

VENANZIO RAUZZINI AND THE SEARCH FOR MUSICAL PERFECTION

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While standards of musical performance in Bath have frequently been high, it is doubtful if concerts in the city have ever achieved greater eminence than they did during the latter part of the eighteenth century. It is clear that, throughout the century, music was very important in the city. Not only was there much music in the homes of the residents and visitors, but they enjoyed a very full and vital programme of public performance as they regularly attended the various balls, churches, concerts, gentlemen's glee clubs, pleasure gardens and the theatre. Chief among these were the subscription concerts which grew out of the music clubs in the city's inns and the morning concerts given by the handful of instrumentalists who formed the first professional orchestra in the Pump Room towards the end of the first decade. From these there developed such a remarkable tradition of high standards of proficiency that, by the 1790s, Bath's concerts were not only among the most grand, elegant and sparkling social occasions in the land, but reviewers described the performances as without competition in the kingdom.

This tradition was established firstly by Francis Fleming, director of the city's earliest subscription concerts, and later by Thomas Linley senior and William Herschel. It was inherited in the late 1770s by the Italian castrato singer and composer, Venanzio Rauzzini, director of almost all Bath's major musical performances until his death in 1810, and it was through his energy, enterprise and musical expertise that, during the last decade or so of the century, Bath's concerts reached their peak of excellence and the city's music became so internationally renowned.

The earliest reference in Bath's newspapers to Rauzzini's

presence in the city appears in the *Chronicle* of 30 October 1777. The young Flemish violinist and composer, Franz Lamotte, had been engaged by the managers of the Lower Assembly Rooms to direct their concerts that season and, in his defence against charges of 'deliberately opposing' Linley's subscription concerts at the Upper Rooms, Lamotte makes it clear that it was he who engaged Rauzzini to perform in Bath. Rauzzini was then thirty-one and his fame would have certainly preceded him to Bath for he had been in England for three years by that time. In addition to those in the city who had witnessed his performances in London, many others would have heard him sing in the various music festivals at which he appeared in the West Country each year from 1775 onwards. Bath's leading musicians would also have known his quality as a performer, for they too were regularly engaged for the same occasions.

It is possible that Rauzzini also visited Bath during these early years in England. Support for this possibility is provided by R. Hippisley whose 'descriptive poem', *Bath and its Environs*, published in the city in 1775, refers to Rauzzini as one of those 'Locusts spawn'd at Rome . . . gelt for a song' who were 'maintained by the luxury and profuse extravagance of the great'. While Hippisley undoubtedly had Rauzzini's London performances very much in mind, it is clearly to the 'pastimes' in Bath that he is alluding. Moreover, those who pampered such singers in the capital were mostly the same people who resorted to Bath for the season, often engaging 'star' performers from London or elsewhere for their private musical parties and it may have been on such an occasion that Hippisley heard Rauzzini sing. It is also likely that his travels to engagements elsewhere in the West Country would have brought him to Bath.

Indeed, Rauzzini may have decided to settle in Bath much earlier than 1780, the year generally supposed, for in February 1796 he wrote of having had 'nearly twenty years' residence in the city. It would be easy to assume that the words were used rather loosely, and intended to include his relatively short periods of residence when he was engaged for the autumn concerts from 1777, but his claims to have been responsible for their direction for eighteen and twenty years, published in 1795 and 1797 respectively, are precise and accurate, suggesting that he was not usually vague about such matters.

Rauzzini was not in sole charge of Bath's music in the early years, however. Apart from advertisements during the 1777-78 season which show that it was only from the third concert of the subscription onwards that Lamotte shared the management with him, local newspapers clearly indicate that, for the following two seasons, it was again Lamotte who was chiefly responsible for the major performances. Nevertheless, Rauzzini, whose reputation in the theatres in London and Europe was well known, was the greater attraction. So much so that John Palmer the Younger, then manager of the Bath Theatre and possibly hoping for some reciprocal arrangement, soon gave his permission for Lamotte and Rauzzini to 'draw *any* additional forces' from his orchestra for their concerts.¹

Unfortunately, because of some 'imprudence' which made it 'inconvenient' for Lamotte to remain in the city, he left Bath early in 1780 and travelled to Weymouth. One can only speculate on the nature of this 'imprudence' for there were a number of deficiencies in his character. He was under considerable pressure and, since he died just a few months later, he was probably unwell. His problems may have affected his conduct of the concerts and the more mature Rauzzini may well have had to accept a greater share of the responsibility than advertisements and other evidence suggest.

By the start of the following season, 1780-81, Lamotte had died, and Rauzzini took over the responsibility for the subscription concerts. No hint of this appears in the advertisements, but his position is confirmed in a complaint published in the *Chronicle* of 30 November 1780 concerning the clash of the concerts with performances at the Theatre which had changed its night from Thursday to Wednesday, the traditional night for concerts in the city. As many instrumentalists were contracted to the Theatre, the writer observed that, being deprived of 'so great a part of the band, from the play being on the same night . . . must [have been] a great injury to Signor Rauzzini'. The season was clearly not easy for Rauzzini. The Theatre manager had changed the night of his performances because an increased interest in cotillon dancing among the younger people in the city had depleted his attendances on Thursday evenings, and the intense rivalry between the two sets of Rooms further complicated what had previously been a well-regulated programme of entertainments.

In addition, his leading vocalist, the Italian Giusto Tenducci, had engagements in London which made it necessary to rearrange some of the later concerts. Yet Rauzzini was clearly not discouraged and the next few years saw him establishing himself as the leader of Bath's musicians and director of the city's major performances.

