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CHARLES BURNEY; OR, THE PHILOSOPHICAL MISFORTUNE OF A LIBERAL MUSICIAN

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ABSTRACT

The moral and political propriety of musical pleasure constituted one of Charles Burney's continuous lines of thought from the 1770s to the 1790s. As a public figure, the music historian found himself called upon to state why music matters – in a preface, a dedication or an essay. Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Burney read in musical performances symptoms of contemporary society and politics, but, unlike Rousseau, he perceived in modern music signs of civilization's progress. Musical excellence, according to Burney, required both freedom and affluence; thus while Burney rejected absolutist monarchy, he nevertheless praised the achievements of court culture. Indeed, his advocacy of music as an 'innocent luxury' reads as an addendum to eighteenth-century disputes on the morality and benefits of luxury. The social implications of this definition of music, however, are problematic: while Burney acknowledged the right of each individual to feel as they please, he also claimed for the music critic the exclusive authority to speak publicly about music. This essay explores these aspects of Burney's political philosophy of music in relation to the works of Rousseau, Montesquieu, Avison, Wollstonecraft and Hume.

'*What is* MUSIC?' Charles Burney asks in his Preface to the first volume of *A General History of Music* (1776); 'An innocent luxury, unnecessary, indeed, to our existence, but a great improvement and gratification of the sense of hearing. It consists, at present, of *Melody, Consonance,* and *Dissonance.*'[1] Nothing perhaps reveals one's personal inclinations more than the act of defining a term for someone else. Compare Burney's definition with Jean-Jacques Rousseau's opening lines in the article 'Musique' (a revision of his article for Diderot and D'Alembert's *Encyclopédie*, printed in his 1767 *Dictionnaire de musique* and first translated into English by William Waring):

> MUSIC, The art of combining the sounds in a manner pleasing to the ear. This art becomes a science, and even very profound, when we attempt to find the principles of these combinations, and the causes of the pleasure which they inspire us with. Aristides Quintilian defines music as the art of the beautiful, and pleasing in the voices and movement. It is not strange, that with definitions so vague and general, the ancients have given a prodigious extent to the art which they thus defined.[2]

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1 Charles Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London: Printed for the author, and sold by T. Becket, J. Robson and G. Robinson, 1776), volume 1, xiii.

2 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *A Complete Dictionary of Music: Consisting of a Copious Explanations of all Words Necessary to a True Knowledge and Understanding of Music*, trans. William Waring, second edition (London: Murray, 1779; reprinted New York: AMS, 1975). For the French text see Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1995), volume 5*: Écrits sur la musique, la langue et le théâtre*, 915.

Both definitions aim to address what music means to us all, rather than to Rousseau or Burney alone. But Rousseau begins with a technical definition. In his mind, music is first and foremost a practical art; unearthing its meaning depends on a personal desire. Burney, by contrast, describes music first in economic and moral terms, before providing the technical components that characterize the musical practice of his time.[3] From this perspective, the value of music lies as much in people as in artistic forms, in collective uses as much as intrinsic qualities.[4]

Charles Burney's publications on music are diverse, ranging from the travel writings that first brought him literary recognition (in 1771 and 1773) to the monumental *General History of Music* (1776–1789), with which he established himself as one of the most respected music scholars of the eighteenth century. Yet all of this work shares in the impulse to vindicate music as an object of public interest, to demonstrate its value – symbolic and even, implicitly, monetary. After all, as a traveller, antiquarian and writer, Burney had an investment in music not only as breadwinning craft (through his activities as organist, teacher and composer), but also as intellectual labour. He readily emphasized the physical strain of his travels and the economic cost of his hunt for documentation: accounting in 1773 for the necessity of a public subscription reaching at least five hundred people for the *General History of Music*, Burney boasted of 'fourteen or fifteen hundred pounds kicked down in my rambles & Bibliomania, with a certainty of loosing Eight or 900 more, if I print two 4to Volumes, besides the Loss of Time, Ease, Sleep, &, perhaps, Reputation'.[5] Even the reputation he earned from the publication of the travels remained a fragile kind of capital, for not everyone readily granted the status of man of letters to a professional musician.[6] Burney's biographer Roger Lonsdale wrote sternly that, in 1769, he was 'little more than a successful music-teacher, who had published some not very inspired music and who had at last had the good sense to bring to a close a rather chequered career as a composer for the theatre'.[7] Burney, then, had a personal stake in the vindication of music's general interest for the public.

3 Burney's definitions of music varied. The 'Essay on Musical Criticism' concisely defines music as 'the art of pleasing by the succession and combination of agreeable sounds' (in Burney, *General History of Music*, volume 3, v). The new *Cyclopaedia*, for which the editor Abraham Rees commissioned the music articles from Burney, commends and reproduces Rousseau's definition from the *Dictionnaire de musique*; see 'Music', in Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia: or, A New Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* (London: Longman, 1819), volume 24. Burney proposes here his own translation of the article (slightly abridged) and elements of a critical commentary. The first few paragraphs of Rousseau's text bear traces of the article published by Ephraim Chambers in the original *Cyclopaedia* (London, 1728, volume 2, 607). As noted by Claude Dauphin in the critical edition of the *Dictionnaire*, however, Rousseau himself had provocatively objected to his own definition of music in the fourteenth chapter of the *Essai sur l'origine des langues* (completed *c*1761): music is *not* the art of combining sounds in a manner agreeable to the ear, but, thanks to melody, a moral art, meaningful and expressive; see Claude Dauphin, ed., *Le dictionnaire de musique de Jean-Jacques Rousseau: une édition critique* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2008), 480n.

4 Vanessa Agnew has emphasized Burney's social appreciation of music in *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), in the context of both his European travels and his son's encounter with Polynesian music. Edward Green has opposed Burney's and Hawkins's ethical views, as betrayed by their distinct representations of Rousseau and his work; see 'The Impact of Rousseau on the Histories of Burney and Hawkins: A Study in the Ethics of Musicology', in *Music's Intellectual History*, ed. Zdravko Blažeković and Barbara Dobbs Mackenzie (New York: Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale, 2009), 157–167.

5 Charles Burney to Thomas Twining, 30 August 1773, in *The Letters of Dr Charles Burney*, ed. Alvaro Ribeiro (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), volume 1: *1751–1784*, 140. See also Roger Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney: A Literary Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965), 118 and 130.

6 For this social distinction see Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 131–133, which quotes, among other things, an excerpt from a 1776 letter by Thomas Twining. Twining recalls the disbelief of some that Burney would indeed be the true author of his books: 'we have had *no* experience of such a phenomenon as a professor of Music, & an artist, that was a man of letters, & a good writer' (132–133).

7 Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 79. On the status of music teachers (including Burney) see Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 56–61.

Yet in promoting his work, Burney faced a quintessentially liberal predicament: how to appeal to the general public – or, at the very least, to the largest possible audience of music lovers (as opposed to music professionals) – even as he established himself as an authoritative voice whose views acquired a privileged status. In the words of Walter Benjamin – words that Adorno would recall when introducing the music critic's social aporia – 'the public must always be proved wrong, and yet it must always feel represented by the critic'.[8] This is Burney's condition, the condition of the modern critic, trapped between universal and particular: the critical voice calls for distinction yet it must appeal to everyone. Recent scholarship has emphasized the myriad continuities between aesthetic and ethical–political questions in the eighteenth century – the ways in which the construction of aesthetic judgment in the Enlightenment dramatized the ethical dilemmas arising from modern accounts of the self.[9] Burney's vindication of music's value to the public, then, was an unavoidably political project – one that had been pursued by many thinkers in the British intellectual tradition: Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Burke, Hume, Adam Smith and others.[10]

Three factors have marginalized Burney's contribution to the history of aesthetics, however – two of which seem to follow from the practicality of his concerns. First, Burney's more philosophically inclined writings are fragmented and episodic in nature, the consequence of his preoccupation with his primary task, the general music history. Nevertheless, in this article I will seek to reconstruct his surviving reflections on the value of music, typically found in prefatory material such as dedications and introductions. My purpose is not to forge a cohesive discourse out of Burney's passing thoughts; indeed, in his accounts of his travels through Europe, Burney's method of inquiry was bound to yield intellectual transformations brought about by new encounters.[11] Even Burney's 'Essay on Musical Criticism' (1789) – his most articulate statement about the purpose and nature of his profession – remains elusive in its conclusions. In her recent commentary on this text, Maria Semi finds Burney's discourse 'tortuous', if not altogether self-contradictory.[12] She notes with frustration that 'in specifying the ingredients of musical composition he muddles compositive elements and aesthetic criteria', making it virtually impossible for a present-day historian of aesthetics safely to attribute to Burney any of the positions supposedly held by his British philosophical contemporaries: that pleasure in music originates in the faculty of sympathy, an inner sense of harmony, some correspondence of music with the mind or the trace of natural language in musical expression.[13]

Second, Burney made few explicit references to contemporary essayists when writing about such questions (Avison and Montesquieu are exceptions). It would not be impossible to read the list of compositional 'ingredients' that Burney proffers in his 'Essay on Musical Criticism' ('melody, harmony, modulation, invention, grandeur, fire, pathos, taste, grace, and expression'[14]) as a recognition of what Adam Smith saw as 'the power of music to excite and vary the different moods and dispositions of the mind'.[15] But Burney

8 Quoted in Theodor W. Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, trans. E. B. Ashton (New York: Seabury, 1976), 149. It is the thirteenth of Walter Benjamin's 'The Critique's Technique in Thirteen Theses' in his 1928 essay 'One-Way Street', *One-Way Street and Other Writings*, trans. J. A. Underwood (London: Penguin, 2009), 36.

9 See in particular Howard Caygill, *Art of Judgement* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); Terry Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990); and Luc Ferry, *Homo aestheticus: l'invention du goût à l'âge démocratique* (Paris: Grasset, 1990).

10 For a survey of British aesthetic philosophy, especially in its relation to musical thought, see Maria Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, trans. Timothy Keates (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2012).

11 These accounts may be found in *Dr. Burney's Musical Tours in Europe*, ed. Percy A. Scholes (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 2 volumes.

12 Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind*, 142.

13 Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind*, 143.

