

2005

# John Travers: 18 Canzonets for Two and Three Voices (1746)

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## Recommended Citation

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## John Travers' Canzonets and their Georgian Context

Emanuel Rubin, University of Massachusetts

As the Baroque drew to a close, England's native composers, outmaneuvered by foreigners who dominated the opera and concert stage, found a voice of their own by tapping into the rich tradition of Elizabethan and Restoration part song. John Travers' delightful collection of canzonets for two and three voices with continuo is typical of this neglected body of music, and it should disabuse musicians once and for all of the canard that there was "no English music after Purcell." At the historical moment when abstract instrumental music was taking continental Europe by storm, the English, with their long-standing admiration of poetry and song, devoted their energy to cultivation of cleverly wrought part songs for highly skilled amateur singers. In that "Silver Age" of British poetry, lyrics by Addison, Chatterton, Johnson, MacPherson, Pope, Prior, Ramsay, Shenstone, and Smollett were lovingly set as witty canzonets, sentimental glees, and rowdy catches in a flowering of vocal ensemble compositions unmatched anywhere else. While serving the ends of nationalism on several levels, the part song culture also played a little-appreciated role in retarding English acceptance of the instrumental symphony and sonata that were the hallmark of what came to be called the Classical style. The music of these generations, undervalued or ignored for more than two centuries, is an unsung treasure.

There were a whole complex of reasons for that, but the two principal ones can be summarized as the impact of foreign ideas and musicians, or "British xenophilia," to borrow Nicholas Temperley's well-chosen term, and the rise of abstract instrumental forms that would soon form the backbone of Romanticism.

Free-wheeling Georgian capitalism produced a level of economic well-being that spread more deeply into British society than could be found in most of Europe. London's rich concert

venues attracted the finest performers from all over Europe to its vigorous concert life.<sup>1</sup> It was the influx of foreign composers, though, who arguably had the greatest impact on English musical life. George Fredrick Handel, Johann Christian Bach and Karl Friedrich Abel were more-or-less permanent fixtures, but a whole parade of visitors from Bononcini to Pleyel and Haydn found welcome in London. Even as early as 1728 Daniel Defoe was decrying the “heaps of foreign musicians” that flooded the capital.<sup>2</sup> Romain Rolland saw Georgian music as having been completely subjugated by foreigners:

At that moment Handel appeared. He arrived in London in December 1710 . . . Geminiani moved there in 1715, G. B. Bononcini in 1716, Ariosti en 1730, Porpora en 1730, Galuppi en 1741—England was conquered.<sup>3</sup>

Handel, as skillful in self-promotion as in composition, became a figure of inestimable importance in the history of English music. Arriving just in time to take advantage of the burgeoning newspaper and public relations enterprise made possible by the high rates of British literacy, he quickly grasped the enterprenurial nature of the English scene, and through industry, talent, and force of character, dominated the musical life of the British Isles for almost 50 years. Indeed, English adulation for the great man approached a frenzy, culminating in the manic Handel Commemoration of 1784, the largest music festival yet celebrated in Europe, held 25 years after his

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<sup>1</sup>To list a handful of foreign musicians based in London: Dussek, Corri, and Clementi were just three of the outstanding pianists. The brilliant cellist Cervetti with his son, and violinists such as Geminiani and Barthélémon, established high standards of string playing. Virtually every singer of standing in Europe was engaged at one point or another for the opera, with many, such as Guadagni, Marchesi, Pacchiarotti, Tenducci, Grassi, Mara, and le Brun either settling in England permanently or remaining for long residencies.

<sup>2</sup>Daniel Defoe, *Augusta Triumphans: Or, The Way to Make London the Most Flourishing City in the Universe* (London, 1728), 17. Quoted in Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: University Press, 2001), 13.

<sup>3</sup>Romain Rolland, “L’Opera anglais au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle,” *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire*, ed. Albert Lavignac (Paris: Librairie Ch. Delagrave, 1913). “A ce moment parut Handel. Il arriva à Londres, en Décembre 1710 . . . Geminiani devait s’installer en 1715, G. B. Bononcini en 1716, APriosti en 1730, Porpora en 1730, Galuppi en 1741--L’Angleterre était conquise.”

death on the assumed (but incorrect) date of the great man's centenary. A Handel adoration and biography by John Mainwaring came out as early as 1760,<sup>4</sup> and the first collected edition of his—or anybody else's—works began appearing in 1786 under the redaction of Samuel Arnold.

Imagine, then, young Georgian composers attempting to establish themselves at the heart of the first true capitalist state of modern times, the fastest-growing capital in Europe, and the first country in which the enterprenurial public concert became a practical reality. The second-class standing of local composers was due in no small part to the influence of an imported German princeling as king in 1710. George I brought with him the tastes and practices of a petty German principality. He had no English, but that was the least of his problems. He had no understanding or appreciation of the Island nation's history or traditions, and dithered between being manipulated by self-serving British courtiers and asserting himself willfully. The same economic vitality that engendered a vigorous musical life outside the royal court also shunted most native composers offstage, as court and nobility vied with one another to host the continent's greatest musicians in private concerts.

George's German-speaking court also brought with it a passion for Italian opera, a grotesquely expensive, florid, and often silly import that captured the imagination of the nobility and the ridicule of everyone else. Brought to London specifically to write Italian operas, Johann Christian Bach soon turned to concert promotion with his Potsdam friend Karl Friederich Abel. Even Mozart's English student and friend, Stephen Storace, was unable to break into the Italian cabal, although he was the son of an Italian immigrant musician, had been trained in Italy, and was fluent in that language. It was not until after 1761, when George III, the first of the Hanovers to speak English as his primary language, took the throne, that the fad for Italian opera began to falter,

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<sup>4</sup>John Mainwaring, *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederick Handel* (London: R. & J. Dodsbury, 1760).

in spite of earlier box-office assaults by such English successes as John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* of 1728, or verbal batterings at the hands of Addison and Steele in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*.

The second, even more powerful reason for subversion of English music was the rise of abstract instrumental forms as the *sine qua non* of musical stature. From the time of the Winchester Troper to Henry Purcell and John Blow at the end of the seventeenth century, English music had a long history of brilliant achievements by some of the best-known names in music history.<sup>5</sup> The great Renaissance masses, English madrigal, lute song, church anthem, masque, and court ode were all evidence of splendid music created for an enthusiastic, supportive audience. Vocal music took pride of place: music and poetry were as indissolubly linked in England as in ancient Greece. With a handful of notable exceptions, instrumental works were primarily conceived as support for vocal: overtures, accompaniments, etc. Contrary to the shift toward instrumental forms that marked the mainstream of European music in the eighteenth century, it is clear that "acceptance of instrumental music as an expression absolute and complete within itself did not take place [in England] until after 1830."<sup>6</sup>

To an extent that seems surprising today, a large segment of the English audience remained rather indifferent to the growing importance of instrumental music, except as a background against which the voice could be projected. Sir John Hawkins spoke for that viewpoint when he scowled, as late as 1788, that "The multifarious [symphonic] productions of [Johann Christian] Bach and [Karl Friedrich] Abel . . . were heard, and consigned to oblivion."<sup>7</sup> While his opinion may have been

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<sup>5</sup>To mention only a few: John Dunstable and Walter Frye (c1450-75), William Cornysh (c1465-1523), John Taverner (c1490-1545), Christopher Tye (c1505-72), Thomas Tallis (c1505-82), William Byrd (1543-1623), and Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625).

<sup>6</sup>Jamie Croy Kassler, *The Science of Music in Britain, 1740-1830*, 2 vols. (New York: Garland, 1979), 1:xii (n. 8).

<sup>7</sup>In William Boyce, *Cathedral Music, Being a Collection in Score of the Most Valuable and Useful Compositions for That Service, by the Several English Masters of the Last Two Hundred Years. The Whole Selected and Carefully Revis'd by the Late Dr. William Boyce*, 3 vols. (London, John Ashley, 1788). Preface.

overstated for rhetorical effect, it did reflect the priorities of London's audiences of the day. That same year Scottish publisher George Thomson encountered a member of the Edinburgh Music Society after a concert, who asked him, "Whose music is that now?," to which the publisher replied, "Haydn's, sir." "Poor newfangled stuff," the first scoffed, "I hope I shall never hear it again!"<sup>8</sup>

Records of prestigious London series such as the Ancient Concerts or the Professional Concerts indicate that vocal music in any form outdrew instrumental concerts, while until the very end of the century, patronage for English orchestral and chamber music played a poor second fiddle when compared to most Continental centers. No less a figure than William Crotch, first principal of the Royal Academy of Music and an active composer himself, argued for "[The] Superiority of Vocal over Instrumental Music"<sup>9</sup> in a public lecture of 1824. English composers of the period who practiced the concerted instrumental style can almost be counted on one hand. Boyce and Wesley come to mind, as does the better-known Thomas Augustine Arne; but none of those devoted themselves as whole-heartedly to the sonata or symphony as did Haydn, Mozart or other mainland contemporaries on the mainland. The developments that took place in Great Britain in the eighteenth century must be seen in the light of that bias to be fully understood.

