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**Purcell and the Seventeenth-Century Voice:
An Investigation of Singers and Voice Types in
Henry Purcell's Vocal Music**

PhD (Performance Studies)

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Abstract

This thesis uses the study of Henry Purcell's vocal music to establish the vocal characteristics of the singers and voice types for whom the composer wrote in London in the seventeenth century. This process is begun in the first chapter by discussing 'The Counter-Tenor Debate' in order to establish the method(s) of vocal production used by Purcell's counter-tenors. This in turn addresses the issue of whether the counter-tenor was a completely different voice type from the tenor, or if they were simply high and low subdivisions of the same voice type. Chapter Two discusses the bass voice, in particular the influence of individual singers in creating voice-type subdivisions, and the dramatic and musical stereotyping of this voice type in Purcell's works. The third chapter takes as its subject Purcell's sopranos and trebles, focussing in detail on the individual singers in his works for the London stage, their vocal characteristics, dramatic stereotyping, and musical influence on the composer. Chapter Four uses the characteristics of each voice type identified in previous chapters to reassign the 'lost' voice types of Purcell's chamber songs and, in conjunction with research into actresses, literature and theatrical convention of the period, provides a first performance voice-type cast list for the opera *Dido and Aeneas*, as well as offering insight into the possible individuals for whom the work may have been intended. Finally, all the above information gathered is combined with knowledge of seventeenth-century singing techniques gleaned from contemporary sources and the work of modern day scholars to offer advice on the modern performance of Purcell's vocal works in a 'historically-informed' manner.

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Preface

The purpose of this study is to establish the vocal characteristics of the singers and voice types for whom Purcell wrote in London in the seventeenth century through the study of Purcell's solo vocal music. Each voice type will be discussed, chapter by chapter, in order to establish the method(s) of vocal production used by Purcell's singers, the range subdivisions within the 'standard' voice types, and the dramatic and musical stereotyping of each voice type in Purcell's works, as well as the vocal characteristics of individual singers. The Purcellian voice-type characteristics identified will then be used to reassign the 'lost' voice types of Purcell's chamber songs and, in conjunction with research into actresses, literature and theatrical convention of the period, to establish the originally intended voice-type for each role in the opera *Dido and Aeneas*, as well as offering insight into the possible individual performers for whom the work may have been written. Finally, all the information gathered will be combined with knowledge of seventeenth-century singing techniques gleaned from contemporary sources and the work of modern day scholars to offer advice on the modern performance of Purcell's vocal works in a 'historically-informed' manner.

In order to carry out this study, certain unique research methods have had to be developed. Firstly, a catalogue of Purcell's solo vocal works has been created to provide the raw material for this research. Secondly, since one of the key elements in defining voice type is range, a method for the calculation of tessitura has been devised in order to investigate more precisely the general trends identified by range.

The Purcell Song Catalogue

The 'Holland' Purcell catalogue, compiled for the purpose of this study, is a record of all the solo vocal music written by Henry Purcell which falls within certain

analytical criteria. Items included in the catalogue are not necessarily self-contained, tonic-cadencing ‘songs’ in the traditional sense, but may be movements or sections of larger works. That said, such items are only included if it can be reasonably supposed that there are no musical agendas behind their composition other than suiting the voice and subject in question; in effect, that they are composed for their own sake rather than as inter-movement linking devices or to serve other such purely structural functions. For similar reasons, recitative ‘conversations’, dialogue songs and songs with duet sections have not been included, since the presence of another voice may compromise the style which the composer uses for both voices. Similarly, extended solos whose musical material is later developed into an ensemble or chorus are disregarded, since the original solo version may have been composed with the limits of the ensuing ensemble in mind; the normal boundaries of range and tessitura which the composer has resource to when writing for a solo voice may be constrained and suppressed in order to ensure a smooth transition from one medium to another. Songs of uncertain attribution and songs with new words fitted to Purcell’s tunes have been omitted, since these works throw up other issues which confuse and interfere with this particular area of research. In addition, songs with Latin texts have not been included since they represent an entirely different corpus of music and cannot be considered using the same criteria as songs written in English.

The purpose of the catalogue is to provide basic information about each song which can then be used to detect similarities among songs composed for the same voice-type or singer. This will shed light on seventeenth-century voice-types and the voices of individual singers with whom Purcell worked, and identify any concessions he made to them in his music. Ultimately this will make it possible to discover the differences between seventeenth-century and modern voices, and to develop a strategy of historically informed performance in the twenty-first century.

Calculation and Evaluation of Tessitura

Of all the elements which make up a song, vocal range is the defining one for the purposes of this study. The highest and lowest notes of a song are a key to the composer's expectations of the voice he was writing for at a specific time. Nevertheless, the extremes of range give only a vague impression of the demands of a song, and must be qualified by the examination of tessitura to form the complete picture. Tessitura is not an easy element to define, but in basic terms it is the most frequently used part of a certain musical range - not the most frequent individual notes, but the most frequently used pitch area. Investigation of tessitura can help to give a clearer picture of the characteristics of seventeenth-century voice-types by identifying more precisely any subdivisions within voice-types and revealing just what special qualities were held by the foremost singers of the day. It is hoped that it will help to solve the debate of whether the tenor and counter-tenor voices were separate entities. Perhaps it may even be the key to allocating the vocal parts for the large number of published chamber songs in the treble-clef which have hitherto existed without nomenclature.

In his 1996 article on voice ranges and pitch in Purcell's odes, Timothy Morris justified his method of investigating pitch standard change through vocal range as follows:

The method used in this study, that of investigating the vocal ranges involved, is open to the criticism that, while it catalogues the extremes of pitch in Henry Purcell's music, it ignores questions of tessitura....

The only possible defence of this method is that any other would involve entering every note of every part into a computer; numerical estimates of tessitura could then be produced by statistical calculations.¹

Whilst Morris' investigation involved choral textures, this study is concerned with the solo voice alone. This means that such a method of statistical calculation instantly becomes more feasible, particularly considering the relatively limited number of songs

¹ Morris, T; 'Voice Ranges, Voice Types and Pitch in Purcell's Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 131.

included in the catalogue created for the purposes of this study.² It has therefore been decided to follow Morris' lead by making statistical calculations of tessitura in order to investigate seventeenth-century voice-types more fully.

As explained above, tessitura is not simply the collection of pitches in between the most frequent high and low notes, but the overall pitch area where the vocal line lies most often in a song. This means that to calculate tessitura not only the frequency of each individual pitch in the vocal line (i.e. the number of times it occurs) but also its duration must be taken into account. Once calculated, this information alone is still subject to influence by 'rogue notes' - pitch or pitches which although used frequently are separated from the 'real' tessitura by a collection of pitches in between which are hardly used at all. The information therefore has to be processed using standard deviation - a statistical system which can take into account these 'rogue notes' or 'outliers' without being thrown entirely off balance by them.

In practical terms this entails expressing musical pitches and durations numerically. The duration system, which remains constant across the voice-types, can be seen in fig.1, and basically involves expressing rhythmic values as fractions of a semibreve. The pitch-numbering system begins with the lowest pitch occurring in Purcell's bass songs, C, which is given the value 0 and each semitone above increases by one value: e.g. if C=0 then C#=1, D=2, D#=3 and so on, until the highest note of Purcell's soprano songs is reached.

A table like the one in fig.3 is used for each song to record the duration of each pitch every time it occurs. The horizontal numbers are the numerical pitch system, the vertical cells each count for one occurrence of the pitch, and the numbers entered represent the duration of each pitch occurrence. As a guide for the data collector the pitch names are listed underneath their assigned numerical values. Once all the information has been collected, the duration numbers for each pitch are added together

² See under and Appendices A-F.

and recorded in the totals boxes with any decimals rounded up or down as necessary.³ These total numbers are the data from which the standard deviation from the mean note is worked out. Tessitura is found by halving the level of standard deviation, then adding the resulting number to the mean pitch to determine the higher limit and subtracting to determine the lower limit. Thus if the mean = 3 and the standard deviation = 2, the tessitura = 2-4. The mathematical formula for this process is shown below in fig.2.

Figure 1: Duration System












 = 0.5	 = 2	 = 8
 = 0.75	 = 3	 = 12
 = 1	 = 4	 = 16
 = 1.5	 = 6	

Figure 2: Formula for Statistical Calculation of Tessitura

$$a = (\bar{x} - \frac{1}{2}\sigma) \quad b = (\bar{x} + \frac{1}{2}\sigma)$$

$$\text{Tessitura} = a, b$$

³ Values of 0.5 and above are rounded up, values under 0.5 are rounded down.

This process of calculating tessitura via standard deviation has three main drawbacks. The first is that being a mathematical process, the 'answer' is likely to involve decimal places, which make no musical sense since each pitch is represented by a whole number. This has been combated by rounding the tessitura limits not according to the laws of mathematics but so that the lower limit is always rounded down and the upper always rounded up (unless there are two zeroes directly after the decimal point) in order to take into account all the pitches which have an influence on the tessitura. The second problem is that the data sets are unlikely to be entirely symmetrical, but there is no way of knowing what percentage of the standard deviation falls on which side of the mean note, so the assumption has been made that the data is normally distributed evenly either side of the mean. Finally, sometimes the process outlined above gives a starting or ending pitch which is never sounded in the song, since the process assumes that numbers which are not used in the series are governed by the laws of mathematics rather than of music. For example, if a song is in D major, and therefore has no F-naturals, the tessitura might in certain cases come out as beginning or ending on F-natural, if that were logical mathematically. From the musician's point of view such a result is of course ludicrous and for this reason, tessitura of individual songs cannot be translated back into pitch names after calculation with a sufficient degree of accuracy. Nevertheless, the numerical estimates of tessitura taken on their own terms can still prove valuable for the purposes of comparison between voice-types or singers, particularly in cases such as that of counter-tenors and tenors where the difference of tessitura may be so minute that it can only be identified by such a precise mathematical system - although admittedly at this point it is likely that factors other than voice-type determined Purcell's writing (such as the creation of a satisfactory melody). Essentially, as long as the process remains the same for each song, the differences between numerical tessiturae are as valuable as those between musical ones. In the long term, it

should be possible to give average tessiturae for each voice-type and singer in pitch names,⁴ thereby giving the statistical process a more obvious musical significance, but this process is out of the bounds of this study.

⁴ This is the opinion of myself and my advisers, Prof. Eric Clarke, Dr. John Powell, and Luke Jobling BSc.

Introduction

Henry Purcell (1659-1695) is primarily known as a composer of vocal music, writing for the church, the theatre, the court and the domestic chamber music of extraordinary brilliance and immediacy - qualities which have ensured that the music survives to be played and heard today. Most of this music was written for a small group of performers employed by one or more of the London musical establishments, whom Purcell knew personally and composed for frequently. While the influence of these performers on Purcell is acknowledged, albeit briefly, by most Purcell scholars, comparatively little work has been undertaken into what Purcell's music for these individuals can reveal about their voices, and about the voice-type groupings to which they belonged. Similarly, although a number of scholars have undertaken 'performance-practice' studies into the nature of seventeenth-century voices, their work has tended to focus more on singing treatises and contemporary accounts of singing technique than on detailed investigation of the music sung. This study seeks to bridge the gap between vocal performance practice research and Purcell scholarship, and is informed by the work of a number of scholars from each area.

Vocal Performance Practice Scholars

In 1978, two articles on vocal performance practice appeared in *Early Music*. The first, by Peter Phillips, covered sixteenth-century English choral music¹ and the second, by Anthony Ransome, centred on late Baroque vocal music². Both these articles highlight the central issues of vocal production, colouring and the use of vibrato. Phillips' article

¹ Phillips, P; 'Performance Practice in sixteenth-century English Choral Music', *Early Music* 6 (1978), 195-99.

² Ransome, A; 'Towards an authentic vocal style and technique in late Baroque Performance', *Early Music* 6 (1978), 417-8.

also introduces the idea of range of vocal music as an indicator of singing style, a method of investigation which has been used by other scholars, and which will be utilised and developed in this study. Phillips suggests that the Tudor counter-tenor, whose range extended as much as a third lower than Purcell's counter-tenors at the lower end, used a combination technique of natural and falsetto vocal production, and also suggests that Tudor voice-types worked in different tessitura areas from those of modern voices, and therefore had different characteristics of sonority. Ransome's article suggests that vibrato was used by Baroque singers, and also that they used a single blend over all the registers of their voices, a theory which has been directly contradicted by later scholars.

Ellen T. Harris, also a noted Purcell scholar, has undertaken research into Baroque vocal performance practice³, using contemporary source material as well as analysis of changes in vocal music range over time to derive theories on the technique employed by Baroque singers. Central to her investigation are issues of blend and vibrato, as well as timbre, and these issues are used to draw conclusions about voice types of this period and to make suggestions for the imitation of them in modern performance. Harris draws attention to the importance of intonation, breathing, enunciation and expression to Baroque singers, and suggests that rather than using a single blend throughout their voices, they maintained a distinct tone colour for each register merely blending over the breaks to ensure smooth passage between the registers. Harris' extensive investigation of vibrato reveals that artificial vibrato from the throat was used for ornamental purposes by Baroque singers, and that women were more likely to have had 'natural' vibrato than men. Harris' research also suggests that the English counter-tenor was a falsettist and that sopranos and trebles may have sounded alike.

Peter Giles' 1994 study of the counter-tenor voice⁴ charts the history and changing techniques of this voice, gives biographical detail on counter-tenor soloists from

³ Harris, E. T.; 'Voices', *Performance Practice: Music after 1600* (London 1989), 97-116.

⁴ Giles, P; *The History and Technique of the Counter-Tenor: A Study of the Male High Voice Family* (Cambridge 1994).

different periods, as well as examining the possible different interpretations of the terminology applied to these voices over time. Giles' work is the only extensive study of this subject, although the vocal production method of the counter-tenor is a subject which is touched on by most scholars in this field. Giles investigates the idea of falsettist, natural and combination counter-tenor techniques, pointing out the links between the English counter-tenor and French haute-contre traditions as distinct from the Italian castrato tradition, and suggests that counter-tenors may have been 'created' by training boys with gradually breaking voices to maintain both their old treble and new tenor/bass ranges.

In 1997, Denis Stevens published his study *Early Music*.⁵ This book covers many performance-related issues, but his work most pertinent to this study is that where he uses contemporary sources to identify the qualities of pre-modern technique voices. Stevens uses these sources to argue that vibrato was used by singers of this period, and to suggest that the 'universal' qualities of sweet tone and vocal beauty are ultimately the most admired qualities of voices in any age.

By far the most extended study on vocal performance practice was published in 1998 by John Potter.⁶ *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* not only covers in extensive detail the question of pre-modern singing technique in areas such as vibrato, articulation, register, accent and larynx position, but also tackles issues of authentic performance in the modern day and how to reconcile the wish for historical accuracy with the needs of modern performers and audiences, topics which inform this study, even if they are not directly addressed by it. Potter points out the link between rhetorical speaking and singing traditions in England, suggesting that pre-modern singing technique was based on a high-larynx position, giving a vocal quality akin to untrained singers or folk or rock singers in the present day, and suggests that this technique enabled Purcellian

⁵ Stevens, D; *Early Music* (London 1997)

⁶ Potter, J; *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge 1998)

counter-tenors to sing their parts without recourse to falsetto. Potter also suggests that this vocal technique is largely incompatible with pitch vibrato and highlights the importance of returning to a 'text-orientated' style of vocal performance.