The time was opportune for Bath and Rauzzini to come together as both were at important stages in their musical development. The city needed a musical director with enterprise and flair to maintain the progress its musical activities had achieved under Linley. Lamotte had proved too inexperienced in social diplomacy, and Herschel, by then thoroughly absorbed in his telescopes and the stars, was probably not sufficiently interested to operate at the level of commitment required. Moreover, with musicians of the calibre of Lamotte and Rauzzini showing willingness to direct the city's music, Herschel may well have been thought not talented enough for the task.

Despite his immediate success following his arrival in England in 1774, Rauzzini had not been happy on the London stage. He may have been concerned about his future career as a singer, not only because of the declining popularity of the castrato voice, but because he, like the famous music historian Charles Burney who had marvelled at his performances when he heard him in Munich some years earlier, would have realised that his voice had already lost some of its quality. The probable effect on his confidence adds credence to the suggestion that when he eventually left the stage it was partly because of his 'unconquerable sensibility, as he never made his appearance as a public performer without trepidation'.²

In Burney's opinion, the reason for Rauzzini's decline was that he 'had a real genius for writing, which inclined him to devote that time to the pen and the improvement of his hand, which, in his station, would have been better bestowed in nursing and exercising his voice'.³ If this was indeed the case, it is hardly surprising that, though he was still young, extremely handsome and at the peak of a highly successful stage career, he should have been drawn to the relative calm and elegant way of life followed by the residents and visitors in Bath in such beautiful surroundings. The prospect of developing his talents as a composer in such an environment must have seemed an extremely attractive alter-

ative to the pressure of an uncertain future travelling round the theatres of Europe.

Nonetheless, for some years Rauzzini continued to be involved in performances in London, both as the director of concerts and as a singer in the opera houses. During his absence in the spring of 1781 Herschel and, later, Johann Salomon and Tenducci directed a number of important performances in the city. It may have been the glowing reports of these which provided the final inducement for Rauzzini to settle in Bath, for his return in the summer of 1781, following a highly successful series of spring concerts at the Hanover Rooms in London, provides the first real evidence that he had decided to make his permanent home in the city. Further commitments in London during the spring of 1782 meant that he did not direct performances in Bath at that time and he returned to the city only for the Lenten oratorios held alternately in Bath and Bristol. He served as co-director with Herschel on that occasion, but because of Herschel's neglect of his musical responsibilities the series included one of the most disastrous performances ever reported in the West Country.⁴

Following Herschel's move a few weeks later to Slough, where he devoted himself to astronomy, Rauzzini was able to take complete control of the city's professional music-making. No visiting entrepreneur who thereafter attempted to promote concerts achieved any real success, and local musicians who set up alternative subscription concerts did so in a relatively modest way. So settled in Bath did Rauzzini become that, towards the end of the century, it was rare for him to direct performances out of the city: the Somerset Music Meetings at Wells in the late 1780s, a performance at Kilmersdon in 1796 for the opening of a new organ in the church on Lord Hilton's estate, and benefit programmes for Gertrud (Madame) Mara and Andrew Ashe in Bristol in 1795 and 1798 respectively being notable exceptions.

It is clear that Rauzzini's success in Bath owed much to his attractive personality. Indeed, a number of contemporary writers appear to have been more anxious to stress how pleasant it was to be in his company than to comment on his musical talents. His manners were impeccable, his conversation humorous and informative, and he was invariably cheerful, contented, and vivacious. He was also generous and hospitable, both at his various town houses in Bath and at Woodbine

Cottage, Perrymead, his country home just beyond the city boundary in Widcombe, where he frequently entertained some of the outstanding musicians of the age. In addition to serving the 'best viands and choicest wines', he had a library of over eighteen hundred volumes covering a wide range of subjects for his guests to read at rare moments when they were not making music together. Occasionally during the summer he held an 'elegant Fete' in a garden for his friends in which a number of local musicians took part.

Rauzzini was also a welcome participant in many private social events in the city. At the beginning of his career in Bath, the growing number of private functions was endangering the success of all the city's amusements. They were often noisy affairs, for guests appear to have been more interested in conversing than listening to the music.⁵ By the end of the century, however, some of the concerts Rauzzini directed in people's homes differed little in content from the public subscription concerts and were among the most important events on the social calendar. This was particularly so in the case of Miss Wroughton's concerts on Sunday evenings which were so glittering that they were occasionally reviewed in the newspapers. He was undoubtedly a favourite there, and may well have been engaged as much for his charm and wit as for his performance. The ladies were especially fond of Rauzzini. They thought he was extremely handsome, and so many found him irresistibly attractive that reports of his affairs in Bath, often with titled ladies, appeared soon after his arrival in the city.⁶ One with whom he was associated was Lady Gooch, 'a young married Lady not of age with two children', who, it was alleged, offered him ten thousand pounds 'to go off with her'. But it was his closeness above all to Miss Wroughton, for many years his chief patroness, which attracted the greatest interest in his personal life, even though he insisted that their relationship was 'only Platonique'.⁷

Rauzzini was also generous in his contributions to other areas of Bath's musical life. For some years he was particularly active in the gentlemen's singing clubs where, at various times, he directed, sang, accompanied performances on the piano, and provided original compositions for the club's meetings and public concerts. He was also occasionally involved at the Theatre, chiefly as the composer of incidental music, but almost certainly as the