By the late nineteenth century, in the light of the different direction taken by the continental mainstream, all of Europe—including the British—was convinced of England's innate unmusicality. The great French historian Elie Halévy suggested that only some "racial incapacity" could "explain . . . the worthlessness of British music,"<sup>10</sup> and at the opening of the twentieth century the English Reverend Hugh Reginald Haweis wrote, "The English are not a musical people and the English are

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<sup>8</sup>David Johnson, *Music and Society in Lowland Scotland in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 41.

<sup>9</sup>In a lecture of 28 May 1824, on Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, the fourth in a series of public lectures on music given by Crotch at the Royal Harmonic Institution that season. Noted in *Harmonicon* 18 (June 1824).

<sup>10</sup>*A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. E. I. Walker & D. Barker (London: Ernest Benn, 1924), 1: 491.

not an artistic people . . . It cannot be affirmed that Englishmen are, or ever were, either one or the other.”<sup>11</sup> British musicologist Henry Davey lamented of his Georgian forebears, “How the aristocracy in those patriotic times would have rejoiced at the appearance of an English Mozart! But he did not appear.”<sup>12</sup> Clearly, what Davey was seeking was not there—but then, what was? The answer is that a whole host of English composers were active, but what they wrote did not reflect the main course of European music. Instead, they went out of their way, in great part, to cultivate part singing for sophisticated—and surprisingly skilled—amateurs. Conditioned, as we have been, to value abstract instrumental music as the measure of compositional achievement, we have overlooked the part song since the middle of the nineteenth century, downgraded music that did not aspire to the sublime, and pooh-poohed music that purported simply to give pleasure. We have paid a high price in ignorance for such rarified tastes, and a part of that loss was the charming music of Georgian England.

Composers of Georgian part-songs visualized themselves revivifying an earlier social singing tradition. Cromwell's Protectorate may have delayed the arrival of opera, inhibited development of the anthem, and caused the destruction of many English church organs, but the Lord Protector did not so much prohibit gentleman's singing clubs as circumscribe their repertory. With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, composition of exuberant part songs was resumed, but in the first half of the eighteenth century, singing clubs were drowned out by the clamor for opera. The impulse was not entirely suppressed, though, and it soon resurfaced. In the hiatus between the turn of the eighteenth century and the coronation of George III, a whole line of secular part-songs in syllabic, homophonic style came quietly into being.

The ancestry of that repertory can be traced back to the part-songs and lute airs of the sixteenth century, when an extensive repertory of social music for voices sprang up, known

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<sup>11</sup>Hugh Haweis, *Music and Morals* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1904), 409.

<sup>12</sup>Henry Davey, *History of English Music* (London, J. Curwen & Sons, 1895), 425-26.

variously as canzonets, balletts, fa-la's, or Neapolitans. The Elizabethan lute song or air tended to be homophonic and syllabic, and did not carry textual repetition to the lengths found in the basically abstract madrigal. Fellowes wrote:

Though the terminology was . . . loosely employed, yet this main distinction between the Madrigal and the Air or Canzonet was evidently understood by composers, repetition being considered an essential feature of the Madrigal.<sup>13</sup>

Although the lute provided categorical designation for those airs, it was not obligatory, as Fellowes makes clear:

It [the lute] was rarely regarded as an indispensable feature in the performance when sufficient voices were available for the rendering of all the parts. Very often it was excluded from such employment by the introduction of variant harmonies."<sup>14</sup>

When the instrument was dispensed with, the result was a composition that "approach[ed] so closely to the madrigal-style as sometimes to be almost indistinguishable from the simpler compositions which have an indisputable claim to the title. . . . [T]hey were more regular in rhythmic outline than the Madrigals . . . [and] were harmonized for the most part on homophonic rather than polyphonic principles."<sup>15</sup>

Thus when Anthony Holborne's *Cittharn School* of ca. 1597 was published it carried an appendix of "Sixe short ayres Neapolitanlike to 3 voyces, without the instrument." Morley had spoken of Neapolitans in his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick* of that same year, remarking that they were "different from [canzonets] in nothing save name." Indeed, Holborne had only introduced those six pieces in the back of his book, writing, "Hereafter do follow sixe short

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<sup>13</sup>Edmund Horace Fellowes, *The English Madrigal Composers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1948), 60.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 304-05.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*, 305.

aers or canzonets to three voyces, being the first fruites of composition, done by his brother, William Holborne.”<sup>16</sup> There are several things worth noting about that inscription. First of all, Holborne equated “aers or canzonets” with Neapolitans, implying an Italian connection. Second, they were for three voices “without the instrument,” as opposed to solo songs accompanied by lute. Finally, it was not Anthony, but his younger brother William, who wrote those “aers,” which suggests that they may have been a newer fashion of the day, or fashionable among younger people. They seemed to be valued more lightly than madrigals and made no pretense to the involved interweaving of voices that marked the most sophisticated madrigals.

The popularity of Tudor part-songs did not diminish in the seventeenth century. In an essay of 1614 Ravenscroft explained the popularity of this music by writing, “Passionate Tunes make Amorous Poems both Willinglier heard and better remembered.” He assured his readers that men’s recreations made the best subjects for music, and listed “all the common Recreations that men take,” as “Hunting, Hawking, Dauncing, Drinking and Enamoring,” of which the first two were the “most generous and worthy.”<sup>17</sup> Ravenscroft’s followers who wrote in this style included (chronologically) William Lawes (1602-1645), Benjamin Rogers (1614-1698), Jeremiah Saville (1620-), Matthew Locke (1621/22-1677), John Playford (1623-1686), John Blow (1649-1708), Henry Purcell (1659-1695), James Radcliffe of Worcester (ca. 1669-1716), and Maurice Greene (ca. 1696-1755), all of whose music remained popular in singing clubs throughout the eighteenth and into the nineteenth centuries. So while other forms enjoyed the historical limelight, it was these homophonic part songs, with their emphasis on “passionate tunes” and direct musical appeal for amateur singing, that retained the vigor to carry through the Interregnum, Restoration, and the Handelian conquest, while

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<sup>16</sup>The six pieces are “Change then for lo she changes,” “Since Bonny-boots was dead,” “Here rest my thoughts,” “Sweet I grant that I am as black,” “Gush forth my tears,” and “Sit stille and sturre not.”

<sup>17</sup>John Ravenscroft, *A Brief Discourse of the True (but Neglected) Use of Charact’ring the Degrees* (London, 1614), preface.

such better-known forms as the madrigal, fantasia, masque, and Italian opera succumbed, one after another.

Through it all, the singing clubs persisted, demanding music as fresh as their food and drink. Accounts of informal musical gatherings in the diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn show that this pleasant pastime continued during the Interregnum. With the re-establishment of the monarchy, though, the practice of social singing began to increase. On 21 July 1660, only two months after the return of Charles II, Pepys speaks of dinner at a club “where we had three voyces to sing catches.”<sup>18</sup> Playford's *Catch That Catch Can* of 1667 was dedicated “To his endeared friends of the late Musick-Society and meeting in the Old Jury, London.” There were private musical meetings at wealthy homes as well as public clubs, and participation in these groups was a necessary adjunct of having “arrived” in society. In a 1762 play, *The Citizen Turned Gentlemen*, by Edward Ravenscroft (based on Molière's *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*), the eponymous citizen was assured that, in order to appear to be a person of consequence it would be necessary “to have a music-club once a week at his house.”

The musical club, then, was a well-established part of London life long before the opening of the eighteenth century. The status attached to the practice of music stemmed from a social code embodied in such books as Baldassare Castiglione's *Il corteggiano* (1528, tran. into English in 1561 by Thomas Hoby) or Henry Peacham's *Compleat Gentleman* (1622). Such Aristotelian books viewed music as a recreation suitable for the leisure time of a gentleman, although it was not a skill to cultivate too highly, lest it detract from more important affairs. “These clubs or ‘Musique Meetings’,” wrote Norman Hyde a half-century ago, “were generally of a convivial nature . . . Others were the forerunner of more serious enterprises.”<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>*The Diary of Samuel Pepys*, ed. Henry B. Wheatley, 2 vols. (New York: Random House, 1893), 1:139.

<sup>19</sup>Norman Hyde, *Music Hath Charms: Some Aspects of Music of the British Isles* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1956), 103.

