Attending to Early Modern Women 2012: Remapping Routes and Spaces

Workshop Title:
Mapping Music: The Gendered Soundscapes of Early Modern England

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Summary of Workshop:
This interdisciplinary workshop will consider how gender informs the musical soundscapes of early modern England. We will focus our discussions around a set of literary, musical, and cinematic case studies that will invite participants to examine the intersections between gender and song performance within a series of seventeenth-century sonic spaces: the Tower of London, boarding schools in Chelsea and Hackney, the musical salon, and chambers and galleries within the home and at court. Integrating our combined research expertise in musicology, English literature, gender studies, and film studies, this workshop aims to illuminate the richness of women’s musical activities in early modern England even as it raises important questions concerning the gendering of the performing body, the affective impact of artistic expression, and the transmission and circulation of song within a variety of architectural and sociocultural environments.

Workshop Description:
The discursive and affective function of song – and indeed of music more broadly – was highly gendered in the early modern period. If music was believed to hold the capacity to move hearers to virtuous and noble action it was also, as Linda Austern has convincingly demonstrated, widely associated with emasculating desire and passion; the figure of the siren embodies song’s seductive potential. Not surprisingly, this excess of affect became especially problematic when attributed to female musicians, and especially the female singer, whose body – open-mouthed, breathing, emoting, on full display – is her instrument. Accounts of women playing and singing teeter anxiously between commendations of the pleasure associated with hearing a talented performer and concerns about impropriety. “Mapping Music: The Gendered Soundscapes of Early Modern England” enters the acoustic and social spaces within which such performances took place in order to consider how the representation and negotiation of the boundaries of these musical environments enrich our understanding of song as a gendered musical practice in the seventeenth century.

We will begin the workshop with a fifteen-minute presentation that introduces participants to our own work on gendered musical spaces and that situates the assigned readings, musical excerpts, and film clips within the broader cultural and historical context of early modern song composition, circulation, and performance. We will highlight in particular the important tension in the period between the gendering of musical performance (and especially of musical performance by women) and the
gendering of spatial boundaries. Women's musical activities were shaped by these
cultural discourses, even as individual writers and musicians worked to negotiate
expectations concerning the boundaries of the performing female body and of the
environments within which women's musical performances took place.

The bulk of the workshop – one hour – will be devoted to a deeper discussion of these
issues that will centre on four case studies, facilitated by each of the co-organizers in
turn: the songs performed by Susanna Perwich in the Tower of London; the ballads sung
by Margaret Cavendish and her female protagonists in courtly salon gatherings; the songs
performed by young gentlewomen within the context of a boarding school masque; and
the musical performances of Queen Elizabeth as adapted for the screen. Taken as a
whole, these literary, musical, and cinematic examples will enable us to explore how a
variety of sonic spaces framed and were in turn shaped by women's performances.

The first of these case studies features the little-known Susanna Perwich, whose life is
celebrated in John Batchler's The Virgins Pattern (1661). Perwich is a fascinating figure
not only because her musical accomplishments were extraordinary for a seventeenth-
century Englishwoman, but also because Batchler's account of her musical performances
complicates our sense of the separation of public and private space in early modern
England. Susanna's parents ran a school in Hackney, where she studied with many of
London's finest musicians. Musicians both English and foreign came to hear her play,
turning the school into a kind of salon. In the last years of her life, Perwich became very
devout and dedicated herself to prayer rather than performance, but Batchler writes that
she played her viol and sang for friends imprisoned in the Tower, giving them the "higher
music" of spiritual solace through her music. Our study will focus on a few passages
from Batchler's text. We will attend closely to the tension that emerges between the
author's response to Perwich's musical gifts and his desire to idealize her as a paragon of
feminine virtue – a tension that is also reflected in the blurring of public and private
spaces in her musical life.

As Perwich's example suggests, song and the spaces within which songs were circulated
and performed were deeply politicized during the Civil Wars and the Interregnum,
constituting important channels for intellectual intervention and sociopolitical
commentary. The second case study explores this context in more detail, focusing on the
writings of Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle. Cavendish probes the acoustic
potency of the speaking and singing voice, seeking to harness the "natural" and
"civilizing" eloquence that she associates with singers. By deploying implicitly royalist
musical genres – notably the ballad – and creating alternative performance spaces within
her writings, Cavendish establishes a viable rhetorical position for herself that enables her
to critique the devastating upheavals of the Civil Wars even as it works to justify her
transgressive authorial stance. Our exploration of Cavendish's texts will focus on Letter
202 from Sociable Letters (1664), in which she describes a musical gathering within the
"Vaulted Rooms" of the Rubenshuis in Antwerp and Scene 19 from The Comical Hash
(1662), which offers a unique opportunity to consider Cavendish's construction of
gendered musical performance spaces within her printed dramatic works.
Thomas Duffett’s *Beauties Triumph* (1676) shifts us from the musical space of the court and domestic *salon* to the overtly didactic space of the early modern school. This masque, on the topic of the judgment of Paris, was performed by gentlewomen at Jeffery Banister and James Hart’s boarding school in Chelsea. Drawing on the masque’s prologue and epilogue as well as the song “When Beauty, arm’d with smiling Eyes,” we will explore how the young women’s performances as actresses, singers, and dancers unsettled the moralistic message of Duffett’s text. Indeed, Duffett’s masque is full of contradictions: on the one hand, Duffett changes his mythological source material, transforming the tale of Paris’s folly into a celebration of chaste love. On the other hand, youthful beauty coupled with musical and terpsichorean performance serves as a tool of dangerous seduction. As Venus eloquently warns in her song, “So deep is her Cunning, so sweet is her Stroke, that all must be subject to Beauties soft Yoke.”

