DR BURNEY'S MUSICAL TOUR a musical tour through France and Italy

Part I

Howard Skempton The Bridge of Fire

reading

Roland de Lassus Bonjour mon coeur

Josquin des Prez Mille regretz

Claude le Jeune Revoici venir du printemps

reading

Tom Johnson Wesley's Challenge (nos. 1, 2, 3, 6)

Francis Poulenc Un soir de neige

interval

Part II

Claudo Monteverdi Ecco mormorar l'onde

Jacob Arcadelt Il bianco e dolce cigno Luca Marenzio Gia torna a rallegrar

reading

Luigi Dallapiccola Due Cori di Michelangelo

reading

John Wilbye Draw on, sweet night

Nicholas Brown Stillness

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This evening's concert follows the 'musical tour' of Dr Charles Burney (1726-1814) through France and Italy in 1770. A self-educated man, Burney rose to prominence both in his profession and in society, and fathered an impressive list of successors: his children included the diarist and novelist Fanny, the minor novelists Charlotte Ann and Sarah Harriet, the writer on South Sea exploration Rear-Admiral James Burney (who twice sailed round the world with Captain Cook), and the Rev. Charles Burney, one of the most eminent classical scholars of his day.

Burney's journey was in search of material for his General History of Music, eventually published in four volumes between 1776 and 1789. It took him almost seven months: he left Dover on 7 June 1770 and returned home on Christmas Eve. By 1770 he had acquired both considerable reputation as a performer, composer and teacher, and significant standing in society: Samuel Johnson said of him 'I much question if there is in the world such another for mind, intelligence, and publication manners'. The Burney's account of his tour as The



Present State of Music in France and Italy the following year laid the foundation for his acceptance as a man of letters rather than what his daughter Fanny later called 'a mere musician', a reputation enhanced by the publication two years later of the journal of a similar tour through Germany and the Netherlands. He acquired 'fashionable status', and his London home became 'the gathering place for prominent musicians, men of letters, politicians and artists' and the venue for regular Sunday evening concerts.

Burney's *Tours* and *General History of Music* remain, according to The New Grove, 'wellsprings of observation and insight into 18th-century musical life and practice'. In addition, the *Tours* graphically indicate the difficulties of travel at that time for a person of modest means: his was far from an aristocratic 'Grand Tour'.

We are following Burney's journey with music and readings, most of the latter being taken from his own work. Musically, rather than limit ourselves to the repertoire for unaccompanied choir of Burney's own time, we follow rather the spirit of his enquiry, reflecting both his antiquarian interest in 'old' music and his intense interest in the new.

Our journey begins (like Burney's) in Dover, with Howard Skempton's *The Flight of Song*. Skempton's direct and immediately appealing music has made him one of the most important and successful composers of his generation (he was born in 1947). This setting of the enigmatic poetry of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow makes a perfect starting-point with its vision of song as 'an enchanting, animating spirit' and its direct references to ships, sea, tide and travel.

Though Burney's main goal was to investigate the music and musicians of Italy, the first weeks of his trip were spent in France. He spent nearly two weeks in Paris, which he had previously visited in 1764. Later, during the preparation of Volume Two of his *History*, he came increasingly to admire the music of the 16th-century, spending much time transcribing the works of composers such as Josquin des Prez, Okeghem and Taverner: Josquin was later described by Burney, quite correctly, as 'the Giant of his time, [who] seems to have arrived at ... universal monarchy and dominion over the affections and passions of the musical part of mankind'. The chanson short pieces, often witty and usually concerned with matters of *amour* was at the centre of French secular repertoire for three centuries. Our selection covers a variety of style and mood: plangent musing from Josquin (c.1450-1521), affectionate conviviality from Orlande de Lassus (1532-1594), and amorous delight and expectation from Claude Le Jeune (c.1530-1600).

Burney's interest as a modernist would no doubt have been aroused by the music of Tom Johnson (b.1939), though he is unlikely to have met any American composers living in Paris (Johnson has lived there since 1983)! Like Skempton, Johnson makes the maximum use of the minimum of material, often explored through witty and unconventional means as in his 1982 setting of part of John Wesley's 'Instructions for Singing', printed in his *Select Hymns* of 1761. Burney must have known of John Wesley, of course, even if he is unlikely to have met the man himself. The music of Francis Poulenc (1899-1963) is more central to the repertoire, and his many fine choral works are much loved. He too is often a witty composer, but *Un soir de neige*, written at Christmas 1944, paints an altogether bleaker picture reflecting the mood of the time.