Surprisingly, in that class-conscious age, music clubs were open to every mainstream political and religious persuasion, a trend that increased over time. “During Handel’s lifetime,” wrote Percy Young, “British music was, insofar as possible, democratized.”<sup>20</sup> The Madrigal Society, founded in 1741, boasted members of every social class and in the 1760s dissenters and Catholics sat comfortably at the table of the Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club, where the musical sons of merchants and craftsmen shared drink and good fellowship with nobility on the common ground of their love of singing. Muriel Jaeger observed that “Entry [to Georgian Society] was open to wealth, if accompanied by a certain minimum of polish, to talent, and to anyone who knew how to be entertaining.”<sup>21</sup> That attitude provided greater class mobility than ever before for those who qualified—more than would be found in England for a long time after. Membership in a musical club delineated a new kind of “we,” when traditional demarcations of “we” and “they” had begun to waver.

All through the first half of the eighteenth century, music for amateur singers continued to offer an attractive alternative to the *fioriture* of Italian opera and Handel’s large-scale Baroque choruses. The Madrigal Society was only one in a long list of Georgian singing clubs, including Catch Clubs at Liverpool, Manchester, and Oxford (which boasted two). Others were The Musical Society, Liverpool; The Philharmonic Society, Manchester; The Philharmonic Society at Queen-Street, Cheapside; and Societies of Singers at Didsbury, Lancashire, at the Dissenting Meeting-House in Manchester, at Northwinfield, Derbyshire, and at Sandbach and Weverham, both in Cheshire. In 1762 one of the most influential of those groups was founded: The Noblemen and Gentlemen’s Catch Club of London, which would play a central role in developing the part-song into the Georgian glee.

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<sup>20</sup>Percy Young, *A History of British Music* (London: Ernest Benn, 1967), 342.

<sup>21</sup>Muriel Jaeger, *Before Victoria: Changing Standards and Behavior, 1787-1837* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1956), 19.

Table 1 documents continuity of the part-singing tradition by listing two dozen of the most popular of its publications between 1597 and 1757 to , but that that list is by no means exhaustive.

**Table 1. Twenty-Four Selected English Part-Song Books: 1597 to 1757**

In the mid-1740s two important collections of music for social part-singing appeared that would remain popular for more than half a century: James Corfe's *Six English Songs* in 1745 and John Travers's *Eighteen Canzonets* in 1746. All six of Corfe's songs were for three voices (TTB), and they retained sufficient currency throughout the century that the composer's nephew, Joseph Corfe, republished the entire collection about 1810. Travers' collection, reproduced here, was musically superior and was the more influential of the two. Travers was certainly the more skilled contrapuntist, but even more than that, his music displayed a wider variety of musical textures, more sensitivity to the text—both its rhythm and its sense—and a more adventurous harmonic palette.

Several anthologies quickly appeared on the heels of those books. The *Milner Collection* of ca. 1750 contained "A variety of two, and three part songs" from the generations between Simon Ives and John Eccles. Ten of its eighteen pieces were continually republished throughout the second half of the century. In 1751 Thomas Green published two three-voice songs in the fashionable *Gentleman's Magazine*,<sup>22</sup> and 1757 saw publication of Broome's *Catch Club*. Even more significant was William Hayes's seminal book, *Catches, Glees & Canons for Three, Four and Five Voices*, marking the first revival of the old word "glee" as a designation for part-song.<sup>23</sup> In 1760 A *Collection of Songs for Two and Three Voices* and John Carr's *The Grove: or, Rural Harmony* appeared, and Thomas Moore (of Glasgow)<sup>24</sup> brought out his *Vocal Concert* in 1761 as a secular

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<sup>22</sup>The two songs were "Who can Dorinda's beauty view" and "Blest were the days when the lonely shade," in vol. 21 (1751): 178 and 564.

<sup>23</sup>*Catches, Glees & Canons for Three, Four and Five Voices; Compos'd by Dr. [William] Hayes*. [Oxford]: printed for the author, 1757.

<sup>24</sup>This was not the well-known poet-composer of the Irish folk revival, but a singing school teacher who migrated north from Manchester and played an important role in fostering the growth of sacred part-singing in Scotland.

counterpart to the *Psalm Singers Pocket Companion* of that same year. The pace quickened after that, with literally hundreds of collections and anthologies marking the latter part of the century and attesting to the continuity of the social singing tradition.

The demand for this music was sparked by the expansion of musical clubs from a pastime practiced by isolated handfuls of gentleman scholars to a passion for social singing that swept the home islands and the colonies. Over three thousand glees alone were published either singly or in one of the almost 400 collections and anthologies that appeared in the long reign of George III (1760-1820),<sup>25</sup> a number that would have to be quadrupled if the canzonets, rounds, catches, and madrigals were included. Singing societies sprang up not only in London, but in every city in Great Britain, extending to the colonies as well. It was a golden age for musical clubs, which offered munificent prizes for the best compositions and sparked a sixty-year boom in part-song publications. Georgian composers wrote vocal ensembles for private clubs, for home singing, and for professional groups on the stages of the concert halls, pleasure gardens, and theater.

Travers' *Canzonets* did not set all this into motion, for the tradition was already there; but it can fairly be said that many aspects of his collection served as a template for the style that would capture English attention in the second half of the eighteenth century, and that would even, to a great extent, divert that attention from the abstract instrumental style that largely defined the so-called "Classical" period that followed.

Matthew Prior was born 21 or 23 July 1664 in Westminster, London to Elizabeth and George Prior. His father was a carpenter of comfortable, if modest, means. He died 18 September 1721, and was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey on 25 September as one of the most

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<sup>25</sup>See Emanuel Rubin, *The English Glee in the Reign of George III: Participatory Art Music for an Urban Society* (Warren, MI: Harmonie Park Press, 2003). The present author also has a supplementary catalogue of glee collections, anthologies, and single publications in preparation for the same publisher.

popular poets of his time. One biographer notes that “[A] sumptuous monument, largest and most impressive in the Poets’ Corner, belongs not to Shakespeare or Milton, but to Matthew Prior,”<sup>26</sup> poet and civil servant. He earned his bread as a political functionary: member of Parliament, commissioner of the board of trade, Minister Plenipotentiary to France, and perhaps most notably, as peripatetic diplomatic agent and spy, possibly the real author of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) with which his superior, Lord Bolingbroke, is credited. Throughout his career he continued to write elegant and witty poetry. Prior’s popular poems may have been held in some disdain by Samuel Johnson, but not so much that Johnson did not write his biography. They were skilled enough to win a seat for him on Swift’s “Academy of English Letters” along with Pope and Congreve. Voltaire wrote of that group with great approval in 1733, comparing Prior to La Fontaine:

The members making up [the Academy] were men whose work will last as long as the English Language: Doctor Swift, Mr. Prior, whom we have seen here as a public minister and who has the same reputation in England that La Fontaine has among us.<sup>27</sup>

At the time Travers composed these canzonets, probably in the early 1740s, Prior was still widely read and was highly enough regarded that a new edition of his poetry had just come out at the beginning of the decade. “He is one of the neatest epigrammatists,” says the *Dictionary of National Biography*, “and in occasional pieces and familiar verse has no rival in English.” Sherburn calls him “the ideal neo-classicist, writing with bold lightness and noble urbanity.”<sup>28</sup> From an eighteenth-century composer’s point of view, this poetry must have been a joy to set. The meter is

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<sup>26</sup>Frances Mayhew Rippey, *Matthew Prior* (Boston: Twayne, 1986), Preface [iii].

<sup>27</sup>Desmond Flower, ed., *Voltaire’s England* (London: Folio Society, 1950), 136. “Les membres qui devaient composer étaient des hommes dont les ouvrages dureront autant que le langage anglais: c’étaient Docteur Swift, M. Prior, que nous avons vu ici ministre public, et qui en Angleterre a la même réputation que La Fontaine a parmi nous.”

<sup>28</sup>George Sherburn, *The Restoration and Eighteenth Century*, v. 3 of “A Literary History of England,” ed. Albert C. Baugh (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1948), 909.

regular but not oppressively so, the rhymes flow freely, and the imagery is delicious. While Prior uses traditional poetic expressions, he gives each of his creations a twist that makes it stand just a bit askew from what might be expected of the genre. But perhaps the most attractive thing was that the sense of his poetry, most especially his wit, was immediately accessible to the educated elite of the day, without pedantry or obfuscation that would stand in the way of a musical setting.

Eight of these poems, though, are not by Prior.<sup>29</sup> As a matter of fact it has been quite impossible to discover who did write those, as will be discussed shortly, although it would not be out of the realm of possibility that some of them, at least, were by Travers himself. It certainly added to the panache of the collection to have included Prior's well-liked poems, and if Travers had, in fact, contributed all of part of the remaining poetry himself, as was not unusual, it would have put his own verse in good company.

Less is known about John Travers, who is covered in only a brief article by Charles Cudworth in *The New Grove*. He was born in Windsor about 1703, son of a shoemaker, and died in 1758. He studied under Maurice Greene and probably Johann Pepusch as well, with whom he remained a lifelong friend. In 1726 Travers became organist of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. He was active in the Academy of Ancient Music and, from 1739, was one of the earliest subscribers to The Fund for the Support of Decay'd Musicians and Their Families. In addition to his secular music, of which the present collection is the outstanding example, he composed a number of anthems, Te Deums, a Service in F, and a setting of The Whole Book of Psalms in five volumes.