Finally, we will turn to a series of depictions of Elizabeth I, a highly proficient performer on the lute and virginals, to examine how visual and cinematic representations of the queen contribute to our reading of gendered musical spaces in early modern England. Although Elizabeth claimed to keep the space of her chamber segregated, she did, in fact, perform for men on a somewhat regular basis, as evidenced by Sir James Melville’s account of her practice of allowing men to hear her play from behind a tapestry. Recent biopics of the queen foreground these questions in their characterizations of the musical Elizabeth, who regularly breaks the rules governing spatial boundaries. Our discussion will focus on excerpts from the BBC’s *Elizabeth R* (1971), which underscore the importance of the gendered boundaries framing Elizabeth’s musical performances even as they depict the queen herself desegregating those spaces. This historically informed biopic provides important insight into the performance practices that complicated the neat demarcation of musical spaces in the early modern context.

In the remaining fifteen minutes of the workshop, we will broaden our discussion of the gendering of musical soundscapes in order to consider how acoustic environments like those represented in our chosen case studies impact our understanding of the performing body, of music’s affective impact within particular settings, and of women’s musical and artistic expression in early modern Europe.

**List of Readings and Other Materials for Preparation:**


Suggested Readings:

THE
Virgins Pattern
IN THE
Exemplary Life, and lamented Death
OF Mrs.
SUSANNA PERWICH,
Daughter of Mr.
ROBERT PERWICH:
Who departed this Life, every way
rarely complest Virgin, in the flower
of her Age, at her Father's House in
Hackney, near London, in the County
of Middlesex, July 3, 1661.
Published at the earnest request of divers, to
Knew her well, for the use and benefit of others.

By John Butcher, a near Relation, to whom she
ey hath had an intimate converse in the
ly with her, more or less, the first and
part of her Life.

Printed by Simon Drew, and is for
at his House, in Marmin, near Alders,
and at Booksellers Thope.
The exemplary Life, and lamented
Death of Mistris Sulauna Per- 
wich, Daughter of Robert Per- 
wich, of Hackney, in the County of 
Middlesex, Gent. who dyed a rarely 
accomplish'd Virgin, at one of the 
clock in the afternoon, on Wednesday, the 3. of July, 1661. in the 
25. year of her Age.

He was born upon 
the 23. day of Sept. 
in the year of our 
Lord, 1636. in the 
Parish of Alderman- 
bury, London; where, 
having by the care 
and cost of her Par-
ents been sent to School to learn to read 
as soon as capable thereof; this was remark.

Her early 
able in her at that tender age, that she pregnancy 
would needs learn by hearing and obser-
ving
The exemplary life, and lamented death of a gentleman in the north of England, long since deceased, who was a celebrated musician, and travelled all over the world, playing on the guitar and the lute, and was renowned for his skill in the art of music. He was so proficient in his craft that he was sought after by many noblemen and gentlemen, who would come from far and wide to hear him play. He was not only skilled in playing but also in composing music, and his compositions were much praised for their beauty and intricacy.

The first that grounded her in the notes of music, and enabled her to play so excellently on the treble viol, was Mr. Thomas Flood, who falling sick, and continuing in that state for a long time, it occasioned her father to make choice of a new master (Mr. William Gregory by name) who being eminent for his skilfulness at the lyra viol, did very much better the making and tuning of her instrument, and was the first that gave her that delicious stroke, which afterwards became so singularly peculiar to her self. He also taught her all varieties of turns and modulations which made her so expert, both in her own play and in judging of others. When she heard them, it was her most curious ear, seldom excelled by any. The very best masters in that art, divers books of bore of excellent composition, and understood them well; nor cared she for any lessons but what were very choice; but her chief delight was in divisions upon grounds of which she had the best that England could afford.

Her principal master at the viol, for the time seven years, was Mr. Stephen Bingley, a remarkable witness of her admirable abilities, which in great part (to his honour be
which others are wont to do; for indeed She made better use of her time, at other sorts of higher Musick, which was much sweeter to her, as we shall hear anon.

As her accomplishments at the Viol were supernaturally great, so at the Lute also, in which Mr. Askberry having done his part towards her, in teaching her till he died; Mr. John Rogers the rare Lutenist of And at shew Nation, for the last three years, came Lute. after him, and added much more to her; professing that her skill at this Instrument was so very exquisite, and her hand so sweet, that he never taught any like her. When She played on the Viol, She seemed to transcend that Instrument above all the rest, and when She played on the Lute, She seemed to transcend as much there; such a contention, and so pleasant, scarce was ever known from one and the same Virgins hand before.

Had leisure given leave, that She could have spared time from her other Instruments and employments, Mr. Albertus Brian, that famously velveringer Organs, would gladly have done the same for her, which he hath done for one of her Sisters yet living, in making her as rare at the Harpsicord, as She was at any of her other sorts of Musick; and so have paired B
Also at the Harpsicord.

She sings most sweetly.

the two Sistars together; one set of the choisest Lessons at this Instrument, at the request of the said Mr. Brian. She learned of him, and as himself amirs, not only attained them in a very short time, but played them as well as he himself could.

To this her Instrumental Musick we may add her Vocal, no less delicious and admirable, if not more excellent; as if her Lungs had been made on purpose, as no doubt they were) by their natural melodies to out-do the artificial; and here Mr. Edward Coleman, her Master, and one of greatest renown, for his rare abilities in singing, deserves no less thanks and commendations for the care and delight he took in perfecting her in this Art also, than any of her other Masters.