On 24 June Burney left Paris for Italy, travelling by way of Lyons and Geneva, finally reaching Milan on 16 July. For the next five months he discussed, researched and listened to music avidly, visiting most of Italy's major cities and musical centres. Among these were Venice, Florence and Rome, cities where in the 16th century the Italian madrigal flourished. Like the chanson in France, the madrigal in Italy (unlike its English offshoot) was the major secular vocal form of its time, a prime focus for musical experiment and innovation. Our selection covers the madrigal's

chanson-like beginnings (Jacob Arcadelt, c.1505-1568) and - in pieces by its two late, great masters, Luca Marenzio (1553/4-1599) and Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643) - its 'pictorial' phase, when every facet of the text was illustrated in graphic musical detail.

Marenzio worked mainly in Rome and Monteverdi for his last forty years in Venice; Luigi Dallapiccola (1904-1975) lived from 1922 in Florence. Like his near-contemporary Poulenc, Dallapiccola was a leading figure both nationally and internationally. Although he later adopted a rather lyrical form of Schoenbergian serialism, his early works were by comparison often remarkably old-fashioned in harmony and structure, though typically Italian in their lyricism and passionate intensity. Nowhere is this more true than in the first pair of *Cori di Michelangelo* of 1933, which respond to the sardonic early 17th-century texts of the sculptor's nephew as flexibly as Monteverdi, using a deliberately archaic harmonic language which would no doubt have intrigued our traveller greatly.

Burney set out on his return journey from Naples on 8 November. He stopped in Rome for a second time, eventually leaving for home on 22 November. This journey proved particularly hazardous, and is described in harrowing detail in his journal (the non-musical sections of this were largely omitted from *The Present State...* and only published in the mid-20th century). Winter was fast approaching, the weather and paths treacherous, food and drink terrible or non-existent, and guides and innkeepers unfriendly and often untrustworthy. He arrived in Paris on 8 December and spent some days meeting people he had missed in June (notably Rousseau and Diderot) before travelling on to Calais. A storm delayed his crossing for five days before he left for Dover, eventually reaching his new family home in London 'heartily glad to find myself in old England again'.

We too end our journey in England, with a final bow to Burney's two abiding musical interests, the old and the new. Nicholas Brown (b.1974) is a lecturer at St Catherine's College, Oxford and research student at Magdalen College. Stillness was written in 1999 to texts drawn from Cecil Collins In the solitude of This Land and is cast in the form of a triptych. The middle, and longest, section is a musical parody (an ancient and honourable musical technique) of one of the most famous and best-loved of English madrigals, Draw on sweet night by John Wilbye (1574-1638). The two pieces form the final group in our programme, and may perhaps reflect Burney's mood of relief and contentment that Christmas Eve, laced no doubt with memories good and bad of his arduous travels.

The Flight of Song

1 The Arrow and the Song

I breathed a song into the air, it fell to earth, I knew not where; For who has sight so keen and strong, that it can follow the flight of song? Long, long afterward, in an oak I found the arrow, still unbroken; And the song, from beginning to end, I found again in the heart of a friend. I breathed a song into the air, it fell to earth, I knew not where; For who has sight so keen and strong, that it can follow the flight of song?

2 Becalmed

Becalmed upon the sea of Thought, Still unattained the land is sought, My mind, with loosely hanging sails, Lies waiting the auspicious gales.

On either side, behind, before, The ocean stretches like a floor, A level floor of amethyst, Crowned by a golden dome of mist.

Blow, breath of inspiration, blow! Shake and uplift this golden glow! And fill the canvas of the mind With wafts of Thy celestial wind.

Blow, breath of song! Until I feel The straining sail, the lifting keel, The life of the awakening sea, Its motion and its mystery.

3 Chimes

Sweet chimes!

That in the loneliness of night salute the passing hour, and in the dark and silent chambers of the household mark the movements of the myriad orbs of light!