14 Burney, *General History of Music*, volume 3, v.

15 Adam Smith, *Of the Nature of That Imitation Which Takes Place in What Are Called the Imitative Arts* [1795], part II, paragraph 24, in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects*, ed. W. P. D. Whightman and J. C. Bryce (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 1982). See also Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind*, 100. According to Smith, music does not refer to anything

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gave no indication that he had any specific theory in mind. This is not to say that Burney had no knowledge, whether direct or secondary, of aesthetic debates. On the contrary, he conversed with prominent figures of his time, including David Hume, James Harris, Edmund Burke and Samuel Johnson, among others.[16] The sale catalogue of his 'miscellaneous library', with its 2,092 lots, demonstrates a keen interest in contemporary aesthetics and politics (as well as the classics, history, geography, astronomy, gardening, grammar and foreign languages).[17] He also maintained an extensive correspondence with Thomas Twining, who, in 1789, published an annotated translation of Aristotle's writings on aesthetics, prefaced with two essays on the concept of imitation.[18] In his text, Twining designates Burney as a 'superior judge and master of the art'; Johnson, too, reportedly acknowledged Burney's superior understanding of the 'Philosophy of Music'.[19]

Third, Burney saw the competence of the music critic not only as distinct from the public, but also as opposed to 'men of wit of all countries'. Such men, he claimed,

> being accustomed to admiration and reverence in speaking upon subjects within their competence, forget, or hope the world forgets, that a good poet, painter, physician, or philosopher, is no more likely to be a good musician without study, practice, and good ears, than another man.[20]

Fontenelle's 'famous question' ('Sonate, que [me] veux-tu?') illustrates, in Burney's mind, such misguided, if not deceitful discourse. In disqualifying the sophistic pronouncements of 'men of wit', Burney implicitly objects to a general faculty of aesthetic judgment, as conceived, for example, by Jean-Baptiste Du Bos: not all listeners have 'ears capable of vibrating to the sweetness of well-modulated sounds'.[21] The perception of

outside itself, and therefore cannot be an imitative art except when it is made to resemble human voices and natural sounds. This does not mean that music is nothing but an abstract form. Music affects us, and as such, elicits 'an original, and not a sympathetic feeling': 'it becomes itself a gay, a sedate, or a melancholy object'; or, more precisely, 'it is our own gaiety, sedateness, or melancholy'. A piece with good melody will necessarily have expression. For this reason, Smith thought that expression, an intrinsic quality of instrumental music, could not logically constitute a separate criterion of its merit; he criticized Charles Avison on this account, and might have criticized Burney on the same account.

16 For Hume and Harris see Burney's *Letters*, 46 and 120–121. Adam Smith presented his ideas on imitative arts at a meeting of the Literary Club (to which Burney belonged, with Johnson, Reynolds and Boswell) in the summer of 1782; see Neil de Marchi, 'Smith on Ingenuity, Pleasure and the Imitative Arts', in *The Cambridge Companion to Adam Smith*, ed. Knud Haakonssen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 136. If Burney was away, he would most likely have heard reports.

17 *A Catalogue of the Miscellaneous Library of the Late Charles Burney, Doctor of Music, and Fellow of the Royal Society: Removed from his Apartments in Chelsea College, Which Will be Sold by Auction, by Leigh and Sotheby, Booksellers, at their House, no. 145, Strand, Opposite Catherine Street, on Thursday, the 9th of June, 1814, and Eight Following Days (Sundays Excepted), at 12 o'Clock* (London, 1814). Burney owned works by Batteux, Beattie, Burke, Du Bos, Hobbes, Hutcheson, Locke, Machiavelli, Mandeville, Montesquieu, Necker, Rousseau, Smith, Voltaire and Young; reports and publications on the French Revolution; the initial issues of the *Anti-Jacobin Review* (July 1798–April 1801); and translations or editions of the classics (Plato, Aristotle, Polybius and Cicero, among others).

18 Twining began his work in 1778 (Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 248); see Thomas Twining, *Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry, Translated: With Notes on the Translation, and on the Original; and Two Dissertations, on Poetical, and Musical, Imitation* (London, 1789; reprinted New York: Garland, 1971). For a commentary see James Malek, 'Thomas Twining's Analysis of Poetry and Music as Imitative Arts', *Modern Philology* 68/3 (1971), 260–268; and Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind*, 89–93.

19 Twining, *Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry*, 49–50, note s. Johnson's comment is reported in Miss Reynolds's *Recollections of Dr. Johnson*, quoted in K. C. Balderston, 'Dr. Johnson and Burney's *History of Music*', *Proceedings of the Modern Language Association* 49/3 (1934), 967.

20 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', x.

21 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', x. Twining, who also served as Burney's proofreader, reproduces this very argument in *Aristotle's Treatise on Poetry*, 49–50, note s, in his second dissertation on 'the different sense of the word, imitative, as applied to music by the Antients, and by the Moderns'. In his *Réflections critiques sur la poésie et*

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music, Burney argues, calls for practice and learning. This valorization of praxis engages the very heart of aesthetics as a discourse of the body, of how knowledge is made by the senses.[22] In Burney's analysis, it turns out that Fontenelle simply cannot hear the sonata's answer to his query, which is plain enough to a 'real lover and judge of Music':

> I would have you listen with attention and delight to the ingenuity of the composition, the neatness of the execution, sweetness of the melody, and the richness of the harmony, as well as to the charms of refined tones, lengthened and polished into passion.[23]

Despite his critical attitude toward mere dilettantism, Burney took a liberal stance on music's contribution to the 'public good' – by which one should understand more than a generous disposition toward others. Indeed, his brand of liberalism conceptually echoes the formal establishment of individual rights and collective duties in the political sphere, dividing everyday life into myriad distinct spheres and separating private from public, personal opinions from universal judgments and emotion from reason.[24] Consent, to Burney's mind, was the common basis of both music and politics – a principle apparent in his conception of musical expression, and in the correlation, noted in his travel journals, between musical styles and political regimes. In music, as in politics, consent did not mean democratic ideals, of course; in fact, musical excellence, in Burney's view, seems to have required musicians' voluntary submission to a leader's will, in combination with the ample resources of court culture. Rather, music's contribution to the public good lay, he believed, in its universality as an 'innocent luxury' – a leisure pursuit without any risk of moral depravation. Moreover, the universal occupations of musical performance and listening allow for individual distinctions to emerge: not all enjoy music in the same manner, with the same refinement.

But these distinctions, which the 'Essay on Musical Criticism' recasts as the individual's right to personal feelings, left Burney with a problem. For who can now legitimately speak for the public? Or, to put it another way, who can set forth the 'common sense' of which all might approve? This is, Burney asserted, the role of professional music criticism – an idea that is at best weak, at worst authoritarian. Burney's misfortune, I wish to argue, is that he established music's universal significance on principles that made private enjoyment accessible to virtually everyone, yet limited the public pursuit of music to but a few. Still – as Adorno noted of the modern music critic – to acknowledge this limitation is not to condemn altogether the intent behind it: Burney's intellectual trajectory is an invitation to take up his liberal project once again.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES AS SYMBOLS AND ENACTMENTS OF POLITICAL REGIMES

In Burney's writings musical expression is the consequence of an accord between musical form, social situation and inner feeling: the situation in which music occurs becomes a criterion by which to assess the

la peinture (1719) Du Bos establishes the spectator's feeling – that is to say, the feeling that the work of art generally impresses on the spectator – as the only legitimate instance of aesthetic judgment. Just as one tastes a dish and knows whether the dish tastes good or bad, one 'tastes' a work of art and knows its value. See Luc Ferry, *Homo aestheticus*, 63–66, and Agnès Lontrade, *Le plaisir esthétique: naissance d'une notion* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2004), 55–67.

22 This is the starting-point for Terry Eagleton's *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*. 'Aesthetics', he writes, 'is born as a discourse of the body' (13). Eagleton's point of departure is Baumgarten's *Aesthetica*, which, he claims, opens up the 'terrain of sensation' to the 'colonization of reason' (15). Luc Ferry adds to Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* Lambert's *Phänomologia* to define a historical turning-point whereby the sensible acquires its autonomy; see *Homo aestheticus*, 90–110.

23 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', xi.

24 On liberalism as an art of separation see Pierre Manent, *Histoire intellectuelle du libéralisme* (Paris: Hachette, 1997), and Michael Walzer, 'Liberalism and the Art of Separation', *Political Theory* 12/3 (1984), 315–330.

quality of a composition. Rousseau paid particular attention to the fictional situation of dramatic music, especially the equation of musical form with the inner life of the character. His study of Armide's monologue 'Enfin, il est en ma puissance' in the *Lettre sur la musique française* advocates tonal contrast and instability in setting a discourse of passion and interrogation.[25] Similarly, Charles Avison, commended by Burney as 'the first, and almost the only writer' to attempt music criticism in England, demanded that music 'give aid to sense [that is, meaning]'; for this reason, Avison criticized cyclical forms in dramatic music (such as da capo arias or structures using ritornellos), since they involved repeating musical segments in whole or part, and were thus contrary to the succession and variety of human passions.[26]

If this definition of musical expression had normative implications for composition, it also provided a framework for understanding performers' labour. For example, in his accounts of his travels, Burney reported on 'the famous old Antonio Vandini, on the violoncello, who, the Italians say, plays and expresses *a parlare*, that is, in such a manner as to make his instrument *speak*'.[27] Instrumental music involved communication, and even a kind of acting. Burney famously described how, seated at the clavichord, Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach could 'absolutely contriv[e] to produce … a cry of sorrow and complaint … he grew so animated and possessed, that he not only played, but looked like one inspired'.[28] Burney's appreciation implicitly posited an agreement between performer and listener – a shared understanding of musical performance as fictionally situated, or, in other words, a self-contained world in which expression, from an almost primal to an 'inspired' utterance, transcended the everyday subject of enunciation.[29] If this description might be seen to confirm Burney's debt to Rousseau's theory of musical expression, its appreciation of theatricality and even illusion in musical performance complicates matters: that Burney acknowledged Bach's capacity to *look like* someone beside himself – to adopt the (outward) signs of passion – seems to celebrate the art of appearance in a way that contradicts Rousseau's avowed goal of liberating everyone from disguise.[30]

In the end, Burney's and Rousseau's disagreement about art betrays differing political conceptions of music.[31] Burney's contractual idea of musical performance, with its emphasis on convention, had clear

25 Rousseau, *Œuvres complètes*, volume 5, 322–328.

26 Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression* (London: Printed for C. Davis, 1752), 71–74.

27 Charles Burney, *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* (London: Printed for T. Becket and Co., 1771), 135–136.

28 Charles Burney, *The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands and United Provinces: Or, the Journal of a Tour through those Countries, Undertaken to Collect Materials for a General History of Music* (London: Printed for T. Becket, J. Robson and G. Robinson, 1775), volume 2, 270.

29 Richard Kramer approaches the question of the performer as actor from the perspective of Diderot's writings on the theatre in 'Diderot's *Paradoxe* and C. P. E. Bach's *Empfindungen*', in *C. P. E. Bach Studies*, ed. Annette Richards (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6–24.