Finally, one of the most recent publications on the subject of singing technique is Richard Wistreich's contribution to *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*.⁷ This study focuses on pre-Romantic vocal technique, in particular the use of throat articulation and text-orientated performance and the consequent lower dynamic level of singers' voices, as well as the singers' use of musical rhetoric appropriate to the performance situation.

Purcell Scholars

Since the 1960s there has been a steady stream of scholarship on Purcell covering virtually every area. The most important scholarly edition of Purcell's works has been published by the Purcell Society, and there have also been two analytical catalogues of Purcell's works, one by Franklin B. Zimmerman published in 1963, which lists all of Purcell's music, and one by Michael Pilkington which covers the vocal music, published in 1994. The Purcell Society edition provides the musical source for this study, whilst these two catalogues provide the basis for the catalogue in this study. Several writers have produced scholarly biographies of Purcell, including Franklin B. Zimmerman (1967), Maureen Duffy (1994), Robert King (1994) and Jonathan Keates (1995). There have also been several large-scale analytical and generic studies of Purcell's work, including one on the development of Purcell's compositional style by Martin Adams, and two works on Purcell's theatre music, Robert E. Moore's *Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre* (London 1961) and Curtis Price's *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984). There have been a myriad of other scholarly works covering such subjects as wordsetting,

⁷ Wistreich, R; 'Reconstructing pre-Romantic Singing Technique', *The Cambridge Companion to Singing* (Cambridge 2000), 178-191.

poetic and musical metre, tempo, Italian and French influences, the influence of John Blow, as well as smaller generic studies of the odes and church music. There are in addition several areas of Purcell scholarship which are particularly pertinent to this study

Purcell's Singers

Many scholars have made passing reference to the singers for whom Purcell composed. Both Jonathan Keates⁸ and Robert King⁹ in their biographies of the composer acknowledge the influence of John Gostling. Timothy Morris¹⁰ and Bruce Wood¹¹ remark upon the influence of Mrs. Ayliff on Purcell's court odes, Roger Savage¹² has investigated contemporary accounts of Charlotte Butler's appearance in *King Arthur*, Michael Burden¹³ remarks upon the importance of the singers to Purcell's compositional style, and Curtis Price's aforementioned study of Purcell's stage music draws conclusions about the talents of the stage singers and actors. In addition, many more scholars have addressed the issue of the vocal production method used by Purcell's counter-tenors, an issue which has occupied the vocal performance practice scholars as well and which will be discussed in Chapter One of this study. Nevertheless, only one pair of scholars has focussed exclusively and in detail on Purcell's singers.

Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson's extensive work on Purcell's singers¹⁴ focuses mainly on the biographical, covering the backgrounds, careers and repertoire of individual singers, and discussing contemporary accounts of their singing. They do, however, highlight the importance of considering the influence of these singers on Purcell, both in

⁸ Keates, J; *Purcell: A Biography* (London 1995).

⁹ King, R; *A Greater Musical Genius England never had: Henry Purcell* (London 1994).

¹⁰ Morris, T; 'Voice Ranges, Voice Types and Pitch in Purcell's Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 130-142.

¹¹ Wood, B; 'Purcell's Odes: A Reappraisal', *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 200-253.

¹² Savage, R; 'Calling up Genius: Purcell, Roger North and Charlotte Butler', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996).

¹³ Burden, M; 'Purcell and his contemporaries', *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 52-98.

¹⁴ Baldwin, O and Wilson, T; 'Purcell's Counter-Tenors', *Musical Opinion* 89 (1966), 661-5; 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters* 50 (1969), 103-10; 'A Purcell problem solved', *The Musical Times* 122 (1981), 445; 'Who can from Joy Refraime?: Purcell's Birthday Song for the Duke of Gloucester', *The Musical Times* 122 (1981), 596-9; 'Purcell's Sopranos', *The Musical Times* 123 (1982), 602-9; 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 105-129.

terms of development of his compositional style - which they do not directly discuss in detail - and in terms of modern performance practice. The performance-practice issues covered by these scholars include methods of training singers in the period, but do not include details of singing techniques other than suggesting that singers did not extend the natural ranges of their voices, or project them above ordinary speaking level. Baldwin and Wilson also point out the extreme youth of some of Purcell's performers and the issues this raises for modern performance of the works. They also highlight the 'theatricality' of all of Purcell's vocal music, and the need to perform the dramatic and chamber songs with an actor's approach, as well as to cast Purcell's large scale vocal works with the original allocations of solos to singers, in order to highlight the differences of timbre which would have been present in the original performance. The single issue which occupies these scholars the most however is the vocal production method of Purcell's counter-tenors, and their views on this subject will be discussed in detail in Chapter One.

Pitch Standards in Purcell's London

In an article written for the tercentenary of Henry Purcell's death in 1995¹⁵, Timothy Morris argued that the pitch standard in London in the late seventeenth century was not constant, but gradually descended, so that Purcell's later works were actually performed at a significantly lower pitch standard than his earlier ones. After consideration of the change in the vocal ranges of Purcell's odes towards the end of the 1680s, Morris surmises that there was a drop from the standard pitch identified by Praetorius at around $a^1=425$ to a semitone lower, making the actual sounding pitch of Purcell's late works around $a^1=390$. Andrew Parrott voices an interesting complementary theory on pitch in an article published a year later,¹⁶ suggesting that it was the importation of French woodwind instruments (pitched at roughly $a^1=410$) which forced

¹⁵ Morris, T; 'Voice Ranges, Voice Types, and Pitch in Purcell's Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 130-142.

¹⁶ Parrott, A; 'Performing Purcell', *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 385-444.

the orchestral pitch standard down during the late seventeenth century. To further complicate this issue, it is generally accepted amongst church-music scholars that organs built at the Restoration to replace those destroyed during the Protectorate were in fact pitched much higher than our modern standard, at $a^1=450$ or above, a theory which has been backed up by the evidence of surviving instruments, such as Smith's Durham Cathedral organ of 1684-5, which has a pitch of $a^1=474$.¹⁷ In addition organ pitch fluctuated with the temperature throughout the seasons, and the tuning process used for organs - bending the tops of the pipes inwards or outwards - resulted in fraying damage after time and caused all the pipes to be trimmed, raising the pitch of the instruments still further. All this information may suggest then, that organ pitch during Purcell's life was probably around $a^1=425$, and orchestra pitch after this time between $a^1=390$ and $a^1=410$.

Morris's investigation centres around the vocal ranges of Purcell's 'concerted works'; the court odes, which were intended for specific festive occasions and can therefore be dated fairly precisely, allowing one to observe the changes in pitch over the passage of time. However, as Morris admits, the human voice is not a medium which lends itself well to precise scientific calibration, and the apparent uniform ascent of chorus ranges in Purcell's later odes may not have anything at all to do with a descent in the pitch standard, but could instead be accounted for by a lack of low basses or the acquisition of several high sopranos. Similarly, one assumes that a change in the range of a named solo singer over time, such as Mrs. Ayliff whom Purcell begins to give a^2 after 1690, could be attributed to an improvement in technique, or simply a realisation on the composer's part that he was not utilising this individual's talent to the full.

Much the same conflict of evidence can be found when examining Parrott's theory. Unless instruments of the period survive and we know exactly which performances they were used in,¹⁸ we cannot be sure at what pitch pieces were played.

¹⁷ Spink, I; *Restoration Cathedral Music 1660-1714* (Oxford 1995), 60.

¹⁸ I have as yet come across no evidence that such instruments with known performing histories do exist, though it is conceivable that they may.

This is even the case for organ-accompanied music written for establishments whose instruments survive intact. Because of the trimming method of repairing frayed pipes, one can only be sure that the performing pitch of earlier works was lower than the current pitch of the instruments. In the case of orchestral instruments, although woodwind instruments may all have been made to roughly the same specifications one cannot be sure which instrument the orchestra tuned to. Is it possible that string players could have tuned their instruments up to organ pitch for a symphony anthem at evensong in the Chapel Royal, and then hotfooted it to the theatre to tune down to the oboes for an evening of incidental music? Similarly there is the question of trumpets, which had been made in England long before the arrival of foreign woodwind. Was their pitch the pre-1690 English orchestra pitch, or by some happy coincidence the same as that of the new French woodwind instruments? Is it not more likely that in fact orchestras tuned to whichever instruments were the most inflexible in terms of pitch, and that therefore there was no such concept as a 'standard' pitch in seventeenth-century London, but only a fluctuating pitch-range? Then there is of course the issue of domestic instruments. If one takes the advice of the oldest extant harpsichord-tuning instruction book (Aaron 1523), these were tuned to nothing except themselves, and then presumably to different temperaments depending on the individual tuner, and so there must have been a wide range of performance pitches in the field of chamber music.

An additional complicating factor to consider, and one which can again have no conclusive answer, is that of Purcell's own awareness of pitch during the compositional process. We know that Purcell tuned both the instruments of the Private Musick and the organ of Westminster Abbey, so presumably he would have noticed any significant difference in performance pitch, but would this knowledge have affected his work as a composer? Assuming that he noticed the fluctuation in pitch standard, did Purcell begin to compose in higher keys more regularly than he had once done to make it possible for

singers to reach the low notes, for example? If there was a fluctuation in pitch standard, was it so much a part of everyday musical life that Purcell just carried on regardless, not really caring at what pitch his works were sounded, so long as they were within the bounds of possibility?

These are all issues which are almost impossible to resolve, and Morris sums up the problem rather well:

Searching for evidence of pitch standards for secular music in the Baroque period is often like trying to find the crock of gold at the end of the rainbow. Each time you think you can see it before you and head confidently towards it, you find that it has moved on ahead of you. From every viewpoint, the evidence leads to a different conclusion.¹⁹

Nevertheless, although the evidence is not conclusive enough to make precise calculations of pitch standard change, it seems obvious that such changes or fluctuations did take place throughout Purcell's lifetime. The significance of a changing pitch standard is immense for a comparative study of Purcell's vocal music, since it might mean that supposed similarities found by song-to-song comparison are entirely misleading. For example, one notes that all the counter-tenor songs have higher tessiturae than the tenor songs, a fact which when taken purely at face value appears to be a significant discovery. However, if there was a change in pitch standard such as that discussed above, in reality at sounding pitch these tessiturae could overlap, a circumstance which would obviously completely negate the supposed pattern. It is therefore necessary to "play it safe" when using range and tessitura as a means of comparison in the study of Purcell's vocal music. During the course of this study these issues will be acknowledged by looking at the patterns of range and tessitura in the light of the above argument, paying particular attention to changes in such patterns around the time that the pitch-standard is supposed to have shifted in order to ensure that the findings of this study are not simply illusory by-products of pitch-standard change.

¹⁹ Morris, T; op. cit, 130.

Dido and Aeneas

Practically every scholar of Purcell has passed comment on some aspect of the opera *Dido and Aeneas* and three scholars have published critical editions, Edward J. Dent, Ellen T. Harris and Margaret Laurie. Of the plethora of research in this area, the work of certain scholars is particularly relevant to this study.

Martin Adams²⁰ has worked on the date of composition of the opera, the conflicting sources of the work, the role of music in expressing the drama, and the organicism of the work. Andrew Pinnock and Bruce Wood²¹ have also worked on the dating of the work as well as the early performance history and voice-type casting, suggesting that the role of Aeneas in the girls' school production was taken by the poet and singing teacher Thomas D'Urfey. Besides her critical edition, Margaret Laurie²² has worked on allegorical interpretation of the prologue as an aid to dating the work, and has also offered suggestions as to which singers took the title roles in the first recorded professional production in 1700.

The three scholars whose work on *Dido and Aeneas* directly influences that of this study are Ellen T. Harris, Curtis Price and Roger Savage. Ellen T. Harris' 1987 study of the opera²³ covers almost every possible angle of research. Harris analyses the structure, tonality and dramatic themes of the opera, discusses the 'missing' music from the end of Act II, and places the date of composition at 1689 (a theory which has since been rejected by other scholars). Harris makes extensive study of the discrepancies between the existing sources of the work and of its early performance history to draw conclusions about the voice-type casting of the work. Harris argues that Aeneas was being performed as a baritone role by 1704 or before, that the Sailor was sung by a tenor

²⁰ Adams, M; *Henry Purcell: The origins and development of his musical style* (Cambridge 1995).

²¹ Wood, P and Pinnock, A; 'Unscarr'd by turning times?: the dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*', *Early Music* 20 (1992), 372-90; 'Singin' in the Rain: Yet more on dating Dido', *Early Music* 22 (1994), 365-7.

²² Laurie, M; 'Allegory, Sources and Early Performance History', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, an Opera* (New York 1986), 42-62.

²³ Harris, E. T.; *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas* (Oxford 1987).

from 1700 onwards, that the Spirit was taken by a treble from 1704 and that the Sorceress may have been played by a man from 1700 onwards. Harris does not, however draw conclusions about the voice-type casting for the first performance, or suggest which individual singers took roles in the original production, a subject which will be addressed in this study.

Curtis Price's scholarship²⁴ covers many of the same areas as that of Harris. Again he has made extensive musical analysis of the work including the issue of missing music from Act II. Price has also made extensive comparison of the musical structure, dramatic plot and themes of *Dido and Aeneas* with those of the masque operas *Albion and Albanus* (1684) and *Cadmus and Hermione* (1686) and Tate's play *Brutus of Alba*, all of which he believes influenced Purcell. Price was the first scholar to suggest that the role of the Sorceress was originally intended for a bass, and his theories on this subject will be explored at length in Chapter Four.

Roger Savage's work on *Dido and Aeneas*²⁵ centres around issues of performance and performance practice. Savage highlights the psychological aspects of the drama, in particular the similarities in the music and dramatic function of Dido and the Sorceress, an issue which has also been touched on by Wilfrid Mellers²⁶ and Curtis Price. These issues will also be explored in Chapter Four.

Other Scholarship

Theatre Historians

This study not only links Purcell scholarship with performance practice scholarship, but also complements the work of two theatre historians. John Harold

²⁴ Price, C; 'Dido and Aeneas: Questions of Style and Evidence', *Early Music* 22 (1994), 115-25; 'Dido's Bass Sorceress', *The Musical Times* 127 (1986), 615-8; 'Dido and Aeneas in context', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, an Opera* (New York 1986), 3-41.

²⁵ Savage, R; 'Producing *Dido and Aeneas*', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, an Opera* (New York 1986), 255-77.

²⁶ Mellers, W; 'The Tragic Heroine and the Un-Hero', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas, an Opera* (New York 1986), 204-13.

Wilson's 1958 study *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* is a history of the rise of the English actresses and includes an extensive biography of these women, many of whom sang for Purcell on the London stage. Elizabeth Howe's *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge 1992) builds on Wilson's work and expands it to examine the effect of these women on dramatic form of the period, identifying character stereotyping of certain actresses and the dramatic vehicles created for them. This line of enquiry is paralleled in this study by the identification of musical stereotyping in Purcell's works for the singing actresses and stage sopranos, and has formed the basis for identifying the original cast for the opera *Dido and Aeneas*.

