

## *The Gentleman's Journal* (1692-1694) as a source of English secular song

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For scholars of seventeenth-century English music, and not least those concerned with the Restoration period, a miscellany such as *The Gentleman's Journal* may, by its very nature, at first appear an unlikely source of vocal music. In his standard text on English song from Dowland to Purcell, Ian Spink totally ignores it as a source of music.<sup>1</sup> It tends to have been dismissed also by other recent scholars such as Margaret Laurie, who has assigned *The Gentleman's Journal* a high level of authority in some instances, but has disregarded it in others.<sup>2</sup> It will be the purpose of this article to reassess the importance of *The Gentleman's Journal* as a source of English secular song by placing it in its social context, and in the context of other sources of the period.

*The Gentleman's Journal* was published in monthly instalments between 1692 and 1694. This short-lived miscellany was the predecessor of modern magazines, and contained poems, book reviews, puzzles, gossip, and articles on such diverse topics as the movement of the tides, and the equality of the sexes. The journal has been widely used as a source of comment about music and musicians of the period. It is, for instance, the source of the often quoted statement that the countertenor solo, 'Tis nature's voice', in Purcell's *Ode for St Cecilia's Day* (1692), was 'sung with incredible graces by Mr. Purcell himself'.<sup>3</sup> What is not generally known is that it also included a total of 87 secular songs, whose composers ranged from the foremost of the period, such as Purcell (20 songs) and Blow (7 songs), to lesser-known figures such as Raphael Courtville, Johann Franck and Samuel Akeroyde.

The background of this London journal is not without colourful incident. Its editor, Peter Anthony Motteux, died in 1718, in what have been described as 'exquisitely unfortunate circumstances'.<sup>4</sup> Although the exact events surrounding his demise are not entirely clear, his death in a house of ill-fame, and the ensuing murder trial of the madam and others, became something of a *cause célèbre*. This was due in part to the bizarre nature of the death, and also to the fact that Motteux was well

known as the editor of *The Gentleman's Journal*, and also as a dramatist and East India merchant.<sup>5</sup>

A Huguenot, Motteux had come to England as a refugee from the persecution that members of his faith suffered after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. Due to the paucity of records, it can only be presumed that he made his living, at least in the first instance, by following in the footsteps of his father, who had been a haberdasher in his home town of Rouen.<sup>6</sup>

*The Gentleman's Journal* was Motteux's first excursion into the English literary scene. It was his first step on the road to becoming a successful dramatist, enabling him to further his associations with other writers, composers and patrons. The title and contents pages from the April 1692 issue give some indication of the miscellaneous nature of the contents of the journal (Example 1).

Motteux himself admitted in the first issue (January 1692) that he had modelled the epistolary nature of *The Gentleman's Journal* on the French journal *Le Mercure Galant*. The latter included news of fashionable society, and 'was designed for the smart set and it was they that made contributions to it'.<sup>7</sup> The contents of *The Gentleman's Journal* indicate a similar readership, although it is difficult at times to ascertain the identity of contributors.

Any attempt to reassess the importance of *The Gentleman's Journal* as a source of English secular song must first view it in its social context. The inclusion of songs in Motteux's journal, and the publication of song books in general, clearly reflected the enormous popularity of such songs in theatres, concert rooms and coffee houses, which had become meeting places for fashionable society, providing a forum for the exposition of new songs.<sup>8</sup> Moving in such circles, Motteux appears to have had access to new songs emanating from a wide circle of musicians.

Biographical connections between Motteux and the composers who contributed to *The Gentleman's Journal* are not always obvious. One that is well documented is that of Robert King, who contributed fourteen songs to *The Gentleman's*

THE  
Gentleman's Journal  
OR THE  
MONTHLY  
MISCELLANY.

By Way of  
LETTER  
TO A  
Gentleman in the COUNTRY.

Consisting of  
News, History, Philosophy, Poetry,  
Musick, Translations, &c.

APRIL 1692.