Through my closed eyelids, by the inner sight, I see the constellations in the arc of their great circles moving on, and hark!

I almost hear them singing in their flight.
Better than sleep it is to lie awake
O'er canopied by the vast starry dome of immeasurable sky;
to feel the slumbering world sink under us,
and make Hardly an eddy, a mere rush of foam
On the great sea beneath a sinking keel.

4 The Tide Rises, and the Tide Falls

The tide rises, the tide falls, The twilight darkens, the curfew calls; Along the sea sands damp and brown The traveller hastens toward the town, And the tide rises, the tide falls.

Darkness settles on roofs and walls, But the sea in the darkness calls and calls; The little waves, with their soft white hands, Efface the footprints in the sands And the tide rises, the tide falls.

The morning breaks; the steeds in their stalls Stamp and neigh, as the hostler calls:

The day returns, but nevermore Returns the traveller to the shore, And the tide rises, the tide falls, And the tide rises, the tide falls

Bonjour mon Coeur

Bonjour mon coeur, bonjour ma douce vie.
Bonjour mon oeil, bonjour ma chère amie.
Hé! Bonjour ma toute belle, Ma mignardise, bonjour, Mes délices, mon amour, Mon doux printemps, ma douce fleur nouvelle, Mon doux plaisir, ma douce colombelle, Mon passereau, ma gente tourterelle, Bonjour ma douce rebelle.

Good day my heart, good day my sweet life.
Good day my eye, good day my dear beloved.
Ah! good day my beauty, my pretty one good day, my delight, my love, my sweet springtime, my sweet new flower, my sweet pleasure, my sweet little dove, my sparrow, my reproached, good day my sweet rebel.

Mille Regretz

Mille regretz de vous habandonner et d'eslonger vostre fache amoureuse.

J'ay si grand dueil et paine douloreuse qu'on me verra brief mes jours definer. A thousand regrets to leave you and to be far from your loving face.

I suffer such deep sorrow and grievous pain that soon I will end my days.

Revoici Venir du Printemps

Rechant Revoici ve

Revoici venir du Printemps L'amoureuse et belle saison

Chant a deux

Le courant des eaux recherchant Le canal d'été s'éclairecît: Et la mer calme de ces flots Refrain

Once again the springtime is coming the season of love and beauty

Song for two parts

The water's current seeks again its summer channel and is clear. And the calm sea with its waves

Amolit le triste courroux Le Canard s'égai' se plongeant Et se lave coint dedans l'eau

Et la grû' qui fourche son vol Retraverse l'air et s'enva.

Chant a trois
Le Soleil êclaire luisant
D'une plus séreine clarté
Du nuage l'ombre s'enfuit
Qui se jou' et court et noircit
Et forêts et champs et coteaux
Le labour humain reverdît
Et la pré découvre ses fleurs.

Chant a quatre
De Vénus le fils Cupidon
L'univers semant de ses traits,
De sa flamme va réchauffer
Animaux, qui volent en l'air
Animaux, qui rampant aux champs
Animaux, qui nagent aux eaux.
Ce qui mêmement ne sent pas
Amoureux se fond de plaisir.

Chant a cinq
Rions aussi nous: et cherchons Les
ébats et jeux du Printemps
Toute chose rit de plaisir
Célébrons la gaie saisons.

Wesley's Challenge

Part 1

Sing lustily and with good courage

Solo voice Beware of singing as if you were half dead or half asleep; but lift up your voice with strength. Be no more afraid of your voice nor more ashamed of its being heard than when you sang the songs of Satan.

Part 2

Sing these songs exactly as they are printed here, without altering or mending them at all;

and if you have learn'd to sing them otherwise, unlearn it a quickly as you can.

mollifies its unhappy turbulence; and the duck delights in diving and bathes and preens himself in the water;

and the crane with its broken flight criss-crosses the sky and departs.

Song for three parts
The sun so brightly shining,
with a most serene radiance
chases the shadows from the clouds
which play and run and darken.
And forests, fields and hillocks
With man's labours are made green again,
and meadows reveal their flowers.