Primary Sources

Since this study hopes to establish factors relating to singers and voice types in the seventeenth century, primary sources are particularly important. Among these are the sociological resources of the diaries of John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys, which give details of music-making, individual performers and general attitudes towards music, as well as useful historical background. Equally valuable are the histories of music by Sir John Hawkins and Charles Burney, which although written a generation after Purcell's death provide useful information about attitudes towards Purcell's singers from a time when these performers were still within living memory. Both these historians suggest that Purcell's singers were not particularly talented compared to the Italian opera singers who came after them, and these attitudes will be discussed later in this study. Finally, the treatise on singing by Pier Francesco Tosi which describes the standard technique used by singers in Purcell's time, and John Playford's *Introduction to the Skill of Music* which also contains similar information are vital sources for the scholar of vocal performance practice, and Playford's work is also interesting for the Purcell scholar, because a later edition of it was edited by Purcell.

Summary

It has been shown that scholars from both vocal performance practice and Purcell disciplines recognise the importance of historical accuracy as a performance criterion. Performance practice scholars have investigated treatises and contemporary accounts of technique in conjunction with the range of vocal music from various eras in order to establish the qualities of pre-modern singing style which can then be emulated in performance. Several Purcell scholars have remarked upon the influence of his singers on his compositional style, and have debated the vocal production method of the Purcellian counter-tenor, largely without recourse to singing technique information. In a different discipline, theatre historians have noted the unique influence of the Restoration actresses on dramatic form, and the exploitation of their private personalities for public entertainment. As yet, however, no one has investigated Purcell's music in detail solely to draw conclusions about the characteristics of all the voice types and individual singers for whom he wrote. There has been no attempt to parallel the investigation of theatre scholars into the dramatic stereotyping of actresses with their possible musical stereotyping in Purcell's works, nor an attempt to use this information to allocate singers to roles in dramatic music. In addition, since there has been no study of the characteristics of Purcell's writing for each voice type, there has been no attempt to reassign 'missing' voice types to Purcell's chamber songs. This study attempts to address these issues by linking together and building upon all the above areas of scholarship.

Chapter One

Henry Purcell and the Counter-Tenor Voice

The Counter-Tenor Debate

The term 'counter-tenor' is unique among the names of standard voice types in that it has been applied to many different vocal sounds and methods of production over the centuries. No-one is certain which of the many different varieties of the 'counter-tenor' voice is the original one, nor indeed which versions were prominent at what precise points in history. Although today, in England at least, the term is usually applied to male falsettists working in early music circles or taking the alto line in cathedral choirs, there is no reason to suppose that this was always the only counter-tenor voice. In fact, as theorists have surmised and as this dissertation will argue, in relation to Purcell this is probably not the case.

In his history of the counter-tenor voice, Peter Giles summarises the key problems which surround the use of the term 'counter-tenor' - problems created largely by the preconceptions of modern audiences as regards the term.¹ Fundamental among the issues he discusses is the fact that the term was originally used to denote the voice part within a piece of music (the alto line, which lies 'against' the tenor),² and that it may have only latterly been misapplied to a vocal type or sound. There is no compelling extra-musical evidence either that the counter-tenor line must be sung by a falsettist, or that it should be taken by a tenor, as scholars have latterly suggested, and there is no reason why different voices could not have functioned as counter-tenors at different points throughout history. In

¹ Giles, P; *The History and Technique of the Counter-Tenor: A Study of the Male High Voice Family* (Cambridge 1994).

² This is the reason for my spelling of 'counter-tenor' rather than countertenor or counter tenor.

addition, Giles points out that the argument for the use of falsettists based on the 'high' register of counter-tenor music is unsound, since by all accounts the pitch standard fluctuated continually throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and so counter-tenors probably never had to sing as high as it might appear from song manuscripts. Even without taking into account this pitch standard fluctuation, an examination of Purcellian counter-tenor range provides an inconclusive picture, with certain instances of very high and very low notes obscuring the more standard range in between. Any singer would agree that although a high note written by a composer must of course be singable by the voice type (or at least the individual) in question, there is a great deal of difference between a song which requires one impressive high note amongst pages of mid-range music, and one which maintains a high tessitura throughout. Counter-tenor songs of the seventeenth century largely fall into the former category. It seems almost as if the public's preoccupation with the castrato, which began at the end of the seventeenth century and still captures our imagination today, together with the use of falsettists in modern cathedral choirs and the repopularisation of Purcell's works by the falsettist Alfred Deller in the mid-twentieth century, has favoured the identification of the historical counter-tenor with an unnaturally high voice despite all the evidence to the contrary.

As far as Purcell's counter-tenors are concerned, two main theories are current. One, advocated by Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson³ amongst others, is that Purcell's counter-tenors were actually high tenors. The other theory, maintained by Timothy Morris⁴ and Andrew Parrott,⁵ is that there were two types of counter-tenor: high (falsettist), and low (high tenor).

Baldwin and Wilson's theory hinges on the fact that the tenor and counter-

³ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters* (1969), 108.

⁴ Morris, T; 'Voice Ranges, Voice Types, and Pitch in Purcell's Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 130-142.

⁵ Parrott, A; 'Performing Purcell', *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 385-444.

tenor ranges of Purcell's songs are virtually the same, so that in published chamber songs which do not stipulate the voice type, it is impossible to tell which is which. This theory would certainly explain why named counter-tenors such as John Freeman and John Pate are sometimes allocated tenor solos. One might even go so far as to say that if there were two distinct voice types operating within the same range, Purcell would probably have indicated which voice type he intended which songs for, and would not have mixed up his performers in such a way. In addition, as Baldwin and Wilson also point out, it is clear that the soloistic capacity of the tenor voice was largely neglected by Purcell. One reason for this could be that the terms 'tenor' and 'counter-tenor' indicated the same voice type, just different voice parts, and so in solo airs within multi-movement works, these voice parts operated on an either/or basis. To support this theory further, Chapel Royal records throughout this period frequently describe gentlemen being sworn in to fill the next tenor or counter-tenor place to become vacant. This must surely mean that the counter-tenor voice was naturally produced, since the singer would otherwise have had to be in command of natural and falsetto voices in the same range - a considerable feat. As Baldwin and Wilson put it:

The range of songs sung by [counter-tenors] corresponds to that of the top three quarters of the modern tenor. The logical conclusion is that they were not baritones using falsetto technique but tenors who had concentrated on the higher part of their voices, so that they sang easily in the e' to a' region but had neglected their voices in the lowest part of our tenor range, c to g.⁶

Baldwin and Wilson's theory seems a logical and plausible one, but Parrott and Morris's theories, developed through close musical analysis of Purcell's odes, provide a conflicting opinion. Parrott's summary of his own theory is worth quoting in full:

⁶ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters* (1969), 108.

The 1680s and 1690s seem to mark an historical mid-way point in the evolution of the countertenor, with the emergence of the later, and indeed current, falsettist countertenor overlapping with the glorious last years of an earlier tradition in which - contrary to popular belief - the voice was, in modern terms, essentially a (high) tenor. In his solo writing Purcell appears to differentiate between the two types, while his choral parts tend to amalgamate them....

While a choral texture helps to disguise any necessary mixing of techniques, a solo context is much less accommodating. Consequently most of Purcell's solo writing divides fairly clearly into high or low parts. Most are low and, after allowances for any differences of pitch standard have every appearance of being suited to today's (high) tenors - and of being implausibly low for even the most accomplished of today's (falsettist) countertenors.⁷

Parrott suggests, then, that both high tenors and falsettists were active as countertenors during the last years of Purcell's life, but that he wrote mainly for the former type. As a theory this seems plausible, especially when one takes into account the individual singers with unusually high ranges such as John Abell and John Howell, who may well have been falsettists. However, although Parrott claims to have made allowances for differences of pitch standard, he apparently does not take into consideration that the 1680s and 90s, which for him mark out the birth of the falsettist, were the years in which it is generally supposed that the pitch standard dropped by a semitone. Could this not have caused counter-tenor parts to appear to be higher than they actually were and create the impression that there were two types of voice in operation, high and low?

Pitch standard change in Purcell's court odes is the primary focus of Timothy Morris' article,⁸ and he also comes up with the same conclusion as Parrott, apparently finding differentiation of counter-tenor ranges both within and between odes:

the soloists seem to divide themselves into high and low. The high singers regularly have top notes of *c''* or *d''*, but few notes below *a*, or even *c'*; the low singers sometimes descend to *e* or (once) *d*, but rarely exceed *b-flat* at the top of their range. This would correspond to the difference today between a high tenor and a falsettist; but whether this was a distinction made in Purcell's day may never be fully understood.⁹

⁷ Parrott, A; 'Performing Purcell', *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 417.

⁸ See Introduction.

⁹ Morris, T; 'Voice Ranges, Voice Types, and Pitch in Purcell's Concerted Works', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 132.

On the other hand Baldwin and Wilson had argued that the highest notes of the counter-tenor songs are those which any self-respecting operatic tenor could manage so there would have been no need for falsettists at all, an argument which is given added credence by the probability that most of the pitch standards in operation at the time were lower than our modern $a^1=440$.¹⁰

So, from the same evidence, two conflicting theories have been formulated. It is clear that the vocal range of each song alone cannot provide a solution to this issue. What must be taken into account is the overall range of Purcell's counter-tenor songs and the average range in which he composed, in order to discover if there are indeed two ranges, or if the highest and lowest of the songs are merely exceptions which prove the rule that all counter-tenor songs use basically the same range.

Purcell's Counter-Tenor Songs: Range and Tessitura

The 59 songs which can be conclusively identified as for the counter-tenor voice¹¹ range overall from $d-d^2$. Of these, 37 lie within the range $g-b^1$, and several just outside it, clearly suggesting that some kind of standard or average range is in operation (see table 1). This 'standard range' falls somewhere between Morris' two definitions of 'high' and 'low' counter-tenors, failing to reach the heights of the former and the depths of the latter, suggesting that there was as a rule one average range to which the higher and lower extremes provide the exception. This supposition is further reinforced by the fact that there is no division of high and low tessiturae within the standard range group. Nevertheless, before we can dismiss altogether the theory of two voice types, we must examine the ranges of the songs which lie outside the 'standard range' bracket, to establish whether they are split into

¹⁰ Apart from organ pitch, which was probably somewhat higher, but varied from instrument to instrument.

¹¹ See Appendix B.

definite high and low groupings.

Table 1: Range of Counter-Tenor Songs

	g¹	ab¹	a¹	bb¹	b¹	c¹	db²	d²
d	3		1					
eb								
e	1		1	1	2			
f		1		3	1			
gb			1	1				
g		5	9	6	5	1		
ab					2	2		
a			3	2	2			1
bb			1					
b				1				
c¹								
db¹				1		1		
d¹								1

bold type = standard range

Of the songs which contain pitches lower than g (16 in all), the majority still ascend to the top of the ‘standard range’ (i.e. to a¹ or b¹), suggesting that these lower notes are simply ‘range extensions’ rather than defining a totally different range. Four of these songs demand no more than g¹, and since their lowest pitch is d (or in one case e), these could feasibly be classified as low songs. However, when placed into original performance context this information may not necessarily ‘prove’ the low/high counter-tenor hypothesis. In fact, all these songs were composed for the singing actor William Mountford, who frequently attains a¹, bb¹ and b¹ in other songs, and so these song ranges can perhaps be explained as Purcell ‘tailoring’ to a specific singer with a special capacity for low notes, rather than proving the

existence of a widely available different voice type.

Of the six songs which contain pitches higher than b^1 , three descend as far as g , $g^\#$ or a , again representing ‘range extension’, leaving only two songs which could be categorised as exclusively high, with ranges of $c^\#1-c^2$ and d^1-d^2 . These two examples are not as easy to explain away as the ‘low’ songs discussed above, although one of them was written for an individual, John Howell, who by all accounts had an exceptional voice, and might perhaps have been a falsettist judging by the tessitura of some of his other solos. Still, it is impossible to derive a conclusive justification for the existence of ‘high’ counter-tenors on the basis of two examples; particularly since Purcell never wrote above d^2 for the counter-tenor and therefore did not exploit the falsetto range as we might expect him to have done had such a voice been common in his lifetime.

There is however another conceivable explanation for the above findings which we must consider before taking this argument as conclusive; the possibility that the apparent ‘standard range’ is in reality a mere by-product of the keys of composition¹² (see table 2).

Table 2: Key

Key	Number of Songs
C major / minor	(13+8) 21
D minor / major	(12+5) 17
G minor / major	(5+3) 8
A minor	4
E minor / major	(2+1) 3
B minor / major	(1+1) 2
F major	3
F# minor	1

¹² By ‘keys of composition’ I refer only to the main key of the song, not the transitional keys of modulation.

The most frequently used keys, C, D and G all fit the ‘standard range’ in a comfortable and musical fashion, despite the fact that only G gives the option of two registers for the tonic. This could be accounted for in reverse, as it were, with the ‘standard range’ being “created” by the musical treatment of the keys of composition. However, when one examines the specific ranges of each song composed in each of the most popular keys, it becomes clear that this is not the case (see table 3). Although most of the songs in C have ranges within the ‘standard’ bracket, those in D show much more variety of range, though a significant number are still within the g-b¹ area. This suggests that the keys do not impose range restrictions, but that the ‘standard range’ is an independent element, distinct from key-orientated considerations. In all, 30 out of the 36 songs in the ‘standard range’ are in C, D, or G major/minor, suggesting that these keys fit the range most successfully.

Table 3: Key and Range

<u>C maj/min</u>	<i>ab</i>¹	<i>a</i>¹	<i>bb</i>¹	<i>b</i>¹
d		1		
<i>eb</i>				
e			1	
f			1	
<i>gb</i>				
g	5	6	5	
<i>ab</i>				
a			1	1

G maj/min	g¹	ab¹	a¹	bb¹	b¹	c²	db²	d²
d	1							
eb								
e								
f		1						
gb								
g			1	1	3			
ab								
a								
bb								
b								
c ¹								
db ¹								
d ¹								1

Dmaj/min	g¹	ab¹	a¹	bb¹	b¹	c²	db²	d²
d	2							
eb								
e	1							
f					2			
gb				1				
g								
ab						1		
a			3	1	1			1
bb								
b				1				
c ¹								
db ¹				1		1		

bold type = standard range

Purcell's Counter-Tenor Songs: Subject and Style

Of the other elements of Purcell's counter-tenor songs besides range and key, few can yield anything more than speculative evidence to further this investigation. Although Baldwin and Wilson maintain that the subjects of counter-tenor songs appear "out of character" when sung by a falsettist,¹³ this is not an argument which it is of any scientific value to pursue since the subject is so emotive. Similarly, the issue of accompaniment is a thorny one. It would be gratifying to be able to show that the forces used to accompany Purcell's counter-tenor songs are more suited to one or other of the natural or falsetto voices, but this again is an area in which instinctive musicality rather than science has too great a part to play. These issues will resurface during examination of the wider implications of the links between the counter-tenor and tenor voices, but for now they cannot shed any light on the possible divisions within the counter-tenor song repertoire. Nevertheless an investigation of the documentary evidence regarding named counter-tenors and an assessment of Purcell's music for them in the light of such evidence can perhaps suggest which of the above theories is the more plausible.

Purcell's Counter-Tenor Colleagues

Purcell had an impressive team of counter-tenors at his disposal throughout his career, and although not all of them sang songs included in this investigation, contemporary documentary evidence concerning them is valuable since it holds clues as to the nature and characteristics of the seventeenth-century counter-tenor voice. In addition, the extremes of these individuals' ranges must be taken into account, as this information shows exactly how high and how low counter-tenors were able to sing,
¹³ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Counter-Tenors', *Musical Opinion* (1966), 661.

providing further clues to the technique of vocal production employed by these singers. Singers without songs in the catalogue¹⁴ will nevertheless be left out of any detailed analytical discussion, as it is not certain that their music was composed under the criteria which have been laid out for the purposes of this study.