She was an incomparable Dancer, as at Country, so in French dances, wherein she was so excellently curious, in her Postures, footings, and most graceful countenance, that Mr. Hazard, her last and chief Instructer therein, and one of the rarest Masters of that Art in England, accounted her a prime Flower of the Age; in that respect, and said she was as knowing therein, as any Dancing-Master whatever.

The Fame of all which at last grew to publick, and universal, that there are few places in England but have heard thereof, yea, and many parts beyond the Seas too. For not only persons of high rank and quality, of all sorts, came from London, the Inns of Court, and out of several Counties, to hear and judge of her abilities, especially the chiefest Musick-Masters that are now living: but many foreigners also, as French, Spanish, Italian, Dutch, as well Agents and Embassadors, as other Travellers into these parts, desired a taste of these her rare qualities, always going away with high admiration, saying that they had now seen one of the choicest Rarities of England, and professing they never heard or knew of the like in any of their own Countries.

All other parts of excellent breeding she likewise had; whatever curious Works at the needle, or otherwise can be named, she had all which Females are wont to be conversant in, whether by silver, silk, straw, glass, of breeding, wax, gems, or any other of the like kind, whether in she was perfectly skilled in. To lay nothing curious of her ability at the pen, where, being an anthropomom, her skill was more than ordinary; whatever women have, and in Arts of good house, wise, and Cookery, wherein she had a good share.
The exemplary Life, and lamented
share likewise; I haften rather to the more
noble perfections of her mind, which in-
deed were very amiable and lovely.
For she had a delicate and nimble wit, a
quick apprehension, a clear understanding,
a sound judgement, a fine invention, a
tenacious memory, which (as we shall hear
anon) she was not wont to shuffe with va-
bity, but with what was most worthy to be
learned and kept. And as these natural
parts and reasonable faculties of her soul,
to her moral virtues also were eminent. She
was very discreet, wise, and prudent in her
actions; not passionate, nor retentive of an-
ger, never over mercury, but modestly grave
and composed; of a very comely and hand-
some carriage, insomuch that strangers were
wont to say, when she came into their pre-
sence, they had not seen a more sweet com-
portment, or a more taking person. For
disposition, so affable, kind, and conve-
ince, that she soon gained the love of all, where
ever she came. Her discourse was always
pertinent and useful, not at all lagniacious,
hers speech being rather soutentious, than
garrulous. These and many such like grace-
ful ornaments, added unto the comeliness
of her person, rendred her very winningly
acceptable to all that knew her. But that
which most of all commends her, and just-
ly leaves her a very imperable example to
all that shall hear of her, and for which
principally this present Relation is penned,
is much more considerable than what hath
been yet said: Namely, that choice and
precious work of grace upon her heart,
which God was pleased to work in her, and
by which all her other excellencies were
sweetly sanctified: the occasion whereof was
as followeth.
About four years since, being disappoin-
ted in the enjoyment of her desires in a HerConver
Match then propounded to her, by the judg-
ment death of the party that had gained her
affection, she wisely considered with her
self, what the meaning of this so sad a pro-
vidence should be; and at last, after many
Prayers and tears to God, that he would
blesse this unexpectted stroke to her, and
some way make her a gainer by it; her
heart began to be much broken and melted. Her broken
Towards God, not to much for this tem-
poral lofs (which she often said might
have proved a snare to her) as at the sight
and sense of sin, and her estate by nature
(which though well educated all her time
be-
Her Prae-...
The exemplary Life, and Instructed
short (faith she) deth this come of a warm Prayer, or heavenly Conference? and indeed she found it to many a time, when her heart which hath been hea""r and sad at first, hath by such Prayers and Conferences gone away greatly cheered and revived, but never could find the like effect from her Sickness only.

No day of the Week unto her so welcome and delightful as the Lord's Day; dancing days were always wearisome, but their pleasantness to her, and therefore unusually (if much illness hindered not) she was up more early on these days than any other, and spent less time in putting on what she wore; her head on these days of late years the never dress'd, and for that reason always went clothe covered with her hood. She was very diligent and attentive at the publick Ordinance, carefully writing the Sermon, and examining her notes when she came home, which she would not fail to read by such help as she could get, either at the repetition in the Family, or otherwise, and as constantly re-enforced all by Prayer for a blessing upon it, when she could get opportunity and place convenient; either in her own closet, or elsewhere, and would rather lose her Supper or come late to it, then miss of her aim herein.

Yet here it must be remembered that it was not always thus with her upon these days, nor at other times; for sometimes complained of her own heart, and now wearisome their holy duties were to the flesh; how apt she was to be taken off by diversions in the Family occasions; how many times when she came down in diversions in a morning with a resolution to keep her mind and intent upon God all the day, she was frequently disappointed therein, and still taken off by one business or other, or by some temptation unto vanity, that was ready to surprize her. The consideration of which at other times much troubled her, Is much kept her under a sense of own weakness, comforted at and caused her sometimes to break forth the thoughts in these or the like words. O thou sweet of Heaven, will Heaven be! Where there will be no inter-ruptions by sin, or wearisomeness of the distractions flesh! What a perpetual rest will that be, will be, when we once come to enjoy it!

By her good will she would not be at any time when the Lord's Supper will never was admitt'd, of which having always misseth the a weeks warning, she failed not with great Lord's Sup- care to examine her own heart, and put up per. strong cries to God for a fitness to so great a Duty, and so high a Privilege; and indeed sometimes had more fear than ordi-
they did; beginning at the first Chapter, and never ceasing till they had read over the whole two and twenty. This she did about three months before her Death, and the reason why she did so, was, that she might take the better notice of the whole Prophecy, and have a full prospect thereof, as it were, all at once; and that which made the reading of it the more pleasant and profitable to her, was the light which she had gained before, in the knowledge of the judicious Comment upon it, published by Mr. Francis Roberts, before mentioned, in his Key of the Bible.