30 Rousseau's critique of social appearances and theatrical representation appears in the *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (especially the opening of the first part) and the *Lettre à D'Alembert*.

31 A detailed discussion of Rousseau's political philosophy of music exceeds the scope of this article, but has been the object of increasing attention. See in particular Robert Wokler, *Social Thought of J. J. Rousseau* (New York: Garland, 1987); Michael O'Dea, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Music, Illusion and Desire* (New York: St Martin's, 1995); John T. Scott, 'Rousseau and the Melodious Language of Freedom', *Journal of Politics* 59/3 (1997), 803–829, and 'The Harmony between Rousseau's Musical Theory and His Philosophy', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59/2 (1998), 287–308; Tracy B. Strong, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: The Politics of the Ordinary* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 59–64; Julia Simon, 'Singing Democracy: Music and Politics in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65/3 (2004), 433–454, and 'Rousseau and Aesthetic Modernity: Music's Power of Redemption', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 2/1 (2005), 41–56; Jacqueline Waeber, 'Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "unité de mélodie"', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 62/1 (2009), 79–143; and Tracy B. Strong, 'Rousseau: nature, langage, politique', in *L'institution musicale*, ed. Jean-Michel Bardez and others (Sampzon: Delatour, 2010), 75–87.

political implications, which emerged, for example, when he discussed the 'pillaging' of Italian opera buffa by French composers.[32] The imitation of Italian music by the French offered, Burney wrote,

> an irrefragable proof of the superiority of that melody which is become the common musical language of all Europe: not like the French tongue, by conquest, or policy, but received every where, by the common consent of all who have ears susceptible of pleasure from sound, and who give way to their own feelings.[33]

Music thus became for Burney a symptom of political regimes – in this case, of the state's foundation in the liberal principle of consent or illiberal modes of domination.[34] Burney's conclusions about Frederick the Great, the 'rigid disciplinarian' who (so he claimed) ruled through terror over music in Berlin, echoed his criticism of French absolutist abuses.[35] 'Music', Burney concluded of his Berlin visit,

> is truly stationary in this country, his majesty allowing no more liberty in that, than he does in civil matters of government: not contented with being sole monarch of the lives, fortunes, and business of his subjects, he even prescribes rules to their most innocent pleasures.[36]

Arriving in the free city state of commercial Hamburg, by contrast, Burney was able to celebrate private freedom – the freedom to circulate in a city 'crowded with people who seem occupied with their own concerns'.[37] Indeed, the social life there pleased Burney as much as the music. At the house of the mathematics professor and musical patron Johann Georg Büsch, Burney naively recalled '[a most agreeable evening that] was productive of no musical event, or new discovery; for I had long been convinced, that there is no harmony more enchanting, than that arising from the coincidence of hearts, and accord of sentiments in society'.[38] In the context of this Hamburg conviviality, C. P. E. Bach, formerly in the employment of the Prussian king, became the exemplary figure of a liberal, newly liberated, musician – yet one who reportedly exclaimed to Burney:

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32 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 53: 'all the present composers of French comic operas imitate the Italian style, and many of them pillage the *buffe* operas of Italy without the least scruple of conscience, though they afterwards set their names to the plunder, and pass it on the world as their own property'.

33 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 53–54.

34 On the resistance to musical change, with regard to serious French opera and to oratorios in England, see Burney, *Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 32. See also Burney, *General History of Music*, volume 4, 607: 'Music, during this period, seems to have been patronized in France with as much zeal as in Italy or Germany, though perhaps with less effect upon its cultivation. But the long and pertinacious attachment to the style of Lulli and his imitators in vocal compositions, the exclusion of those improvements which were making in the art in other parts of Europe, during the first fifty years of this century, have doubtless more impeded its progress, than want of genius in this active and lively people, or defects in their language, to which Rousseau and others have ascribed the imperfections of their Music.'

35 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 234–235 (on the king of Prussia disciplining his Italian troops): 'in the opera house, as in the field, his majesty is such a rigid disciplinarian, that if a mistake is made in a single movement or evolution, he immediately marks, and rebukes the offender; and if any of his Italian troops dare to deviate from strict discipline, by adding, altering, or diminishing a single passage in the parts they have to perform, an order is sent *de par le Roi*, for them to adhere strictly to the notes written by the composer, at their peril'.

36 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 235.

37 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 235–236: 'there is', he added, 'an air of chearfulness [sic], industry, plenty, and liberty, in the inhabitants of this place, seldom to be seen in other parts of Germany'.

38 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 248. The metaphor of social harmony is of course commonplace, and appears, for example, in Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression* (168) in an anonymous 'letter to the author on the music of the ancients': 'there is no *harmony* so charming as that of a well-ordered life, *moving* in *concert* with the sacred laws of virtue'. On its place in British aesthetic and social thought see Caygill *Art of Judgement*, 49–50 (on Shaftesbury) and 61–62 (on Hutcheson). On its earlier influence on political thought see James Daly, 'Cosmic Harmony and Political Thinking in Early Stuart England', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 69/7 (1979), 3–41.

> But adieu music! Now, he said, these are good people for society, and I enjoy more tranquillity and independence here, than at a court; after I was fifty I gave the thing up, and said let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die! And I am now reconciled to my situation; except indeed, when I meet with men of taste and discernment, who deserve better music than we can give them here.[39]

If Burney was concerned with individual liberty, he also expressed ambivalent feelings about social levelling. Burney's opinion on the distribution of authority in the orchestra, in particular, complicated his apologies for the freedom of civil society. In his mind, the martial structure of command provided a model for describing the best orchestral performances, typified by the orchestra at Mannheim – famously, an 'army of generals, equally fit to plan a battle, as to fight it'.[40] Burney described Gluck similarly as 'a great disciplinarian' whose 'troops', though endlessly drilled, submitted without protest, in a kind of silent plebiscite: 'there is a strong presumption, that when it is endured without murmur, by men not absolute slaves to their commander, they are convinced of its expediency.'[41] The parallel between Gluck the 'great' and Frederick the 'rigid' thus still highlighted the value of consent. But the representation of orchestral excellence as the product of military discipline highlighted the economic and symbolic resources necessary for professional musical performance. While opposing the Prussian king's monopoly on musical pleasures, Burney conceded that most cities lacked the means to support the arts adequately:

> The fine arts are children of affluence and luxury; in despotic governments they render power less insupportable, and diversion from thought is perhaps as necessary as from action. Whoever therefore seeks music in Germany should do it at the several courts, not in the free imperial cities, which are generally inhabited by poor industrious people, whose genius is chilled, and depressed by penury, who can bestow nothing on vain pomp and luxury, but think themselves happy in the possession of necessaries.[42]

In other words, Burney defended the superiority of Italian opera and galant music – both refinements of court culture – while praising a private life freed from the encroachment of despotism. This implicit accommodation of aesthetic self-determination within governmental despotism was hardly unusual: eighteenth-century thinkers from Voltaire to Kant entertained dreams of social progress shepherded by enlightened and benevolent despots.[43] With his suggestion that the fine arts attenuate the pain of subjugation, however, Burney perhaps comes closer to the contemporary Burkean conception of beauty as a 'social quality'.[44]

39 Burney reports C. P. E. Bach's discourse in direct speech in *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 2, 252.

40 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 93. On the army as a model for thinking about the orchestra in the eighteenth century see John Spitzer and Neal Zaslaw, *The Birth of the Orchestra: History of an Institution, 1650–1815* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 515–519.

41 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 344. Gluck, Burney reported, is 'a great disciplinarian, and as formidable as Handel used to be, when at the head of a band; but he assured me, that he never found his troops mutinous, though he, on no account, suffered them to leave any part of their business, till it was well done, and frequently obliged them to repeat some of his manoeuvres twenty or thirty times'.

42 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 118. For this reason, Burney determines to stay 'but a short time at Augsburg'.

43 In his depiction of Hamburg, his celebration of freedom and his condemnation of French and Prussian absolutism, Burney echoes a common topic of British liberal thought, beginning with the work of Shaftesbury. As the report of Burney's conversation with C. P. E. Bach indicates, however, civil freedom does not necessarily entail a progress in the arts, and Burney's endorsement of court patronage, if not political despotism, allows at best for a restricted scope of self-government. On the notion of freedom in eighteenth-century British thought see Michael Meehan, *Liberty and Poetics in Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1986).

44 Quoted in Eagleton, *The Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 52, from Burke's *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* (1756).

Later in the century, Burke was to argue that the French Revolution erred precisely because laws cannot be 'supported only by their own terrors' – by the sublime of power – but must also 'engage our affections': 'to make us love our country', Burke wrote, 'our country ought to be lovely'.[45] The fine arts, these 'children of affluence and luxury' in Burney's phrase, flourish precisely at the intersection between material freedom and voluntary servitude. They are the surplus product of a powerful subject who has nonetheless abjured any political power.

Or perhaps Burney simply tried to have his cake and eat it too – an accusation levelled at him by several of his contemporaries. Among them, John Bicknell ferociously attacked Burney and the implicitly monarchist politics of his appreciation of Italian opera in a satirical parody, *Musical Travels through England* (published under the pseudonym of the late Joel Collier). Commercially successful, the satire went through several editions (1774, 1775, 1776 and 1785), adding and varying material to include lengthy quotations from Burney – among them his disparaging view of music in imperial cities.[46] Bicknell called into question the pertinence of the information found in such travel literature, criticizing the personal vanity of a project that demanded such general attention, with the ultimate aim of social advancement.[47] Italic font, in Bicknell's parody, is used to signal the formulas that mar Burney's writing, such as his regular recourse to the near-meaningless phrase 'pretty things'; Bicknell reuses these formulas in unusual or odd contexts in order to highlight the banality and vagueness of Burney's discourse.[48]

In Wolverhampton, Joel Collier – Bicknell's fictional traveller, who Italianizes his name as *Coglioni* or *Collioni* (colloquial for testicles) – attends a public procession celebrating a newly elected representative; the people of Wolverhampton audibly live on the fringes of civilization with their out-of-tune violinist, their English horn and their 'fifteen performers on marrow bones and cleavers, all in blue aprons and blue night-caps'.[49] The account recalls Burney's report on ceremonial music in the mass during a religious festival in Augsburg, in which he heard 'the rude and barbarous flourish of drums and trumpets, at the elevation of the Host'.[50] But it is the hero's complete reliance on hearsay, and his incapacity to distinguish common from elevated music, that leads him into trouble: moved with enthusiasm during the procession in Wolverhampton, Collier bursts into song. With its mythological imagery and gallant language, the ode he sings pertains to courtly culture – and Collier already hears the banks of the Thames resounding with Italian airs. But instead of showing appreciation, the elected representative makes him the target of the crowd's ire:

45 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), 68. See Eagleton, *Ideology of the Aesthetic*, 52–61.