These canzonets, or at least some of them, had to have been written after 1740, when Prior's "I, my dear, was born today" was first published (See notes to Canzonet V, below). Travers'

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<sup>29</sup>Sources checked the poems were Harold Bunker Wright and Monroe Kirklyndorf Spears, eds., *The Literary Works of Matthew Prior* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), hereafter Wright and Spears; and Nicholas Frankovich, ed. *The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry in Collected and Selected Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), and Nicholas Frankovich, ed. *The Columbia Granger's Index to Poetry in Anthologies*; 11th ed., completely rev. (New York: Columbia University Press, c1997), the latter two are hereafter grouped together as *Granger's Index*.

dedication to his friend and teacher, John Christopher (Johann Christoph) Pepusch (1667-1752), who had immigrated to London in 1700, describes an admirable man, even in light of the effusive style of the day, :

TO J. C. Pepusch. Mus. D.

Sir,

Tho' I know your Candour and Generosity to be such, that you are better pleas'd to do Acts of Courtesy, than in receiving thanks for them when done; yet I must beg your acceptance of these small musical Performances, and with them, (as a publick Testimony of Gratitude) my most sincere & hearty acknowledgements for your kind Instructions in the Science we profess.

Were I to enlarge upon your merits in proportion to my inclinations, I might incur a Suspicion of Flattery; of which Vice (so distasteful to men of Ingenuous minds) I would avoid the least appearance. I shall therefore conclude with my earnest Wishes for the continuance of a Life so valuable as is yours to all Lovers of Virtue, or the true Study of Musick; that I may long enjoy your Friendship, and have the Happiness to approve myself,

Sir,

Your infinitely obliged

and

most humble Servant

John Travers

In these light canzonets Travers does his teacher proud with an enviable display of the art of canon. Some skill in constructing canons is within the capability of most good musicians, but the seemingly effortless examples of singable melody in these pieces requires a level of mastery not often found. His vocal writing shows off each singer to best advantage, and there is barely a dull measure to be found. He expects quite a bit from his singers technically, suggesting that the amateurs for whom such a collection would be written were more than casually acquainted with their art.

One would think that a collection of demanding secular part songs by a little-known cathedral organist, heavily weighted with the abstruse device of canon, and calling for frequently difficult continuo accompaniments, might attract little attention and even fewer sales. That was apparently not the case, though. The list of pre-publication subscribers run to four pages, listing 171 names, including London's Academy of Ancient Musick and the recently founded Madrigal Society,

The Philharmonic Societies of Dublin, Oxford, and Worcester, at least eleven singers of the royal chapel that I have been able to identify, and leading composers such as William Boyce and Daniel Roseingrave. Even more impressive, though, was the number of amateur singers who subscribed for their own copy, either by name alone, or as one styled himself, “Mr. Andrews, Gentleman Commoner.” The popularity of the collection led to a second printing in 1750 and still another in 1755. In addition, individual canzonets from the set could be found sprinkled through anthologies and single publications for the next fifty years or more, where they served as muse for new social part-songs written in such profusion in the latter half of the century.

Twelve of Travers' settings were for two voices and six for three, all with continuo. All six of the three-part canzonets call for alto or high tenor, tenor and bass. The top line could be sung by a light tenor with a high range, but as it is plentifully sprinkled with high b-flats and an occasional c, an alto could handle it more comfortably. The canzonets for two voices show greater variety, calling for soprano and alto as in Canzonet I, alto and tenor as in Canzonet II, tenor and bass as in Canzonet IV, and two tenors (or two sopranos) as in Canzonet VI. C-clefs are usually, but not inevitably, tied to the voices bearing their names, and treble clefs frequently, but not necessarily, designate women or boys (who could also be designated by the soprano clef). The practice was too free, though, to take the clef designations too strictly, so a certain amount of latitude can be used in interpreting them, depending on the range of individual singers involved.<sup>30</sup>

Travers' *Eighteen Canzonets* was republished in 1750 and again in 1755, but that only hints at the popularity of those songs, for they reappeared in countless single publications as well as in at least five major anthologies, well into the nineteenth century. They consisted of polyphonically conceived lines structured harmonically by the continuo, which is contiguous with the lowest voice most, but not all, of the time. The composer chose to represent the tradition from which they derived

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<sup>30</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the problem of assigning undesignated voices in this repertory, see Emanuel Rubin, *The English Glee in the Reign of George III*, chapter 8.

by using the old word “canzonet,” taking his cue from Morley’s 1597 definition of canzonets as “little short songs.” For ten of these pieces he chose the unapologetically hedonistic poetry of Matthew Prior, which contributed no little to their continuing popularity. They utilize binary or extended binary structures for the most part, although some are also through-composed. They are characterized by meticulously figured basses that play an active role in the contrapuntal, often canonic, texture. While predominantly syllabic, they tended to climax in high-spirited Purcellian melismas. The light-hearted exuberance of Prior’s poetry and the wit with which Travers conveyed its spirit captured the essence of the age and spawned hundreds of imitations.

The canzonets found immediate popularity. By 1748 there were copies in the library of the Madrigal Society, recorded as having gone out on loan on 24 August of that year.<sup>31</sup> An indication of the regard in which these pieces were held **was the inclusion of six of them, second only to Purcell**, in such anthologies as Hale’s *Social Harmony* of 1763, among the revered works of Blow, Eccles, and Purcell, and in company with such well-known contemporaries as Maurice Greene and William Boyce.

A copy of the 1746 edition in the author’s possession is in folio format, measuring 9.25 x 13 inches (23.5 x 33 centimeters), bound in boards with leather trim. The title page is followed by six unnumbered pages: a dedication to J. C. Pepusch noted above, a four-page “List of Subscribers,” and “A Table of Songs or Canzonets.” Sixty-four pages of Arabic-numbered music follow, notated on three staves (for two-voice canzonets) or four staves (for three-voice canzonets). Each piece is headed “Canzonet” followed by roman numerals I through XVIII.

Figuring of the continuo has no significant errors, and is meticulous throughout—if anything, overly so. By that I mean that he has taken special care to figure chromatic alterations, even when they are self-evident, or to mark many first inversion triads with both the root and third to avoid even

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<sup>31</sup>I am thankful to the late James Gregham Craufurd for this information, taken from his unpublished typescript “The Madrigal Society, Books and Songs Lent,” covering the period 1748-70.

the slightest ambiguity. All this bespeaks a careful musician who would leave no doubt as to how the music is to be performed, especially at the hands of the amateurs. There are only one or two initial tempo markings (e. g., Canzonet XII) , and only a handful of internal indications of tempo change, most of which are found in the last six, canzonets. It would be another fifty-five years—fifteen years preceding invention of the metronome— before William Crotch would argue for tempo standardization by the use of string-and-weight pendulum lengths.<sup>32</sup> Dynamic markings, too, hardly exist in this music, save for a rare sprinkle of rubrics such as “softer,” or “vigorous.” Travers follows the rhythm of the words closely in writing his gracious melodies, and aside from his use of long melismas at verbal or musical climaxes, the melodies are mostly syllabic. His general plan is to move from a declamatory opening to melismas at key words, which often as not come at or near the end and contain the witty barb of the poem. That is not an unfailing procedure, though, and he employs enough variety that there is no sensation of a mechanical process, even when proceeding directly from one piece to the next.

### Notes on the Individual Canzonets

In the musical edition language and orthography are modernized; however, here in the notes the spelling, capitalization, and punctuation found in the authoritative edition of Prior's collected works (Wright and Spears) are used for his poetry. For poems that have not been identified, the form used by Travers in the original score is reproduced, although Travers' own usage was not always consistent. Travers updated Prior's spelling and capitalization to that of his own generation; that is, he capitalized nouns in mid-eighteenth century fashion, though not uniformly, and modernized some of Prior's spellings.

In the following notes for each canzonet a header line gives the first line of the poem and title in italics, if there is one. The titles applied by Travers were not always the same as those given by

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<sup>32</sup>See Emanuel Rubin, "New Light on Late Eighteenth Century Tempo: William Crotch's Pendulum Markings." *Performance Practice Review* II:1 (Spring, 1989), 34-57.

the poet, and where thjat is true any difference will be given in a footnote. Following that, the key and meter are given, separated by commas, and Prior's lyrics are identified as such. Any corrections or changes from the original score are described in a final paragraph.

**Canzonet I** ("I like a bee," *Proem. A Minor, 3/4*)

I like a Bee, with Toil and Pain,  
Fly humbly o'er the flow'ry Plain.  
And with the busy, busy Throng,  
The little Sweets my Labours gain,  
I work into a Song.