A great sympathizer towards the suffering servants of Christ, whether by imprisonment or otherwise, she pitied them much; spoke often of them, sometimes with tears in her eyes; and prayed for them constantly with great affection.

Some of her acquaintance, and very dear friends, such as the Lady Willoughby, and some others, not here to be named (who highly valued her, and desired her Company as she might be) she frequently visited for several years together, while under their restraint in the Tower of London; to whom after a sweet & more spiritual converse otherwise, she would sing and play with all alacrity imaginable, to comfort them in their distress; accounting it an high honour to her, that she was any way able to be a refreshment to those that she thought were dear to God. To such persons and to such places as they were in, though the closest prisons, she went readily and joyfully; but when invited to any Musick-meeting in London, where the choicest ears and most skilful Musick of Musick coveted to hear and admire her, though never so earnestly desired, she would not be backward to it. One time above the rest, prevailed with very great importunity she was strong with to go lyter upon by some Gentlemen of special Reuels or acquaintance, to be present at the Reuels dancing Bals or dancing Balls, but being left free to her own choice, whether she would go or not (at which she was very glad) she absolutely & irrepealably refused it, as thinking it no way suitable, either to her Person or Profession of Religion.

Nor were the Musicks aforesaid, which she so freely imparted to her said friends in Prison, all the comfort they had from her, but her Spiritual and Christian converse also, was a delight to them, (as is before hinted) as theirs likewise was to her; insomuch that when she returned home, from
visiting them, her discourse was so raised, and her affections so quickened, that she would sometimes say, O! how brave a thing is to suffer for Christ! who would not wish to be among the souls under the Altar, that cry, how long Lord will it be ere thou revenge our blood on them that shed it? Thus triumphing, as it were, with a kind of heroic spirit of Martyrdom before hand; further adding, that since Death must be undergone, what better or more noble death can there be, than rather to die? Yet at other times she had great fears upon her, saying, that if she were called to suffering, she doubted she should not hold out; only the consideration of good Company, a good cause, and especially of a good God (she said) would encourage one much.

Among her other gracious qualifications, this was not the least, especially of latter times) a very tender conscience, as might be intanced in many particulars, wherein the performed not till she received satisfaction to all doubts, from such arguments as were cleared by Scripture, and approved of by persons able to judge in the case.

To which also must be added, that when she perceived any, especially such as she had a reverence to, remained unsatisfied in any of her actions, she was always ready resolves to upon knowledge of it, from their own deny her mouths, to forbear it, out of a tenderness self in that of grieving any of the generation of the particular.

Yet fears her own strength if called to suffer.

As for black spots or patches, as they are called, she abhorred them with her very soul, and was so far displeased at the sight thereof, that when any of the Gentlewomen made use of them, she seldom or never left, till she had prevailed with them, to forbear that to unerit a dress, or else desired her Mother to take them off from them.

As great an enemy she was to any uncomely attire; nor did she affect rich laces, or any thing over costly, but what was most mean in a plain garb, much more minding the Ornament of a hidden man, which in the sight of God are of greatest price.

It was a great abhorrence to her, when she perceived any, especially such as she had a reverence to, remained unsatisfied in any other actions, she was always ready resolves to upon knowledge of it, from their own deny her mouths, to forbear it, out of a tenderness self in that of grieving any of the generation of the particular.

A great hater of black spots.

Yet rather than would offend other.
for your Health and Long Life, and though I thought it was impossible I could love any creature better than you, yet I find by experience I do, for since I am married, I love my husband a degree above you, yet however, my several affections are like God and nature, both infinite, and if love lives in the soul, and the soul never dies, my several affections may be eternal. But you may say, if my love was so troublesome to you, what is it to my husband? I must tell you, I have some more discretion now than I had then, and though extraordinary love will hardly allow, or admit discretion, yet reason doth persuade love, and brings many arguments not to be impertinently troublesome; but though I do not ask my husband so many impertinent questions as I did you, yet my love to him is not less watchful, careful, and fearful, but rather more, if more can be, and all the powers and endeavours of my life are ready to serve him and you, only he must be served first, which I am confident you will take no exception at, but approve of, for you are a wife, and know what the love to a husband is, and so leaving you to your beloved husband, I rest,

Your most affectionate sister.

LETTER 201

Dear sister Ann,

I cannot advise you to marry, unless men's souls, minds, and appetites, were as visible to your knowledge as their persons to your eyes, for though there may be much deceit even in outward forms, or aspects, yet not so much, but (if there be defects) there will be some appearance, but the defects of the mind, soul, or appetites, may be so obscured, as not to be perceived till you find you are unhappy by them; indeed there is so much danger in marrying, as I wonder how any dare venture, yet there is less danger for women than men, by reason a man may receive a fix'd disgrace both to himself and his posterity, by the wife's adultery, where the wife can receive no dishonour if she be honest and chast; but though she can receive no dishonour by her husband's adultery, yet she may be very unhappy by his opposite disposition, cross humour, and unruly passions, which antipathy may not only be a hindrance to the peace of this life, and tranquility of the mind, but endanger the glory of a future life, for mankind is apt from the troubles of their minds, to curse fortune, and to murmur against heaven, unless they have a supernatural patience; besides, men are most apt to run into vices in a discontented