*Plus multo tibi debiturus hic est,  
Quam debet Domino suo libellus.*

Licensed, April 13<sup>th</sup>, 1692. R. Midgley.

LONDON  
Printed, For Rich. Parker; And are to be Sold by Rich. Baldwin,  
near the Oxford Arms in Warwick-lane. 1692.

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*Journal*. It is likely that King and Motteux had a close association, for Motteux asserts in the May 1692 issue that the song 'Since Spartan Heroes were so dull' is by 'my worthy Friend Mr. *Robert King*, whose admirable Talent in Music is well known to you, and all Lovers of that Art'.<sup>9</sup>

Another associate of Motteux was Alexander Damascene, who replaced Purcell as a counter-tenor in the Chapel Royal upon Purcell's death in 1695.<sup>10</sup> Damascene appears to have been a close friend of Motteux, who wrote the words of two of the four songs by Damascene that were published in the journal. One of them, 'Come beat the drum, trumpets sound all around', which was later known as 'Sir John Guise's March', appeared in the issue for March, 1692. In that issue Motteux wrote: 'the first Song which I send you is set by my good Friend, Mr. Damascene. I wrote the Words to the March which was made for a Person of Quality [presumably Sir John Guise], I do not doubt but it will please you'.<sup>11</sup>

Biographical connections and social context cannot in themselves establish the importance of *The Gentleman's Journal* as a source of English

secular song, for it is necessary also to place it in the context of other sources of the period, both manuscript and printed.

The latter half of the seventeenth century had seen a dramatic expansion in music printing in England. Between 1651 and 1720 song books were published at an average rate of three or four a year, but the most productive period was the last decade of the century. Day and Murrie's standard bibliographical reference, *English Song-Books: 1651-1720* shows that the average rate of production in the final eight years of the seventeenth century more than doubled to nine books per year.<sup>12</sup> For this reason, it is not surprising that 54 of the 87 songs that appeared in *The Gentleman's Journal* are also to be found in many other song books published between 1692 and 1720 (the number of concordances is listed in Table 1).<sup>13</sup>

As can be seen from this table, there are 17 song books of the period providing concordances with *The Gentleman's Journal*. These issued from a small group of publishers. Of the 17, the largest number of concordances appeared in the series entitled *Wit and Mirth: or, Pills to Purge Melan-*

Title of song book (and year)		Concordances
<i>The Banquet of Musick</i> - Book 6	(1692)	1
<i>Comes Amoris</i> - Book 4	(1693)	7
<i>Thesaurus Musicus</i> - Book 1	(1693)	5
<i>Comes Amoris</i> - Book 5	(1694)	3
<i>Thesaurus Musicus</i> - Book 2	(1694)	7
<i>Joyful Cuckoldom</i>	(1671[sic])	5
<i>A Second Book of Songs</i>	(1695)	4
<i>Thesaurus Musicus</i> - Book 3	(1695)	2
<i>Orpheus Britannicus</i>	(1698)	6
<i>Mercurius Musicus</i>	(1699)	1
<i>Pills to Purge Melancholy</i>	(1699)	8
<i>Orpheus Britannicus</i> - Book 2	(1702)	1
<i>Orpheus Britannicus</i> - 2nd Ed.	(1706)	6
<i>Pills to Purge Melancholy</i> - Vol. 4	(1706)	2
<i>Pills to Purge Melancholy</i> - Vol. 5	(1714)	20
<i>Songs compleat, Pleasant and Divertive</i>	(1719)	8
<i>Pills to Purge Melancholy</i> - Vol. 6	(1720)	31

Table 1: Printed concordances for songs in *The Gentleman's Journal*



A Song set by Mr. R. Courville.

W HILE, Ga—l—the—4, you de—fign to gain 1  
 Conquest o're all Hearts; take heed! Tell you your own re—  
 fign, Love play's not Id—

Example 2a: *The Gentleman's Journal* November 1693.