1 From T. Rowlandson's *Comforts of Bath*, 1798.

director of the music from time to time. Though none of the large-scale operas he produced at the London theatres and for which he received highly favourable reviews appeared on the Bath stage, *Werter* and *Cymbeline*, works for which he wrote the incidental music, were frequently performed. Some individual items became popular and, like his 'Epithalamium', a nuptial song in praise of the bride and bridegroom with prayers for their prosperity, first produced in February 1786 for inclusion in the third act of *Werter*, were subsequently included in a number of other works and heard in the concerts. The cantatas, *The Genius of Britain* and *Old Oliver: or the Dying Shepherd*, also received their first performances on the Bath stage in Charles Incledon's and Miss Gopel's benefit performances in February 1789 and March 1796 respectively. That he directed these works at the Theatre cannot be confirmed, but, as both were soon repeated in his concerts, it is assumed that he probably did. All the same, not everyone found Rauzzini's character pleasing. Mr Thrale, for instance, was one gentleman who resented Rauzzini's popularity with the ladies and vowed that he 'longed to cane him every day! such a work made with him! all the fair females sighing for him! enough to make a man sick'.⁸ For others, such as Edmund Rack who described Rauzzini as 'a *Eunich* [with] a fine shrill Pipe', and clearly did not admire 'these *Shreds* of Men, these shells of Human beings',⁹ it was the effeminacy of the castrato which made it difficult for them to accept and respond to him immediately.

There were some who had more well-founded reasons to dislike Rauzzini. His mild disposition masked a wit which could be quite barbed, often betraying a high degree of impatience. His self-confidence bordered on arrogance, especially at the Theatre where he showed his contempt for English voices by turning his back on many who were about to sing on the stage. He was also strongly convinced of his native country's pre-eminence, not only in singing, but in music generally; an attitude reflected in his assertion that though Handel was a good enough German musician, the Italians had many Handels. The comment was made at a time when many in England had come to regard Handel as a native composer, by adoption if not by birth, and it led Rauzzini into some difficulty with his friend Dr Henry Harrington, one of Bath's leading citizens and the most renowned amateur musician in the land.

It is also clear that Rauzzini could be very obdurate. This is implied in accounts of the alleged differences between him and Sacchini regarding which of them was the true composer of many of Sacchini's works. Fortunately, the extent of any disagreement between them was probably exaggerated, for programmes show that Rauzzini's pupils often sang items credited to Sacchini and so support the opinion of 'his friends and the reasonable part of the public' who would not accept the accusations made against him.¹⁰ Nonetheless, his disputes with the managers of the Somerset Music Meeting in Wells during the late 1780s over the direction of their performances meant that he did not conduct there again. Even more serious and unpleasant were the difficulties he encountered with the managers of Bath's Sunday Schools in the spring of 1794, when a gross misunderstanding over arrangements agreed between them and Rauzzini regarding a performance in the Abbey for the benefit of the charity resulted in Rauzzini losing his own performances there for some years and the charity having to make do with less able performers. Though Rauzzini was subjected to the most virulent personal abuse, the evidence tends to support his innocence against charges of 'notorious falsehood' and greed.¹¹ A few years later there were further problems as a strong religious faction in the city persuaded many of Bath's concert-goers that musical performances on Ash-Wednesday and the anniversary of King Charles' martyrdom were inappropriate. Consequently Rauzzini's arrangements had to be drastically altered despite the financial obligations he had already entered into.¹² That he not only survived the many difficulties he encountered, but generally emerged with increased esteem and loyalty from the majority, is indicative of the considerable inner strength of character he possessed.

Rauzzini's many personal qualities would have counted for little as a musical director, however, had he not also been extremely talented. He always enjoyed the respect of his fellow musicians in Bath, since his own standards of performance, as well as those he required of others, were high. When he first settled in the city his voice still had many of the qualities, especially in the upper range, demanded by the motet, *Exultate, jubilate*, which Mozart had written for him in 1773, but his failure to look after his voice meant that its power and range soon began

to diminish. A turning point seems to have been reached in March 1784, when he received an extremely adverse criticism of his singing in his opera, *Alina, o sia La regina di Golconda*, at the King's Theatre in London,¹³ for he subsequently became more settled in Bath, and rarely sang elsewhere. By the end of the century he had lost the soprano part of his voice, but the middle and lower range were still 'very fine' and his taste remained 'exquisite'. He sang few solos, but duets and trios with some of his pupils, in which he presumably sang a lower part, were occasionally advertised. He also sang in such items at private musical parties.

While there is no record of Rauzzini playing any keyboard works in Bath's concerts, his skill is often acknowledged in advertisements and reviews which note that he had 'obligingly promised his assistance' or 'presided [at the Pianoforte] with his usual abilities' as the accompanist for individual soloists or groups of glee singers. Furthermore, the many flattering comments he received for his direction of the orchestra almost certainly refer, in part, to his performance at the keyboard. Rauzzini may also have been a harpist, for 'an elegant Pedal Harp' was included in the sale of his effects after his death.¹⁴ Regrettably the only references to his involvement with the instrument relate to singers who accompanied themselves on the harp as they performed some of his songs, and to the *Periodical Work of Vocal Musick*, published in Bath in 1797, in which many of the accompaniments are written for 'Harp or Piano Forte'.