Song for four parts
Cupid, the son of Venus,
scatters his darts over the world
and with his flame will rekindle
animals who fly in the sky,
animals who crawl in the fields,
animals who swim in the water.
Even that which has no feeling
feels love and pleasure.

Song for five parts
Let us laugh too and let us seek
the revels and games of springtime:
everything laughs with pleasure:
let us praise the happy season

Part 3

Sing all!

See that you join with the others as frequently as you can. Let not a slight degree of weakness or weariness hinder you. If it is a cross to you take it up, and you will find it a blessing. Sing all!

Part 4

Sing modestly.

Do not bawl, so as to be heard above or distinct from the others that you may not hear the harmony;

but strive to unite your voices together, so as to make one clear melodious sound.

Part 5

Above all sing spiritually. Have an eye to God in every word. Aim at pleasing him more than yourself. More than any other living creature. In order to do this attend strictly to the sense of what you are singing. And see that your heart is not carried away with the sound, but offered to God continually so shall your singing be such as the Lord ill approve.

Un Soir de Neige

1. De grande cuillers de neige
De grande cuillers de neige
Ramassent nos pieds glacés
Et d'une dure parole
Nous heurtons l'hiver têtu
Chaque arbre a sa place en l'air
Chaque roc son poids sur terre
Chaque ruisseau son eau vive
Nous nous n'avons pas de feu

2. La bonne neige

La bonne neige le ciel noir
Les branches mortes la détresse
De la forêt pleine de pièges
Honte à la bête pourchassée
La fuite en flèche dans le Coeur
Les traces d'une proie atroce
Hardi au loup et c'est toujours
Le plus beau loup et c'est toujours
Le dernier vivant que menace
La masse absolue de la mort.

Our freezing feet collect
Great lumps of snow
And with deep groans
We confront the onset of winter
Each tree has its place in the air
Each rock its place on the earth
Each stream its flowing water
We have no fire.

The beautiful snow the black sky
The dead branches, the pain
The forest full of traps
Disgrace to the hunted creature
Fleeing as an arrow in the heart
The tracks of a cruel hunt
Courage to the wolf which is always
The finest wolf and is always
The last survivor threatened by
The inevitable burden of death

3. Bois meurtri

Bois meurtri perdu d'un voyage en hiver

Navire où la neige prend pied Bois d'asile bois mort où sans espoir je rêve

De la mer aux miroirs crevés Un grand moment d'eau froide a saisi les noyés

La foule de mon corps en souffre Je m'affaiblis je me disperse J'avoue ma vie j'avoue ma mort j'avoue autrui.

4. La nuit le froid la solitude
La nuit le froid la solitude
On m'enferma soigneusement
Mais les branches cherchaient leur
voie dans la prison
Autour de moi l'herbe trouve le ciel
On verrouilla le ciel
Ma prison s'écrou la
Le froid vivant le froid brûlant m'eut
bien en main.

Woods scarred woods wrecked in the course of winter
Ship where the snow takes hold
Woods of refuge, dead woods

Of a sea of broken mirrors
A surge of cold water has gripped the drowning
My whole body cries in suffering
I grow weak, my strength is shattered
I am reconciled to life, to death and to others

The night the cold the loneliness
I was locked in carefully
But the branches sought their way into
the prison
Around me grass found the sky
The sky was bolted
My prison crumbled
The living cold the burning cold had me
in its grip

Ecco mormora l'onde

Ecco mormora l'onde E tremolar le fronde, A l'autra mattutina, e gl'arborseli, E sovra i Verdi rami i vagh'augelli Cantar soavemente, E rider l'Oriente. Ecco già l'alb'appare E si specchia nel mare E rasserena il cielo E imperla il dolce gielo, E gl'alti monti indora. O bella e vagh' Aurora, L'aura è tua messaggiera, e tu de l'aura Ch'ogn' arso cor ristaura.

Lo murmur the waves and tremble the fronds In the breeze of dawn and the young trees, And upon the green branches the pretty birds sing sweetly, And laughs the East. Lo already the dawn appears and is reflected in the sea And clears the sky and makes pearly the delicate ice And the high mountains gilds. A beautiful and fair dawn, The breeze is your messenger, and your breeze Every inflamed heart restores

Il Bianco e Dolce Cigno

Il bianco e dolce cigno cantando more, Et io piangendo giungo al fin del viver mio.

