Bartolozzi, this time of a portrait of Burney by Reynolds, now in the National Portrait Gallery, and formerly the property of the Rev. Dr Charles Burney, son of the author of the *History*. There are copies in the Music Faculty, Oxford, and the Conservatorio di Musica G.B. Martini, Bologna (Grant, 2000: 640).

Scholes describes 'two slightly varying forms' of the first edition of the first volume of the *History* (Scholes, 1971: vol.2, 333-4). These variations affected only the placing of the plates and may be attributed to the vagaries of different bookbinders. In some copies of the 1776 edition Bartolozzi's engraving of Reynolds's portrait of Burney appears as the frontispiece and the list of subscribers is omitted. As shown, the Unisa copy contains the list of subscribers. It does contain a slight, different variation, however. In the volume in the Unisa archives one of the engravings by Bartolozzi, which is explained in the list of engravings as 'Mercury presenting the Lyre to Apollo, whom a muse is crowning' and should have faced p. 275, is missing. This was probably due to a decision by the bookbinder, as there is no sign of a missing leaf. The quire of four leaves is complete.

The volumes were bought by the University of South Africa from Blackwell's Rare Books in Oxford, England, in February 1963. As mentioned, the name 'Robert H. Hibbert' and the date 'September 1954' written in pencil, appears on the second flyleaf of each of the volumes. An extensive search in Blackwell's archives housed in Merton College, Oxford, as well as all possible other sources, did not reveal the identity of Robert Hibbert. Prof. B.S. van der Linde, who became head of the then Department of Music in 1966, has no recollection of the books or that they were ever used or displayed, and did not know that Prof. Kirby had been instrumental in buying the books. No other lecturer or student of the department, which became the Department of Musicology in 1970 and the Department of Art History, Visual Arts and Musicology in 2002, who could be contacted, knows anything about the books. The only two reprints of the books, apart from that of the first two volumes in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, are those by Foulis, London (with a New York edition by Harcourt, Brace) in 1935, in two volumes, edited by F. Mercer, and by Dover, also in two volumes, unaltered, in 1957, not long before the purchase.

Burney: the creation of the books

Charles Burney was born in Shrewsbury, England on April 7, 1726 and died in Chelsea, London, on 12 April 1814. He is described by Kerry Grant as 'English musician, composer and music historian. A fashionable and popular teacher of music, he was a composer and performer of modest talents whose greatest success and legacy are his writings on music' (Grant, 2000: vol.4, 640). Burney studied music as a youth in Chester and in 1744 became apprenticed to Thomas Arne. In 1745 Arne sent him to Handel, who engaged him to play in the orchestra for his new oratorios *Hercules* and *Belshazzar*. He eventually obtained a regular place in the orchestra of the Drury Lane Theatre and performed at Vauxhall Gardens. He worked for many years as organist, music instructor, impresario and performer for concerts and moderately successful composer. In 1769 he was appointed to write an ode for the installation of the chancellor of the University of Cambridge, but withdrew over disagreement about the cost of the orchestra. Instead, he wrote an exercise for Oxford and matriculated from the University College in June 1769 with the degrees of BMus and DMus (Grant, 2000: vol.4, 640).

Burney claimed that he had conceived the first, although vague, idea of his *History of Music* as early as 1753; and whilst it is possible that during a visit to Paris in 1764, he first realised how much material was available on the continent for musicological research, he engaged in no very obviously 'literary' activities for another five years (Lonsdale, 1965: 63). In 1788 he more than once described his *History of Music* as having been '30 years in meditation, & 20 in writing & printing' and in 1807 he stated that he 'began to meditate a General History of Music' after taking his doctorate at Oxford. In 1760 Burney must already have been contemplating the publication of a musicological work of some sort; but it was not until 1769 that he made the specific and highly ambitious commitment of writing a *General History of Music*. He was talking freely of the work by 1770, had evidently been engaged in research for some months and had been greatly encouraged by his friends (Lonsdale, 1965: 80).

Already visualizing his *History* as a work which would appeal to readers who were neither musicians nor antiquarians, Burney's eagerness to arrive at his own conclusions and to avoid dullness at all costs led him to make a drastic and unprecedented decision:

I have determined to fly to Italy this summer & to allay my thirst for knowledge at the pure source, which I am unable to do by such spare Draughts as are to be attained from the polluted works through which it is conducted to us here (Lonsdale, 1965: 91)⁶.