46 The passage is quoted in full in a footnote; see Joel Collier, *Musical Travels through England* (London: Printed for G. Kearsley, 1785), 100.

47 Vanessa Agnew studies Bicknell's opposition to Burney's exploration of music's power to affect society in *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 137–165.

48 See Collier, *Musical Travels through England*, 45: 'Tho' I know Dr. *Burney* treats all *Carillons* with sovereign contempt, I confess I was much pleased with these, and taking out my tablets, followed them, and prick'd down the tunes they played, which indeed were *full of pretty things.*' The phrase appears on two occasions in *The Present State of Music in France and Italy*: 'the music, which had pretty things in it' (80) and 'There were many ingenious pretty things in his performance' (226–227).

49 Collier, *Musical Travels through England*, 74.

50 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 99: 'a rude, and barbarous flourish of drums and trumpets, at the elevation of the host'. Bicknell quotes the phrase in a footnote; see *Musical Travels through England*, 99. For Collier's Italianized name see *Musical Travels through England*, 7; Collier is later surprised in bed with a barber's wife, and the jealous husband castrates him (117–119).

> Scarce had I arrived at the conclusion of my song, before, instead of admiration and applause which I had so well deserved, I was saluted with a general hiss; the representative himself … exclaimed with a terrible oath, 'This here man, gentlemen, is a ministerial tool, and all that he says is unconstitutional.'[51]

Burney's toadying to the authorities – he dedicated his *General History* to the queen (1776) and worked under the patronage of the king to produce the *Account of the Musical Performances in Commemoration of Handel* (1785) – clearly gave Bicknell grounds for this implied accusation.[52] But Collier (unlike Burney, perhaps) learns a certain discretion: in the city of Worcester, he finds himself once more in the midst of an election, and with learned wisdom, retreats. 'I fear', he notes, 'it is a serious truth, and my own experience has in some measure confirmed it, that the wild notes of liberty, and the quavering of *Italian* airs, can never be heard together in concert.'[53]

Bicknell's satire is demagogic in its dismissal of art music. The 'wild notes of liberty', one is led to surmise, are nothing but John Bull's 'roaring' to the sound of harsh trumpets, or some such modern rendition of the 'arts of *ancient Rome*'. In a footnote to his dedication, Collier commends England's recent attempts to sing, 'notwithstanding … that an ingenious gentleman, the author of *The Musical Lady* [George Colman], has said, "*John Bull* was made to *roar*, and not to *sing*"'.[54] But the sentiment was evidently ironic: England's determination to sing stands for its misguided repudiation of republican values (opposed to the imperial, decadent and 'modern' Rome).[55] George Colman's farce ridicules a woman's infatuation with Italian opera. She ultimately bows to the authority of the young Englishman she has just married, however, and is compelled to mend her ways. Bicknell's satire borrows heavily from the play, from the mannered Italianization of names to the marrowbones and cleavers whose raw sounds sometimes ornamented public and private celebrations in England. In this play, as in Bicknell's satire, coarseness – reversing the refinement of Italian opera and its cosmopolitan connoisseurs – becomes the aesthetic manifestation of England's native freedom.

Against this ideological background, Burney's correlation of musical excellence with economic surplus, individual divertissement and political disempowerment were clearly distinct from populist and republican theories of music. Indeed, Burney's equation of music with luxury markedly differentiated his views from Rousseau's. So far as we can tell, the two men never exchanged ideas on this subject: Burney seems only to have solicited Rousseau's philological and musicological competence, and Rousseau, in his one letter to Burney (dating from 1776 to 1777), wrote solely about technical and music-historical issues. But Burney evidently did not agree with Rousseau's diagnosis of modern corruption and his attendant calls for political reform. In Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* and his *Essai sur l'origine des langues*, the artificiality of beauty and the complexity of the arts are symptoms of degeneration and

51 Collier, *Musical Travels through England*, 80.

52 On Burney's complex relation to the court, fraught with a desire for social ascension and economic security on the one hand, and a compulsion to maintain scholarly integrity on the other, see Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 292–346.

53 Collier, *Musical Travels through England*, 99–100.

54 Collier, *Musical Travels through England*, xi: 'I am entirely of my Cousin's opinion in this matter, notwithstanding I know that an ingenious gentleman, the author of "The Musical Lady", has said, "*John Bull* was made to *roar*, and not to *sing*". But it should be considered, that it is but of late days that John Bull has attempted to sing; that England has hitherto preferred the harsh trumpet to the soft violin; and that she still cultivates, as well in America as in Europe, the arts of *ancient*, more than of *modern* Rome'. The quoted text does not appear in printed versions of *The Musical Lady*, but recalls certain dialogues; see [George Colman,] *The Musical Lady, a Farce, as it is Acted at the Theatre Royal in Drury-Lane* (London: Printed for T. Becket and P. S. Dehondt, 1762), 16–17, 32 and 36–37.

55 This patriotic and moralist rejection of Italian opera has a long history and evokes the writings of John Dennis at the beginning of the century. See Thomas McGeary, 'Opera and British Nationalism, 1700–1711', *Revue LISA/LISA e-journal* 4/2 (2006) <http://lisa.revues.org/2067> (15 July 2012). On the cultural politics of opera in eighteenth-century 'Britain' see Suzanne Aspden, 'Ballads and Britons: Imagined Community and the Continuity of "English" Opera', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 122/1 (1997), 24–51.

alienation, not of progress.[56] Burney turned to other authorities to establish the political significance and public utility of music.

'INNOCENT PLEASURE', 'INNOCENT LUXURY'[57]

In the end, then, Burney decided that cultivating music, although inherent to humanity, was less a necessity than an occupation for times of leisure: one wants music not to survive, but to live well. Not everyone agreed. A political tract published in London in 1793 (which Burney may have possessed) saw real utility in the 'amusement, consolation and pleasure' that music provided 'in the hours of fatigue or leisure'.[58] The notion that music could 'impede the vicious and promote the virtuous sentiments', as the essay put it, was, on the surface, consistent with Burney's ideas, but the argument took a different turn. Since the purpose of the essay was to propose social reforms by considering the general interest as opposed to the individuating principles of 'liberty, property, security' – foundational ideas that supposedly tormented men with the 'desire of acquisition' and 'luxury'[59] – music performed the vital task of 'teaching man to be happy': far from being an optional embellishment of human needs, it belonged among those 'productions' of the 'human faculties' which each member of the 'social compact' has an equal right to share in.[60] From this perspective, music was a public activity – not merely a private pursuit.

While Burney did not explicitly refer to contemporary disputes about luxury, his discussion of music at the intersection of moral conduct and political economy reads as an important addendum to this debate.[61] Eighteenth-century thought on luxury had taken a polemical turn in 1714 with the publication of *The Fable of the Bees; or, Private Vices, Publick Benefits*, in which Bernard Mandeville notoriously argued that the pursuit of self-interest produced the comfort, wealth and power of modern commercial nations. This idea ran counter to classical censures of luxury as a moral vice and a sign of broad-based social decadence – indictments that were famously to inform Edward Gibbon's account of the decline of the Roman Empire, as well as the demagogic dismissal of Italian opera by the pseudonymous Collier. (Burney owned in his library representative works of the traditional attack on luxury, including John Brown's *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times*.[62]) The idea of 'innocent luxury' thus amounted to a moral reformulation of

56 On the correlation between luxury, the refinement of the arts and the moral decadence of modern societies, especially in Rousseau's early work, see James F. Hamilton, 'A Theory of Art in Rousseau's First Discourse', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 94 (1972), 73–87; R. Galliani, 'Le débat sur le luxe: Voltaire ou Rousseau?', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 161 (1976), 205–217; and Wokler, *Social Thought*, 374–434.

57 The phrase 'innocent pleasure' appears in Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 54 (see quotation below), but it is also a topic for the preface to the *Present State of Music in France and Italy* and the dedication of the *General History of Music* to the queen (where music is said to bring pleasure and innocence together). 'Innocent luxury' appears in Burney's definition of music in the preface to the *General of History Music*, as quoted above.

58 *An Essay on Civil Government, or Society Restored, by Means of I. A Preface of Peace, II. A Reform in Mataphysics* [sic], *and III. A Political Code and Constitution, Adapted to the True Nature of Man, Translated from the Italian MS. of A. D. R. S. with Notes, by the Editors* (London, 1793), 24–25. The catalogue of Burney's music library records an 'Essay on Civil Government' dated 1793 (lot 1005) that might be the same work; see *Catalogue of the Music Library of Charles Burney, sold in London, 8 August 1814*, ed. A Hyatt King (Amsterdam: Frits Knuf, 1973), 40. I thank an anonymous reader for bringing this text to my attention.

59 *An Essay on Civil Government*, 7–10.

60 *An Essay on Civil Government*, 24–25.

61 For a history of this debate see John Sekora, *Luxury: The Concept in Western Thought, Eden to Smollett* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977); Christopher J. Berry, *The Idea of Luxury: A Conceptual and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Jeremy Jennings, 'The Debate about Luxury in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century French Political Thought', *Journal of the History of Ideas* 68/1 (2007), 79–105.

62 See the *Catalogue of the Miscellaneous Library*, lot 272. On John Brown's two-volume diatribe against the 'Spirit of Commerce' see Sekora, *Luxury*, 93–95.