Strano e diversa sorte, ch'ei more sconsolato

Et io moro beato morte che nel morire Mi empie di gioia tutto e di desire. Se nel morir, altro dolor non sento, Di mille morte il di sarei contento.

Già torna a rallegrar

Già torna a rallegrar l'aria e la terra, Il giovenetto April carco di fiori; Il mar s'acqueta, il giel fugge sotterra, Scherzan le vaghe Ninfe lor Pastori.

Tornan gli augelli l'amorosa, Lieti a cantar nei matutini albori. Et io piango la notte e son dolente, Tosto che'l sol si scopre in Oriente,

Due Cori di Michelangelo

Il Coro delle Malmaritate

All'altrui spese, donzelle, imparate, All'altrui spese imparate, donzelle, Per non aver a dir piangendo poi: Triste, mal maritate! Quant'era me' per noi Chiuderci per le celle Scavezzarci le chiome, Mutarci abito e nome, Vestir nero, bigio o bianco, Arrandellarci 'l fianco Di còrdigli e di cuoi... Quant'era me' per noi! Quant'era me' per noi Levarci a' mattutini, Dar mano a' lumicini Prima che canti 'l gallo! Cacciarci in un Bigallo Entrare in un Rosano,

The white and sweet swan dies singing, and I, weeping, reach the end of my life.

Strange and different fate, that he dies disconsolate and I die a blessed death, which in dying fills me full of joy and desire. If in dying, were I to feel no other pain,

I would be content to die a thousand times

Now returns to brighten the air and the earth Young April, laden with flowers;
The sea becomes calm,
the frost flies underground,
Frolic the pretty nymphs and their shepherds.

Return the birds to amorous war, Happy to sing in the morning dawn. And I mourn the night and am sorrowful As soon as the sun reveals itself in the East

Chorus of Unhappy Wives Learn, girls, at the expense of others, At the expense of others, learn, girls, So as not to have to say in tears later: How sad to be unhappily married! How much better it would be for us To shut ourselves up in cells, To shave our heads, To change our clothes and our names, To dress in black, grey or white, To flagellate our sides With ropes and leather straps... How much better it would be for us! How much better it would be for us To get up at the dawn bell, To take a little lamp in our hands Before the cock crows! To run off to the Bigallo, * To enter the Rosano, *

Metterci in un Majano, Al Portico, al Boldrone Darci, o 'n Pian di Mugnone Farci vestir a Lapo, O ver ficcare 'l capo 'N un Monticel di buoi... Quant'era me' per noi! Però imparate E pensateci ben ben ben ben prima

Ch'è non vi s'abbia a dir poi: lima, lima.

To commit ourselves to the Majano, * To give ourselves up to the Portico * Or the Boldrone,* or take the habit Of Lapo* in Pian di Mugnone, * Or go and bury our heads In the Monticel di buoi... * How much better it would be for us! But learn And think very very very very carefully beforehand.

So that you don't have to say afterwards, We've made our beds, now we have to lie in them.

Il Coro dei Malammogliati Chi imparar vuole a tòr moglie Mastri esperti eccoci qui: E diciam che chi la toglie Dato aver vedrà in duo dì 'N una diavola infernale, 'N una zucca senza sale.

Me ne stetti al ditto altrui: Un buon uom mi disse: "Fa"; O minchion, minchion ch'io fui! Inciampai (e ben mi sta) 'N una diavola infernale, 'N una zucca senza sale.

Ohimè! Chè per bellezza Ch'era tutta frondi e fior Colsi poi frutti d'asprezza M'incontrai, ebbro d'amor, 'N una diavola infernale, 'N una zucca senza sale.

Zie, sorelle, madri e none Lo staranno a inzipillar, E dieci alter mone Cionne, Per finirlo d'affogar 'N une diavola infernale, 'N una zucca senza sale.

Chorus of Unhappy Husbands For anyone who wants to take a wife Here we are as expert masters in the art; And we say that anyone who takes one Will see her erupt in two days Into a she-devil from hell Into a pumpkin without salt. *

I went by what other people said: A good man told me, "Go ahead". Oh, what a fool, what a fool I was! I stumbled (and it serves me right) Over a she-devil from hell, Over a pumpkin without salt.