Humor, and are always wandering abroad to divert their home-disquiets, not that they need to go out of doors to seek vice, for vice dwells in most houses or families, but that by going into many houses or families, they may take infection from every one, for vice many times is multiplied by acquaintance, I mean general acquaintance, not particular societies; but I speak not this, as believing you can be infected, being secured by the antidote of virtue, the spirit of grace, and the balsam of honour, which nature, heaven, and education gave you; but though you cannot be infected, yet should you seek diversion by much company, being of the female sex, you might be suspected; neither will I have you think by this discourse, as if I did not approve of marriage, for if you do, you mistake me, there being no life I approve so well of, as a married life, were as much sympathy joys souls, and affection hearts, as ceremony joys hands; but to live with antipathy must needs be very unhappy, and if you be so, there is no way to help yourself, for if you be once tied with the matrimonial bond, there can be no honourable divorce but by death, for all other divorces are marked with some disgrace, either more or less, and the least disgrace is too much; wherefore, if you marry, choose a husband rather by the ear than the eye, for the world seldom gives an undeserved praise, but often detracts from the deserver, for it seldom gives merit its due; but the safest way is to live a single life, for all wives, if they be not slaves, yet they are servants, although to be a servant to a worthy husband, is both pleasure and honour, for true affection takes more pleasure to serve than to be served, and it is an honour to obey the meritorious; but where there is a hazard in the choice, and a security in not choosing, the best is to be mistress of your self, which in a single life you are. But whether married or not married, my wishes and prayers are, that you may be as happy as this world can make you, and in that I shall be a sharer with you, as being

Your very loving sister.

LETTER 202

Sweet madam Eleonora Duarte, 1

The last week your sister Kath'ine and your sister Frances were to visit me, and so well pleased I was with their neighbourly, and friendly

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1 Daughter of a Portuguese merchant living in Antwerp. The brother was Gaspar. Evelyn visited the Duarte residence in 1641 (Grant, 136).
Visit, as their Good Company put me into a Frolick Humour, and for a Pastime I Sung to them some Pieces of Old Ballads; whereupon they desired me to Sing one of the Songs my Lord made, your Brother Set, and you were pleased to Sing; I told them first, I could not Sing any of those Songs, but if I could, I prayer them to Pardon me, for neither my Voice, nor my Skill, was not Proper, not Fit for them, and neither having Skill nor Voice, if I should offer to Sing any of them, I should so much Disadvantage my Lord's Poetical Wit, and your Brother's Musical Composition, as the Fancy would be Obscured in the one, and the Art in the other, nay, instead of Musick, I should make Discord, and instead of Wit, Sing Nonsense, knowing not how to Humour the Words, nor Relish the Notes, whereas your Harmonious Voice gives their Works both Grace and Pleasure, and Invites and Draws the Soul from all other Parts of the Body, with all the Loving and Amorous Passions, to sit in the Hollow Cavern of the Ear, as in a Vaulted Room, wherein it Listens with Delight, and is Ravished with Admiration; wherefore their Works and your Voice are only fit for the Notice of Souls, and not to be Sung to Dull, Unlistening Ears, whereas my Voice and those Songs, would be as Disagreeing as your Voice and Old Ballads, for the Vulgar and Plain a Voice is, the Better it is for an Old Ballad; for a Sweet Voice, with Quavers, and Trilles, and the like, would be as Improper for an Old Ballad, as Golden Laces on a Thrum Suit of Cloth, Diamond Buckles on Clouted or Cobbled Shoes, or a Feather on a Monks Hood; neither should Old Ballads be Sung so much in a Tone as in a Tune, which Tone is between Speaking and Singing, for the Sound is more than Plain Speaking, and less than Clear Singing, and the Running or Humming of a Wheel should be the Musick to the Tone, for the Humming is the Noise the Wheel makes in the Turning round, which is not like the Musick of the Spheres; and Ballads are only Proper to be Sung by Spinsters, and that only in Cold Winter Nights, when a Company of Good Huswifes Drawing a Thread of Flax; but as these Draw Threads of Flax, so Time Draws their Thread of Life, as their Web makes them Smocks, so Times Web makes them Deaths Shirts, to which, as to Death, afterwards those Good Huswifes are Married, and lie in the Bed of Earth, their House being the Grave, and their Dwelling in the Region of Oblivion; and this is the Fate of Poor Spinsters, and Ballad-Singers, whenas such a Singer as you, such a Composer as your Brother, such a Poet as my Lord, are Cloth'd with Renown, Marry Fame, and Live in Eternity, wherein Death hath no Power, Time no Limit, and Destinies Shears are Useless; but though I am willing to Sing an Old Ballad, yet not to Dwell in Oblivion, for I love your Company so well, as I would Live in Eternity with you, and would be Clothed as you, with Renown, for no Fashion'd Garments Please me so well, and though the Stuff or Substance is not the same with yours, the Substances being as Different as the Several Qualities, Faculties, Proportions, Virtues, or Sweet Graces, and the like, yet I will have as Good as I can get, I will Search Nature's Ware-house, or Shop, and though I cannot have a Piece or Measure of Silver Sound, or Broccaded Art, yet certainly I hope to get a Piece or Measure of Three-poil'd Philosophy, or Flower'd Fancy, for though my Lord hath taken many several Pieces or Packs out of Nature's Shop, and hath Inhanced the Prices, yet he must not Ingras this last Commodity to himself; 'Tis true, he hath Ingras'd two Commodines, as Weapons, and Riding, out of Art's Shop, the Hand-maid of Nature, yet sure he will be never able to Ingras all the several Kinds, and divers Sorts of Wares that Nature and Art yet have in their Store-houses. But I perceive that you three, as my Lord, You, and your Brother, do Traffick so much with Nature and Art, as I shall be but as a Pedlar; Howbeit, it is better to have some Dealings than none at all, and I will rather Trade with Toyes, than Starve for want of a Living, and in order to make my self Capable, I have bound my self Prentice to my Lord, and am willing to Serve out my Time, but my Lord is so Generous, as to give me my Freedom, and I must also desire you to give me at present so much Freedom, as to Subscribe my self,

Madam,
Your very faithful Friend and Servant.