Mandeville's scandalous observation that the pursuit of the superfluous proved useful to the public. For this purpose, Hume, in his widely read essay 'Of Refinement in the Arts' (1752), distinguished between 'innocent' and 'vicious' luxury:

> as innocent luxury, or a refinement in the arts and conveniences of life, is advantageous to the public; so wherever luxury ceases to be innocent, it also ceases to be beneficial; and when carried a degree farther, begins to be a quality pernicious, though, perhaps, not the most pernicious, to political society … A gratification is only vicious, when it engrosses all a man's expense, and leaves no ability for such acts of duty and generosity as are required by his situation and fortune.[63]

Indeed, in Hume's mind, one could hardly call 'luxuries' those 'indulgences … pursued at the expense of some virtue, as liberality or charity'; these were, properly speaking, 'follies'.[64] Rather, luxury was, according to Hume, only what procures gratification even as one fulfils one's obligations (toward oneself, one's kin and others). Hume's argument thus had two targets: against the censors of luxury, Hume highlighted the economic benefits and civilizing effects of luxury; against the 'libertines', Hume defended the moral primacy of duty and generosity, and the boundaries it ought to set on gratification.[65]

The public value of music as luxury, then, was almost a matter of calculation, a question of political economy. The balance tipped in the wrong direction when the public utility of luxury became nil or negative; musical spending should entail neither deficits nor bankruptcies. Burney likened the Duke of Württemberg to Nero for wasting the resources of his country in both musical and military establishments (note that both, even in this critique, are lumped together as the prerogatives of a sovereign prince):

> It is, perhaps, upon such occasions as these, that music becomes a vice, and hurtful to society; for that nation, of which half the subjects are stage-players, fiddlers, and soldiers, and the other half beggars, seems to be but ill governed.[66]

It was from this perspective that Burney endeavoured to justify the institution, in 1774, of a public music school in the Foundling Hospital in London, as the corrective to a deficit on the musical balance sheet. Indeed, he proposed that this establishment would substitute the exploitation of domestic resources (such as voices and instructors) for the importation of foreign musicians and the attendant transfer of wealth abroad – this for the 'benefit' and 'honour' of the nation.[67] Initially successful, Burney's proposal was ultimately rejected by the School's Court of Governors and Guardians 'on the grounds that it was "not warranted" by the Act of Parliament which had established the Foundling Hospital'.[68]

The moral and political propriety of musical pleasure constituted one of Burney's most continuous lines of thought from the 1770s to the 1790s. Burney's Preface to *The Present State of Music in France and Italy* (1771) takes up the matter with a misquotation from Montesquieu's *De l'esprit des lois* (book 4, chapter 8):

> in [music's] defence, Montesquieu has said that 'it is the only one of all the arts which does not corrupt the mind.'

63 David Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', in *Selected Essays*, ed. Stephen Copley and Andrew Edgar (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 175–176. The essay was first published in 1752 under the title 'Of Luxury', which was changed in 1760 to 'Of Refinement in the Arts'. For a history of Hume's thought on luxury see Andrew S. Cunningham, 'David Hume's Account of Luxury', *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 27/3 (2005), 231–250.

64 Hume, 'Of Refinement in the Arts', 167.

65 See Cunningham, 'David Hume's Account of Luxury', 237, 242.

66 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, 100–106.

67 See Jamie Croy Kassler, 'Burney's Sketch of a Plan for a Public Music-School (1774)', *The Musical Quarterly* 58/2 (1972), 210–234 (229 for the quotation), and Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 136–144, which includes a discussion of Burney's perception of professional excellence in music as a sign of national greatness.

68 Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 152–153.

Charles Avison's translation of the same sentence in the Preface to his *Essay on Musical Expression* reads slightly differently:

> But some will ask, why should Music be pitched upon as preferable to any other entertainment? It is because of all sensible pleasures there is none that less corrupts the soul.[69]

Burney transformed the negative turn of Montesquieu's phrase into a positive one (*none* versus *the only one*) and modified the modalization of the verb *corrupt* (from *less* to *does not*). The misquotation – whether intended or accidental – effectively salvaged music from any association with moral disorder. It made a more forceful case for the benefit of occupying leisure time with music, and promoted music from the low rank that some of the foundational thinkers of British liberalism, such as Locke, had assigned it.[70] In the strong words of Burney's dedication to the queen in his *General History of Music*,

> Pleasure and innocence ought never to be separated; yet we seldom find them otherwise than at variance, except when Music brings them together.[71]

In fact, Charles Avison had already used a strategy of selective quotation for the same purpose. While he translated most of Montesquieu's examination of music in *De l'esprit des lois*, he omitted the first paragraph and the title of this short chapter: 'Explanation of a paradox of the Ancients in respect to manners'. The truncated text reads as a reasonable defence of music's social utility: in martial societies such as those of ancient Greece (according to Montesquieu), music's power to generate passions could successfully counterbalance 'fierceness, anger, and cruelty' with 'a sense of pity, lenity, tenderness, and love'. If Burney had checked the quotation not only against Avison's but also Montesquieu's text, however, he probably realized the idiosyncrasy of his translation. Montesquieu attributed the importance of music in ancient polities to particular social circumstances rather than to political principles. As the opaque title of the chapter of *De l'esprit des lois* indicates, Montesquieu saw the place of musical institutions in Hellenic constitutions as a curiosity in need of explanation rather than vindication. In his first paragraph, he consistently distances himself (and, implicitly, the Moderns) from 'all the Ancients'. In the end, he legitimizes government of and by music only in 'particular circumstances', and its utility for the present remains determined by the legislator's diagnosis of contemporary mores.

But Burney, in his 1771 Preface, sought to make a point about the present as well as the past. Against a conception of music as 'a frivolous and enervating luxury', Burney wrote in defence of music's usefulness to humanity in all the main domains of social existence, from the church to the state ('military discipline'), from public to private spheres (the theatre and the family) and, finally, in times of labour as of leisure:

69 Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, book IV, chapter 8: 'Mais, dira-t-on, pourquoi choisir la musique par préférence? C'est que, de tous les plaisirs des sens, il n'y en a aucun qui corrompe moins l'âme', translated by Avison, *Essay on Musical Expression*, 17, misquoted in *Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 3. Burney owned a 1749 (Geneva) edition of the French text (*Catalogue of the Miscellaneous Library*, lot 1210) and a 1752 English translation 'by Mr. [Thomas] Nugent' (lot 1218). Avison's translation conforms to Nugent's for this sentence. It is impossible to know when Burney purchased these books, whether he was writing from memory and inadvertently altered the text, or whether his correction of certain words was deliberate. But the *effet de sens* produced by this textual discordance remains, independent of its author's conscious intentions.

70 Most famously, John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (London, 1693), section 197: 'it wastes so much of a young Man's time to gain but a moderate Skill in it; and engages often in such odd Company, that many think it much better spared: And I have amongst Men of Parts and Business, so seldom heard any one commended, or esteemed for having an Excellency in *Musick*, that amongst all those things, that ever came into the List of Accomplishments, I think I may give it the last place.'

71 Charles Burney, 'To the Queen', in *General History of Music*, volume 1, iv.

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> [music] alleviates labour and mitigates pain; and is still a greater blessing to humanity, when it keeps us out of mischief, or blunts the edge of care.[72]

Burney also speaks of music's economic and philanthropic purpose – as a vehicle for raising money for the poor and orphaned, for softening the 'pangs of childbirth', or quite simply for making a living. What is unique about this disjointed catalogue of music's 'humane and important purposes' is its theoretical frame. Burney sought to establish music not as luxury, but as a multifarious necessity:

> Music has indeed ever been the delight of accomplished princes, and the most elegant amusement of polite courts: but at present it is so combined with things sacred and important, as well as with our pleasures, that mankind seems wholly unable to subsist without it.[73]

A synoptic reading of Burney's prefatory and dedicatory gestures suggests the uniqueness of this Preface in his work. Burney never returned to the subject of music's necessity for human subsistence in the openings of later works. The 1773 Preface to the second travel book struck a more personal, autobiographical tone: 'music has, through life, been the favourite object of my pursuit'.[74] Only in passing did Burney mention that he was 'unwilling to allow the knowledge of a science which diffuses so much blameless pleasure, through a circle of such vast extent, to be of small importance' – and left the matter there.[75]

When Burney returned to the issue of musical pleasure at the start of his two next publications, he theorized music exclusively as a luxury. Consider the dedication to the queen and the Preface to the *General History of Music* (1776) and the dedication to the king in the *Account of the Musical Performances in Commemoration to Handel* (1785), both of which were reviewed and perhaps even partly written by Samuel Johnson.[76] These dedications represent musical pleasure as the union of contraries – of 'science' and nature, of 'corporal with intellectual pleasure', of sense and reason.[77] Music is simultaneously 'a passion implanted in human nature' and the product of 'rational nature', which develops wherever leisure succeeds 'the restless tyranny of painful want'.[78] It is a universal delight used 'upon occasions the most opposite' – religion and theatre, funerals and weddings, solemnity and mirth – but also an aristocratic and moral pursuit of refinement and civilization:

> Music, an art of which the rudiments accompany the commencements, and the refinements adorn the completion of civility, in which the inhabitants of the earth seek their first refuge from evil, and, perhaps, may find at last the most elegant of their pleasures.[79]

The king and queen themselves subsequently become the (characteristically gendered) symbols of music as a rational and moral pursuit, the king representing science; the queen, virtue.[80] The dedication to the king

72 Burney, *Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 6.

73 Burney, *Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 5.

74 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, iii.

75 Burney, *Present State of Music in Germany*, volume 1, vi.

76 Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 168 and 285.

77 Charles Burney, 'To the Queen', iii–v; and 'To the King', in *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, and the Pantheon, May 26th, 27th, 29th, and June the 3rd, and 5th, 1784, in Commemoration of Handel* (London: Printed for the benefit of the Musical Fund, 1785), no page number.

78 The first quotation appears in the dedication to the queen, the two others in the dedication to the king.

79 'To the King', no page number.

80 The relation between monarchy and the common good in Burney's thought, then, is more complex than William Weber suggests in his study of the ideology of ancient music; see *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 219. Burney's borrowings of republican ideas hardly make him a political disciple of Rousseau, as Mary Wollstonecraft aptly perceived (see below). In a letter to Mrs. Waddington (12 July 1805), Burney also extended his praise to the Prince of Wales: 'He is an excellent critic; has an enlarged taste admiring whatever is good in its kind, of whatever age or country the composers or performers may be; without being however insensible to the superior genius and learning necessary to some kind of music more than others'; quoted in Kerry S. Grant, *Dr Burney as Critic and Historian of Music* (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1983), 45.

praises him as 'a judge of music in whom all requisites concur, who hears [artists] not merely with instinctive emotion, but with rational approbation', while the queen, to whom musical recreations provide but another fold in the cloth of purity and dignity of which her life is made, receives Burney's wish in the guise of a courtier's prayer:

> May it long amuse your leisure, not as a relief from evil, but as an augmentation of good; not as a diversion from care, but as a variation of felicity.[81]

In sum, Burney might be said to radicalize music as the epitome of 'innocent luxury'. Insofar as one could afford to enjoy music without hindering the fulfilment of one's duties – or insofar as one was in a position to pursue pleasure without detriment to oneself and others – music, properly understood and practised, could keep one 'in perpetual occupation' (to borrow Hume's phrase), which is to say that it kept one both free from the pain of labour and protected from 'sloth and idleness'; unproductive and unnecessary, music, in this condition, offered no other reward but that of the 'occupation itself'.[82]