Charles Burney was not the only renowned musician of the period to acknowledge Rauzzini's talent, for Samuel Wesley referred to him as an excellent theorist, 'thoroughly versed in every species of good music'.¹⁵ But it was probably Haydn's recognition of him which pleased him most. Haydn stayed with Rauzzini, whom he described as a famous 'Musicus', at his home in Widcombe in August 1794 and, as a charming gesture to his host, wrote the canon, 'Turk was a faithful dog and not a man', as a tribute to Rauzzini's favourite pet.¹⁶

It was as a teacher, however, that Rauzzini was loved and respected most ardently. When his financial situation was at its worst, it was his pupils in Bath who came to his support by producing a concert for his benefit which, according to a review in the *Chronicle* of 6 March 1794, had 'rarely been surpassed'. While



2 Venanzio Rauzzini and the dog Turk, attributed to J. Hutchinson, c. 1780.

some pupils, including a number who were already professional singers, undoubtedly went to him for the 'honied elegance' that he 'infused into [their] tones and manner of singing Italian', he was clearly also a master of technique. He was the most sought-after teacher in Britain, and the list of his pupils includes many of the most famous performers of the period. While it was generally accepted that a singer untutored by Rauzzini was only half taught, the *Chronicle* of 30 August 1792 went much further and described him as 'the first master for teaching in the universe'. Some justification for such praise is evident in those songs which Rauzzini seems to have written with particular singers in mind, a number of which were published with 'as sung at the Bath concerts' by the singers concerned printed on the title page. The range of styles reflects his understanding of individual voices, and suggests that, while he was thought of as primarily a teacher of bel canto singing, his outstanding quality was not as a master of any rigid system of training but as an encourager and developer of a pupil's own unique talent.

Apart from the satirical *ABC Dario Musico* which was published in Bath in 1780 and suggests that Rauzzini exhorted his pupils to 'exhibit' their teeth by closing them and stretching their mouths as wide as possible, no record of his teaching practices survive. There may have been some emphasis on sight-reading, however, for if William Parke is to be believed Rauzzini would occasionally 'take up the most difficult instrumental composition, reverse the page as he held it before him, and in that position sing it at sight with perfect correctness'.¹⁷ Advertisements for his *Periodical Work of Vocal Musick*, to which the Queen and other members of the Royal Family subscribed, suggest that his songs may have been written with some didactic purpose in mind, for he asserted that they would be 'of essential advantage' to those who wished to become proficient singers and accompanists of vocal music. On the other hand he may have been merely concerned with enlarging the commercial potential for his music. Nevertheless, some of his precepts are outlined in the introduction to the set of 12 *Solfeggi or Exercises for the Voice*, which he composed especially for and dedicated to his scholars. These exercises, published in 1808, emphasise the importance of pronunciation and good vowel sounds, and show some sensitivity to the implied criticism in *ABC Dario* by urging singers to 'open the mouth wide to produce

sounds free without being impeded by the TEETH, yet not so wide as to appear ridiculous'. Above all, he reminds readers that the 'sole object is to please'.

Rauzzini's relationships with his pupils were often close and the affection in which he was held by so many suggests that a singer not taught by him was deprived of a very kind, encouraging and supportive friend. There were some who publicly acknowledged that his kindness and generosity to them had been almost parental. Incledon, the first Englishman he appears to have recognised as a singer of ability, paid tribute to him by giving 'Venanzio' to his first-born son for a second name. There were some who mistook Rauzzini's kindness to his pupils as merely a love of companionship and the reason for much of the financial embarrassment which he suffered through promoting Bath's concerts. Parke refutes this, however, and points out that Rauzzini was compelled by circumstance to entertain those he engaged for the concerts, for they received little or perhaps no other remuneration. 'Indeed', insists Parke, 'no man less respected than Rauzzini was could have carried on these concerts, and produced at them as he did, a succession of singers of the first eminence, at a subscription amounting to no more than two shillings and sixpence per night! being less than a third of those concerts in London'.¹⁸

The Irish tenor, Michael Kelly, confirms that it was 'almost an article of faith' among many leading singers who were Rauzzini's former pupils to give their services freely at his concerts,¹⁹ and it is hardly surprising that when Ashe, Bath's leading flautist, took over the direction of the concerts following Rauzzini's death in 1810, he was obliged to increase the cost of the subscriptions on the grounds that 'the late Mr Rauzzini had resources which no other person ever could . . . command. He was the very head of his profession, and father of most of the best singers of the . . . day, who gratefully assisted at his concerts on terms that no successor [could] have pretensions to expect'. His funeral was attended by a greater number than any since Nash had died, and it is fitting that it should have been two of his pupils, John Graham and Nancy Storace, who, as a mark of the 'zealous affection' of Bath's 'applauding public', erected a memorial to him in the Abbey.

Yet for Bath's own performers Rauzzini's highest qualities were

to be found in his role of director of music in the city. As well as providing them with greater financial security, he so enhanced their status among England's professional musicians that, on 20 November 1794, the *Chronicle* declared that, out of London, there was not 'a band equal in excellence to the band of Bath', and attributed the cause to their being 'accustomed to playing together under the governance of so finished a conductor'. Such was the reputation Rauzzini's performances acquired that he attracted some of the outstanding musicians of the period. In fact many of those who appeared in Bath under Rauzzini's direction were among the most celebrated performers in the land, whether native born or from the continent of Europe. In 1794 the Italian violinist and composer, Giovanni Viotti, even had a clause inserted in his contract with the London Italian Opera which allowed him to play in Bath during the 1794–95 season. With Rauzzini's insistence on the highest standards, and the training he gave to ensure that the local performers were worthy to support such talented visitors, it is hardly surprising that the people of Bath felt justified in claiming that their concerts were equal, if not superior, to those anywhere in the kingdom.