This is clearly a poet's *apologia* for his own work; but it is not certain who the poet might be. In the absence of evidence to the contrary one could speculate that the poet was Travers himself, as no such poem appears in Wright and Spears or *Granger's Index*. A simple open binary form suffices to carry this little poem. Gently canonic throughout, the unpretentious setting is a delight to sing and makes few demands on either of the two voices. The upper voice could be sung by either soprano or alto, given that "alto," at this time, invariably meant the voice we would today call "countertenor;" that is, a male voice higher and lighter than the modern tenor. While the treble clef normally indicated soprano in this repertory,<sup>33</sup> an alto would also be effective, because the treble clef line sounding an octave lower than written would never cross below the tenor clef part.

**Canzonet II** ("Whilst our joys," *The Praise of Bacchus. D Major, 2/4*)

Whilst our joys in Wine we raise,  
Youthful Bacchus will we praise;  
Bacchus Dancing did invent,  
Bacchus is on Songs intent.

Bacchus teacheth Love to Court,  
And his Mother how to sport.  
Graceful Confidence he lends,  
He oppressive trouble ends.

To the Bowl when we repair,  
Grief doth vanish into Air.  
Drink we then and drown all Sorrow,

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<sup>33</sup>See Rubin, *English Glee*, Chapter 8, "Redefining Voice Configurations."

Care will come too soon tomorrow.

Life is dark, let's dance and play,  
 They that will be troubled may.  
 We our Joys with Wine will raise.  
 Youthful Bacchus we will praise.  
 Fa la la . . .

The poet for “Whilst our joys” also remains unidentified and there is no ascription in the score. The music of this second canzonet is more homophonic than that of the first, but is also more technically demanding because of the long melismas in the fourth section. The upper (alto) part is marked with an unequivocal alto clef, and the high tessitura with recurrent  $a^2$  and  $b^2$  rule out the top line for any but the lightest of tenors. The second line is in tenor clef, and lays comfortably within the range of that voice. The piece is laid out in six sections best understood as three back-to-back binary forms, ABA. The first, primarily syllabic, coincides with the first two verses of the poem, moving from D Major to the dominant at the double-bar ending the first verse, then back to the tonic at the end of the second. The middle binary structure moves to a dark subdominant at its midpoint, perhaps reflecting the line, “Care will come too soon tomorrow.” After the double-bar new material is introduced, with the music hesitating after the words “Life is dark,” then plunging into parallel melismas that lead back to the tonic on the words “let's dance and play.” The third, brief, coda-like binary form converts the march-like rhythms of the opening 2/4 into a swinging 6/8 for the carefree lines, “We our joys with wine will raise / Youthful Bacchus we will praise,” ending each half with a joyous “fa-la-la.”

**Canzonet III** (“Thus to the Muses,” *The Advice of Venus*,<sup>34</sup> D Major, 4/4)

Thus to the Muses spoke the Cyprian Dame;  
 Adorn my Altars and revere my Name  
 My Son shal else assume His potent darts  
 Twang goes the Bow, my Girls, have at your hearts  
 The Muses answer'd, Venus we deride  
 The Vagrants Malice, and his Mothers Pride.  
 Send him to Nymphs who sleep on Idas shade,

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<sup>34</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 679, where the poem is headed *Fragment*.

To the loose Dance and wanton Masquerade:  
 Our Thoughts are settl'd, and intent our look  
 On the Instructive Verse and Moral book;  
 On Female Idleness his Pow'r relies  
 But when he finds Us Studying hard he flies.

This poem is indeed by Matthew Prior. The piece is a through-composed *tour de force* for alto and tenor, taking its formal cue more from the celebratory ode or even the verse anthem than the Restoration part-song. It is an expansive ninety-six measures without repeats, shaped into movements that follow the sense of the text, but not its structure. The canzonet opens in a canonic 4/4, with Venus demanding due veneration lest her son “shall else assume his potent darts.” This gives way to a 6/8 in less formal imitation, playing with the phrase “Twang goes the bow,” and ending with an admonition to the muses in 4/4: “My girls, have at your hearts.” A new section announces their answer in a tempo marked “Slow,” which quickly changes to “Brisk” as they voice derision of “the vagrant’s malice and his mother’s pride.” A change to ¾ marks the next section as the muses taunt, “Send him to nymphs who sleep on [Mt.] Ida’s shade,” then with a change to 4/4, marked “With spirit,” they continue, “to the loose dance and wanton masquerade.” The word “dance” calls forth melismas that grow longer and longer until a cadence on the dominant is reached. There a new section in D Minor, marked “Slow,” sets the coy words “Our thoughts are settled and intent / Our look on the instructive verse and moral book.” That gives way in turn to what must certainly be a faster tempo (D Major, 2/4) for the final lines with, as one might expect, exuberant melismas on the word “flies.”

**Canzonet IV** (“When Bibo thought fit,”<sup>35</sup> F Major, ¾)

When Bibo thought fit from the World to retreat,  
 As full of Champaign as an Egg’s full of Meat,  
 He wak’d in the Boat, and to Charon he said,  
 He wou’d be set back for he was not yet Dead:  
 Trim the Boat and sit quiet, stern Charon reply’d,  
 You may have forgot, You was Drunk when You Dy’d.

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<sup>35</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 673, where the poem is headed *Epigram*.

“Bibo,” whose name, of course, Prior takes from the Latin “*bibere*” (“to drink”), consists of three sections with the first two repeated: ||: A :||: B :|| C ||. The extended final section, in which the meter changes to C, is marked “Brisk,” and as so frequently occurs in these pieces, breaks into energetic melismas to accentuate the punch line: “You were drunk when you dy’d.” A repeat of the C section is then written out, albeit displaced by a half-measure, for the joke is too good not to have a second go at it.

Travers corrects the verb in Prior’s last line to “You *were* drunk when you dy’d.” The original figuring for meas. 45 has been changed slightly in the edited version. The suspension under the first note of the bass was written as 4-5, changed here to the more traditional 4-3.

**Canzonet V** (“I, my dear, was born today,”<sup>36</sup> A Major, C)

I my Dear, was born to Day:  
 So all my Jolly Comrades say.  
 They bring me Music, Wreaths, and Mirth,  
 And ask to celebrate my Birth.  
 Little alas, my Comrades know  
 That I was born to Pain and Woe:  
 To thy Denyal to Thy Scorn:  
 Better I had n’er been born!  
 I wish to Dye, ev’n whilst I say  
 I, my Dear, was born to Day.

I, my Dear, was born to Day:  
 Shal I salute the rising ray?  
 Welspring of all my Joy or Woe,  
*Clotilda*, Thou alone dost know.  
 Shal the Wreath surround my Hair?  
 Or shal the Music please my Ear?  
 Shal I my Comrades Mirth receive,  
 And bless my Birth, and wish to live?  
 Then let me see great *Venus* chace  
 Imperious anger from thy Face,  
 Then let me hear thee smiling say  
 Thou, my Dear, wer’t born to day.

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<sup>36</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 388, where the poem is headed *My Birth Day*.

Originally written by Prior for *The Tatler*, but never submitted,<sup>37</sup> the poem was not published until 1740, almost twenty years after his death.<sup>38</sup> Opening with a repeated homophonic section in the tonic, it changes to solemn *stilo antico* in a morose A Minor, accented still further by a flatted supertonic, for the poet's tongue-in-cheek complaint that he was "born to pain and woe." "Better had I ne'er been born," the poet moans, "even as I say, 'I, my dear, was born today.'" The following verse, still in A Minor, gives us the cause of both his joy and woe: Clotilda, who alone understands the poet's needs. In this strophe Travers' word-painting, puts a long melisma on the word "joy" then suddenly slams on the brakes for "woe." A final verse returns to a merry A Major for canonic treatment of the lines "Then let me see great Venus chase / Imperious anger from thy face." The word "chase" elicits sixteenth-note melismas, while "imperious anger" elicits back-and-forth arguments between the two voices, finally culminating in a long, good-natured melisma, as if to say, "There, I didn't mean to be quarrelsome." A final couplet set in a gentle 6/8 is marked "Tenderly." In soft accents, the poet invites his beloved—the only one who counts—to tell him, "Thou, my dear, wert born today."

Canzonet V contains one of the few notational errors required correction for this edition. Measure 72 of the original beams the third and fourth notes as eighths when they should be sixteenths, as shown in Fig. 1:

Figure 1



<sup>37</sup>Rippy, 65.

<sup>38</sup>*Miscellaneous Works of His Late Excellency Matthew Prior, Esq . . . .* ([London]: S. Powell for G. Risk, 1740).

**Canzonet VI** (“Why thus from the Plain,” *Chanson Française*,<sup>39</sup> A Minor, C)

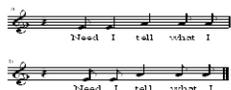
Why thus from the Plain does my Shepherdess rove  
 Forsaking Her Swain and neglecting his love?  
 You have heard all my Grief, you see how I dye  
 give some relief to the Swain whom you fly.