Alas! Since, because of the beauty That was all branches and flowers, Afterwards I picked sour fruits, I met, in the intoxication of love, With a she-devil from hell, With a pumpkin without salt.

Aunts, sisters, mothers and grandmothers Will carry on nagging at him, As will ten other women, Till they finish up drowning him In the clutches of a she-devil from hell, Of a pumpkin without salt.

*ie a complete idiot

Translation: Graham Billing

^{*} Names of convents or religious orders in Florence

Draw on Sweet Night

Draw on sweet night, best friend unto those cares,
That do arise from painful melancholy.
My life so ill through want of comfort fares,
That unto thee I consecrate it wholly, Sweet night draw on!
My griefs when they be told to shades and darkness,
find some ease from paining.
And while thou all in silence dost enfold,
I then shall have best time for my complaining

Stillness

I walk in the silent glades of bone

The sword of venom stabs the devotion of the eagle on the solitude of this land. Still loneliness a glance of stillness upon the jewelled scourge of streets. Perfumed dark the wreath of utterance, the enigmatic wine, the sceptre. Mysteries of the heart work unceasingly with the voice of their wound. Drink from the well of their flowing rays that breath in secret, The spring deeply flashing with a sigh, spring, the infinite lamp Beside the skull on the hill, beneath the furious clouds, I eat the vivid bread of life. O the solitude of this land.

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paragon singers

Paragon Singers was formed in 1976. In recent years the choir has come increasingly to specialise in Renaissance, Baroque and twentieth-century music and is now considered a leading chamber choir in the field of early music in the area. Paragon Singers performs several times a year in Bath and its environs as well as making frequent appearances elsewhere. The choir has made concert tours to Kenya, Ireland, France and Holland, having six times visited Alkmaar as guests of its 'twin' choir, Good Company.

sopranos Pam Bennett, Rachel Flecker, Charlotte de Grey,

Josephine Guillaume, Mary Henderson, Stephanie Lockhart

altos Gill Clarke, Louise Gibb, Margaret Graham, Catherine Richards

tenors Mike Gumbley, James Henderson, Christopher Rogers,

Gareth Somerset.

basses Phil Brotheridge, Tim Graham, Marc Horobin, Nicholas Stuart

Keith Bennett

Keith Bennett studied music at Oxford, where he was organ scholar at Brasenose College. He was awarded a doctorate from Oxford in 1978 for his study of the 16th century composer Luca Marenzio. He was a principal lecturer at Bath Spa University College from 1979-2004. He has performed

widely as an accompanist, continuo player and singer, and has lived in Bradford on Avon since 1979.

Acknowledgements:

Grateful thanks go to Wiltshire Performing Arts Library for loan of scores and to Graham Billing for the translation of Dallapiccola's 'Due Cori di Michelangelo'.



Are you a singer? Paragon is always interested in high quality singers who have an interest in our repertoire. If you would like to sing with Paragon, then please contact Keith Bennett on 01225 862675.

You can find details of forthcoming paragon singers events at www.paragonsingers.co.uk

future paragon singers concerts

Saturday 3 Dec 2005 St John's South Parade, Bath7.30pm

Tallis 500 'Spem in alium' a celebration of Thomas Tallis's quincentenary

including 'Spem in alium' and Mass 'Puer natus est', and works by Byrd, Ludford, Sheppard & Taverner.

Sat 17 Dec 2005 Wiltshire Music Centre, Bradford on Avon 7.30pm

Christmas at Versailles

Marc-Antoine Charpenter'Te Deum & Messe' de 'Minuit' Michel-Richard de Lalande'Cantate Domino' & 'Te Deum' Faye Newton soprano, Colin Howard tenor, Colin Campbell bass Bradford Baroque Band

Saturday 25 March 2006St Alphege Church, Oldfield Lane, Bath

Lamentation & Redemption

Duarte Lobo 'Requiem'

Dierdre Gribbin 'Her Tears: Stabat Mater'

Tom Johnson Tallis 'Bonhoeffer Oratorium - Chorfragmente' 'Lamentations'