No Englishman had previously attempted to write a large-scale *History of Music*, let alone cross Europe in search of materials⁷; but, in Burney's opinion, such a journey would fulfill two important purposes:

The one was to get, from the libraries to the *viva voce* conversation of the learned, what information I could relative to the music of the ancients; and the other was to judge with my own eyes of the *present state* of modern music in the places through which I should pass, from the performance and conversation of the first musicians in Italy (Lonsdale, 1965: 83)⁸.

The attraction of Italy lay not only in the musical collections of its great libraries, but in the fact that Burney believed it to be the home of the most important contemporary music; and since he believed that unlike the other arts, the music of antiquity could in no sense be described as 'classical' and that music had only recently approached perfection, modern music was in many ways the most important subject of his historical survey. In addition he was well aware of the potential publicity value that his personal investigations would confer on his history, for it was with the deliberate aim of 'stamping on my intended History some marks of originality, or at least of novelty' that he 'determined to hear with my *own ears*, and to see with my *own eyes*'. There could be no substitute for personal testimony when it came to contemporary music: 'It is only *living* musicians that can explain what *living music* is'. In June 1770 he therefore left England on a tour of the leading cities of France and Italy, bearing numerous letters of introduction to leading intellectuals and musicians on the continent (Scholes, 1959: vol. I, 184; Lonsdale, 1965: 84).

Although the idea of publishing his journal had not been mentioned before his departure for Italy, it had been fully conceived by the time he reached Naples in mid-October 1770. Early in 1771, Burney began to consider this plan in earnest. Although he feared 'the imputation of puffing, a vice of which authors are so frequently guilty', he found it hard to resist the urge to inform the musical world, in an interim report, on his progress with the *History of Music*, and of the great success of his continental researches and interviews. Moreover in the sense that he had carefully kept his daily journal up to date, the book was already written: the only problem was how much of it to publish (Lonsdale, 1965: 98).

In 1772 Burney undertook a trip through the Low Countries, Germany and Austria, and less than a year later published his extensive *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Provinces*. Having got his *German Tour* safely published Burney began to busy himself seriously about his *History*.

Three years in the writing, the first volume of Burney's *General history of Music* was published two years later than proposed. On 25 January 1776 Burney presented the first volume of his *History of Music* to the Queen 'at St James's in full drawing room'. The volume was officially published on 31 January. Three days later the *Morning Post* published a long letter from 'Crito', which praised every aspect of the *History*. This generous publicity was probably the result of some private arrangement with the newspaper's editor, the Rev. Henry Bate, a friend of Burney (Lonsdale, 1965: 173). Burney usually took pains to ensure good reviews for his publications. C.P.E. Bach, the composer, wrote a complimentary and affectionate letter, which ended with the hope that God would preserve Burney's life and health to the end of his great work (Lonsdale, 1965: 183).

The publication of Burney's book had been a success and the extra charge for non-subscribers had had a dynamic effect. In spite of the trouble which Burney took to ensure favourable reviews, the success of his volume was assured long before the reviewers had reached their final verdicts. By the middle of February 1776, some three weeks after its publication, very few copies remained for sale and they were in the hands of the publishers, Becket and Robson, who had each subscribed for fifty copies, and Robinson, who had taken six. The 857 subscribers in Burney's final list had taken between them 1,047 copies and it is unlikely that many more had been printed. Published in a year when such notable works as the first volume of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, and Priestley's *Experiments on Air* were also receiving extensive treatment in the reviews, Burney's volume was nevertheless one of the most fashionable books of the year (Lonsdale, 1965: 180, 181).

6. Letter to William Mason, 27 May 1770, quoted by Lonsdale.

7. At the end of vol. 4 of the History, Burney supplied a chronological list of 66 books published in England on the subject of music from 1701 to 1788. These books do not include a general history of music, but are mainly treatises and essays on the ear, opera, singing, good taste etc.

8. Letter to D. Garrick, 17 October 1779, quoted by Lonsdale.

The second volume of the *History* was delayed by a relaxing of Burney's ambition, partly because he enjoyed his earlier successes and because of his distaste for the 'Gothic' music that was his subject; it did not appear until 1782. Work on the third volume of the *History* was interrupted by Burney's involvement with the Handel commemoration of 1784. In 1789, at the age of 63, Burney published the third and fourth volumes of his *History*. A new, somewhat revised, edition of the first volume was also published, enabling the purchase of all four volumes (the first volume had gone out of print many years earlier). The completed work was favourably received (Grant, 1983: 287) It is a copy of this 'mixed' set, with the first volume in second edition, that is in the possession of the library of the University of Cape Town.