How can you complain or what am I to say,  
 Since my Dog lyes unfed, and my Sheep run astray,  
 Need I tell what I mean, that I languish alone  
 When I leave all the Plain, You may guess tis for One.

Canzonet VI is a French chanson in Prior's translation, set for two equal voices. It opens with a perfect canon in the unison at one measure distance through m. 16. The canon then changes to a half-bar's distance at the fifth below through m. 32, finishing the last seven measures in free imitation. Travers does not miss opportunities for word painting, even within strict canon. “Rove” calls for a measure-long melisma of dotted eighths and sixteenths, while the “sheep run astray” to a playful little melismatic flourish. “O give some relief” calls for a syncopated suspension in fourth species counterpoint. Throughout this piece the bass line has more independence than in most of the other canzonets, where it tends to track closely with the lower voice.

Canzonet VI also contains an error that is corrected in the present edition. As shown in Fig. 2a, measure 27 has a quarter rest written at the beginning of the alto part, followed by an eighth, then a quarter note. This was corrected as in Figure 2b so that the alto voice was brought into line with other canonic entries of that same figure.

Figure 2.



<sup>39</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 687, where the poem is headed *Chanson Françoise*. [sic] *Translation*.

**Canzonet VII** ("Says Pontius in rage."<sup>40</sup> C Major, C)

Says Pontius in rage,  
 contradicting his Wife,  
 "You never yet told me  
 "one Truth in your life:"  
 Vext Pontia no way  
 could this Thesis allow,  
 "You're a Cuckold, say's she,  
 "do I tell you Truth now?"

Travers' setting of Prior's poem opens with a canon at the fifth above at a distance of six beats. Pontius' rage is predictably expressed by a vigorous descending melisma, and the couple's choleric exchange is maintained at white heat throughout by rapid syllabic eighth notes, chromaticism, and argumentative trade-offs of "You're a cuckold" exchanged between them. The longest note in either voice part, with the exception of one syncopated half note suspension, occurs on the stinging word "truth" in the last line. This little piece of only 28 measures is built in three sections: an opening canonic section, closing homophonically, for the first quatrain. A modified repeat of that music is fitted out with a different continuo to repeat the text. A new section, marked "Slower," is a duet in which one can almost hear the calculating gleam in Pontia's eye. That leads in turn to the punch line, marked "Faster," a canon at the fifth below, in which Pontius strives to keep up with his angry wife until they join for the last line.

**Canzonet VIII** ("Whilst I in Prison," *To Fortune*<sup>41</sup>, G Minor, C)

Whilst I in Prison on a Court look down,  
 Nor beg Thy Favor, nor deserve Thy frown;  
 In vain, malicious Fortune, hast Thou try'd  
 By taking from my State, to quell my Pride:  
 Insulting Girle, Thy present rage abate;  
 To keep Me humble, Thou must make me great.

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<sup>40</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 686, where the poem is headed *Truth Told at Last. An Epigram.*

<sup>41</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 676, where the poem is headed *Epigram.*

While Prior's poem makes no direct references to his own experience, it is hard not to imagine that sprang out of his imprisonment for over a year in 1715-16, when he was recalled from France and brought up before a parliamentary committee seeking to press a charge of treason against the Earl of Oxford. Incarcerated first at his own home, then at that of the sergeant-at-arms of the House of Commons, Prior managed to save his own neck and that of his patron through judicious responses to repeated questioning. Travers captures the mood in a lugubrious opening canon, re-stated with different harmonies for the first four lines. The final couplet then comes in for quite different treatment as the voices take turns expressing disdain for fortune ("insulting girl"), then exchange extended melismas on the word "rage." A written-out repeat of that section produces, in effect, a binary form with varied repeats, to which Travers adds a pompously contrapuntal coda for to the last line of the poem, starting at m. 39. The composer also altered the last of the poem, presumably to provide a better metric scheme for his music. In his canzonet Travers renders the line as, "And wou'd'st thou have me humble make me great."

Editorial emendations to the original text of this canzonet included the modernization of Prior's spellings: "quel" to "quell" and "girle" to "girl." Musically, the figuring in mm. 6 and 19 was amended by the addition of a sharp sign to the 6 at the end of those measures as an alert for the approaching c# in the top (alto) voice.

**Canzonet IX** ("Cease Leonora," *Advice to Leonora*,<sup>42</sup> D Minor, C)

Cease, Leonora, cease to mourn,  
Thy faithful Strephon will return.  
Fate at thy sighs will ne'er relent,  
Then grieve not what we can't prevent.

Nor let predestinating tears,  
Increase thy pains or raise thy fears.  
'Tis but the last long winter night,  
Our sun will rise tomorrow bright,

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<sup>42</sup> Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 696, where the poem is headed *To Leonore. Encore.*

And to our suff'ring passion bring,  
 The promise of eternal spring,  
 Which thy kind eyes shall ever cheer,  
 And make that season all the year.

Travers opens his tongue-in-cheek setting of Prior's poem with a canon that faithfully follows the first couplet, breaking only to cadence at the certainty of Strephon's return (m. 13). A new canon takes up the second couplet, assuring Leonora that such mourning will have no effect on fate. Still another canon takes up the opening couplet of the next stanza, cadencing on the downbeat of m. 18., but then Travers begins to impose his own structure on the poem. The third line of that stanza is treated separately, reaching a full cadence and double-bar at m. 26. The composer sets the next line, "Our sun will rise tomorrow bright," as a new passion, continuing directly into a canon at "And to our suff'ring passion bring" then cadencing homophonically at "The promise of eternal spring." The final saucy couplet introduces new melodic material, also in canon, to close the piece.

**Canzonet X** ("Poor Hall caught his Death," *An Epigram*,<sup>43</sup> G Minor, C)

Poor Hall caught his Death standing under a Spout  
 Expecting till Midnight when Nan wou'd come out  
 But fatal his Patience as cruel the Dame,  
 And curst was the Rain that extinguisht this flame.  
 "Who e'er thou art that reads these Moral Lines  
 "Make Love at Home, and go to Bed betimes."

Poor Hall died waiting in the rain for cruel Nan. It is never made clear whether she would not, could not, or was simply late getting there, but in any case Prior's caustic moral to this poignant tale is to "Make love at home, and go to bed betimes." Travers captures the fun with a pseudo-dolorous, Palestrina-like opening. A written-out repeat of both first and second halves produces binary treatment of the quatrain with a faster moving canonic coda devoted to the final couplet.

In meas. 5 of the original, the second figure (6) lacks a natural sign, which has been added here. The original score has an error in the text of the second line, reading, "Expecting till midnight

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<sup>43</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 676, where the poem is headed *Epigram*, just as it is in Travers' collection.

till Nan wou'd come out." This was corrected by replacing the second "till" with "when," which corresponds to Prior's original poem as well as to other repetitions of that line in the score.

**Canzonet XI** ("Reading ends in melancholy," *Friendship*, C Major, C/)

Reading ends in melancholy,  
Wine breeds vices and diseases,  
Wealth is but care and love but folly,  
Only friendship truly pleases.  
My wealth, my books, my flask, my Molly,  
Farewell all if friendship ceases.

This poem is not among Prior's works nor has it been found anywhere else. <SEE "REWRITES"> After listing the disasters that await practice of the Georgian gentleman's favorite pursuits, the poet concludes that "Only friendship truly pleases." Travers treats the poem as an open binary form, devoting the first half to the opening quatrain and developing the last couplet in the latter, longer half of the piece he as a series of canons with first one voice, then the other, taking the lead. At the climax the voices trade leading positions in an effective canon in fourth species counterpoint marking the words "Farewell all." Travers calls on each voice in turn for a range of an octave and a seventh in this piece, with greater demands on the bass than any of the other canzonets.

Errata in the score include a missing flat sign on the first note of meas. 37 in the continuo and correct, but "inverted" figuring in meas. 56. The former was added, changing the B to B-flat, and the latter was changed so that the figuring 4/6 3/5 was rewritten to 6/4 5/3.

**Canzonet XII** ("Haste my Nanette,"<sup>44</sup> E Major, C)

Hast [sic]my Nannette my lovely Maid  
Hast to the Bower Thy Swain has made.  
For Thee Alone I made the Bower  
And strow'd the Couch with many a flow'r  
None but my Sheep shal near us come  
Venus be Prais'd my Sheep are dumb.  
Great God of Love take Thou my Crook  
To keep the Wolf from Nannetts Flock  
Guard Thou the Sheep to her so dear  
My own Alas are less my Care

<sup>44</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 675-76, where the poem is headed *Song*.

But of the Wolf if thou art afraid  
 Come not to Us to call for Aid  
 For with her Swain my Love shal stay  
 Tho the Wolf Strole, and tho the Sheep Stray.