That Rauzzini also had flair and panache as a director of public performances is implied in various reports. In addition to persuading 'celebrated players on all kinds of instruments, from the Jew's Harp upwards to the Kettle Drum',²⁰ to make the uncomfortable journey to Bath and his encouragement of many outstanding child prodigies, he had an eye for the special occasion. His presentation of 'an elegant purse' to Mrs Billington after her appearance in the oratorios in Lent 1792, the unexpected performance of 'God Save the King' as the audience, anxious about events in France, were about to leave his concert in November that same year, and the leading out of the popular young Mary Comer to sing in his concert in April 1799 in defiance of Mrs Wingrove to whom she was apprenticed, not only reveal some sensitivity to the mood of his audiences but also contain elements of pure showmanship. Local musicians would clearly have enjoyed being associated with such remarkable and dramatic events.

William Bingley, the musical biographer, suggests that it was to Rauzzini's 'talents and exertions' that the city of Bath was 'more indebted for its advancement to eminence in the world of fashion

than to those of any other individual'.²¹ Yet quite why Rauzzini persisted with the concerts is uncertain, since at the end of almost every season he had made a loss. Indeed his appearances in London may have been as much for financial reasons as a desire to perform. Charges for attendance at the concerts were generally moderate: five shillings for individual performances, with an additional two shillings and sixpence on special occasions. Audiences were encouraged to subscribe for the whole or part of a series of concerts, however, on terms which varied considerably according to the number of tickets required. Prices rose a little in the last few years of the century, but even then three tickets to twelve concerts could be obtained for just three guineas.

Despite such generous terms there were those who sought to deprive Rauzzini of revenue by passing their tickets among friends, attending rehearsals without purchasing tickets for the performances, and seeking admission to one performance by presenting tickets issued for another. Occasionally subscribers were informed that only tickets bearing Rauzzini's signature would be accepted as a number had been lost or stolen. By contrast, some insight into Rauzzini's character may be gained from his refusal to cancel a second concert of a subscription series in the spring of 1782 after incurring heavy losses on the first, not, he asserted, out of false pride, but because he had a sense of duty to fulfil the engagement he had contracted with the public by advertising two concerts.

The only recompense Rauzzini received for directing the concerts arose from his own benefit performances which he usually held on Christmas Eve. Since he lost money each season, this was clearly inadequate, yet the public in Bath refused to allow him to raise the terms of the subscriptions for the concerts. It could hardly have come as a surprise, therefore, when in April 1795 he announced that, unless a plan could be suggested 'to prevent his being a loser in future' he would not direct any performances the following season. For many in Bath the concerts were 'first' among the city's 'elegant amusements' and of great attraction to its visitors. Had Rauzzini left Bath there is no doubt that its musical life would have been seriously jeopardised. Consequently a committee of 'twelve gentlemen, of large fortune' was established. They were to be responsible for the concerts and had pledged themselves to defray every expense attending them. In

order to reduce the possibility of losing by their generosity, however, they doubled the cost of the subscriptions and eradicated some of the practices which had robbed Rauzzini of essential funds. Unfortunately Bath's music-lovers soon became disillusioned with the committee as events showed that its members were more interested in making money for themselves than in the well-being of the city's musical life. Disputes arose within various factions in Bath and, when it became clear that all chance of financial gain from the concerts had been removed, the committee lost their will to continue their financial support. Rauzzini found himself responsible for all aspects of the concert promotion once again. But in restructuring the terms of the subscription the committee had put the concerts on a firmer financial foundation; and from this, for the next few years at least, Rauzzini was able to benefit.

For most of the eighteenth century precise details of Bath's concert and oratorio performances are rarely to be found. During Rauzzini's period as musical director, newspaper advertisements often became more informative, giving more titles of works and names of composers. In addition, reviews provided further detail, occasionally attempting some objective assessment of the music or the performances.

The concert structure Rauzzini inherited generally consisted of both vocal and instrumental music usually divided into two acts, the second of which was occasionally devoted to a single, often sacred, work or billed as a miscellaneous act which might also contain some lighter items. Rauzzini's choice of repertoire shows that he regularly introduced the latest works, yet did not neglect the masters of previous generations. Works for larger instrumental forces included many composed by Haydn and Pleyel, while solos and concertos were often written by the soloists who performed them. Since these frequently included some of the most renowned players in Europe, Bath's audiences were often exposed to fresh sounds and styles. Solo vocal music ranged considerably from the music of Purcell to that of the Italian opera. Much solo performance, both vocal and instrumental, was intended for virtuosic display, but towards the close of the century the demand for relatively simple music led to a significant number of English, Scots and Irish ballad-like songs being included in the programmes.

NEW ASSEMBLY-ROOMS,
For the Benefit of
MADAME MARA.

ON WEDNESDAY next, January 13^d,
will be
A GRAND CONCERT
OF VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC,
MADAME MARA
Will sing for that Night THREE SONGS.
Mr. NIELD and Miss COMER,
Will sing TWO SONGS each.
Mrs. MILES
Will play a CONCERT on the PIANO-FORTE.
Mr. TAYLOR
Will play a CONCERT on the VIOLIN.
AND
At the End of the First Act, will be performed
A MARCH with other MILITARY MUSIC,
In which, a YOUNG LADY, for that Night only,
will perform on the TAMBOURINE.
Principal Vocal Performers,
Mr. NIELD, Miss COMER, and Madame MARA.
Tickets 5s. each, to be had of Madame Mara, No.
24, Gay-street; at the Pump-Rooms, Libraries,
Linters' Music-Shop, and at the New Rooms.
6^o. To begin at Seven o'clock.