Once again, it seems pertinent to begin with a discussion of vocal range. The table below shows the range within which Purcell wrote for these named counter-tenors and the collective tessiturae of their songs (see table 4).¹⁵ A glance at the range column of this table makes it easy to understand what prompted Morris and Parrott's theories. It appears that there is a clear divide in range between Howell, Bouchier, Turner, Damascene and Robert, and the others whose ranges include much lower notes and do not transcend the range boundaries of the high tenor. This information taken at face value would clearly suggest that there were two distinct groups of counter-tenors, and the evidence of the higher singers' ranges could lead to the conclusion that they were falsettists while the others were high tenors. However, when one also considers tessitura it is evident that the case is not so straightforward, especially when we take into account the 'standard range' identified earlier in this chapter. Both Damascene and Robert's ranges fit neatly into the 'standard range' bracket, and although Freeman and Pate do have occasional lower notes, their tessiturae correspond to this 'standard range' also. Meanwhile Bouchier, although obviously capable of achieving d² does so only once, suggesting that he was not generally comfortable in such a high tessitura for long periods of time. Nevertheless, the tessiturae of the higher group of singers are all entirely above c¹ (as are the tessiturae of all the standard-range songs) whilst the lower singers' tessiturae include notes from the octave below, pointing again to some kind of division.

¹⁴ See Appendix A.

¹⁵ For explanation of the numerical tessitura system see preface.

Table 4: Named Singers' Ranges and Tessiturae.

Singer	Range	Tessitura
John Howell	d ¹ -d ²	30-33
Josiah Bouchier	a-d ²	27-31
Mr. Turner*	g-c ²	
Alexander Damascene	g [#] -b ¹	26-31
Anthony Robert	g-bb ¹	25-28
John Freeman	e-bb ¹	23-29
John Pate	d-b ¹	22-29
William Mountford	d-b ¹	20-30
John Church*	e-f ¹	

*No songs in this study

The apparent range and tessitura division within this group of singers is too suggestive to dismiss; there must be a reason why Purcell chose to give some of them higher notes than others. One possible answer is that Purcell was writing for individual voices rather than to a voice-type template, and so used the standard counter-tenor range with higher or lower additions as appropriate to exploit the peculiar vocal qualities of each singer. Equally possible is that the apparent 'standard range' may have been created by the fact that most of Purcell's counter-tenors were 'low' as Parrott suggests, and the few higher singers whose ranges do not conform to the standard may have been treated differently because they were falsettists. Had there been more of this latter type, the 'standard range' may have been entirely different. It certainly seems that the 'high' singers from Table Four were exceptional cases, for whatever reason, and that the others conformed to some kind of average counter-tenor voice type. The question is whether these high singers were merely individuals with unique ranges, or singers using an entirely different vocal technique.

One of the most valuable sources of documentary evidence concerning the world of the late seventeenth-century London stage is the autobiography, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedian*, published in 1740. The following extract refers to William Mountford:

he sung a clear Counter-tenour, and had a melodious, warbling throat, which could not but set off the last scene of *Sir Courtly*¹⁶ with an uncommon Happiness; which I, alas! could only struggle thro'... under the imperfection of a feign'd and screaming Treble, which at best could only shew you what I would have done, had nature been more favourable to me.¹⁷

This passage clearly suggests not only that Mountford used a natural method of vocal production (as one would expect from his range) as opposed to Cibber's falsetto technique, but also that the latter was regarded as an 'imperfection', rather than a desirable alternative.¹⁸ This suggestion is supported by the following evidence cited by Ian Harwood:

We read in Campion's *Caversham Entertainment* (1613) of 'a song of five parts... The Robin-Hood-men feign two trebles, one of the Keepers with the Cynic sing two counter-tenors, the other Keeper the bass...' A 'feigned' voice was a falsetto, and only the two trebles were so rendered; the two countertenors and the bass simply 'sang'.¹⁹

Are these extracts conclusive proof that the counter-tenor voice in Purcell's day was a naturally produced high tenor? Evidently not in all cases, since Evelyn's diary describes the accomplished singer John Abell as a 'treble' in complimentary rather than disparaging terms:

After the supper, came in the famous Treble *Mr. Abel*, newly return'd from Italy, & indeede I never heard a more excellent voice, one would have sworne it had been a Womans, it was so high, & so well and skillfully manag'd.²⁰

One must question whether the term 'treble' is used by both these writers to

¹⁶ *Sir Courtly Love*, a play by Thomas Crowne.

¹⁷ Cibber; *An Apology for the life of Colley Cibber* (London 1740, repr. London 1914), 72.

¹⁸ I have come across no evidence to suggest that Purcell ever wrote specifically for Cibber, though he wrote for Cibber's wife, Catherine. If it were possible to prove that Purcell deliberately did not write for Cibber when he had the opportunity, it would certainly add credence to the argument that Purcell's counter-tenors were tenors not falsettists.

¹⁹ Harwood, I; Review of Robin Blaze English Lute Songs CD, *Early Music Review* 58 (March 2000), 17.

²⁰ Evelyn, J; *The Diary of John Evelyn* (London 1959), (27th January 1682), 719.

denote a falsetto voice, or whether it can simply be written off as indicative of a lay-person's misunderstanding of musical terms; an assumption that any high male voice was termed 'treble'. The latter alternative seems unlikely when we consider the genteel accomplishments that Evelyn must have cultivated in order to move with ease in his social set, and the fact that Cibber lived his life on the stage, where he must frequently have encountered musicians, and even married into the famous, trumpet playing Shore family. In the light of these facts, it seems more likely that Cibber's remarks pertain only to his own, most likely untrained, falsetto, and that Abell was an accomplished falsettist, since it is unlikely that a high tenor voice would be referred to as "like a woman's", ultimately meaning that there were two methods of vocal production used by counter-tenors.

So, if one accepts that falsetto may have been a legitimate form of vocal production for a counter-tenor, into which category should one place the singers named in Table Four? Purcell himself referred to Howell as 'the high counter-tenor...[who] takes the high D with agility',²¹ and composed for him the only air he ever notated in the mezzo-soprano clef. This shows a division in Purcell's mind between Howell and the rest of his counter-tenors, but is it enough to classify him as a falsettist? Similarly, since I have found no documentary evidence concerning the singer Josiah Bouchier's voice, it seems a little overeager to classify him as a falsettist on the basis of the one fleeting d² prescribed him by Purcell. There is also the puzzling case of John Pate, who although classified by range as a 'low' singer, made a name for himself on the stage by singing female roles; surely if falsettists were freely available this task would fall to one of them rather than to a 'natural' counter-tenor? Similarly, if Anthony Robert was a 'high' falsettist, why was he allocated the tenor solo *Crown the year and crown the day* (H52) in the 1687 court ode *Sound the trumpet, beat the drum*? And what of the other singers? It is necessary

²¹ Purcell cited in Giles, P; op. cit, 71.

to compare the music written for these men to establish whether Purcell's songs for the 'high' singers have a musical style distinct from those allocated to the others, which might identify them as two different voices altogether.²²

It may be pertinent to begin with the lowest of the 'high' counter-tenors, Anthony Robert. *A Prince of Glorious Race* (from *Who can from Joy Refraine?*: H1), Robert's only counter-tenor solo included in this study, has a range of g-b^{b1} (our 'standard range') and is characterised by lively, energetic tunes with passages of rapid rhythmic decoration, extensive use of sequence, and a lack of large leaps and sustained notes (see Ex.1). The song could certainly not be described as exploiting a falsetto voice, with its middling tessitura of 25-28 but, it might be argued, would prove extremely effective when sung by a high tenor. In fact, when we compare Robert's air with *Wake Quivera* (from *The Indian Queen*: H275) written for the highest 'low' counter-tenor, Freeman, despite the stylistic differences brought about by the different subject matter, the basic compositional elements are the same except that Freeman's air contains sustained high notes. In addition, the main tessitura of Freeman's song is 25-29, and its range is g-a¹, which is not so very different from Robert's, yet we have supposed on the basis of the evidence presented above that they had different voices.

A similarly contentious case is that of Bouchier, whose song *The Fife and all the Harmony of War* (from *Hail! Bright Cecilia*: H224) contains one d², but nothing else higher than b¹. After an opening reminiscent of Robert's air (see Ex.2), the song reveals itself to be of much the same basic compositional character as the two discussed above. However, the fact that the song has a tessitura of 27-31 and that Bouchier remains in the area above c¹ for most of the song could be an indication that he was a falsettist, as could the presence of his solitary d². On examination of the

²² In order to minimise the possibility of a change in pitch standard affecting my results I have chosen examples from the same period, after the supposed drop in orchestral pitch in the late 1680s.

music we find that this d² is extremely short, and part of a “rapid-fire” phrase, with no need for any kind of sustaining (see Ex.3). It is obviously used purely as a word-colouring device, and is not by any means the highlight of the song, and so cannot be relied on as proof that Purcell was writing for a falsettist, particularly considering the uncertain nature of the pitch standard at this time (1692).

Example 1: *A Prince of Glorious Race*, bars 4-9

A Prince, a Prince of glo - - - - rious race des-cend-ed

Example 2: *The Fife and all the Harmony of War*, bars 7-12

The fife, the fife, and all, all, all, all, all, the har - -
 - - - mo-ny of war

Example 3: *The Fife and all the Harmony of War*, bars 38-39

a-larm, a-larm, a-larm, a-larm

Another song with an opening similar to Robert and Bouchier's is *'Tis Nature's voice* (from *Hail! Bright Cecilia*: H267) (see Ex.4), sung by John Pate²³, a 'low' counter-tenor who also occasionally took tenor roles and who was described by John Evelyn as 'that rare voice, Mr. Pate... reputed the most excellent singer, ever England had'.²⁴ This song has a range of f-b¹, which actually extends in its upper reaches beyond the 'high' Robert's solo. Like Bouchier's solo, this song expands on the basic compositional materials used in Robert and Freeman's songs, to include large interval leaps in low-mid range, and runs which stretch from one range extreme to the other, at least suggesting a homogeneity of technique throughout the range, if not confirming which technique is being used (see Ex.5).

Example 4: *'Tis nature's voice*, bars 1-8

'Tis Na-tures voice, 'tis Na-tures voice thro' all the mov
ing wood

Example 5: *'Tis nature's voice*, bars 36-9

re-joyce

²³ Some scholars believe that this song was performed not by Pate but by Purcell. However, this is due to a misinterpretation of the account of the first performance in the *Gentleman's Journal*, which states that Purcell wrote out the graces himself (rather than sang them himself).

²⁴ Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn*, (London 1959) 30th May 1698, 1024.

Alexander Damascene's short air *Strike the Viol* (from *Come ye Sons of Art*: H211) is in a completely different vein from the songs previously studied. This is partly due to the sentiments of the text, but also perhaps to do with Damascene's quality of voice. The range is a-b^{b1}, not an unusual one, but the main tessitura is almost the same as Bouchier's, 26-31 and so the song is all quite high, with the need for both energetic and lyrical sustained singing in this register (see Ex.6). The overall impression gleaned from the music is that although it does not overtly exploit the qualities of the falsetto voice, it would be more successfully rendered using this vocal technique than in a natural high tenor, at least at its written pitch.

Example 6: *Strike the Viol*, bars 27-37

Sing your pa - ter - niss' - s praise, Sing, Sing, Sing, Sing, in cheer

ful

Crown the Altar (from *Celebrate this Festival*: H51), John Howell's only song included in this study, is much like *Strike the Viol* in musical character but has a range of d¹-d². Large leaps alternate with extremely high runs and sustained d²s, and although the main tessitura is 30-33 there are significant numbers of d¹ and c² in addition to this already high tessitura, utilising the whole range (see Ex.7). The need for lyrical, sustained singing at a consistently high register only serves to highlight the fact that Howell must have been an extraordinarily talented singer, and assuming that the pitch standard could be proved not to have been significantly lower than

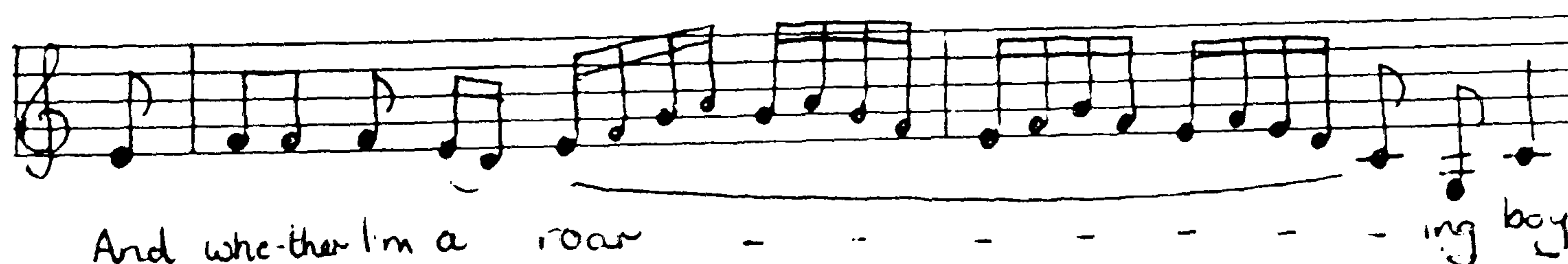
a¹=415 it seems almost inconceivable that he could have been anything other than a falsettist.

Finally Mountford, whom Cibber appears to have confirmed as using 'natural' technique and whose solo *I'll sail upon the dog star* (from *A Fool's Preferment*: H104) certainly has what might be described as a tenor range, d-a¹. Nevertheless, the main compositional devices are the same as those of the above songs, with lively melodies, use of repetition, sequence and rapid rhythmic decoration, but no sustained notes. The tessitura of this song is 23-27 but there are a significant number of higher notes, and some of the runs are at the same tessitura of those of the higher singers. Apparently this 'tenor' is expected to do what all the other 'falsettists' must (see Ex. 8).

Example 7: *Crown the Altar*, bars 33-8



Example 8: *I'll sail upon the dogstar*, bars 26-8



Purcell's Tenor Songs

The above debate has repercussions on another 'separate' voice type, the tenor. If, as Parrott, Morris, Baldwin and Wilson all seem to suggest, some or all counter-tenors were in fact high tenors, the question arises: were these same singers also singing tenor songs or was there a further difference between 'tenors' and 'high tenors'? Were counter-tenor and tenor in fact the same voice type, just different voice parts?

The solo tenor in Purcell's music is distinguished largely by his virtual absence. For one reason or another, tenor solo songs are a rare occurrence, the total number of tenor songs included in this study being only 19, compared with nearly 60 counter-tenor songs. Since the counter-tenor line in Purcell's choral writing lies higher than the tenor as a general rule, and since it seems that most counter-tenors were probably not falsettists, one might draw the conclusion that counter-tenors were 'high tenors' and that those taking the choral tenor line were 'low tenors' so that they were different varieties of the same voice, necessitating the use of the two terms to indicate the range of solo songs for ease of singer allocation. For this to be proved the case, one would expect to find that the ranges of the tenor songs are lower than those of the counter-tenor songs (see table 5).