W HILE, Ga—l—the—4, you de—fign to gain 1 Conquest o're all Hearts;  
 take heed! Tell you your own re—fign, Love play's not Id—ly with his Darts  
 your Love—te you pre—fer  
 By Mr. Lang 1694.

Example 2b: *Thesaurus Musicus* Book 2 (1694).

A SONG, Set by Mr. Courville.

W HILE, Ga—l—the—4 you de—fign to gain, a Conquest o'er all Hearts; take  
 heed! Tell you your own re—fign, Love play's not Id—ly with his  
 Darts. Be

Example 2c: *Mercurius Musicus* (1699).

A Song set by Mr. Henry Purcell, the words by Colonel Heveningham.

IF Mu-sick be the food of Love, Sing on, sing on, sing on, sing on, till I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy: For then my list-ning Soul you move, for then my list-ning Soul you move to plea-sures that can ne-ver cloy. Your Eyes, your Meen, your Tongue declare that you are Mu-sick e-v'ry where. Your Eyes, your Meen your Tongue

Example 3a: *The Gentleman's Journal* June 1692.

IF Mu-sick be the food of Love, Sing on, sing on, sing on, sing on, till I am fill'd, am fill'd with Joy; For then my list-ning Soul you move, for then my list-ning Soul you move, with pleasures that can ne-ver cloy; Your Eyes, your Meen, your Tongue declare, that you are Mu-sick e-v'ry where.

II.

Pleasures invade both Eye, and Ear,  
 So fierce the transports are, they wound;  
 And all my Senses feasted are,  
 Tho' yet the Treat is only Sound.  
 Sure I must perish by your Charms,  
 Unless you save me in your Armes.

Example 3b: *Comes Amoris* Book 4 (1693).

and 'lest' respectively (Example 2c).

Even leaving aside any direct relationships between sources, comparison of concordances in at least one instance reveals the worth of *The Gentleman's Journal* on purely internal musical grounds. The well-known song by Purcell, 'If Musick be the food of Love', had its first appearance in print in *The Gentleman's Journal* in June 1692. This song was subsequently included both in the fourth book of *Comes Amoris* (1693), and in the first volume of *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1699).

Example 3 shows the song as it appears in *The Gentleman's Journal*, and in *Comes Amoris*.<sup>16</sup> Apart from the obvious difference of key, the discrepancies between the two are relatively minor. In the notes to the collected edition of Purcell's solo songs, Margaret Laurie suggests that the version in *The Gentleman's Journal* 'is the more polished, and probably later version', although she also admits the possibility that the version in *Comes Amoris* might be 'a pirated copy decorated by someone else'.<sup>17</sup> Some of the differences she cites as reasons for these judgements include the elaboration at bars 5-6 for the text 'I am fill'd, am fill'd with joy', the appoggiaturas in the version in *Comes Amoris* at bars 13-14 for the text 'Your Eyes, your meen, your Tongue declare', and the ornamented bass line in the journal's written-out repeated section. These differences (bracketed in Example 3) could well be explained as written-out elaborations indicating contemporary performance practice, especially as the degree and nature of the elaboration differ in the two sources.

Perhaps the most obvious importance of *The Gentleman's Journal* as a source of English secular song has so far remained unmentioned. Apart from the 54 songs for which printed concordances can be found, there are 33 songs remaining that are unique to *The Gentleman's Journal*. Five of these are songs by Purcell, two of which are mock songs, that is, songs which have had the words fitted to pre-existing music. There are six songs by John Blow unique to this source, of which one is a mock song. There are unique works by a further eight composers, comprising nine songs by Johann Wolfgang Frank, four by Robert King, four by Samuel Akeroyde, and one each by Raphael Courtville, Alexander Damascene, C. Dryden, James Hart and Nicola Matteis.

In examining the *unica*, it is especially interesting that there are entire individual issues of the

journal whose songs do not appear elsewhere. These songs include one each by Blow and Purcell in both the February 1693 and July 1694 issues. While the failure of later compilers to reprint the works of 'lesser' composers may account for their unique survival in *The Gentleman's Journal*, the same could hardly be said of the works by Blow and Purcell. It may be that later compilers did not have access to these particular issues of the journal, and their survival in Motteux's miscellany only serves to highlight its importance as a source of English secular song.