NEW ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

MR. BROOKS most respectfully informs his Friends and the Public, that his BENEFIT CONCERT is fixed for SATURDAY Evening, the 5th of January.
Further particulars in due time.
Tickets, 5s. each, to be had at the usual places, and of Mr. Brooks, No 16, Beaufort-square.

Mr. JOHN TAYLOR,
BEGS Leave to inform the Nobility and Gentry, that his
CONCERT
Will be at the LOWER ASSEMBLY ROOMS,
On SATURDAY, February 3.
The particulars of the Music and the Names of the Performers will be inserted in future Advertisements.

Mr. J. TAYLOR has played from a very early age at the Bath Concerts; and he therefore naturally solicits the attention of the Nobility and Gentry, whose frequent approbation has made him anxious to attain an eminence in his profession; and he trusts that his exertions will, on this occasion, meet his highest ambition—the honour of their kind patronage.

3 Three concert advertisements from the *Bath Herald*, 19 January 1799.

As might be expected, many items in the concerts were composed by Rauzzini himself. In fact, of all the music known to have been heard in Bath throughout the period, only that of Handel, and possibly Haydn, surpasses his in quantity. He arrived in the city with an already established reputation as a composer. Indeed his music had been heard in Bath as early as March 1776 when Miss Harper sang one of his songs in James Brooks's benefit concert at the New Rooms. Among the first to comment publicly on his music was the anonymous compiler of the *ABC Dario Musico*. Rauzzini is not left completely unscathed,

NEW ASSEMBLY-ROOMS.

MADAME MARA's CONCERT,

DECEMBER 12th, 1787.

FIRST ACT.	SECOND ACT.
Overture, (Double Orchestra.) BACH.	Symphonie. HAYDN.
Song, Mr. Incledon. HOOK.	Song, Madame Mara. GREENE.
M A Chere Amie, my charming fair, In kind companion I find in thee Whole only care is love of thee. <i>Ma chere amie.</i>	A Il dippon di mia Sott ^a Ja fare quon tu verrai, Ja fare quon Amore Voglio ritener, e morir.
Under great friend's fixed name, May friendship in thy bosom fame, May friendship in thy bosom fame Convered into love for me. <i>Ma chere amie.</i>	S a non senti un Cor tiranno Non senti un Cor tanto affanno, O Concerto, la smania O Castola il mio morir. <i>Ah Dippon, D. C.</i>
Quartetto. PIELTAIN.	C
Song, Mrs. Pietain. SARTI.	S CONCERTANTE.
C ARO bene amato oggetto Mi vorrei cor te spiegare, Mi vorrei cor te spiegare, Calle voce a te spiegare, Batta fuli' fuli' mio Che folla mi ferbil il cor. <i>Caro bene D. C.</i>	Song, Miss Cantela. BIANCHI.
Concerto Violino. PIELTAIN.	S TEPHANIE Amedeo Del mio bel sole Non far sentire Qui del mio sole.
Song, Madame Mara. CARUSO.	L a Sot ^a Incontro D'altri vi vade Ne appressa al mento Della sua fe. <i>Sembrauz, D. C.</i>
S O che dovrei goder Se ho perduto il cor Ma in oscuri in dubbio m'è Un gallito noioso Un gallito noioso Per lo pietoso Amore Mi rende il Cor bene Lieto il mio Cor disver E più t'interessa.	Concerto Piano-Forte, Miss Guest. KOZELUCC.
<i>To begin precisely at Half past SIX o'Clock.</i>	
The SIXTH SUBSCRIPTION CONCERT	
Will be on WEDNESDAY the 19th of December.	
<i>Mr. RAUZZINI's BENEFIT</i>	
Will be on MONDAY the 24th, being Christmas Eve, in which will be performed The Sacred ORATORIO of REDEMPTION, Compiled by Dr. ARNOLD, from the best Works of Handel.	

Printed for R. & S. DODS.

- 4 Madame Mara's concert bill for 12 December 1787 from *Bath Chronicle*, 12 December 1787.

but considering the generally scurrilous tone of most entries, the comments on his works border on flattery as they assert, 'Signor Rauzzini is an At-All in composition. Songs, duos, trios, quartettos, and operas flow from his pen equally good'.

Rauzzini produced not only 'songs, duos, trios, quartettos, and operas', but odes and cantatas, an extended 'Sacred Performance', and a wide range of instrumental items, many of which were written especially for performance in the Bath concerts. A number of 'additional' songs composed for various stage works, and some 'occasional' items first performed at the Bath Theatre, also found their way into concerts, even though they were not always included in advertised programmes. So too did the 'very

beautiful Ode "The Genius of Britain" written on the Happy Recovery of his Majesty by Mr. Meyler and composed by Mr. Rauzzini'. It was first sung by Incledon in his benefit performance at the Theatre on 3 March 1789, and according to the *Chronicle* the work was 'delightful and affecting; the accompaniments were particularly grand. It was written, composed and sung as though the subject was felt', and the audience responded with 'triple applause'. The words of the ode were published in the *Chronicle* the following week, and the performance repeated a number of times in the concerts that season. The Royal Family was popular with people in Bath and, though none of the concert performances was reviewed, they were undoubtedly received with the same enthusiasm.

Twelve years later, in October 1797, Rauzzini composed the music to a 'song written on the Evening of the arrival of the glorious news at Bath', entitled 'Jervis and Duncan, or The Year 97'. Following a performance of the work in November, a reviewer wrote:

The Concluding Piece (as a *Musical* composition) is truly excellent, and will rank Mr. Rauzzini still higher in the list of Fame, than the World had, with one concurring voice, long exalted him. It was a grand, sublime and successful attempt at a style which few Composers of the present day would presume to aspire to, and was received, as such Music ever will be, with the loudest approbation.