The tenor song ranges begin and end slightly lower down than the counter-tenor ones, as predicted, but the most significant range-related data concerns the distribution of songs over each voice's total range. Most of the counter-tenor songs lie within the 'standard range' bracket of g-b¹, but only four of the tenor songs are to be found within the same range-bracket, clearly indicating that Purcell perceived the voices as having different ranges. The tenor songs have a fairly even distribution of ranges from the lowest, d-f¹, to the highest, a[#]-a¹, with the highest concentration between d-g¹ and f[#]-a¹ with a total of 15 out of the 19 songs. This does suggest some

kind of practical differentiation between the two voices, with counter-tenors generally having higher songs and tenors lower ones, but with some crossover. Moreover, this crossover can in part be accounted for by the influence of individual voices, since the six lowest counter-tenor songs with ranges in tenor territory were written for the singers Mountford and Pate. This further strengthens the idea that the tenor and counter-tenor used the same production methods except in rare cases, and that the terms were only used to indicate the range of the songs as an aid to assigning them to singers, hence the fact that the 'low' counter-tenors Freeman and Pate were occasionally assigned tenor solos. In addition, Purcell's publisher John Playford is known to have used the clef most appropriate to the song range rather than the voice type,²⁵ so some of the songs which do not exist in original manuscript form may have been allocated the wrong voice type by later copyists or editors by virtue of their original printed clefs (i.e. a low counter-tenor song may in fact be a tenor song printed in the 'wrong' clef). If this is the case, it could also be seen as an indication that the two voices used the same production method, since one assumes Playford would have indicated that a song he printed in the tenor clef should be sung by a falsettist rather than with 'natural' technique.

Despite the above conclusions, it is important to remember that song range may well have been affected by the surmised pitch standard drop in the late 1680s. Table Six lists in chronological order those works which contain both tenor and counter-tenor songs. If there is intra-work differentiation between the voices in terms of range - i.e. if the tenor solos in each work are lower than the counter-tenor ones - and if this pattern is consistent over the period of pitch standard disruption, then it is safe to assume that Purcell deliberately wrote in a lower range for the tenor voice and a higher one for the counter-tenor. If however there is no such intra-work

²⁵ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Alfred Deller, John Freeman and Mr. Pate', *Music and Letters* 50 (1969), 103-10

Table 5: Tenor and Counter-Tenor Song Ranges

Range	Number of Songs	
	Tenor	Counter-Tenor
d-g ¹	3	3
d-a ¹		1
eb-eb ¹	1	
eb-g ¹	1	
e-e ¹	1	
e-g ¹	2	1
e-a ¹		1
e-bb ¹ / b ¹		3
f-f ¹	3	
f-ab ¹ / a ¹	2	1
f-bb ¹ / b ¹		4
f#-a ¹	1	1
f#-bb ¹		1
g-e ¹	1	
g-g ¹	1	
g-ab¹ / a¹		14
g-bb¹/b¹		11
g-c ²		1
g#-g ¹	1	
g#-b ¹		2
g#-c ²		1
a-a ¹		3
a-bb¹ / b¹		4
a-d ²		1
a#-a ¹	1	
b-bb ¹		1
c# ¹ -bb ¹		1
c# ¹ -c ²		1
d ¹ -d ²		1

bold type = songs which fall within the counter-tenor standard range bracket.

differentiation, and particularly if the majority of the low tenor and counter-tenor songs were written before the late 1680s and the majority of the high ones afterwards, then it is more likely that the variety of range displayed by each voice is a by-product of the pitch standard drop and that there was no difference between the counter-tenor and tenor voices at all.

The evidence set out in Table Six does indeed suggest a differentiation between tenor and counter-tenor ranges which is not directly caused by pitch standard fluctuation. In most cases the ranges are markedly different, and when they are not so different there are extenuating circumstances which may be the cause of this. *The Yorkshire Feast Song* was written to commission, and so the close relation

Table 6: Chronology of Tenor/Counter-tenor solos

Date	Work	Range of Solos	
		Tenor	Counter-Tenor
1682	The Summer's Absence	e-e ¹ g-g ¹	b-bb ¹
1683	From Hardy Climes Fly Bold Rebellion	d-g ¹ d-g ¹	g#-b ¹ f-bb ¹ g-bb ¹
1684	From those Serene	e-g ¹	a-a ¹
1687	Praise the Lord, O my soul	f-f ¹	g-b ¹
1689	The Yorkshire Feast Song* Now does the Glorious	f#-a ¹ g#-g ¹	g#-c ² a-a ¹ c#-bb ¹
1691	Welcome Glorious Morn	d-g ¹	g#-c ²
1692	The Fairy Queen	d#-g ¹ e-g ¹	g-ab ¹ = 2 g-a ¹ = 3

* society commission

of the tenor solo range to that of the lowest counter-tenor solo might be accounted for by the fact that Purcell did not have specific singers in mind when writing the work, or was allowing for the possibility of doubling up on singers in the actual performance, something which seems to have been done in the ode *Sound the trumpet, beat the drum* where Anthony Robert took a tenor solo and Mr. Turner sang tenor in several ensembles and choruses. The higher of *The Fairy Queen* tenor solos was actually sung by the counter-tenor Freeman, and the closeness of the tenor and counter-tenor ranges may again be because Purcell was unsure which singers would be taking part or, with the additional complications of costume changes and the like, which of the singers hired would be able to come on stage in which particular scenes. The need for an ‘average’ range to suit all would be paramount.

Table 7: Tessitura of songs in Table 6

Work	Tessitura of Solos	
	Tenor	Counter-Tenor
The Summer's Absence	21-24 23-26	28-30
From Hardy Climes	22-26	26-30
Fly Bold Rebellion	23-27	25-28 28-31
From those Serene	23-26	25-29
Praise the Lord, O my soul	20-23	25-29
The Yorkshire Feast Song*	24-27	26-30 27-30
Now does the Glorious	24-27	27-30
Welcome Glorious Morn	23-26	25-29
The Fairy Queen	20-24 24-27	25-28 = 3 25-29 = 2

* society commission

The above range-related evidence coupled with the crossover of personnel demonstrated by works such as *The Fairy Queen* and attested to in the Chapel Royal records indeed suggests that we are dealing with two varieties of the same voice, high and low. For confirmation of this supposition we must turn to the analysis of tessitura, using for convenience the songs in table six which already demonstrate a clear differentiation of range between the two voices. Table Seven clearly shows that the difference of range between tenor and counter-tenor songs within each work is supported by a difference of tessitura. Moreover, when these tessiturae are ranked from lowest to highest, rather than by work, an even more significant discovery is made (see table 8).

Table 8: Tessitura of Table 7 in Numerical Order

<u>Tenor Tessiturae</u>	<u>Counter-Tenor Tessiturae</u>
20-23	
20-24	
22-26	
23-26 23-26 23-26	
23-27	
24-27 24-27 24-27	
	25-28 25-28 25-28 25-28
	25-29 25-29 25-29 25-29 25-29
	26-30 26-30
	27-30 27-30
	28-30
	28-31

Unlike the ranges of the Table Six songs, the tessiturae of these songs are split into totally separate voice-specific groupings, with tenors having a 'low' tessitura and counter-tenors a 'high' tessitura. The slim margin between these two tessitura groupings further strengthens the theory that these voices were high and low versions of the same voice, hence the reason that singers in the Chapel Royal and in the production of *The Fairy Queen* could be engaged to sing either part. In fact, the closeness of the tessitura groupings can partly be explained by such instances of part-swapping. Three out of the four counter-tenor songs with the lowest tessitura (25-28) are from *The Fairy Queen*, and one of the highest tenor songs (24-27) is another *Fairy Queen* solo, *See my many coloured fields* (H193) sung by the counter-tenor Freeman, who also took at least one of the aforementioned 25-28 tessitura counter-tenor solos, *One charming night* (H172). In addition, a second song from the highest tenor tessitura bracket is from the *Yorkshire Feast Song* and so was probably also affected by the potential need for crossover of personnel (see above). Also, an examination of the tessiturae of counter-tenor and tenor songs with the same ranges reveals that the tessiturae too are almost always exactly the same, again pointing towards a voice type of two 'parts' which were to a certain extent interchangeable, rather than two distinct voice types.

The tessiturae of the remaining nine tenor songs not included in Table Six also suggest the tenor as a 'low' option which crosses over slightly at its highest point with the lowest point of the counter-tenor tessiturae. So, it would appear from examination of the range and tessitura of Purcell's tenor songs that they form the lower half of a voice type group of which counter-tenors form the upper half. The question now is whether the other basic elements of the tenor songs support this theory by revealing similarities between these and the counter-tenor songs, giving the two voices a collective identity distinct from that of the other voice types.

Alternatively there may be differences which endow each voice with a separate identity, suggesting two different voices with individual characteristics which merely happen to coexist in overlapping registers.

Tenor and Counter-Tenor Songs: Style and Aesthetics

Most of the tenor songs are fairly evenly divided between the court and sacred genres (nine songs and seven songs respectively), presumably since solos were sung on these occasions by choir members who were singing the tenor part, so the counter-tenor/tenor distinction had to be made to enable the solos to be allocated fairly. There are in addition, three dramatic songs.

The tenor sacred songs tend to have a supplicatory character, leaving the bass with the tormented and passionate imagery, but the song texts themselves are not linked by common themes or images. They do however all share the trait of being based on declamation, either in recitative or declamatory-lyric format and not containing much purely vocal decoration, as befits their supplicatory nature. Interestingly, the counter-tenor sacred songs tend to be joyful, rapturous and praising, but similarly the texts are not linked by common themes other than these broad emotions. This, combined with the greater frequency of decoration and musical forms tending towards declamatory arioso, may suggest that Purcell was distinguishing between the two voices, seeing the counter-tenor as the more 'brilliant' option of the two.

The texts of the tenor court songs are varied, but similar in their florid and almost always happy imagery. Of course, the odes written for such occasions always abounded in such imagery, but it is interesting that none of the tenor songs contain musical imagery and have very few classical allusions, but concentrate instead on

nature imagery. As a side effect of the florid language employed in odes, the musical emphasis moves away from declamation, and the most common forms for tenor songs are now the lyric and the arioso. The counter-tenor court songs show a much wider scope of imagery, embracing classical-pastoral, musical and nature imagery in more or less equal proportions. As was the case with sacred songs, the counter-tenor court songs show much greater frequency of decorative arioso than the tenor ones, suggesting that the counter-tenor was perhaps the normal solo option where the tenor was mainly a choral voice in a similar way to the modern perception of mezzo-sopranos as soloists and contraltos as choral singers.

The three dramatic songs, *Love quickly is pall'd* (from *Timon of Athens*: H134), *See my many coloured fields* (from *The Fairy Queen*: H193) and *When a cruel long winter* (from *The Fairy Queen*: H283), have little in common textually, as might be expected in a genre governed by plot and by dramatic action and reaction. Nevertheless, the latter two songs are particularly interesting to compare since they come from the same masque in *The Fairy Queen* and one was sung not by a tenor, but by the counter-tenor Freeman. These two songs have similar ranges, e-g¹ and d#-g¹ respectively, and are both accompanied by three-part strings. The song sung by Freeman however, *See my many coloured fields* has a much higher tessitura, 24-27 compared to 20-24, explaining why this tenor song was deemed suitable for a counter-tenor to sing. Mr Pate's counter-tenor solo from this same masque *Here's the summer* has a tessitura of 25-29 and a range of g-a¹, once again demonstrating that although in practice counter-tenors and tenors were much of a muchness, in theory they were higher and lower voices. The stylistic elements of these songs also point to differences, but these are more to do with the characterisation of the *dramatis personae* who sing these songs rather than defining separate voice types by style.

All in all, as was the case when attempting to establish stylistic differences

between high and low counter-tenor music, there is little evidence to suggest a separate ‘tenor music style’. There are no specific melodic or harmonic devices exclusive to the tenor voice, and it also demonstrates less thematic and aesthetic stereotyping in terms of subject material and textual emotion than the other voice types. Crucially, the tenor songs function stylistically in relation to the counter-tenor songs in much the same way as they do in terms of range; they are less adventurous options. Counter-tenor songs are an ‘exaggeration’ of the qualities already present in tenor songs, pointing perhaps to the idea of a ‘choral’ voice versus a ‘solo’ voice.

Counter-Tenors: Falsettists or High Tenors?

We have seen that the fundamental etymological problems of the term ‘counter-tenor’ are paralleled by musical and documentary confusion. As with all debates about ‘authenticity’, it is impossible to provide definitive answers since we do not have the capacity to revisit an earlier age. In addition, we cannot even rely on the musical evidence which survives today, as we have no conclusive proof of the pitch standard(s) which operated during the seventeenth century. What at one turn appears to be conclusive evidence can in a moment be contradicted by another apparently equally reliable source. In the discussion of the Purcellian counter-tenor we have encountered much of this conflicting evidence and the various theories arising from it, and also the less than conclusive results of our own musical analyses. Nevertheless, although it is not possible to eliminate or accept fully any of the theories which have been put forward, a number of them present themselves as possible conclusions.

The music itself reveals a number of fundamental points. Foremost among these is the fact that Purcell’s tenor and counter-tenor songs operate within

essentially the same range area, tenors being slightly lower than counter-tenors as a rule, suggesting that they were one and the same voice, especially when taken in light of the fact cited above that gentlemen of the Chapel Royal were sworn in to fill either tenor or counter-tenor places, and the fact that named counter-tenors were sometimes assigned tenor solos. The implications of these findings will be explored further below. As for the supposed division within the counter-tenor voice type, the exceptionally high counter-tenor solos are so few in number that they can be attributed to the individual vocal capabilities of named singers. The rest of the songs by and large conform to the 'standard' g-b¹ range, and there is no distinction of musical style between songs for higher and lower ranges. Only Howell, Bouchier and Damascene have real "falsetto-friendly" music, and their solos discussed above were written after the supposed late 1680s drop in pitch standard, which may account for their apparently high range and tessitura.

Documentary evidence suggests that falsetto technique was used by seventeenth-century counter-tenors, though to what extent and how acceptable it was we may never know. Purcell talks of Howell as 'high', and when considering vocal range alone it is possible to split singers into high and low categories, but not into 'falsettist' and 'natural' technical groupings. This evidence can only be 'interpreted' at best, and there is no scope for definite conclusions of any kind. In terms of logic alone, the theories of Parrott and Morris that there were both falsettists and tenors working as counter-tenors during the 1680s and 90s are more plausible than Baldwin and Wilson's refusal to accept anything but a 'tenor' counter-tenor despite the differences evident in the music itself; but neither theory can be proved.

There is of course another possibility which neither set of scholars considers. Is it not presumptuous to suggest that the Purcellian counter-tenor must correspond to one of our modern standard voice types? It is unlikely that the human voice has

undergone much of a physiological change since the seventeenth century, although it is obviously subject to individual variance. Nevertheless, changes in vocal training and people's changing perceptions of what is an acceptable musical sound have undoubtedly created a set of vocal environmental conditions in the twenty-first century which are vastly different from those of the seventeenth century. Perhaps in Purcell's day the counter-tenor was a hybrid tenor-falsetto voice, and maybe it was employed on both tenor and counter-tenor parts, using natural technique for the lower notes and falsetto for the higher ones? This would after all require only an attitude of audience acceptance to be a perfectly viable singing technique, and would sit well with the Baroque singing ideal of marked colour distinction between the low, middle and high vocal registers. With this theory as a basis, we could surmise that with the advent of the castrati such a juxtaposition of vocal sound became undesirable, and that the modern falsetto tradition grew up in England as a less drastic means of achieving the same end. We might suggest, therefore, that this is where the idea of the falsettist counter-tenor originated and persisted throughout history.