Prior's pastoral opens as the most predictable of poems, but becomes something more as a result of his satirical treatment of typical elements. What begins as convention ends up as a delicious intellectual game. Prior's sly "Venus be praised, my sheep are dumb" evokes a grin that borders on the salacious, and the latter half of the poem, taunting an all-too-human Cupid who fears the wolf, steps out of character to poke fun at the whole genre. Prior's biographer praises it, writing, "In many ways the poem . . . has survived when most pastorals have not through its last four lines, which both domesticate and defy Cupid."<sup>45</sup>

This canzonet is through-composed, and has the most complex structure of the entire collection. An initial binary structure ( ||: A :||: B :||, cadencing to V and I in E Major respectively) comprises the first four lines, with a change to E Minor 6/8 setting the verse's last couplet to new material. The first line of the second verse, charging Cupid with the chore of keeping watch on Nanette's flock, is given eight measures of its own (B minor, C), then the key returns to the tonic to spell out the details of Cupid's duties in another brief binary structure, again with each half repeated and the obligatory half cadence in the middle. For the final couplet (E Major, 6/8) the wolf's "strole" is given jolly homorhythmic melismas for the two voices, gaily warning Cupid that in the event of danger, the lovers will be too busy to rescue him.

At meas. 48 of the original score the first half of a repeat sign was missing; it is replaced here. It is worth noting that in the author's copy of the score a repeat for meas. 64-80 has been penciled in by an earlier (18<sup>th</sup> century?) hand.

**Canzonet XIII** ("Soft Cupid," *Cupid's Promise*,<sup>46</sup> C Minor, C)

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<sup>45</sup>Rippy, 65.

<sup>46</sup>Given here as printed in Wright and Spears, I: 692-93, where the poem is headed *Cupid's Promise Paraphrased*.

Soft Cupid, wanton, am'rous boy,  
     The other day, moved with my lyre,  
 In flatt'ring accents spoke his joy,  
     And uttered thus his fond desire.

O raise thy voice, one song I ask,  
     Touch then th'harmonious string,  
 To Thyrsis easy is the task,  
     Who can so sweetly play and sing.

Two kisses from my mother dear,  
     Thyrsis, thy due reward shall be,  
 None like beauty's queen is fair,  
     Paris has vouched this truth for me.

I strait replied, Thou know'st alone  
     That brightest Cloe rules my breast;  
 I'll sing thee two instead of one,  
     If thou'lt be kind and make be blest.

One kiss from Cloe's lips, no more I crave,  
     He promised me success.  
 I played with all my skill and pow'r ,  
     My glowing passion to express;

But O! my Cloe, beauteous maid,  
     Wilt thou the wished reward bestow?  
 Wilt thou make good what love has said?  
     And by thy grant his Power show?

Prior's "Soft Cupid," given here as canzonet XIII, is the first of the six three-voice pieces in this collection. Like most of the other pieces for three voices here, it is a more extensive essay than the two-part canzonets, setting six verses in 92 measures, not counting repeats. Travers seems to have given extra attention to the three-voice canzonets since, in contrast to most of the others, dynamics and relative tempi are carefully marked there. This is the most consistently homophonic of them, with Travers' use of recitative-like pronouncements and full stops in the music serving to introduce rhythmic patterns akin to declamation. By the same token, this canzonet lacks the extensive melismas that mark key words and climaxes in others, as if to declaim the story all the more clearly. The poem has several distinct sections. In the first verse, Thyrsis, the singer who was said by Theocritus (in the First Idyll) to have "brought to perfection the bucolic art," explains that

Cupid admiring his music, is moved to make a request. The god then proffers a contract for a song in the next two verses. Thyrsis protests his love for Cloe alone, and bargains for Cupid's intercession with her; but at the end he fears that she might choose not to fulfill the god's promise, and pleads that she do so as a demonstration of his power.

Canzonet XIII opens with the words "Soft Cupid," marked "Slow" evoking countless other paeans to the god of love. Travers quickly disabuses the reader of this convention, though, introducing Cupid's unusual request in two repeated strains marked "A little faster." Each of those follows a similar pattern, opening homophonically and moving into canonic counterpoint once under way, with Cupid characterized by delicate vocal flourishes. In the third verse Cupid names his reward for Thyrsis' song: two kisses from the divine Venus, whose beauty has been attested by no less than Paris. Thyrsis objects in a harmonized *recitativo accompagnetto* that it is Cloe who "rules [his] breast," and switching to a joyful C major marked "Slow and soft," negotiates: he will sing twice as much in exchange for a single kiss from Cloe in preference to two from Venus. Prior slyly allows readers to realize for themselves that neither of the ladies in question has taken part in this bargaining.

That contract made, Thyrsis "play'd with all [his] skill and pow'r" in a homophonic strain of 20 bars, marked "Loud" in the printed music. In an emendation that tells us something about performance practice in this music, some unknown earlier user of the score in the author's possession has amended this section by inking in repeat signs to each of the first two eight-measure phrases and changing the marking to "First loud & then soft," leaving the last, four-measure phrase to stand alone with the composer's marking, "Soft," replaced by the inked-in dynamic, "Loud." (See plate 1) The final verse, marked "Tenderly" by the composer, is entirely homophonic as the singer makes his uncertain plea to Cloe: "Wilt thou make good what love has said / And by thy grant his Power show?"

Corrections made here include providing two missing natural signs at meas. 36 to assure the change of mode from C Dorian to C Major. Some dynamics worth noting have been added to the author's score in the same hand that had penciled in earlier changes. Those include changing the printed "Loud" at meas. 67 to "First loud then soft," and then at meas. 75, "Loud."

**Canzonet XIV** ("He is not numbered with the Blest," *Advice to Delius*, A Major, 2/4)

He is not numbered with the Blest,  
To whom the Gods large Store have giv'n,  
But he who of enough posses'd,  
Can wisely use the Gifts of Heav'n.

Who Fortune's frowns unmov'd can bear,  
And worse than Death doth Baseness fear.  
To those that chuse the Golden Mean,  
The Waves are smooth, the Skies serene.

They envy not the Houses of the Great,  
Nor Court the Baseness of the Poor's retreat.  
An even Mind in ev'ry State,  
Amidst the Frowns and Smiles of Fate,

Dear mortal Delius always show.  
Let not too much of cloudy Fear,  
Nor too intemp'rate joys appear,  
Or to contract, or to extend, thy Brow.

This poem is another that has not been identified. It, too, stands as a relatively large essay among these miniatures, comprising 91 measures in five through-composed movements. Of the poems chosen by Travers, only this one shows such marked changes in its rhyme scheme, with the first and last stanzas (ABAB and ABBA respectively) being quite unlike the middle two (AABB). Travers places a judicious text repetition into the fourth phrase, sidestepping the predictable poetic meter with musical phrasing of 4+4+4+5 measures. With the second quatrain he breaks into a high-spirited canonic texture for he "Who fortune's frowns unmov'd can bear," then in the next line pauses on "death," before the final solemn chords. A second movement ("Moderately") in the subdominant key (D Major) changes to  $\frac{3}{4}$  time and a new, happier mood to present "those that chuse the golden mean." At "An even mind," the tempo becomes "Brisk," while meter and key return to

their opening values. The movement takes an unexpected turn to the supertonic at the end of that quatrain, mirroring, perhaps, the fickleness of fate; but with the pickup to measure 66 the thought is completed in canon with the first line of the following quatrain, ending on V for the repeat of those three lines. Following the double bar the line "Let not too much of cloudy fear" stays in the dominant, slowing down in "particular imitation" for the last two words. Travers cannot stay gloomy for long, though, and sighting the word "joys" ahead, reverts to a faster tempo ("Brisk") and his trademark melismas for the final movement.

Emendations to the printed markings in the original include the addition of an initial repeat sign for one that is missing at meas. 34, and an ending repeat sign at meas. 91.

**Canzonet XV** ("Beauty shou'd please but not ensnare," *Love's Security*, D minor,  $\frac{3}{4}$ )

Beauty shou'd please but not ensnare,  
                   Good Sense alone upholds her Reign.  
 Scarce Venus self were worth our Care,  
                   Unless the Graces joined her Train.

Except the nobler Mind endears,  
                   In vain the fairest Face allures,  
 That but a specious Bait appears,  
                   Sense, like the Hook, its Prey secures.

Then Celia ev'ry Hour improve,  
                   That each may mutual blessings taste,  
 So shall the Charms that win my Love,  
                   Be strong enough to make it last.