LIBERALISM'S MUSICAL PROBLEM: UNIVERSALITY, FREEDOM AND AUTHORITY

The theory Burney sketched in the opening pages of his *General History of Music* – that music was a universal luxury uniting pleasure and innocence, from its primitive beginnings to its utmost refinement – may have provided a solution to the issue of music's social role, but it left Burney with another, more pressing difficulty. Even as the 'innocent luxury' of music-making provided an elegant demonstration of the natural identity of all human beings, it also attested to the inequalities among them. While Burney upheld a vision of music's universality, assuming that musical experiences are, on some level, the same for everyone, he also sought to account for the distinctions – the conflicts of taste and judgment – that remained. Pleasure in music, according to Burney the observer of human nature, was universal. Yet Burney the professional critic, in seeking to judge and classify, could only establish his authority by recourse to normative principles: common rules of aesthetic and social discrimination. The 'dilemma of liberalism', to borrow Richard Shusterman's phrase, comes about in the effort to reconcile these two sources of the collective self – pleasure and norm – so that a normative principle of aesthetic authority appears to be the true expression of the individual rather than a set of rigid and impersonal laws external to it; the problem, to quote Shusterman, 'is how to establish or legitimate an authoritative standard for consensus beyond the individual, which will not be seen as an unjustified imposition on his freedom as subject'.[83] Burney's problem, then, was nothing less than that of liberalism itself. One solution, offered by Hume in 'Of the Standard of Taste', is to agree that, for a variety of reasons (education and social circumstances, among others), only a certain category of people feels as everyone ought.[84] The critic thus emerges as the 'real' voice of the public, and the only voice with the authority to silence others.[85]

81 Burney, 'To the Queen', v.

82 I refer here, once again, to 'Of the Refinement in the Arts', 168 ('In times when industry and the arts flourish, men are kept in perpetual occupation, and enjoy, as their reward, the occupation itself, as well as those pleasures which are the fruit of their labour') and 177 ('Luxury, when excessive, is the source of many ills, but is in general preferable to sloth and idleness, which would commonly succeed in its place, and are more hurtful both to private persons and to the public').

83 Richard Shusterman, 'Of the Scandal of Taste: Social Privilege as Nature in the Aesthetic Theories of Hume and Kant', *The Philosophical Forum* 20/3 (1989), 216; see also David Marshall, 'Arguing by Analogy: Hume's Standard of Taste', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28/3 (1995), 337–338 and 342, note 2.

84 See Shusterman, 'Of the Scandal of Taste', 217–220, and Jeffrey Wieand, 'Hume's Two Standards of Taste', *The Philosophical Quarterly* 34/135 (1984), 129–142 (especially 137–142).

85 Marshall, 'Arguing by Analogy', 335.

Mary Wollstonecraft, in her 1790 review of Burney's *General History of Music*, took issue with precisely this blunt division of mankind into 'practiced' and 'ignorant' ears, and its socio-political implications. 'What kind of music is most pleasing to mankind?' Burney asked in his Preface, providing the following answer: 'To practiced ears, such as has the merit of novelty, added to refinement, and ingenious contrivance: to the ignorant, such as is most familiar and common.' Wollstonecraft, however, advocated a third musical category addressed to those who would be neither ignorant nor knowledgeable. Sensibility, for her, constituted a form of musical intelligence that did not require practice or labour and hence was not the property of a particular social class or professional group. The two categories established by Burney were not enough:

> He might have gone further, and have said that people of taste and feeling, who are not professed performers, are most touched by strains addressed to the heart. The mere novelty of harmony will not interest them; and the ingenious contrivance alluded to, sometimes disgusts, as much as fine attitudes in an actor, which, so far from being the expression of passion, spring from study, to produce stage effect … What is then to make a sensible heart vibrate? Dr. Burney was aware of this objection, though he often loses sight of it.[86]

With this, Wollstonecraft prepares the ground for her praise of ancient music's supposed 'strict union with poetry' – a guarantee of simplicity and intelligibility – and her promotion of this aesthetic in modern times, under the rubric of 'national music':

> It may, perhaps, be made a question, whether this is not the only musical pleasure that can be felt by a nation at large: the style of national music, which Dr. Burney speaks too slightingly of, seems to say – yes, – and a heart of sensibility will sometimes beat with the crowd, though it understands a superior language.[87]

Wollstonecraft thus imagined a community born from shared sensibility. In the process, she dismissed the vision of musical pleasure promoted by Burney as either arbitrarily privileging a professional minority or simply false. This critique draws attention to the distance Burney had gradually taken from his initial appreciation of music's appeal to 'the rest of mankind' – and not only 'to the rich and luxurious part of the world'.[88]

Read as a political discourse on musical pleasure, Burney's 'Essay on Musical Criticism' (1789) begins – ironically given his rejection of the aims of the French Revolution, which began in the same year – with what amounts to a declaration of musical rights, clearly establishing the primacy of individual feelings and the concomitant duty not to infringe on those of others:

> As Music may be defined [as] the art of pleasing by the succession and combination of agreeable sounds, every hearer has a right to give way to his feelings, and be pleased or dissatisfied without knowledge, experience, or the fiat of critics; but then he has certainly no right to insist on others being pleased or dissatisfied in the same degree.[89]

86 Mary Wollstonecraft (signed M), Review of 'Dr. Burney's *General History of Music*', *Analytical Review* 6 (February 1790), 131.

87 Wollstonecraft, Review, 133.

88 Burney, *Present State of Music in France and Italy*, 4.

89 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', v. William Weber has given an informative reading of this essay in *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 215–216. He correctly establishes Burney's 'elitist principles' (215) wherein the public sphere and musical taste must be 'regulated by learned authority' (221). It is hard to see, then, in what sense Burney showed any 'sense of how public opinion and professional expertise could work together in shaping an informed order of taste' (218).

Two aspects of Burney's opening sentence delineate his separation of musical discourses into private and public genres. First, Burney establishes hearers' diversity of feelings in music *as an individual right*, not as a matter of fact. The distinction, though it appears negligible, nonetheless prevents Burney from pursuing Hume's line of argument about taste, even though both writers begin their reflection at the same point: 'the great variety of Taste, as well as of opinion, which prevails in the world'.[90] Indeed, in 'Of the Standard of Taste', Hume constantly appeals to the possibility of general agreement and the necessity of a single standard of taste to regulate and supplant its general diversity. (This is what separates him from the sceptic who is simply resigned to the impossibility of aesthetic accord.[91]) Burney's recourse to the individual's right to feel differently rules out, *a priori* and on principle, the desirability of a 'standard', 'rule' or even a 'decision' about how one should feel about a piece of music.[92]

Second, Burney also disqualifies personal feelings as a source of any public norm on the basis of the same individual right to feel. Reciprocity precludes the heart from making its reasons a law for others. In other words, the expression of emotions is intransitive; it belongs to each personally and to none in general. Accordingly, a hearer 'does not extend his hatred or contempt of my favourite Music to myself'.[93] As a point of comparison, Burney's liberal vindication of toleration in aesthetic matters contrasts with Johnson's rejection of toleration in religious affairs, not in its effects, but in its principle. Boswell, in his *Life of Samuel Johnson, LL. D.*, has his protagonist declare:

> People confound liberty of thinking with liberty of talking; nay, with liberty of preaching. Every man has a physical right to think as he pleases; for it cannot be discovered how he thinks. He has not a moral right; for he ought to inform himself, and think justly. But, Sir, no member of a society has a right to *teach* any doctrine contrary to what that society holds to be true. The magistrate, I say, may be wrong in what he thinks: but, while he thinks himself right, he may and ought to enforce what he thinks.[94]

In practice, Johnson still concedes a distinction between private and public spheres, though he strictly constrains the former to the inner self (as an inalienable 'physical right') and confers to the magistrate the power to enforce censorship in the name of society. One might say, borrowing from Isaiah Berlin, that Burney instead defines aesthetic freedom in the manner of a Modern, which is to say negatively, as 'liberty *from*' the interference of others.[95] This is consistent with the apparent accommodation of musical liberty with political servitude in *The Present State of Music in Germany*: Burney is first and foremost concerned

90 David Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste', in *Selected Essays*, 133. The sceptic takes a similar view of diversity in aesthetic judgment (98–99): 'You will never convince a man, who is not accustomed to Italian music, and has not an ear to follow its intricacies, that a Scotch tune is not preferable. You have not even any single argument, beyond your own taste, which you can apply in your behalf: And to your antagonist, his particular taste will always appear a more convincing argument to the contrary.'

91 In other words, the sceptic finds no way out of the unavoidable relativity of aesthetic judgment (Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste', 99): 'If you be wise, each of you will allow, that the other may be in the right; and having many other instances of this diversity of taste, you will both confess, that beauty and worth are merely of a relative nature, and consist in an agreeable sentiment, produced by an object in a particular mind, according to the peculiar structure and constitution of that mind.'

92 I refer here to the turning-point of Hume's 'Of the Standard of Taste' (136): 'It is natural for us to seek a *Standard of Taste*; a rule by which the various sentiments of men may be reconciled; at least a decision afforded confirming one sentiment, and condemning another.'

93 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', v.

94 George Birkbeck Hill, ed., *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, revised and enlarged edition by L. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934; reprinted Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), volume 2, 249.

95 On the notion of 'negative' freedom see Isaiah Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', in *Four Essays on Liberty* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 121–131.

with showing that music defines humanity – not with the question of who should govern in order that one can truly exercise one's freedom.[96]

Burney, then, comes close to the relativism of Hume's sceptic; in effect, a radically liberal and strictly subjectivist view of music makes the arbiter of taste a pointless figure. But the main part of Burney's 'Essay' consists in divining precisely who can legitimately speak of music with authority. At least five candidates emerge:

1 the 'lovers of Music', with 'partial and capricious tastes' (paragraph 6);
2 the 'Prudent critics, without science' (paragraph 5), or amateurs whose judgment depends on the existence of a canon and the 'sentiments of a professor';
3 'professors' (paragraph 5), whose study and experience of a particular art limit the quality of their judgment to that art, so that a great instrumental performer, for example, might not have the proper feeling toward and respect due to 'good singing';
4 'composers and performers' (paragraphs 5 and 6), who encompass, but also exceed, the previous category and sometimes divide into 'sects'; together with the 'lovers of Music' and the 'professors', they properly constitute music's public sphere, as opposed to;
5 'men of wit' (paragraph 15), who lack the study of composition, the practice of an instrument and the extensive listening that music, in all its various styles, genres and media (paragraphs 6 to 14), requires.