John Potter also argues that the Purcellian counter-tenor probably did not correspond to our modern classical music equivalents, for reasons of technique. He surmises that;

The kind of singing that would emerge from a systematic attempt to reconstruct Renaissance or Baroque technique... would have the 'natural' sound of an untrained voice, probably not dissimilar to that of a folk or rock singer.... Many rock singers use an upper register which is a non-falsetto head voice corresponding too (and in many cases exceeding) the male alto range, which would conveniently solve the problem of Purcell alto/tenor lines.²⁶

This then may be the answer to the above debate, that Purcell's counter-tenors were high tenors who differed from today's high tenors only in terms of technique, with a higher larynx and speech-like delivery as opposed to the modern lower larynx and consequent rounding and lowering of tone. However, it is unlikely

²⁶ Potter, J, *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge 1998), 121.

that every professional singer sang with the same technique in Purcell's time any more than they do today. Some, like Colley Cibber, may only have been able to manage their parts in an imperfect falsetto, others - perhaps Josiah Bouchier in *The Fife and all the Harmony of War* - may have slipped into falsetto for the very highest notes, whilst some may have sung in the manner that Potter describes. What is clear is that a recognisably modern vocal technique did not begin to be practised until more than a century after Purcell's death, and therefore it is unlikely that the Purcellian counter-tenor and tenor would have sounded exactly like their modern equivalents.

Whilst no hypothesis on this subject can ever be totally certain, several things have become clear in the course of this argument. The Purcellian tenor and counter-tenor voices were linked not only in terms of range and vocal production method, but also stylistically. There were probably singers in the seventeenth century who called themselves tenors or counter-tenors, but essentially they were high or low specialists of the same voice-type. The important conclusion is that the idea of the falsettist as counter-tenor can only be supported in relation to a handful of individual singers rather than a whole vocal 'school', and the fluctuating pitch standard at this time means that even this small evidence in favour of the falsettist counter-tenor may be invalid. In short, the idea of any timbral difference between the two voices is largely unfounded. It seems more than likely that rather than being falsettist and natural voices respectively, both voices were types of tenor, perhaps with counter-tenors using falsetto at the top of their register or using a higher larynx position to create naturally-voiced top notes, or a mixture of the two, each singer using the method which came most naturally to him. In terms of modern performance, it is unlikely that audiences in the twenty-first century would accept a hybrid production method of falsetto and natural technique, nor a rock-singer-like delivery, so essentially the

quest for a perfect match for the Purcellian counter-tenor/tenor cannot be fulfilled in the current classical music climate. Modern falsettists in the pursuit of authenticity should perhaps confine themselves to the songs for Howell, Bouchier and Damascene, and those with similar ranges, whilst modern tenors are advised to sing either tenor or counter-tenor songs, picking those which suit their voices best, in the same way as the counter-tenors for the *Fairy Queen* may have allocated their own parts in 1692.

Chapter Two

Henry Purcell's Bass Songs

The term 'bass' in the twenty-first century is taken to mean the lowest of the male voices, as distinct from the bass-baritone and the baritone. No such separate terminology existed in Purcell's day, but this is not an automatic indication that there was only one type of bass voice in the seventeenth century. In the course of this chapter the range and tessitura of Purcell's bass solos will be examined to identify any subdivisions within the voice-type, and the style of Purcell's bass writing will also be examined to see if this sheds any light on the vocal characteristics of the Purcellian bass. As an extension of this, the music for known bass soloists will be examined to establish their individual vocal characteristics and ranges, and the influence that these may have had on Purcell's bass writing.

The Purcellian Bass: Range and Tessitura

Purcell composed 72 bass songs of relevance to this study, the majority of which fall into the 'public performance' genres of theatre, court and church music. A striking feature of the bass songs is apparent as soon as we examine their ranges. Unlike the other voice-types, where a 'standard range' is employed, the bass songs cover a great variety of ranges so that a range 'standard' is difficult to identify.

The most frequently employed range is G-e^{b1}/e¹ with 13 songs, but the range D-e^{b1}/e¹ represents eleven songs, and those of F-e^{b1}/e¹ and B-e^{b1}/e¹ seven and eight respectively. In addition, the miscellaneous ranges in between mean that a total of 56 out of the 72 bass songs are contained within the D-e¹ bracket. Nevertheless, since most of these songs do not contain D or even E or F, this cannot be labelled a 'standard'

range. The only constant factor is that e¹ is the standard high note; only six songs contain notes higher than this. The tessitura data reinforces the range information, with an almost seamless span of tessiturae from 12-19 through to 21-24, with the majority (48 songs) contained in the bracket 15-22, and only 13 songs having tessiturae higher than this. The most frequent individual tessitura is 18-22.

Table 1: Bass Song Ranges

	d ¹	d# ¹	e ¹	f ¹	f# ¹	g ¹
D	2	1	10			
D#						
E	1		2			
F		3	4	1		
F#	1					
G	3	7	6	1		1
G#						
A	2		3			
A#		4	1			
B	1	4	4			
c	2	1	1	2	1	1
c#						
d				1		
d#						
e			1			

It is unlikely that all of Purcell's basses were able to sing from D right up to g¹ or even the 'standard' high note of e¹, especially considering that today with much more advanced methods of training the standard bass range is F-e¹,¹ so it must be the case either that individual singers are responsible for the extremes of range, or that the

¹ Jander, O; 'Bass', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music 2* (London 2001), 851-856.

Purcellian bass section was made up of several different types of bass voice. It is also possible that the change in pitch standard may have affected the bass range over time, particularly since all the songs containing low D were composed before or on the cusp of the supposed pitch-standard change, but since e¹ remained the standard high note after this time this is unlikely, since one would expect to see a corresponding upward shift at the top of the range.

When one examines the songs with ranges including low D, all of them were written after the arrival of the celebrated low bass John Gostling to London, and all but one are from the sacred and court genres - a significant fact when one considers that Gostling never appeared on the stage. The two remaining songs are chamber songs, one sacred and one secular, which could easily have been composed with Gostling in mind. It is already established that Gostling sang four of these songs, and many of the others share the traits peculiar to Purcell's writing for him, an issue that will be explored later in this chapter. The only problem with this theory is that the song *While Caesar like the Morning Star*, which contains a low D, is thought by some scholars to have been sung by John Bowman.² The characteristics of this song will be discussed later in this chapter, but as will be revealed, it is unlikely that Bowman actually sang the written D.

Taking now the songs including notes higher than e¹, it becomes clear that all these songs were written during the career of John Bowman, a bass who sang in the Private Musick and Chapel Royal as well as in the theatre. Some of these songs are already known to have been composed for Bowman, and most of his other songs have ranges at the upper end of the bass register, as will be discussed later in this chapter, whereas the other known bass soloists had mid-range solos. There is one song which extends above e¹ which is known to have been sung by another bass, Richard Leveridge, but since this song *Take not a woman's anger ill* (from *The Rival Sisters*:

² See: Keates, J; *Henry Purcell* (London 1995), 51;
and: King, R; *A Greater Musical Genius England Never Had: Henry Purcell* (London 1994), 151.

H214) was published in the treble clef, one cannot be sure at what pitch it was actually sung in the original performance, and as will be discussed later it is unlikely that Leveridge could sing this high. It should be noted here that the song *Celia that I once was blest* (from *Amphitryon*: H45) from this group known to be sung by Bowman was also published in the treble clef, but when compared with his other ranges, it is very likely that he sang this song without any key transposition of the music.

The allocation of these songs to Gostling and Bowman leaves a group of ranges which correspond to that of the modern bass voice as defined in the Grove Dictionary.³ This suggests that there was no real equivalent to the modern baritone in Purcell's day, but that Bowman at least appears to have been a bass-baritone, and Gostling a basso-profundo, with the rest of Purcell's singers being akin to the modern bass. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Purcellian bass sounded exactly like his modern counterpart, and examination of Purcell's bass song style may reveal something more about the characteristics of the Purcellian bass.

Bass Songs: Subject, Structure and Style

There are 31 sacred songs and 26 court songs for bass, making 57 out of the total 72 songs in this study. This information alone suggests that Purcell found the bass much more appropriate as a religious or ceremonial solo instrument than as a dramatic one.⁴ This theory is supported by the fact that most of the bass roles on the stage are those of priestly figures or gods in scenes which parody religious and ceremonial rites. This theatrical trend seems to have been popular all over Europe at this time; Lully's operatic bass roles were often gods, and the same stereotyping was seen in Italian opera - and

³ Jander, Sawkins, Steane, Forbes, Harris, and Waldman; 'Bass', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* 2 (London 2001), 851-856.

⁴ There are of course several dramatic bass songs with choruses which do not fit the criteria of this study because the solo voice acts as a lead-in to the main music of the chorus.

both these traditions also supported the comic bass in the John Bowman style - whilst in Germany the bass voice was associated with wisdom and gravity, for which reason in the German Passion tradition the role of Christ was always sung by a bass.

Dramatic Songs:

There are 14 dramatic bass songs from a variety of plays and semi-operas, all but two of which are sung by magical, spiritual or godly apparitions.⁵ As a result of their similar function, most of the dramatic bass songs are in the same style, using declamatory recitative or arioso, or a combination of the two, and are usually accompanied by full strings to create an impressive, ceremonial effect. Nevertheless, stylistically the stage songs differ enormously behind their similar structures, one possible reason for which is that Purcell was tailoring them for specific voices. Take for example the songs *What power art thou?* (from *King Arthur*: H280) and *Next, Winter comes slowly* (from *The Fairy Queen*: H150). Both of these songs are from masque sequences in semi-operas, both are sung by ‘frosty’ characters, the ‘Cold Genius’ and ‘Winter,’ and so deal in the same imagery, and both are in the same declamatory vein accompanied by four-part strings. However, Purcell chooses to characterise the Cold Genius with repetitive tremolando, which ascends as he rises through a trap in the stage, whilst Winter is given a much more sinuous, legato, chromatic line (see Ex.1). Although both characters sing of being “old” and “cold,” Purcell chooses to characterise this vividly in the Cold Genius’s song whilst settling for conventional musical representation of words such as “quivering” in Winter’s song (see Ex.2). Both songs are in minor keys, both are based on stepwise melodic movement, and both have similar ranges (B-e^{b1} and A-e¹ respectively), so what other reason can there be for such radical difference of style than the consideration given to individual singers’ personal talents?

⁵ One of these songs was sung by John Bowman and the other probably intended for him; see below for discussion.

Indeed, when we examine the tessitura of these songs we find that they are different, Winter's being 16-20 and the Cold Genius' 18-22, suggesting that either different voices were being catered for, or that Purcell deliberately pitched the Cold Genius' song higher to heighten the tension of the scene. Admittedly the Cold Genius' masque is more sinister and less pastoral than Winter's, and perhaps Purcell felt that having once done such a radical stylistic thing he could not with any success repeat it. In fact it is possible that the Cold Genius' scene was inspired by the 'Choeur de Peuples des Climats glaces' in Act IV of Lully's *Isis* (1677), which could explain the differences between these two Purcellian 'cold music' settings, and which would then serve as an example of Purcell directly imposing a foreign vocal technique onto his singers,⁶ but as will be revealed later in this chapter the differences between these settings are likely to have been due to a combination of singer influence and Purcell's emulation of Lully.

Example 1: *What pow'r art thou*, bars 9-16

what pow'r art thou, who from be-low Hast made me:
 rise - un-willingly and slow - From beds of e - - ver
 last - ing snow? -

⁶ See Sawkins, L; 'Trembleurs and Cold People: How do they Shiver?', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996).

Example 2: *Next, Winter comes slowly*, bars 16-28

The image shows two staves of handwritten musical notation. The top staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody consists of quarter and eighth notes, with some notes beamed together. The bottom staff continues the melody, also in treble clef and one sharp key signature. Handwritten lyrics are written below the notes: "Next, Win-ter comes slow-ly, pale, mea-ger and old" above the first staff, "age, and then quiv- - - - - ring with cold" below the second staff, and "First trem-bling with" to the right of the second staff. The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals.

An equally interesting comparison to investigate is that of the non-ceremonial-style cantata song *Let the dreadful engines* and the ceremonial, *Ye twice ten hundred deities*; not least because they were both written for named singers, John Bowman and Richard Leveridge. These two songs share similar basic structures, juxtaposing sections of recitative, arioso and lyric writing, and yet their subjects and the characters who sing them could hardly be more different. *Ye twice ten hundred deities* is sung by Ismeron, a conjurer, to invoke the God of Dreams at the wish of Queen Zempoalla, whilst *Let the dreadful engines* is a quasi-mad song sung by the character Cardenio in a comedy, and deals with the very human themes of love and betrayal. Whilst one is a spell using fanciful, magical imagery, the other is a musical rendition of human feelings and deals in emotion-led imagery rather than imagery for imagery's sake. This disparity of subject is to a certain extent is reflected in their structures. The former, invocatory air is a 'modern,' Italianate, ternary structure which gradually progresses through recitative and arioso, culminating in a lyric 'aria' section where the text gives way to the music almost as if Ismeron has put himself into a trance by means of the spell. In *Let the dreadful engines*, on the other hand, the same basic structure is used in quite a different, much more English way. This song is a realisation of a human 'stream of consciousness' and so in the first instance has a need for many more sections, seven in all. In addition, the text involves many twists and turns of direction rather than a sense of progression

towards a recognised goal. Purcell represents this by mixing up sections of recitative, arioso, lyric and declamatory writing both to create a sense of the troubled and confused state of Cardenio and also to express his emotions vividly, so that happy images and feelings become lyrical sections whilst unhappy or tempestuous ones are recitative or arioso. Although some of the sections are formally separate from one another, more often than not either the bass line or the melody runs over the join between sections to add to this feeling of confused emotion, as if Cardenio cannot control his thoughts or feelings.

These two songs, though different in subject and internal structure, still share the same overall formulaic concept, and the different structures are often employed for the same effect, to realise the words and emotions of the song texts. The main difference between the songs lies in their ranges. Bowman's *Let the dreadful engines* has a range of c-g¹ supporting the idea that he was a bass-baritone, whereas Leveridge's song has a range of G-e^{b1} which corresponds to the 'normal' Purcellian bass range and to that of the modern bass. The differences in range could be attributed to the different subject of the songs and the different natures of the characters who sing them or they could be due to the individual vocal traits of Bowman and Leveridge, as discussed above. It does, however, seem strange that Purcell would create special ranges for each singer but not individual elements of style, particularly considering the differences of character and subject in these songs and Curtis Price suggests a reason for this.