*Love's Security* is not listed among Prior's works and is not found in *Granger's Index*. It is a poem of instruction for young ladies, not entirely lacking wit, but not depending on it either. The repeated opening section, cadencing on the dominant, leads the listener to expect a binary form, but the B section leads to new musical material for the third stanza (D Major, C), leaving the piece to end in D Major as the moral is driven home. Canzonet XV contains one of the few musical *gaucheries* of the set. At the downbeat of measure 36, where a theoretically permissible dissonance occurs on the second note of the beat, the "snapped" rhythms sustain the discord longer than is

aurally comfortable within the style. The piece proceeds by fits and starts, frequently cadencing on agogic accents where the music loses forward motion. Even the final movement, where Travers usually shines, is here full of aimless harmonic wandering. For all that, there are some lovely touches, such as the chromatic rise in the canon at measures 15-24, or the lovely 6-bar cadence (mm. 52-7) that salvages the banal sequences of the preceding four bars (mm 48-51). Perhaps this moralizing poem deserves no more attractive setting, yet the vocal writing is masterful in spite of some weaknesses, and it remains enjoyable for the singers, which was, after all, its purpose. It is, at least, instructive to know that those characteristics attractive to today's young men marked the liberated woman of the early eighteenth century as well.

**Canzonet XVI** ("Pleasure's enchanted ground I'll tread," *The Resolution*, A Major, C/)

Pleasure's enchanted Ground I'll tread,  
Where Love and youthful Fancy lead,  
For life as yet is in her Spring,  
As yet I'll toy and laugh and sing,

When Cynicks rail or Pedants frown,  
My Smile repays their angry Brow,  
Their rigid Maxims I disown,  
I hate the gloomy, selfish, Crew.

Be mine the Joys of social Life,  
Where Innocence and Peace reside,  
Still may good Nature vanquish Strife,  
And Honour reign each Action's guide.

While Phillis is as kind as fair,  
Fly, discontent and sullen Care.  
Her Smiles can make perpetual Spring,  
With her I'll toy, to her I'll sing.

Canzonet XVI is not attributed to Prior, nor is it listed among his works. Its limping rhymes suggest a poet of less standing, but the poem was not listed anywhere in *Granger's Index*.

Nevertheless, it serves as an excellent expression of Georgian hedonism. Pleasure, love, and youthful fancy were indeed the watchwords of the young Georgian gentleman, whose ideal world was summed up in the last two verses. At 124 measures this is the longest canzonet of the

collection. It owes its length, in part, to the composer's use of the final couplet of the first stanza as a refrain after the second, and to his delight in its second line, apparent from its lengthy development, when it appears in the first stanza and again when those lines are echoed at the end.

**Canzonet XVII** ("Fair and ugly, false and true," *A Translation*, C Major, 3/8)

Fair and ugly, false and true,  
All to great Venus's yoke must bow.  
Such pleasure in our pains she takes,  
She laughs to see what sport she makes.

Not listed among Prior's works or found in *Granger's Index*, the translator is unknown and the original source has not yet been identified. The first half of this binary canzonet is homophonic, but in the second, much longer half, two voices often join against a third in various canonic combinations. It is a challenge for the singers, with long melismas, sustained trills (See, for example, meas. 63-65), and sung repercussions on a single vowel that recur all through the second half of the piece, all of which insured its popularity for many years.

**Canzonet XVIII** ("Old I am yet can (I think),' *The Old Bacchanal*, B-flat Major, C)

Old I am yet can (I think),  
Those that younger are outdrink.  
When I dance no Staff I take,  
But a well-fill'd Bottle shake.  
He that doth in War delight,  
Come and with these Arms let's fight.  
Fill the cup, let loose a flood,  
Of the rich grape's luscious blood.  
Old am I and therefore may,  
Like Silenus drink and play

This poem <SEE "REWRITES"> ~~is not listed in Prior's works or in *Granger's Index*.~~ A through-composed essay of 63 measures, it has some noteworthy structural features that suggest experimentation with ideas that would develop into the full-blown sonata-allegro in the next generation. An initial section provides homophonic antecedent and consequent phrases of two measures for each of the first two lines. This is followed by new material consisting of canonic phrases with a spinning melisma illustrating the word "dance," which leads in turn to a longer

melisma in the upper voices over a trill in the bass punning on the word “shake.” While the music of the opening couplet centers on the tonic (B-flat), the second couplet, which comes in for more extended treatment, centers on and cadences to the dominant at the repeat sign. Following a double-bar the opening material returns in the dominant for the third couplet, displaying earmarks of sequential development. That is followed in turn by the last pair of lines set to the development of material taken also taken from the opening section, incorporating a notated “echo,” that is, the repeated measures (45-50) are actually marked “Soft,” but there is no repeat such as one would expect if this were an ordinary binary form. Instead, the whole piece is wrapped up by a 6/8 “Fa-la-la” coda.

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The Georgian part-song repertory is virtually unknown today, yet it should be of particular interest, if for no other reason than the twentieth century renaissance of solo-voice ensembles in popular music. Historically, too, it requires our attention because it stimulated Europe's largest commercial publishing industry, engendered a tradition of democratic singing clubs, motivated prizes for outstanding compositions, built a tradition of social part-singing that survives to this day in glee clubs and barbershop quartets, and laid the foundations of the commercial music business as we know it. The most valid reason for becoming aware of it is simply the pleasure it brings, both to singer and listener. Rediscovering this music opens a new window into the cultural life of Georgian England.

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Table 1. Twenty-Five Selected English Part-Song Books: 1597 to 1760

	<i>Year</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Composer (or <u>Publisher</u>)</i>
1.	1597	<i>The Cittharn School. . .Hereunto Are Added Sixe Short Aers Neapolitanlike to Three Voyces, Without the Instrument: Done by His Brother William Holborne</i>	Anthony Holborne
2.	1609	<i>Pammelia: Musicks Miscellanie, or Mixed Varietie of Pleasant Roundelayes, etc.</i>	Thomas Ravenscroft
3.	1609	<i>Deuteromelia: Or the Second Part of Musicks Melodie, or Melodious Musick, or Pleasant Roundelaies; K. H. Mirth, or Freeman's Songs . . . [etc.]</i>	Thomas Ravenscroft
4.	1611	<i>Melismata: Musicall Phansies Fitting the Court, Citie, and Country Humours. To 3, 4, and 5 voyces</i>	Thomas Ravenscroft
5.	1622	<i>Songs of 3. 4. 5. &amp; 6. Parts</i>	John Tomkins
6.	1627	<i>Airs or Fa-Las for Three Voyces</i>	John Hilton
7.	1652	<i>Select Musical Ayres, and Dialogues, for One or Two Voyces, to Sing to the Theorbo, Lute, or Basse Viol . . . to Which Is Added Some Few Short Ayres or Songs for Three Voices without the Instrument</i>	John Playford
8.	1659	<i>Select Ayres</i>	John Playford
9.	1659	<i>Third Set of Ayres and Dialogues,</i>	John Playford
10.	1660	<i>Cheerful Ayres and Ballads</i>	John Wilson
11.	1667	<i>Catch as Catch Can, or The Musical Companion, Containing Catches and Rounds for Three and Four Voyces, to Which is Now Added a Second Book Containing Dialogues, Gleees, Ayres and Ballads &amp;c.</i>	John Playford
12.	1669	<i>Ayres and Dialogues,</i>	Henry Lawes
13.	1678	<i>Songs . . . [for] 1, 2, and 3 Voices to the Thorowbase</i>	Henry Bowman
14.	1678	<i>Musica Oxoniensis. A Collection of Songsa: For One and Two Voices, with the Thorough-bass</i>	[Frances Smith?]
15.	1698	<i>Orpheus Britannicus</i>	Henry Purcell
16.	1699	<i>Amphion Anglicus</i>	John Blow
17.	1701	<i>Harmonia Anglicana</i>	pub. Walsh & Hare
18.	1743	<i>Thesaurus Musicus. A Collection of Two, Three, and Four Part Songs . . . to Which Are Added Some Choice Dialogues. Set to Music by Dr. Blow, H. Purcell, Handel, etc . . . The Whole Revis'd . . . by a Judicious Master (2 vols)</i>	Anon.
19.	1745	<i>Six English Songs for Two and Three Voices . . .</i>	James Corfe
20.	1746	<i>Eighteen Canzonets for Two , and Thrtree Voices . . .</i>	John Travers
21.	1747	<i>Catches and Canons for Three and Four Voices. To Which is Added a Collection of Songs for Two and Three Voices. With a Thorough Bass for the Harpsicord</i>	Maurice Greene
22.	1750	<i>A Collection Reviving and Refining (from the More Gross &amp; Obscene Songs) of the Old Catch Book Together with a Variety of Two, and Three Part Songs from the Most Eminent Masters . . . [etc.]</i>	Abraham Milner
23.	1750	<i>The Essex Harmony: Being a Choice Collection . . . of Songs and Catches</i>	J. Buckland, B. Law, and S. Crowder
24.	1757	<i>The Catch Club; or Pleasant Musical Companion: Containing . . . Thirty-Three Sons for Two, Three, and Four Voices</i>	Michael Broome
25.	1760	<i>A Collection of Songs for Two and Three Voices . . .</i>	Anon.