In painting this tableau of musical criticism, Burney effectively disqualifies the ordinary listener as the primary adjudicator of musical value; instead, the music critic rises to the position of authority. Like Adam Smith, then, Burney helped to establish the new behavioural and discursive regulations that redefined (good) music as art and (proper) listening as contemplation:[97]

> There is a degree of refinement, delicacy, and invention which lovers of simple and common Music can no more comprehend than the Asiatics harmony. It is only understood and felt by such as can quit the plains of simplicity, penetrate the mazes of art and contrivance, climb mountains, dive into dells, or cross the seas in search of extraneous and exotic beauties with which the monotonous melody of popular Music has not yet been embellished.[98]

Consciously or not, the metaphor of musical criticism as a form of intellectual travel was partly self-serving: it set Burney apart from other music historians as the well-known author of two travel books. More to the point, the financial and physical resources implied by the metaphor also highlighted a key difference between the music critic and the layman – a difference of experience and practice that could have been articulated in terms of social class, but that Burney prefers to couch in the pejorative terms of a developmental geography (in a footnote Burney specifies that, by 'Asiatics', he means the 'Chinese' who, 'accustomed to simplicity', have been observed by 'repeated trials' to dislike 'harmony').[99]

96 Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', 129: 'liberty in this is not incompatible with some kinds of autocracy, or at any rate with the absence of self-government. Liberty in this sense is principally concerned with the area of control, not with its source.' For a critique of the oft-assumed disjunction between individual and civic liberty, and the resulting opposition between negative and positive freedom, see Quentin Skinner, 'The Idea of Negative Liberty: Machiavellian and Modern Perspectives', in *Visions of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), volume 2, 186–212.

97 On Adam Smith's contribution to musical aesthetics see Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), 152–157; Michel Noiray, 'Le son et le sentiment', in Adam Smith, *Essais esthétiques*, ed. Patrick Thierry (Paris: Vrin, 1997), 123–138; Simon Frith, 'Adam Smith and Music', *New Formations* 18 (1992): 67–83, reprinted in *Taking Popular Music Seriously: Selected Essays* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 275–291; and Semi, *Music as a Science of Mankind*, 93–102.

98 Burney, 'Essay on', xi.

99 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', xi. On Burney's difficulty in accounting for direct observations of Polynesian polyphony from this Eurocentric perspective see Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus*, 113–119.

Competence – defined as practice, knowledge and experience (paragraphs 3, 10 and 14) – becomes the sign of a distinction that confers the right to speak, not for oneself, but for the public. What the musical 'traveller' acquired on the way to musical 'civility' ('refinement, delicacy and invention') amounts to 'a tranquil pleasure, short of rapture, in which intellect and sensation are equally concerned' (paragraph 2) – a pleasure whose analysis is the very object of the 'Essay on Musical Criticism'.[100] Burney advocates here the recognition of a distinct science of musical judgment based on the decomposition of 'musical productions, both as to composition and performance', into a series of qualities, 'by a kind of chemical process' (paragraph 3).[101] Only briefly sketched, this science requires at least two prerequisites, namely the broadening of one's perspectives and an empirical method of valuation. *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*: musical criticism, Burney claims, requires a 'liberal, enlarged, and candid mind', which, like Horace, pays no dues to any particular master, but judges for itself, and will therefore see more than 'a small angle of the art'.[102] Burney makes it his task to reason with 'principles' and 'criteria', holding as a model the work of Roger de Piles for 'testing merit' among painters. Invoking 'De Piles's steelyard', Burney most likely has in mind the *Balance des peintres*. In this table of marks, provided as an entertaining exercise at the end of de Piles's *Cours de peinture par principes* (1708), the critic evaluates the work of painters in four distinct categories (composition, drawing, colour and expression).[103] The quantitative conversion of qualitative judgments provided a comparative method in ascribing aesthetic (and market) value, and came to be used as a didactic tool for art education and collection displays.[104] In England, Jonathan Richardson, in his *Two Discourses* (1719), discusses at length de Piles's 'Scale of Merit' as the connoisseur's useful shorthand for judgments and observations; he further amplifies its scope to include the painter's technique, aspects peculiar to the painting's genre and the 'advantage' and 'pleasure' the painting procures, and illustrates his method of aesthetic judgment with a study of the portrait of the Countess Dowager of Exeter by Anthony Van Dyck.[105] The 'Scale of Merit' found other applications too: Mrs Thrale, whose salon Burney assiduously frequented from 1776 to 1784, evaluated her friends' qualities in such a manner (Burney fared rather poorly as regards scholarship, humour and wit, but received higher marks for good humour, religion, morality, manners and general knowledge).[106] That Burney provides no such quantitative table should not

100 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', v.

101 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', v: 'In this manner, a composition, by a kind of chemical process, may be decompounded as well as any other production of art or nature.'

102 The Latin quotation is from Horace's first *Epistle* (1.1.14). It translates, according to John Davie, as: 'there's no master I'm bound to swear loyalty to', in Horace, *Satires and Epistles*, trans. John Davie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 65.

103 Roger de Piles, *Cours de peinture par principes* (Paris: J. Estienne, 1708). See John Steegman, 'The "Balance des Peintres" of Roger de Piles', *The Art Quarterly* 17/3 (1954), 255–261, and Andrew L. McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 33–35.

104 De Piles's table appears in Jonathan Richardson's *Two Discourses* (London: Churchill, 1719) and was further discussed by the French Royal Academy of Sciences in 1755; see Pascal Griener, *La république de l'œil: l'expérience de l'art au siècle des Lumières* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2010), 100–105 and 281, note 55. The 1743 English edition of *The Principles of Painting*, on its title page, advertises the 'Balance of Painters' as 'of singular use to those who would form an idea of the value of paintings and pictures'; see Thomas Puttfarken, *Roger de Piles' Theory of Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), 42, note 7. For its use in organizing the exhibit of ninety-nine paintings from the royal collection at the Palais du Luxembourg (1750–1779) see McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre*, 35–42, and Georges Teyssot, '"The Simple Day and the Light of the Sun": Lights and Shadows in the Museum', trans. Jessica Levine, *Assemblage* 12 (1990), 69.

105 Richardson, *Two Discourses*, 55–72. Burney owned a copy of this work (*Catalogue of the Miscellaneous Library*, lot 1504).

106 See Percy A. Scholes, *The Great Dr. Burney: His Life, His Travels, His Works, His Family and His Friends* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), volume 1, 327, and *Thraliana: The Diary of Mrs. Hester Lunch Thrale (Later Mrs. Piozzi), 1776–1809*, ed. Katharine C. Balderston (Oxford: Clarendon, 1942), volume 1, 328–331. Mrs Thrale toys with

necessarily come as a surprise: as de Piles put it, the table has no persuasive power.[107] Connoisseurship, Richardson suggests, consists in 'considering a Picture, or Drawing' – in the art of describing, reflecting and reasoning, which the connoisseur may further refine in 'the making of a dissertation'. The 'Balance of Painters', in this context, provides a 'further exercise' of judgment and a 'shorthand' for memory.[108]

If Burney did not dwell further on the nature of critical judgment, it was, I surmise, because the *General History* provided, to his mind, an extensive illustration of his method.[109] With the 'Essay on Musical Criticism', Burney intended to clarify for his reader the didactic purpose of his *General History of Music* – a purpose that, he thinks, distinguishes it from treatises 'on the art of musical composition and performance' – namely, to 'instruct ignorant lovers of Music how to listen, or to judge for themselves'.[110] In conceiving of the critic as a teacher mediating between scholars and amateurs, Burney conforms to the elitist trend that broadly characterizes the institution of criticism in the second half of the eighteenth century.[111] Indeed, Burney had no qualms in claiming the public sphere for the critic, and one can read the 'Essay' as a kind of self-assertion. Opening with a quasi-dramatization of the relation between third-person ('every hearer', paragraph 1; 'Mr. Avison', paragraph 3; 'he') and first-person subjects ('I'), the 'Essay' presents the narrator-critic ('Burney') as a conversationalist (with such phrases as 'I believe', 'I mean', paragraph 3; 'I have long suspected', paragraph 5). In the space of a few pages dedicated to a list of musical 'criteria' that 'would admit of little dispute', however, the first-person subject disappears, not to return. Instead, the narrator-critic appropriates the plural first person 'we', a collective subject primarily defined by its listening experience or absence thereof ('we never have heard', paragraph 11; 'we grow nice and fastidious by frequently hearing', paragraph 16) and partly determined, in the very end of the essay, by its opposition to other nations (Germany, Italy):

> Novelty has been acquired, and attention excited, more by learned modulation in Germany, than by new and difficult melody in Italy. We dislike both, perhaps, only because we are not *gradually* arrived at them; and difficult and easy, new and old, depend on the reading, hearing, and knowledge of the critic.[112]

The appeal to common experience and consensus is hardly unusual in the history of aesthetics. In 'Of the Standard of Taste' especially, Hume was at pains to establish the universal agreement that would delegate aesthetic judgment to a few, and, in the process, to appropriate the public voice in the name of common sense.[113] Is there any other way for a critic to speak for others than by 'creating a persona that represents a united voice, a sympathetic sharing of voice, sentiment, and tongue'?[114] In Burney's and Hume's essays, the 'first-person plural, the "we" that stands for common sense and consensus, that must silence the reader' is an elided compact to which the reader may or may not assent in his or her inner self.[115] The power of the critic lies in the terms according to which he or she proposes to speak as the public.

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the idea of making a 'Scale of Novel Writers' before making two separate scales for her male and female friends on the model of the 'Scale of Beauties' found in Joseph Spence's *Crito, or a Dialogue on Beauty, by Sir Henri Beaumont* (London, 1752), 43–45.

107 Roger de Piles, *The Principles of Painting* (London: Osborn, 1743), 294: 'This I have attempted rather to please myself, than to bring others into my sentiments … All I ask is, the liberty of declaring my thoughts in this matter.'

108 Richardson, *Two Discourses*, 71–72.

109 For a survey of Burney's critical vocabulary see Grant, *Dr Burney as Critic*, 17–47.

110 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', vi.

111 See Douglas Lane Patey, 'The Institution of Criticism in the Eighteenth Century', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), volume 4, 3–31 (especially 22–30).

112 Burney 'Essay on Musical Criticism', xi.

113 For the analysis of the 'voice' in Hume's essay see Marshall, 'Arguing by Analogy', 336–337 and 342, note 27.

114 Marshall, 'Arguing by Analogy', 336.

115 Marshall, 'Arguing by Analogy', 336.

But how could Burney's cooption of the public voice in the 'Essay on Musical Criticism' not constitute an encroachment on individual pleasure? The primary answer, I believe, is that Burney imagines the narrator-critic of the 'Essay' as a spokesperson – if not a kind of amplifier – for musical compositions and performances themselves. The most dramatic moment of the essay occurs when 'I', the narrator-critic, disappears behind the 'I' of the sonata, directly addressing Fontenelle's question, which 'you' (that is, 'the lover and judge of Music') had asked: '*I* would have *you* listen' (see above for the full quotation).[116] What distinguishes this passage is not only that it ventriloquizes the sonata, but also that it gives a favourable impression of the sonata's interlocutor – a position with which the essay's reader (for example, the royal dedicatee of the *General History*) might identify. Burney's rhetorical strategy, then, does not merely consist in appropriating the public voice, but also in staging a conversation with nothing other than music itself. Here again, Burney does not dwell on how music comes to have its own voice; as noted above, it could be that, like Edmund Burke and David Hume, Burney thinks that a sonata produces the same effect on each person's senses, given the proper disposition of the listener; that, like Adam Smith, Burney finds in the autonomous order of musical productions the potential reflection of emotions we ascribe to it; or that the sonata's power of speech arises from an accord between the composer's intention, the performer's execution and the listener's understanding, as one might gather from Burney's musical criticism.