Such works may well indicate how anglicised Rauzzini had become, and how loyal he was to his adopted country. On the other hand it is equally likely that in the latter years of the century, when everyone was very concerned about events in France, he was sensitive to the atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty among Bath people and provided music to which they could respond with patriotic fervour. Even the 'grand, sublime' style referred to by the reviewer was very similar to that of Arne's 'Rule Britannia' and undoubtedly added to the feeling of stability and confidence provided by the words of the song.

Another vocal work which found favour in the Theatre and the concerts was Rauzzini's cantata *Old Oliver: or the Dying Shepherd*, first introduced in Miss Gopel's benefit at the Theatre on 15 March 1796, and repeated for Rauzzini's spring concert three weeks later. After yet a third performance in one of the subscrip-

tion concerts at the end of the year, the *Herald* produced one of the earliest tentative attempts at balanced criticism to appear in Bath's newspapers. The reviewer had clearly found the item much too long and lacking interest, for, after praising Braham for his singing, and Rauzzini for his skill as a composer, he added:

The effect would perhaps have been greater, had the Song been compressed. The Poetry may be characteristic of the garrulity of age, but by compelling the music to dwell too long upon similar sentiments, the buzz [sic] of approbation is repressed, and the composition consequently loses part of that applause which its superior excellence must otherwise obtain.

Other large-scale works which appeared from time to time drew further superlatives from reviewers, and his 'New Sacred Performance', first heard in February 1796, was said to have 'equalled any thing hitherto produced by the great masters'. A number of individual songs, duets and trios from Rauzzini's larger works were included in the concerts, and of special interest are those which are identified with particular singers, mostly his pupils. Many of these became established favourites and were published with 'as sung at the Bath concerts by' such outstanding singers of the age as Braham, Anne Cantelo, Samuel Harrison, Incledon, and Jonathan Nield, printed on the title-page. Local retailers frequently advertised Rauzzini's songs for sale, and following the publication of his highly popular *Periodical Work of Vocal Musick* concert advertisements occasionally drew attention to particular items from it which were to be performed. The style of music in the series is quite varied and reveals how adept Rauzzini was as a composer, since examples of his Italian *bravura* songs appear together with others very much in the prevailing English style of delicate restraint.

Rauzzini left a number of instrumental works, ranging from solo keyboard items to a 'Sinfonia' in D for full orchestra. The majority of these, including twelve string quartets, op. 2 and op. 7, and six quartets for keyboard, two violins, and cello, op. 6, were published about the time he first appeared in Bath, and it would be surprising if these, and others now lost, were never heard in the subscription concerts. Yet the many instrumental works credited to Rauzzini in the programmes fall into only two categories: overtures and marches.

The overtures, many of which were performed 'by desire', are never identified, but may have been either those to his operas and incidental music for the stage, or even some of the smaller ensemble works supported by woodwind, brass, and percussion. Rauzzini was always anxious to please his patrons, however, and his talent for writing in all the fashionable genres makes it much more likely that they were full orchestral pieces, probably in the style of Haydn or Pleyel. Rauzzini's marches, advertised at various times as 'new', 'favourite', and 'Grand', have not survived except in his own arrangements for piano. Nevertheless, some of these have 'performed at the Concerts in Bath' printed on the title-page. They appear to have been written especially to encourage patriotism and boost the spirits of those volunteering for military service. These, too, were well received, and of his 'concluding March', dedicated to the 'Volunteer Corps of Bath' and performed at the end of the first concert of the 1798–99 season, a reviewer in the *Chronicle* of 29 November 1798 states that it 'evinced the versatility of his genius, which seems to adapt itself, with equal facility, to every walk of musical composition, to the grand and majestick, as well as to lighter, lyrical efforts'.

A remarkable omission from both Rauzzini's extant music and the advertised programmes is a concerto for any instrument. It is unlikely that he wrote none at all, but it is possible that, with so many soloists providing their own or introducing those of such composers as Cramer, Hummel, and Mozart, there was no room or little demand in the concerts for any of *his*. The one suggestion that Bath audiences perhaps occasionally heard such works from him appears in the *Herald* of 1 December 1792, where a reviewer of John Mahon's performance in the third subscription concert that season observed that 'the Clarinet Concerto . . . as a composition, was unworthy of Mr MAHON'S execution. If Mr RAUZZINI would condescend to write a Concerto for this admirable performer, it would be a grateful acquisition to the public'. All the same, the word 'condescend' may be significant, indicating that mere virtuosic display was of little interest to Rauzzini, since such an attitude is certainly evident in his introduction to his *Set of 12 Solfeggi or Exercises for the Voice*.

Rauzzini's music delighted Bath's audiences for whom he was the 'new Apollo', and so often were his compositions heard that his friend Richard Warner considered them 'too well known to

New Assembly-Rooms.

MMR. RAUZZINI most respectfully informs the Public, that his SPRING CONCERT will be on THURSDAY the 17th of APRIL instant.

Principal Vocal Performers:
 Signor BENELLI, Signor ROVEDINO,
 (FROM THE OPERA HOUSE)
 Mr. KELLY;
 Mrs. ASHE,
 And Madame BANTI.