LETTER 203

Madam,
You ought not to take it ill if I do not Obey your Commands, in Speaking to A.F. to Grant your Requests, by reason I think those Requests would Prejudice you, should they be Granted, so that if I Speak as you Desire, I must Plead against your Good, and my own Conscience, which I will never do, although I were sure to have your Hate, for I had rather you should Hate me for the Love and Esteem I have for you, than you should Love me for doing an Unfriendly Part or Act, for I Prefer your Good before your Love; neither must you take it ill that I send your Present back to you again, for it did appear to me like a Bribe; besides, I desire to keep my self free from such Obligations, your Love being all that I desire, and more worth than all the Service of my Life, should I Live
PLAYES
Written by the
Thrice NOBLE, ILLUSTRIOUS
AND
EXCELLENT PRINCES,
THE
LADY MARCHIONESS
OF
NEWCASTLE.

Printed by J. Warren, for John Martyn, James
Alleyne, and Tho. Dicks, at the Bell in
Saint Paul's Church Yard, 1664.
Enter the Lady Conjuror, the Lady Examination, and the Lady Solitary.

Examination. Where have you been Lady Conjuror?
Conjuror. Faith at Court, amongst a Company of Ladies and their Gallants.
Examination. And what was their pastime?
Conjuror. Why Singing, Dancing, Laughing, and Jeering; but I have seen an Angel amongst them.
Examination. How proceed?
Conjuror. Although not by the beat of my brows, yet by the expanse of my Spirits.
Examination. Proceed tell.
Conjuror. Why the Court Ladies in a stormfull jeering, for Courtriers love to put petitions out of Convenance if they can prayed me to sing an old Song out of a new Ballad, as knowing my voice fit for no better Songs but I told them, that if I did sing they should pay me for my pains for there was never a blind Beggar, or poor young Wench, that sings at a door, but had money given him; they told me they would give me a penny, I answered, that when they sung to Gentlemen or Ladies guns, that they had a calling at law given them, and unless they would give me twelvemote a piece I would not sing, so they went to the laughter sports, borrowed a Crown of the Gentlemen to give me.
Solitary. Oh that's the Court fashion, for the women to borrow of the men.
Conjuror. How should they live if they did not for in my Conscience they could not have made up twelve pence amongst a dozen of them, not a money, for their Cloaths though costly and rich, yet are worn upon truth, and as I said, I was to sing them a Song for my moneyso I sung them an old Song, the burden of the Song, Oh women, women, monstrous women, what do you want to do? but because the Song was against women, they would have bid me give them their money back again, I told them so I would not for twelvemote a piece for to keep it, since I gained it by an honest industry, and that thire that made a bargain must stick to it, then they told me, that if I would sing them a good old Song, they would give me another Crown, I told them I would have the money in hand, for fear they should dislike my Song when I had sung it, or at least to seem to dislike it, to keep their money, for although they were ladies, yet at least they borrowed another Crown to give me, thinking it did disgrace me, in that my voice was fit for nothing but old Ballads, for all their Admirers, and Courtey Servants, or Servants for Courtship were with them, so then I sung them Doctor Faustus that gave his Soul away to the Devil; for I knew Conjurers and Devils pleased women best.
Examination. They fright women.
Conjuror. By your favour, all Conjurers gain more by womens coming to them to know their Fortunes, and to find out their losses, than they do by men; for where one goeth to a Conjurer or Fortune-teller, their goeth a hundred
The Comical Halfl.

The Comical Halfl.

Enter the Lady Solitary, the Lady Examination, and the Lady Centurier.

Examination. How have you employed the ten shillings get by singing a

Solitary. I must tell you, I have been extremely troubled how to employ it, inform a Mind my Myth mind never been at rest, for their been such arguing and disputing and contradiction among my Thoughts, as I did very believe there would have been a mutiny in the head: for first I did resolve to put my ten shillings to poors use, and then I thought to build some Alms Houses, as building one long room like a Gallery, making in it several Partitions, and the outward door a-likes those Houses, or rather partitioned rooms, for poor old and infirm persons, that could not work nor beg for their livelihood, to live in: but when I had well considered that when I had built my Alms Houses, which is as I said one long Room divided by Partitions, I should have nothing left to maintain them, and they to have only House-room, and have neither Meat, Drink, Clothes, nor Fishing to feed them and to keep them from the injuries of the cold, having neither Fires nor Beds, I thought the Parish wherein they were Born, would better provide for them, so that instead of praying for me, they would Curse me, besides I considered, that after I was dead, had I means to leave an allowance, yet that it came for the Magistrates to chuse, those that should be put in they would leave out, and chuse idle young Husbands, or foul Blots to dwell therein, such as those Magistrates would wite, sometimes, to see what they did want, so as I let that design pass, then I thought to build a Church, and much were my thoughts concerned, whether the Roof should be flat, or vaulted, or sloping, but after I had resolved how the Roof should be, and where the Blessed and Quilt-room, I was sore perplexed in my Mind, as where or how to place the Pulpit, whether at the East or West end, or at a Corner in the Church, or at one of the sides of the Church close by the Wall, but at last I resolved it should be placed in the midst of the Church, in the very Centre, that the voice of the Miinister might spread round to the Circumference, so as all the Congregation might hear him; and when I considered that when my Church was built there was neither Benches, Pews, nor Thrones, nor any allowance for the Minister, and that there was none that did or would preach merrily for God's sake, but for gains sake, as to have a maintenance thereby, or some advancement therefrom, I desisted from that design 3, then I thought to build a Bedlam, and be the Keeper myself, but I considered that if any of the mad folks should get loose they might kill me, besides they think so horribly, and require so much cleaning, not being capable of keeping themselves clean, as I resolved not to go forward with that design 3, then I thought to build a free School, and to be the chief Tuteur of my self, but when I considered the confus'd noise the Scholars make reading all at once, that neither I could hear nor they understand what they read, I thought it would be to no purpose, because the Scholars would profit little by their reading, and then I should be thought an ignorant Tuteur; at that I thought to give my ten shillings to the poor Beggars, but I considered the Alms that was given to Beggars did more harm than good.