What the 'Essay' achieves is the redefinition of the role of the narrator-critic, from the analysis of musical productions to the art of 'really' listening. This might in part explain why Burney had surprisingly little use for the word 'taste' in this text (with a total of five occurrences) and why he submitted to Abraham Rees's new *Cyclopaedia* a separate article on 'Taste, in Music', which reproduced selected paragraphs from Rousseau's article on 'Goût' from the *Dictionnaire de musique*. In the latter, taste appears as a faculty distinct from both judgment and sensibility, which 'enables' the comprehension and expression of another's feelings and ideas – the perception of the poet's ideas by the composer, of the composer's ideas by the performer and of these 'musical perfections' by the 'hearer'. Taste, as one might expect, appears in the 'Essay on Musical Criticism' as an element of composition and performance (paragraphs 3, 9 and 12); where the 'hearer' is concerned, the plurality of 'tastes' refers to the preferences of music lovers (paragraph 6), while 'good taste' (paragraphs 9 and 16) characterizes not only the performance of embellishments, but also critical listening. It could not be otherwise: if taste is the faculty that ultimately enables one to hear the sonata speak, then it is as absurd to ask whether a standard of taste exists as to ask whether a sense of hearing exists. The proof is uttered by the music. Functioning as an amplifier for the sonata, the narrator-critic is also the hearing-aid for 'those who have not ears capable of vibrating to the sweetness of well-modulated sounds'.[117] In sum, the legitimacy of the music critic depends entirely on this act of ventriloquism: critical authority lies in this power to say what the music *really* is; recognized as such, this authority cannot infringe on the pleasure of the individual.

The reality of music, it should also be noted, was not the only kind of musical community Burney imagined. A fraction of music, only briefly mentioned in the 'Essay', escapes 'cold criticism', engaging the listener in a kind of spiritual travel:

> there is a certain portion of enthusiasm connected with a love of the fine arts, which bids defiance to every curb of criticism; and the poetry, painting, or Music that leaves us on the ground, and does not transport us into the regions of imagination beyond the reach of cold criticism, may be correct, but is devoid of genius and passion. There is, however, a tranquil pleasure, short of rapture, to be acquired from Music, in which intellect and sensation are equally concerned; the analysis of this pleasure is, therefore, the subject of the present short Essay.[118]

116 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', xi. My italics.

117 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', xi.

118 Burney, 'Essay on Musical Criticism', v.

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Music also communicated via a transcendent register – the ineffable background to the rule of reason – yet Burney remained largely silent on the matter, even when it clearly shaped his musical appreciation (as in the case of C. P. E. Bach's inspired performance in Hamburg). Indeed, in the *Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients*, Burney went so far as to assert instrumental music's superiority to words when it came to communicating meanings that escape reason altogether: '[music] is itself the language of the heart and of passion'.[119] If, in the 'Essay on Musical Criticism', the narrator-critic cannot account for this, it is because music subjugates the collective subject, or rather, transmutes the listener into a collective object ('us') that has, literally, no active voice to account for its experience. This revelatory kind of communal experience remains inexpressible.

My narrative about Burney's intellectual trajectory is thus one of social anxiety and philosophical resignation. It begins in 1771 with an ambitious affirmation of the importance of music to mankind and ends with the upholding of rational learning and social distinction as a source of community – with the caveat of a quasi-religious experience of music, in which meaning reveals itself to the transported listener. By the 1790s Burney's 'liberal conservatism' brought him closer to Burke, whose *Reflections on the French Revolution* he and his daughter Fanny procured for the royal family.[120] In a letter from 1792 Burney went so far as to fantasize that music was an occupation that could, among other arts and sciences, divert people from politics altogether, and contribute to preserving the established social order. This epistolary digression placed in sharp relief the politics of his published reflections from the 1770s and 1780s on how music could benefit from German political despotism and how music, as an 'innocent luxury', was a moral occupation for times of leisure (or, to be more precise, an amoral occupation, since, under the right circumstances, it temporarily effaces the world of the ethical–political).[121] Burney's advocacy of music as a public good relied on an paradoxical strategy of individual liberation and collective disempowerment consisting of (1) the establishment of a private sphere where everyone could exert their freedom to feel differently; (2) the 'capture' of the public voice by the music critic, not only in the name of a collective listening subject ('we'), but also in order to make music audible to those unable to hear appropriately; and (3) the musical subjugation of an enthusiastic, transported but speechless community of listeners ('us'). In the 'Burneyan' institution of the musical ear, the dichotomy between knowledge and opinion – and in the end, the difference between those who could afford to study music and those who could not – would ideally have regulated public discourse on music. Economic and technical inequalities reinforce the symbolic coup by which the music critic conjures a reality inaudible to the layman.

To many, Burney's philosophical misfortune will appear all too clear: musical freedom, though established in principle, comes at the actual cost of public servitude, if not self-delusion. In this regard, Burney's music history, like many constructions of the Enlightenment, unfolds as a bid for social control, if not authoritarianism. But the critique of the critic is itself an invention of the Enlightenment and thus to

119 Burney, *General History of Music*, volume 1, 85: 'And there is, again, some kind even of instrumental music, so divinely composed, and so expressively performed, that it wants no words to explain its meaning: it is itself the language of the heart and of passion, and speaks more to both in a few notes, than any other language composed of clashing consonants, and insipid vowels, can do in as many thousand.'

120 Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 356. On 'liberal conservatism', a twentieth-century oxymoron with some interpretative utility, see 'Tocqueville, Burke, and the Origins of Liberal Conservatism', *The Review of Politics* 60/3 (1998), 435–464. On Burke's ambivalence as regards social change and traditional hierarchy see Isaac Kramnick, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative* (New York: Basic Books, 1977).

121 See his letter to Mrs Crewe in 1792, quoted in Lonsdale, *Dr Charles Burney*, 370: 'I sh^{d} think I did the world a signal piece of service, if, one night or other, when its inhabitants were all fast asleep, I could, by the wave of a magic wand, wipe away every idea of that kind [that is, 'democratic' ideas], smack smooth out of their brains, or send them down forever to the bottom of their *dimenticatos*; & in their room, pour into their precious noddles, with a large funnel, the love of Music, poetry, & the fine arts, or other good-humoured, amusing, & improving pursuits, ingenious or scientific, as they please. Let them study mathematics, optics, metaphysics, & all the *ics* & *tics* in the world, except *Politics*. How good-humoured & happy they w^{d} all come down to breakfast, the next morning?'

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some degree consubstantial with criticism as an institution.[122] Even Adorno's call for a criticism 'immanent to music itself' takes up Burney's advocacy of 'true' listening – and Adorno's disqualification of some professional music critics for their lack of serious involvement with musical practice echoes Burney's objections against 'men of wit'.[123] The historical 'function of criticism', as Terry Eagleton has argued, was on the one hand to oppose the tyranny of the absolutist state, and on the other to oppose the dominance and dogma of received criticism itself.[124] If Burney's misfortune is instructive, then, it is not simply because one might hope not to repeat his errors. His intellectual trajectory also brings to the fore the foundational importance not only of aesthetics and economics, but also politics in the historical development of musical institutions and ideas separate from governmental power, supported by individual pursuit and regulated by their own principles of authority. Consider the concert hall, the silent listener, the music critic and, well into the twentieth century, the avant-garde composer – who until recently could still hope for the general audience to learn to love what was frequently represented as objectively superior.[125] Were I to follow Burney, then, in giving a liberal account of myself as a music critic – as a musician, listener and writer – I would seek to answer three questions. First, assuming liberty is indeed what I value first and foremost, (why) can I achieve this end by making music? Second, if there is indeed a good reason for my music-making, what physical, economic, social and personal circumstances will shape its forms and my practices? Third, to the extent that I live under a regime that enables autonomous and plural musical institutions, what is the nature of the social compacts I form with others when making (and thinking about) music? Anchoring his answers in an understanding of human nature, Burney thought music contributed best to securing the good life when it occupied people in their leisure time. For that reason, he privileged a vision of music and music-making that was as inconsequential as possible – that represented music as an unnecessary social embellishment: 'innocent luxury' would neither harm nor transform society. Burney thus paid particular attention to the accord of the composer, performer and listener, and the sonorous reality this accord ought to endorse; as a music critic, he was the man who heard this reality. Burney's answers are not my own, but in giving an account of himself – revisiting, from Preface to Dedication, the purpose or end of music (as Isaiah Berlin speaks of the 'ends of life') – he turned musicians into political thinkers and converted political thought into music-making.[126] In this regard, Burney's philosophical misfortune might prove a useful stepping-stone.

122 On Shaftesbury's and Addison's efforts to define the 'true Critick' see, for example, David Marshall, 'Shaftesbury and Addison: Criticism and the Public Taste', in *The Cambridge History of Literary Criticism*, ed. H. B. Nisbet and Claude Rawson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), volume 4, 631–657 (especially 645–656).

123 See Adorno, *Introduction to the Sociology of Music*, 149 and 152. On 'structural listening' as the critical process whereby music comes to 'speak' see Richard Leppert, '"Music Pushed to the Edge of Existence" (Adorno, Listening, and the Question of Hope)', *Cultural Critique* 60 (2005), 92–133 (especially 118).

124 See Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism: From* The Spectator *to Post-Structuralism* (London: Verso, 1984): criticism emerges first as a 'terrain of cultural consensus' (39) against the repressive regime of the absolutist state, but its history unfolds in a series of tensions, ambivalences and conflicts – against coffee-house dogmatism, Grub Street or political partisanship, for example. The distinction between genuine and 'false' criticism is a critical commonplace.

125 The social critique of 'classical' music has become a commonplace of the musicological literature, which is the reason I do not rehearse it here; in addition to Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works*, 205–242, on the 'Beethoven Paradigm', see, for instance, Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), especially 87–93 and 110–119, and Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 19–38.

126 Berlin, 'Two Concepts of Liberty', 118.