Price reveals that there are several different autograph versions of *Ye twice ten hundred deities*. The first draft goes up to g¹, the version for the first performance to e^{b1}. Price suggests that much of the music for *The Indian Queen* had to be rewritten in a hurry when the United Company of actors dissolved, and that *Ye twice ten hundred deities* was rewritten lower for Leveridge, who would replace the original choice of Bowman in the role of Ismeron. This explains why these two songs appear so similar in

style even though they were sung by different singers.⁷

Court and Sacred Songs:

Unlike the dramatic songs, the court and sacred songs tend towards the more overtly musical structures of lyric and arioso, or a combination of the two. This is because most of the solos in these genres come from large-scale works with texts that all express similar sentiments (and in sacred works, the texts were likely to be familiar to the congregation anyway) and therefore the pieces were really ‘about’ the music rather than the declamation of the text. Nevertheless, the lyric and arioso are by no means the only structures employed in this genre, and in particular there are several anthems for solo bass and chorus which show great variety of solo song structure to compensate for the lack of voice-type variety. It is likely that most of these anthems were written for John Gostling, an issue which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Of course the lyric, arioso and combination song structures are common to all voice-types and examples of them can be found in most genres, but where the bass is concerned, lyrical writing rarely appears outside the court genre as anything other than a section of a compound structure. It seems that in the theatre basses are expected to be manly, dramatic and commanding, leaving to the sopranos the lyrical material, whilst in a concert work Purcell could afford to explore more completely the lyrical qualities of the bass voice. This difference of structure is probably largely caused by the character stereotyping of basses in Purcell’s dramatic works rather than indicating any voice-type differences between stage and court/sacred singers. In fact, it may well be the case that the character stereotyping of basses in Purcell’s dramatic works was caused by the fact that some of the stage singers also sang at court and in the Chapel Royal, and that Purcell therefore associated them with religious and ceremonial situations. This means that at least some of the stage singers were capable of arioso-style music, so the style

⁷ Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984), 130.

Purcell adopted in his stage works must have been one he felt particularly appropriate for the subject rather than the only one in which the stage basses could manage to sing.

Named Bass Soloists

Purcell's bass soloists with songs in this study are John Gostling and Leonard Woodeson who were exclusive to court and sacred circles, the stage singer Richard Leveridge, and John Bowman who sang in all three areas.

John Bowman:

John Bowman made his first appearance in connection with Purcell in 1680 when he acted in Nathaniel Lee's *Theodosius*, for which Purcell composed the incidental music. At this time he was probably in his early twenties (he died in 1739). He became a member of the Private Musick a few years later in 1684, and also sang in the Chapel Royal, but remained primarily associated with the theatre - where he usually played the supporting role rather than the lead - and was particularly successful in "fop" roles, which often included songs. Bowman was described by Colley Cibber as "a youth famed for his voice"⁸, and he represents the old-style of Purcellian singing actor employed before the advent of the semi-opera form, as opposed to the later idea of professional stage singer represented by Leveridge. Five of Bowman's songs are included in this study: the dramatic songs *Let not a moon-born elf* (from *King Arthur*: H125), *Thy Genius, lo!* 1 (from *The Massacre of Paris*: H264a), *Let the dreadful engines* (from *Don Quixote I*: H126) already briefly discussed earlier in this chapter; the treble-clef dramatic song *Celia that I once was blest* (from *Amphitryon*: H45); and the court song *While Caesar like the Morning Star* (from *Sound the Trumpet*: H291).

⁸ Cibber, C; *An Apology for the life of Colley Cibber* (repr. London 1914), 278.

The ranges and tessiturae of the four dramatic songs identify Bowman as equivalent to the modern bass-baritone, and although in his early stage roles⁹ he sang as low as G, any notes below c are infrequent, becoming more so as his career progressed. The ranges of the songs with which we are concerned are all quite similar as, by and large, are the tessiturae, e-e¹ (21-24), c-f¹ (18-22), c-g¹ (19-23), and d-g¹ (21-24) and since all these are songs from the same genre they could also be expected to be similar in style. However, the situation is necessarily complicated by the factor of plot. *Let not a moon-born elf* is sung by the spirit Grimbald as he attempts to lead the British army astray from the protective guidance of Philidel; *Thy Genius, lo!* is a prophesy sung by the god of Genius to the King; *Let the dreadful engines* is a love/mad song sung by a mortal, apparently to himself; and *Celia that I once was blest* is a static song. Largely for this reason, each song has a different form: declamatory lyric, recit/arioso/lyric combination, cantata, and strophic lyric respectively. It is interesting to note that the two solos for “spiritual” apparitions have structures which extend from the normal declamatory recitative and arioso combination Purcell used for other songs on this subject, and it is tempting to ascribe this to Bowman’s personal talents influencing Purcell, especially since his other dramatic songs break the structural mould altogether (although this could be for reasons of character).

It was surmised earlier that the one dramatic bass song not sung by a priestly character for which there is no singer allocation was probably intended for Bowman. This song, *When the world first knew Creation* (from *Don Quixote I*: H290), is from a production which Bowman was already appearing in, and since his character does not enter until the next act, since the song has a medium range and tessitura of c-d¹ (19-22), and since Bowman is the singer of all the other dramatic songs not sung by priestly

⁹ Music ineligible for discussion in this study, as it does not conform to the criteria laid out in the Purcell Song Catalogue (see preface).

characters or which do not conform to Purcell's usual dramatic bass song structure,¹⁰ it seems that this song was indeed intended for him. For similar reasons, I believe that the song *Ye blustering brethren of the Skies* (from *King Arthur*: H305) was also intended for Bowman. This is a masque solo from a production in which Bowman was already appearing as a singing actor, and is one of the songs with a range higher than e¹ which it was surmised at the beginning of this chapter were intended for Bowman. The song is a binary declamatory arioso beginning with a lengthy string prelude, and the bass soloist anchors the busy strings in the first section by moving in minims, crotchets and quavers against semiquavers, so Purcell clearly needed a singer of great musicianship rather than a run-of-the-mill singing actor. The two octave range of G-g¹ and the musical complexity of this song make it, like *Let the dreadful engines*, a vocal showpiece which must surely be designed for Bowman.

There is another role in *King Arthur* which I believe was designed for Bowman. The singing actress Charlotte Butler had a long-standing duet partnership with John Bowman, and she was appearing in this production playing the good spirit Philidel to Bowman's bad spirit Grimbald. She was also playing Cupid in the masque of the Cold Genius, and since the other solo role in this masque, that of the Cold Genius himself, was for a bass, it seems inconceivable that this role could have been intended for anyone other than Bowman. The two solos from this masque, *What power art thou?* (H280) and *Great Love, I know thee now* (H68) do not have particularly high ranges at B-eb¹ and G-e¹ and they have fairly middling tessiturae of 18-22 and 16-21, but the inclusion of the avant-garde 'trembling' technique into the Cold Genius' solo, as discussed earlier, suggests that a singer with a proven technique rather than just a singing actor would be needed here, and this and the knowledge of Bowman and Butler's special partnership makes it impossible to resist ascribing this role to him.

¹⁰ It has already been explained above that the song *Ye twice ten hundred deities* which does not conform to the standard dramatic bass song structure was originally intended for Bowman.

The one solo included in this study from John Bowman's second career as a court and sacred singer, *While Caesar like the Morning Star*, although stylistically similar to some of the more substantial dramatic songs that he sang, seems somewhat out of character in terms of range containing as it does a low D and having an extremely low tessitura of 12-19. The overall range and character of the song seem far more suitable for Gostling, as will be discussed below, and although Bowman may well have sung this song since his is the only bass soloist name to appear over other solo sections in manuscript copies of the ode, one surmises that it was in fact intended for Gostling, and that perhaps for some reason he was unable to sing it, in which case Bowman could easily have taken the two phrases with low D (and if necessary the one with low E) up an octave.

There are two court songs and two sacred songs which fall into the group of songs with high ranges identified at the beginning of this chapter as probably sung by Bowman. The court song *Those eyes, that form, that lofty mein* (from *Love's Goddess Sure was Blind*: H253) was written when Bowman was a firmly established member of the Private Musick, and although the tessitura is a 'normal' bass one of 17-22, the presence of f¹ may well be an indication that Bowman sang this solo. The other ode solo, *Of old, when heroes thought it base* (from *The Yorkshire Feast Song*: H166) again is eminently suitable for Bowman in terms of range and tessitura, but since the performance did not take place at court, one cannot be sure that Bowman took part, or even if Purcell knew who the singers would be. Similarly, the sacred chamber song *Awake and with attention hear* (H24) may have been written with Bowman in mind, but this cannot be proved as the circumstances of its performance, if any, cannot be established. The sacred song *For though the Lord be high* (from *I will give thanks*: H63) although suitable in range and tessitura for Bowman, may have predated the time that he was a member of the Chapel Royal and so cannot conclusively be assigned to him.

John Bowman was obviously a versatile singer, and judging by his range cannot have been anything other than an equivalent to the modern bass-baritone, a voice-type which it appears was quite unique in Purcell's circle. All the facts suggest that he was the only one of Purcell's basses able to sing above e¹ and although it is impossible to prove that all Purcell's high bass solos were intended for him, common sense suggests that this was indeed the case. The uniqueness of John Bowman's range may be the key to solving the debate surrounding the voice-type of the male title role in *Dido and Aeneas*, a possibility which will be explored further in Chapter Four.

Richard Leveridge:

Richard Leveridge was the last stage bass with whom Purcell worked, and he eventually sang the bass solo part in Jeremiah Clarke's funeral ode for Purcell. Like Bowman, Leveridge was in his early twenties when Purcell first wrote for him, but he was one of a new generation of professional stage singers whose parts were created with their singing rather than acting at the forefront. Leveridge's first Purcell appearance was as Ismeron the Conjurer in *The Indian Queen*, in which he sang *Ye twice ten hundred deities*, discussed briefly above. This was followed amongst other roles by the role of Bacchus in *Timon of Athens* from which the song *Return revolting rebels* comes. Both Leveridge's solos have similar ranges, G-e^{b1} (18-23) and F-e¹ (16-20) respectively. The subjects and plot-functions of the songs are entirely different, but structurally they have much in common (although *Return revolting rebels* is a da capo structure) both being in three sections and both containing similar lyrical sections. Despite this, there are no distinguishing decorative or melodic features which can be pinpointed as voice-specific and the only interesting fact is that the two similar lyrical sections are born of completely different textual sentiments, which might be attributed to vocal quality were it not that they bear a distinct resemblance to Bowman's *Let not a moon-born elf* and

several of Woodeson's solos.

In fact, the lack of voice-specific traits in Leveridge's music may tell another story. Although he was the first of the professional bass singers for the stage, he may not actually have been particularly talented musically. Indeed John Hawkins reported¹¹ that he was

a young man possessed of a deep and firm bass voice....
he had no notion of grace or elegance in singing; it was all strength and compass¹²

Perhaps the dire straits caused by the actors' revolt called for desperate measures, for as Curtis Price points out, in the revival of *The Indian Queen* the role of Ismeron was taken from him, and he did not sing the other principal role of Envy either.¹³ We know that Purcell may not have written Ismeron's solo with Leveridge in mind, and the solo from *Timon of Athens*, written when Purcell would really have known Leveridge's capabilities, is much easier.

The fact that Leveridge is described by Hawkins as a 'deep and firm bass' suggests as was surmised at the beginning of this chapter that the treble-clef song *Take not a woman's anger ill* was sung by him at a lower pitch since it is doubtful that the range d-f¹ let alone a tessitura of 20-24 would have been a comfortable one for him. In addition, knowing that Leveridge may have been somewhat musically-challenged, and that he was a 'real' bass, there are certain of Purcell's dramatic songs which one might assign to him.

Although there is no evidence of Leveridge appearing on the stage before *The Indian Queen*, there are two roles in *The Fairy Queen* which may have been intended for him. The masque song *Next Winter comes slowly*, discussed earlier in this chapter, is one candidate because of its range and tessitura, and this would certainly explain the differences between this song and the much more challenging Cold Genius' solo, if the

¹¹ Hawkins, who was born in 1719 and therefore could not himself have heard Leveridge as a young man, does not reveal the source of his information about the singer.

¹² Hawkins, J; *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (repr. New York 1963), 827.

¹³ Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage*, (Cambridge 1984), 130.

latter was indeed sung by John Bowman. The other role which may have been taken by Leveridge is that of Hymen. One of the two songs for this character, *See I obey* (H192) has a bass range of G-e¹ and tessitura of 15-20 which would be ideal for Leveridge, while the other solo *My torch indeed* (H149) is a Bowman-like c-d¹ and 18-22, but is by no means out of Leveridge's range.

In addition to the songs from *The Fairy Queen*, Leveridge may also have sung *Hear ye Gods of Britain* (H79), from *Bonduca*, a production which took place during the time that Leveridge was active as a stage singer. This song has a range of G-e^{b1} and a tessitura of 17-22 and is declamatory and ceremonial in character, with some slight instances of decoration, but is mostly designed to sound grave and impressive, a task which if John Hawkins is to be trusted, Leveridge would have accomplished with ease.

There is little suggestion that Richard Leveridge had any influence on Purcell's compositional style, other than perhaps the need to write bass songs which did not require any 'grace or elegance' from the performer. Leveridge seems to have been an equivalent to the modern bass, with a loud and impressive voice, and since he went on to compose stage music, and to train theatrical choirs, it seems unlikely that he was entirely unmusical. It is probably the case that Leveridge was an untrained singer who had not mastered the finer points of singing and had less control over his voice than Purcell's better trained choral singers.

Leonard Woodeson:

Little is known of Leonard Woodeson other than that he was a member of the Private Musick. Purcell wrote three songs for him which are included in this study, *The father's brave*, *While for a righteous cause* (from *Celebrate this Festival*: H292) and *Wondrous Machine*. These three solos have a lot more in common with each other than either Bowman or Leveridge's songs. Their ranges mark Woodeson out as equivalent to

the modern bass; F-eb¹, G-e¹ and B-e¹, although the tessiturae confusingly include one of the lowest, 13-18, and one of the highest, 20-23, as well as a more average 17-22. All are court songs which use the images and subjects of the texts to inspire music in a particularly martial style which seems to be associated more often than not with this singer, perhaps suggesting that he had a particular facility for declamation. *The father's brave* is the most basic example of this style, a declamatory, fanfare-like air with "flourishes" rather than extended decorative passages and a syllabic melody based on arpeggios and sequential movement. *While for a righteous cause*, the text of which contains similar sentiments as the aforementioned song, builds on this style beginning as highly decorative arioso but moving into the same martial dotted rhythm triple-time as the above song. The last song, *Wondrous Machine*, does not have a martial subject but uses the military concepts of 'conquest' and 'dispute' to describe a metaphorical battle between the mighty organ and the fragile lute. The amount of decoration is somewhere in between that of the two songs already mentioned and once again the strong declamatory rhythmic style is evident.

As well as their stylistic similarities, these three songs are also linked structurally by the fact that they all involve elements of da capo, repeating at least part of their first sections at the end of the song. In addition, they are all lavishly scored, for two violins and continuo, trumpet and continuo, and two oboes and continuo respectively. Because of these similarities, it would be tempting to link the bass solo *These are the Sacred Charms* (from *Come ye Sons of Art*: H245) to Woodeson, since it is surely the supreme example of a militaristic style in a Purcell ode, and its range of A-e¹ and tessitura of 19-24 would seem to be well within this singer's capabilities. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that all Woodeson's songs were written for the same sort of occasions, and to accompany texts of basically the same sentiments and imagery, and that any such similarities are more likely to be influenced by this than by

Woodeson's vocal characteristics alone.