E 1 f f f f
Prologue, spoken by a young Lady.

Ladies.

Ye are welcome, — and we hope y'are all sharpset,
Good Appetites excite a honest Treat.
This was intended for our selves alone,
From whom our Masts' no censoring frown:
But awd, and dead'd by your piercing eye,
(Fors, though expected, you like Death surprise.)
They humbly bow, — and beg a kind excuse,
For strained'time, and a disorder'd Haste;
Hoping, the want of prudence, firing steel,
And glorious Scener, may make our failings less:
As if defects could purchase good success.

This might appease an accidental Guest:
But you're invited, and expect a Feast:
Enlarged hopes, and longing looks y'have brought,
Fine Dances, Songs, and Show, swell ev'ry thought:
Such things our Masts' meant, but prove too fast
To win the prize, we fall with too much haste.
Like eager Gardens, that make Nature poet
The Flow'rs to early births, which being forc'd,
Their sweet perfume and native beautie's lost.
If we miscarry, let them feel the smart,
They hardly gave us time to read a Part:
Yet — if we're out, — I fear 'twill break my heart.

Courage! be gone dull fear, and fallen doubt:
The Cause! the Cause we fight for, still our hour.

Battles Triumph, — Beauty! your joy and care,
The crown of Peace, and the reward of War.

Ladies, Your instinct your affiance calls,
Your Empire's lost if Beauties Triumph falls:
If any Lover his applause denies,
Kill the Rebel, — stab him with your eye.
Sound a charge, — we'll not take no quarter.
She that falls is Education's Martyr.
Beauties Triumph.

Song in praise of Beauty.

When Beauty arm'd with smiling eyes,
And in toy'ring features slight,
For musing hearts to Ambush lyes,
She beats the outlines, cheats the wise,
And gives a Throne in every breath;
To so many bright forms she nurses her hope,
No God nor man can ever escape.

Who guessing looks and shrill displates,
She wounds with more Matyshock Art,
And where the brightness never времен,
Such a view as love to fight in vain,
As can displates the hardest bear's
To keep in her cunning, so sweet to her eyes,
That all male is subject to Beauties felt yokes,
But oh how sweet to the passage,
The forest with its beauty move,
The joy no language can express,
Nor any match make mortal guess.
That love not try so sweetly alone,
Such dispensers of pleasure from beauty proceed,
That none but the wise are happy indeed.

The Lady dances in honour of Venus. — Exeunt.

Song by Paris.

The wishing the great
To Beauty subdue,
It reigns in the sky, and conquers in fight;
Then let it reign its triumph, for then,
And Deity shall Pave and V. fame subdue.
\[Sweet are her charms,\]
\[As guilt without term,\]
The Splendor of Empire and Treasures of Arms.

Beauties Triumph.

Oh let me be lost in my dear Oenone,
And give the Ambush the most and soon;
Paris gives the Golden Apple to Venus, at which
Juno and Venus step to Harris.

Juno. Thy fondness, Gilly Shepherd, shall destroy
The last enlarged Monarche of Troy
When Grecian swords and Fire thy home devour,
No God shall guard thee from my injurious power.

Pallas. O ye admittance minds prepare,
To urge with noise and destructive war,
Neglected Wisdom near that fatal hour,
Shall leave the City, when I quit the Town.

Exeunt Juno, Pallas.

Venus. Siena's proud daughter, thy office is,
Go mind thy match-making and Multetime,
And what's dance Pallas with her pining train?
A grateful Infid, bride of Jove's hot brain,
Go threaten Children with your bugbear rods,
My Son, my Husband, and Gallum are Gods.
Love! — Love's thy Province! — let Fools and Snobs care,
I rule the mighty Gods of Fire, Love, and War. — Exit Venus.

Song between Paris and Oenone.

Paris. To the Clover, gentle Love, let us be going,
Where the kind Spring and wind all day are moving,
He with soft glowing looks, throws to the tender hair,
She would not, though her senses, have him forsake her.

Oenone. But a circling ring returning,
And to feeling whisperers revealing,
The beauty and part of it abound for,
Fain would it not dare not stop.

Paris. With it he gets all the sweet on the loves spreading,
Which he brings on his wings where his Olymp's bidding,
In some deep bottom sleep, how Nature feeds her,
To the green Willow she be sernades her.

Oenone.
Venus's song

Beauties

Triumph

His Beauty, ran'd with feeling Fire, and in burning Passion dressed; for

warming Hearts as Am—and yet, do bet the Venetian, cheats the World, and

gives a Threnos in every Breast; To one busy bright form she all near her Shape, so

God, do so He-so, can e'er change, Who planting Venice, and March, did, she

wounds with more keen—Dick Art; and when the wrygley Man proves vain, such

Peaceably Upon Earth; as eat dis-solve the sad Christ Heart. So

deep in her Charming, to Suen is her hand, that all might be subject to

Beauties fell Yoke. But, oh! have sent him to pull, the greater Wilson Beauty move; the

joy on Language can ex-prize, nor e'er wrygley briskuch push, that

has not try'd So-called Love. Such Reapers of Flowers from Beauty proceed, that

none but True Lovers are happy indeed.