The music of Purcell's contemporaries, such as those whose work appeared in *The Gentleman's Journal*, has been discussed in some detail by Spink, who does not appear to have a very high regard for most of it.<sup>18</sup> While the veneration of Purcell as 'the true genius of the Restoration'<sup>19</sup> might be justified, Spink's personality-centred approach does not serve to provide a full assessment of the milieu in which these composers worked. As several of them wrote songs that were being reprinted in collections up to 30 years after they were written, it would appear that contemporary market forces saw it differently.

By examining the vocal music in a single source such as *The Gentleman's Journal*, we are able to gain a more balanced picture of the musical world that pervaded the theatres, concert rooms and coffee houses of Restoration London, a world in which Motteux's journal was a seminal force.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ian Spink, *English Song: Dowland to Purcell* (London: Batsford, 1974), pp. 261-70.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Laurie, ed., *Secular Songs for Solo Voice*, vol. 25 of *The Works of Henry Purcell* (Sevenoaks, Kent: Novello, 1985).

<sup>3</sup> This statement has been the subject of much debate. The full sentence, with original punctuation, reads 'The following Ode was admirably set to music by Mr. Henry Purcell, and performed twice with universal applause, particularly the second stanza, which was sung with incredible graces by Mr. Purcell himself'. *The Gentleman's Journal* (November 1692), p. 18.

<sup>4</sup> 'Motteux, Peter Anthony', *The Cambridge Guide to Literature in English*, ed. Ian Ousby, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 693.

<sup>5</sup> G. A. Aitkin, 'Motteux, Peter Anthony', *Dictionary of National Biography* (1917), p. 1094.

<sup>6</sup> Aitkin, 'Motteux, Peter Anthony', p. 1092.

<sup>7</sup> Dorothy Foster, 'The Earliest Precursor of our Present-day Monthly Miscellanies', *PMLA* 32 (1917), p. 23.

<sup>8</sup> Henry Raynor, *A Social History of Music* (London:

Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), p. 262.

<sup>9</sup> Peter Anthony Motteux, *The Gentleman's Journal* (May 1692), p. 26.

<sup>10</sup> Ian Spink, 'Damascene, Alexander', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie, vol. 5 (London: Macmillan, 1980), p. 170.

<sup>11</sup> Motteux, *The Gentleman's Journal* (March 1692), p. 26.

<sup>12</sup> Cyrus Lawrence Day and Eleanore Boswell Murrie, *English Song Books, 1651-1702: A Bibliography* (London: Bibliographical Society at Oxford University Press, 1940).

<sup>13</sup> Complete details of concordances are given in Appendix C of Christopher Mason, 'The Gentleman's Journal (1692-1694) as a Source of English Secular Song', B.Mus. (Hons) dissertation, Australian Catholic University (Vic.), 1992.

<sup>14</sup> This matter is pursued in more detail in my M.Mus. dissertation (in progress).

<sup>15</sup> The only song book in this table that seems out of place is *Songs compleat, Pleasant and Divertive*. It is in fact the first volume of the 1720 edition of *Pills to Purge Melancholy*, and was obviously prepared from the first volume of *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1699).

<sup>16</sup> *Pills to Purge Melancholy* (1699) may be dismissed for the purposes of this discussion as it obviously derives from *Comes Amoris*, and includes only the melody line.

<sup>17</sup> Laurie, *Secular Songs for Solo Voice*, p. 300.

<sup>18</sup> 'And so on . . . There seems little point in continuing this catalogue of mediocrity. Luminaries such as these shine only to the extent that they reflect Purcell's brightness.' Spink, *English Song*, p. 258. See also pp. 251-52, 255-56, and elsewhere

<sup>19</sup> Manfred Bukofzer, *Music in the Baroque Era* (London: Dent, 1947), p. 203.