Burney and Hawkins

Not long after he had decided to write a *History of Music* Burney learned that Sir John Hawkins (1719 – 89) a magistrate and keen amateur musician, had been busy for many years on a similar endeavour. Hawkins himself claimed to have started writing his *History* as early as 1759, and to have been collecting materials for an even longer period. The first volume of Hawkins's *History* was already in the press when Burney began writing his own work. The two authors became engaged in a race to publish England's first history of music. Both works were announced well in advance of publication and the many friends the two men shared watched the race with interest. In one sense Burney won it, and in another Hawkins. Burney's history anticipated that of Hawkins by about ten months, but Hawkins published his complete five-volume history at one time, whereas it was to take Burney until 1789 to complete his task (Scholes, 1978: 114, 139). In anticipating Hawkins, Burney had the advantage of a considerable amount of publicity, of having to stand comparison with no earlier attempt at such an undertaking in English, and of securing in his subscription list many readers who would not wish to purchase both works. Hawkins, a man of means (he had married money – much of it), just threw his work on the market and took his chance (Lonsdale, 1965: 198; Scholes, 1978: 293). Burney did not dare to do this, but published by subscription.

For many years Hawkins's very real merits were greatly underrated. During the nineteenth century a reaction set in against the fashionable Burney. Burney's *History* is undoubtedly better written and more carefully organised, and his account of eighteenth-century music is important not merely for the firsthand information it contains, but because it embodies so completely and fundamentally the 'fashionable taste' of the period. Hawkins, on the other hand, has often proved more valuable to later scholars as a repository of obscure musicological information. On the whole, justice has been done. Hawkins's book was reprinted in 1853, 1875, and 1963 and, although he had to wait much longer, Burney's *History* has been reprinted twice in the twentieth century, in 1935 and 1957 (Lonsdale, 1965: 223).

Later editions

As soon as he recovered from completing the last volumes of his *History*, Burney set about preparing a second edition of the first volume. Apart from the correction of errata and the absorption of the 'Additional Notes' into the main body of the text, the most extensive alteration affected the Preface: the introduction to the 'dissertation on the Music of the ancients' was transferred to the preface in the second edition, and what had originally been a series of catechistical questions and answers on the nature of music, was re-written and separated in the new edition from the preface as 'Definitions'. The first chapter of the historical narrative, 'Of Music in Greece during the Residence of Pagan Divinities, of the first Order, upon Earth', was extensively altered, many passages were omitted in 1789, others transferred and still others replaced. A passage on 'reeds' in the Appendix entitled 'Reflections on the ... Musical Instruments of antiquity' was also extensively revised. The new edition of the first volume went to press on 8 May 1789, nine days after the publication of the third and fourth volumes. Burney's haste can be explained by the fact that not a single copy of the first edition remained unsold and by his desire to publish the second while interest was being aroused by the two new volumes. Since there were no subscribers to the third and fourth volumes, it was more important than ever that Burney should receive favourable reviews (Lonsdale, 1965: 342,343).

According to Lonsdale (1965: 469) the second volume was 'hastily' reprinted in 1811-12. Only 250 copies were required to complete the sets with the other three volumes, and it seems likely that no more were reprinted. This 'second edition' was not described as such. It was no more than a reproduction of the 1782 edition and retained the original date of 1782 on the title-page. As noted above there were two reprints of the whole set in the twentieth century.

Evaluation

Burney's *History* is still quoted with great respect by musicologists (Klima, Bowers and Grant 1988: xxiii). It remains a wellspring of observation of and insight into 18th-century musical life and practice. It is an impressive, if inconsistent, work of great value even after more than 200 years of specialised scholarship. The distinguishing mark of Burney's *History* is his interest in contemporary music and his skill in addressing the general reader. Burney intended his work to be a distinctively English history of music for Englishmen.

If we are content to judge Burney's achievement as a critic and historian by contemporary international critical opinion, or by the fulfilment of his own ambitions, he has an impressive and commendable record. It is a record which stands. Changing fashions in historiography, or our expanding perception of musical history, should not be permitted to detract from his accomplishment (Grant, 1983: 302).

Allen wrote in 1962:

These two works (the histories of Burney and Hawkins) stand near the top of every bibliography of music history and have been the models for all our narrative histories since that time. No student of letters in the eighteenth century should neglect them.

As a critic who loved 'grace and elegance, symmetry, order and naturalness', Burney was thoroughly representative of 18th century taste (Allen, 1962: 76,81).

Burney's *History* was a truly remarkable achievement. The first editions in South Africa certainly deserve more attention than they are receiving.

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