Mr. John Hampers
Epilogue, spoken by a young Lady.

Like cloister'd Nuns with virtuous zeal inspir'd,
From publick noise, and vicious evil retir'd,
Here we have all that's by the good admir'd,
'Tis advantageous, sweet, and innocent.
And when our thoughts to serious things are bent,
One in rich works with lively colours tells
Locrine's Rape, or mourning Philomel's
Each shaft bebolder flies and drops a tear,
To burn the well-wrought silk they scarce forbear,
So sad and moving does the work appear :
Oh that the Ravisher were here, one crick,
Thus would I rend the bloudy Tyrian's eyes,
Then for his crime some harmless Flower dyes,
Whole falling head, as if indeed twice pain'd,
She 'd dewy tears upon the marble's hand.
Some Hero's pride in sacred Veil kept long,
Another ring to th' Lute ———
While ev'ry string seems turn'd into a tongue,
And finds soft echoes to the joyfull song,
Another Servant mind more pleasure takes,
In various forms to mould the painted Wax,
Such shape, such beauty, in each piece is shown,
Nature the pale, or blushing on her own,
To see her pride by curious Art out-done.
While burning furnace, with venom'd wing,
Hunts clam'nous pleasures that in Ciren ring,
Thus we enjoy the sweets without the thing,
When more age with flaring care's oppressed,
Toil'd with false joys, 'twill lastly be confir'd,
Of all our lives these happy hours were best.

Kendra Preston Leonard

Readings


“The same day, after dinner, my Lord Huntsdean drew me up to a quiet gallery that I might hear some music (but he said he durst now avow it), where I might hear the Queen play upon the virginals. After I had hearkened a while, I took by the tapestry that hung before the door of the chamber, and, seeing her back was towards the door, I entered within the chamber, and stood a pretty space, hearing her play excellently well; but she left off immediately so soon as she turned her about, and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alleging, she was not used to play before men, but only when she was solitary to shun melancholy.”

Another version of this appears in The Select circulating library, (Philadelphia: A. Waldie, 1838), 228:

“The following anecdote has often been quoted: but it is sufficiently curious and characteristic to bear repetition. It is contained in Sir John Melvil’s Memoirs, which contain an account of his embassy from Mary of Scotland. After Elizabeth had asked him many questions about her beautiful rival — such as, how his queen dressed, what was the colour of her hair, which of them was the taller, &c., she asked, “what kind of exercises she used’! I answered,” says Melvil, “that, when I received my dispatch, the queen was lately come from the Highland hunting; that when her more serious affairs permitted, she was taken up with reading of histories; that sometimes she recreated herself with playing on the lute and virginals. She asked if she played well! I said, reasonably for a woman. The same day, after dinner, my Lord of Hunsden drew me up to a quiet gallery, that I might hear some music, (but he said that he durst not avow it,) where I might hear the queen play upon the virginals. After I had hearkened awhile, I took by the tapestry that hung before the door of the chamber, and seeing her back was toward the door, I entered within her chamber, and stood a pretty space, hearing her play excellently well. But she left of immediately as soon as she turned about and saw me. She appeared to be surprised to see me, and came forward, seeming to strike me with her hand, alleging, she used not to play before men, but when she was solitary, to shun melancholy. She asked, how I came there! I answered, as I was walking with Lord Hunsden, as we passed by the chamber door, I heard such a melody as ravished me, whereby I was drawn in ere I knew how; excusing my fault of homeliness, as being brought up in the court of France where such freedom was allowed; declaring myself willing to endure what kind of punishment her majesty should be pleased to inflict upon me for so great an offence. Then she sat down low upon a cushion, and I on my knees by her; but with her own hand she gave me a cushion to lay under my knee, which at first I refused, but she compelled me to take it. She enquired whether my queen or she played best! In that I found myself compelled to give her the praise.
"A MS. book of music compiled for her majesty's own use, and known by the name of "Queen Elizabeth's Virginal Book," is still preserved in the British museum. It contains compositions for that instrument by the principal masters of the time—Tallis, Bird, Bull, &c., some of which are so difficult, that they would puzzle a Cramer or a Moscheles. It is a mistake to suppose that the accumulation of difficulties, either in vocal or instrumental music, is a vice peculiar to recent times."

Film Clips

*Elizabeth R* Episode 1 (BBC, 1971):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UFmZwuy0bZ0&feature=related, beginning- 1:00.

This clip shows Elizabeth playing while discussing matters with Cecil, who turns pages for her. Although Elizabeth plays here in Cecil's presence, she claims in the second clip that she never plays for men. The same music is used later when Elizabeth is shown outshooting Dudley at archery, and the recurring image/sound of Elizabeth playing while making conversation appears to signify her ability to separate tasks and/or carry out multiple, complex action and thoughts simultaneously. It, like the clip below, shows that—in this version of Elizabeth's life, at least—the boundaries between private and public, or intimate and political, were impossible to maintain.

*Elizabeth R* Episode 2 (BBC, 1971):
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_KdNbdolyc&feature=related, 4:02-4:56

This clip dramatizes the anecdote detailed above, in which John Melvil, on an embassy from Mary of Scots, is draw into Elizabeth's chambers while she is playing, and she makes the statement that she does not play in the presence of men. Nonetheless, she continues to play, bridging or perhaps dismissing the boundaries between private spaces and public ones.