Principal Instrumental Performers:
 First Violin, Mr. Brooks.
 Violoncello, Mr. Herschell.
 Oboe, Mr. Ashley.
 Concerto, Flute, Mr. Ashe.
 And Concerto, Piano-Forte, Mrs. Miles.

ACT I.

Overture, Haydn. Aria, (*Buffo*) Signor Rovedino. Song, Mrs. Ashe, (a Ballad) Rauzzini. Aria, Signor Benelli. Concerto, Flute, Mr. Ashe. Aria, Madame Banti. Terzetto, Madame Banti, Signor Benelli, and Mr. Kelly.

ACT II.

Overture, *the Chace* Mehull. Song, Mr. Kelly, Handel. Aria, Madame Banti. Concerto, Piano-Forte, Mrs. Miles. Aria, Signor Benelli. Aria, Madame Banti. Quartet, Madame Banti, Signor Benelli, Signor Rovedino, and Mr. Kelly. Full Piece.

(To begin at half past Seven o'clock.)
 Tickets, 5s. each, to be had of Mr. Rauzzini, Queen-square; at the Pump-Rooms, Libraries, York-House, Lintern's and Ashley's Music Shops, and at the New Rooms.

- 5 Rauzzini's advertisement for the final concert of the period, 17 April 1800, from *Bath Herald*, 29 March 1800.

need any analysis'. He did note, however, their airiness, elegance and force. Moreover, it was he who also provided the most balanced assessment of Rauzzini's compositions when, some years after the composer's death, he maintained that the music was more remarkable for 'science and taste' than for 'genius or originality'.²²

It was the music of Handel, however, which was heard most often in the city. Following a dispute between those who favoured 'ancient' or 'modern' music in 1784, Rauzzini devoted the second act of his concerts to music composed before 1760. On many occasions it consisted solely of Handel's works and long after complete oratorio performances had fallen from fashion, Rauzzini included solos and choruses from them in his programmes. His own benefit concerts on Christmas Eve were almost always of *Messiah*.

In the last decade of the century complete oratorio performances were given in the Abbey. These often involved up to one

hundred and fifty vocal and instrumental musicians and, in the spring of 1791, when Mara was the leading soprano, it was reported that fifteen hundred people attended the performance. Reviewers were again fulsome in their praise for these performances. It was generally accepted that standards in Bath were higher than those anywhere else in the country. As Bath's audiences perceived their musicians under Rauzzini's direction to be 'daily arriving at some new excellency to draw nearer the point of perfection'²³ only performances in London were accepted as possibly equal to those in Bath.

Bath's last season of the period overlapped the beginning of the nineteenth century, and it is fitting that, though there were still a few benefit performances to be held, the final review of the season's subscription concerts should reflect the obvious pride and confidence the people of Bath had in them as the city moved into a new era:

Wednesday evening we bade a reluctant farewell to what we consider as the most elegant entertainment which this refined city can boast – Mr. Rauzzini's Concerts! The great encouragement which they experienced this season, is the best proof that the exertions of their liberal manager have been acknowledged and approved. All indeed, that musical talent and variety could be expected to effect, has been produced – one general sentiment of gratification as long as the Concerts continued, and as universal a regret at their conclusion.

Notes

- 1 See K.E. James, 'Concert life in Eighteenth-century Bath' (unpublished thesis, University of London, 1987), p. 215.
- 2 R.E. Peach, *Historic Houses in Bath and their Associations* (London, 1883), Vol. 2, p. 72.
- 3 C. Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (1789), ed. F. Mercer (London, 1935), Vol. 2, p. 880.
- 4 See K.E. James, op. cit., pp. 235–7.
- 5 See T. Rowlandson, *Comforts of Bath* (London, 1798, repr. Bath 1858), plate III.
- 6 M. Elwin, *The Noels and the Milbankes: their Letters for Twenty-Five Years, 1767–1792* (London, 1987), pp. 85–92.
- 7 R. Warner, *Bath Characters: or Sketches from Life*, edited by Timothy Goosequill [Richard Warner] (London, 1808), p. 75.

- 8 F. Burney, *Diary and Letters, 1778–1840*, C. Barrett and A. Dobson (eds.) (London, 1904–5), Vol. 1, pp. 304–5, 309.
- 9 E. Rack, 'A Disultory Journal of Events in Bath, 1779–1780' (Bath Reference Library, MSS.1111–3), pp. 4–5.
- 10 C. Burney, op. cit., Vol. 2, p. 895.
- 11 K.E. James, op. cit., pp. 284–6.
- 12 Ibid., pp. 303–4.
- 13 *The Public Advertiser* (London) 10 May 1784.
- 14 *Bath Herald* 22 Dec 1810.
- 15 J.T. Lightwood, *Samuel Wesley, Musician* (London 1937), p. 145.
- 16 H.C.R. Landon, *Haydn, Chronicle and Works* (London, 1976–80), Vol. 3, p. 50.
- 17 W.T. Parke, *Musical Memoirs* (London, 1830), Vol. 2, p. 51.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 M. Kelly, *Reminiscences of Michael Kelly, of the King's Theatre, and Theatre Royal, Drury Lane* (London, 1826, repr. 1968), Vol. 2, p. 233.
- 20 Warner, *Bath Characters*, p. 28.
- 21 W. Bingley, *Musical Biography* (London, 1834, repr. New York, 1971), Vol. 2, p. 310.
- 22 R. Warner, *An Historical and Descriptive Account of Bath and its Environs* (Bath, 1802), p. 111; *Literary Recollections* (London, 1830), Vol. 2, p. 9, fn.
- 23 *Bath Herald* 24 Nov 1798.