John Gostling:

John Gostling was the most celebrated bass of his era. Evelyn described him as a "stupendious Base"¹⁴ and North recounts a tale of even higher praise from the monarch himself:

And I think an observation of Good King Charles II at Canterbury, may conclude this topic. He was asked how he liked Dr Gosling's voice, and he answered that all the rest sang like Geese to him.¹⁵

Gostling arrived at the Chapel Royal in 1679 and from this date Purcell's writing for him can be split into three phases. Until 1682 Purcell only wrote occasional solos to exploit Gostling's voice, but it was not until Purcell had become Chapel Royal organist and could ensure that the right bass would be picked for the part that a Gostling solo was included in every anthem. From 1685 onwards, beginning with the composition of *They that go down to the sea in ships* Purcell's Gostling writing underwent a stylistic change away from the vocal acrobatics of the earlier works to a more musically worthy style which combines virtuosity and artistry. Changes of style inspired by Gostling are not only evident in solo passages, but also in Purcell's choral bass writing as Michael Burden points out:

[Gostling] clearly had a great influence on the music that Purcell wrote, and it has been suggested that the increased flexibility of line apparent in the works of the early 1680s was due to his appearance on the scene.¹⁶

Many of Gostling's appearances in Purcell's works involve chorus, specifically the choir of the Chapel Royal, or involve the counter-tenor John Abell, with whom Gostling frequently sang duets. This therefore means that only four of Gostling's solos are represented in this study, the three court songs *In his just praise* (from *Ye tuneful Muses*: H113) *The Summer's Absence* (H239) and *Accursed Rebellion* (from *Why are*

¹⁴ Evelyn, J; *The Diary of John Evelyn* (repr. London 1959), 28th January 1685, 786.

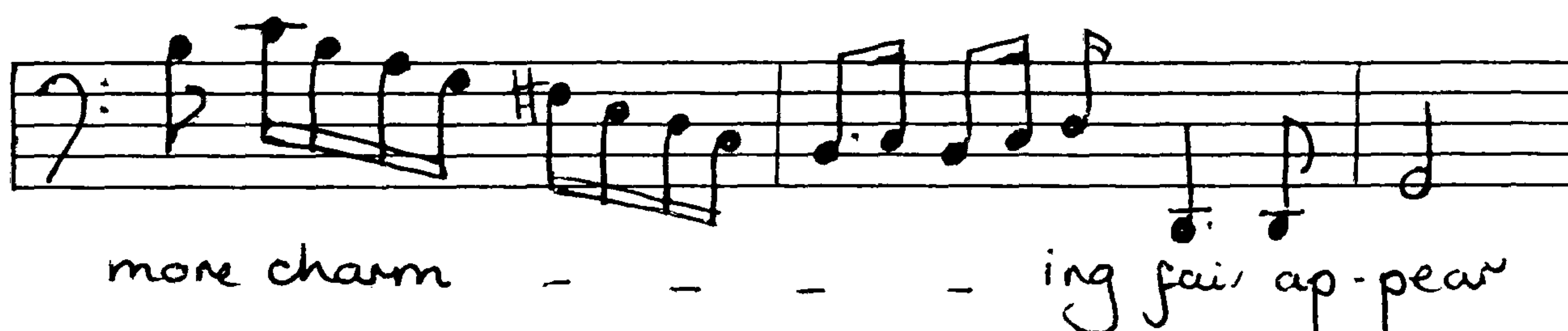
¹⁵ North, R; 'Second Musical Grammarian', *Roger North on Music* (London, 1959), 270.

¹⁶ Burden, M; 'Purcell and his contemporaries', *The Purcell Companion* (London, 1995), 84.

all the Muses Mute?: H3) and the solo bass anthem *They that go down to the sea in ships* (H250). All of these songs have the same range, D-eb¹/e¹, which it was surmised at the beginning of this chapter was a range unique to Gostling.

The summer's absence was written in 1682, and has the highest tessitura of Gostling's songs, 14-20; indeed, Gostling's solos are immediately identifiable by their lower than average tessiturae combined with wider than average range. There is little in this song which speaks distinctively of Gostling other than the few very low notes which are made much of. The only decorative figure of note is a run on the words "charming fair" which encompasses nearly two octaves (see Ex.3). This is in principle no different from the runs in other songs which encompass the whole range, but in practice because of the unusually wide range of Gostling's songs this can be used as a benchmark by which to identify his style.

Example 3: *The Summer's Absence*, bars 6-8



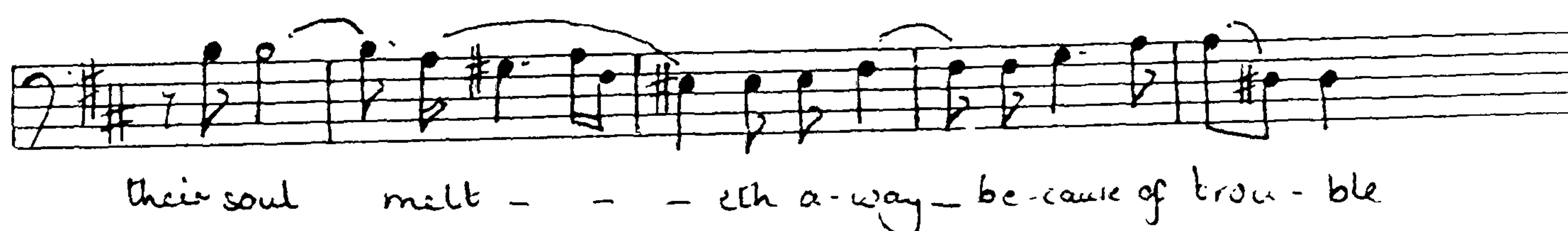
It was mentioned above that the 1685 anthem *They that go down to the sea in ships* (tessitura 13-20) marked a turning point in Purcell's writing for Gostling, and here we find more instances of weighty low-notes and runs stretching from one extreme of range to another, with declamation and decoration directly inspired by the text rather than created just to exploit the voice. The opening solo from this anthem is unusual in that its melody is not based solely on stepwise and arpeggiated movement, but moves unpredictably through a variety of intervals including such daring ones as diminished

fifths (see Ex.4). Admittedly this could bear some relation to the text, which is stormy in image, but is tempting to link this feature to Gostling, since this element has not been seen to anything like the same extent in the other basses' songs. In fact, this anthem is particularly interesting because there is a suggestion that Gostling had a direct influence over its composition, as Jonathan Keates relates:

King Charles, a great admirer of Gostling, decided to take him along on a boating trip down the Thames in a newly built yacht he had christened the *Fubbs* after the nickname he gave his roly-poly mistress the Duchess of Portsmouth. Together with the Duke of York and others, they got as far as the North Foreland when a storm arose, and the two royal brothers had to 'hand the sails and work like common seamen.' Though they managed to come safely to shore, 'the distress they were in made an impression on the mind of Mr Gostling which was never effaced.' Once back in London, he besought Purcell to write an anthem on psalm texts associated with 'the wonders and terrors of the deep', and the result, *They that go down to the sea in ships*, was the most formidable display piece ever composed for this singer.¹⁷

This anecdote, if it is true, is a valuable example of a singer exerting an active rather than a passive influence over Purcell, making this piece of music the most interesting of the Gostling solos for this study since Purcell had no other purpose than to gratify the singer.

Example 4: *They that go down to the sea in ships*, bars 46-50

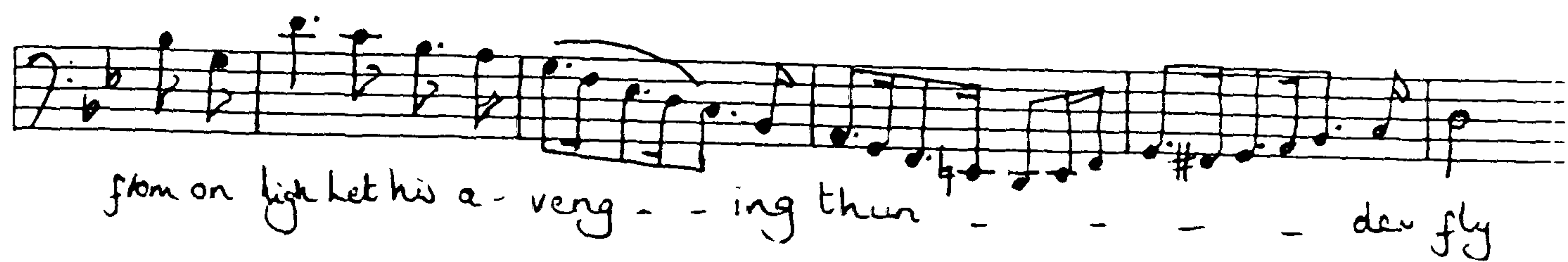


The court song *Accursed Rebellion* from the same year as the above anthem shares with it the trait of melodic unpredictability, a fact which suggests that this is another Gostling trademark, coupled as it is in this song with the emphasised low-notes and wide-ranging runs characteristic of this singer (see Ex.5). Similarly, in 1686 Purcell

¹⁷ Keates, J; *Purcell: A Biography* (London 1995), 118-9.

composed for Gostling the court air *In his just praise your noblest songs let fall* which has a tessitura of 13-19 and seems to be entirely made up of the Gostling-elements just described.

Example 5: *Accursed Rebellion*, bars 35-40 and 43-48



Since it is obvious that Purcell had a recognisable ‘Gostling style’, identifying other bass solos as intended for Gostling should be relatively straightforward. Robert King suggests that the solo bass anthem *Sing Unto God* was written for Gostling,¹⁸ and on examination it does contain all the elements outlined above, including the characteristic D-e¹ range and low tessitura. This is also the case with another solo bass anthem, *The Lord is King* from 1688, and it seems certain that both these works were intended for Gostling. Jonathan Keates suggests that the anthem *I will love thee O Lord* was the one mentioned by Thomas Purcell in his letter to Gostling prior to the latter’s arrival at court as the work which he would premier in London¹⁹ but on the merit of the music alone, one would not immediately identify it as a Gostling solo. Nevertheless, one must remember that Purcell had no way of knowing what Gostling’s singing voice was like at this point, so the work could well have been his first composition for the new bass.

¹⁸ King, R; op. cit, 148.

¹⁹ Keates, J; op. cit, 214.


It was suggested at the beginning of this chapter that all the songs containing low D were written for Gostling. Other than the two anthems mentioned above, which both contain low D's, there are three sacred songs, three court songs and a chamber song which were written during the time of Gostling's employment and contain low D.

Of the sacred songs *O Lord how glorious* (from *It is a good thing to give thanks*: H161), *Praise the Lord* (from *Praise the Lord O my soul*: H180), and *Unto thee will I cry* (from *Unto thee will I cry*: H271), all have tessiturae suitable for Gostling of 14-20 (x2) 12-19, and 15-21. Although *Praise the Lord* and *Unto thee will I cry* are melodically complex (see Ex.6), and the latter song contains weighty low notes (see Ex.7), which combined with their ranges and tessiturae mean they were probably for Gostling, it is *O Lord how glorious* which has the most persuasive evidence, containing all the stylistic Gostling traits as well as the range and tessitura (see Ex.8), and also existing in Gostling's own manuscript.

Of the court songs *It was a work as full as great a weight* (H119), *The Plot is displayed* (from *Fly Bold Rebellion*: H234), and *Welcome as soft refreshing showers* (from *From those serene and rapturous joys*: H276), *It was a work of full as great a weight* has weighty low notes and wide-ranging runs (see Ex.9), suggesting Gostling was the singer, but *Welcome as soft refreshing showers* and *The Plot is displayed* have all the Gostling traits and were clearly intended for him (see Ex.10 & 11).


Finally, the chamber song *Bacchus is a pow'r divine* (H27) which contains one low D and has a tessitura of 16-20, but apart from some large interval leaps to negotiate has no identifiable Gostling traits, and if anything most emphasis on single notes is given at the top rather than the bottom end of the register. In addition, one must remember that Gostling was a minor clergyman, and this song - a paean to the god of wine - seems an unlikely subject for him. The suggestion that this song is not for Gostling does not however have a great impact on the idea that all Purcell's low bass

Example 6: Praise the Lord, O my soul, bars 7-11



Thou deckst Thyself with light as it were - with - a garment, and spread - est out the heavens

Example 7: Unto Thee will I cry, 41-47



them that go down, down, down, that go down, down, in-to the pit

Example 8: O Lord how glorious, bars 9-10



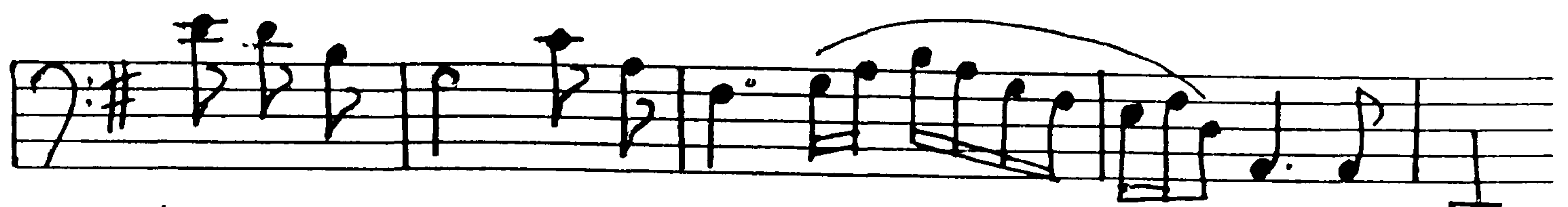
Thy thoughts are ——— ve-ry deep

Example 9: It was a work as full as great a weight, bars 16-18



As well as tri - - - - - mph up-on Earth


Example 10: *Welcome as soft refreshing show'rs*, bars 27-31



And all his fears, all his fears are _____ put to flight

The musical notation for Example 10 is a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains 11 measures of music. The melody starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, B3, C4, and ends with a half note D4. A slur covers the notes from G3 to C4.

Example 11: *The Plot is displayed*, bars 5-9



And some to A - ver - nus by Jus - tice thron down

The musical notation for Example 11 is a single staff in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains 9 measures of music. The melody starts with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3, G3, A3, and ends with a half note B3. There are slurs over the first two notes and the last two notes.

songs were intended for him. Since *Bacchus is a pow'r divine* is a chamber song, Purcell may well have been writing in a vacuum, setting the text according to subject-specific considerations only, rather than having to remember the range specifications of a precise singer.

It does seem that the low D was a Gostling speciality, and indeed there is a manuscript in his own hand where he alters the solo *Upon the Slippery tops of human state* (H272) from Purcell's ode *If ever I more riches did desire* to include a low D.²⁰ The knowledge of this makes it all the more unlikely that John Bowman was the intended singer for *While Caesar like the Morning star*, even if he did in the end have to perform it. An examination of this song for characteristic Gostling traits reveals the weighty low notes, range-stretching runs and complex melody one would expect in a song for this singer, and which do not correspond to John Bowman's other music. Of course, this could be caused by Purcell writing in a 'low bass style', but it seems incredible with John Gostling firmly on the scene at this point that Purcell would have contemplated writing such a piece for another singer, or that John Bowman would have wished to sing it, especially since Gostling was evidently in great Royal favour.

²⁰ *The Gostling Manuscript: compiled by John Gostling* (Austin 1977).

The Purcellian Bass Style

It is obvious from the above information that certain of Purcell's individual bass soloists had a great deal of influence over the composer's writing for them. It remains to be seen if there is a recognisable 'bass voice style' in Purcell's works for anonymous singers, or if these songs have a multipurpose style no different from the music for other voice-types.

There are a few areas in which we can search for particulars of a Purcellian bass 'style'. One of these, perhaps most obviously, is range. Naturally no other voice has the same pitch range as the bass, but curiously neither does any other voice have the same average range span. The range of Purcell's treble, soprano, counter-tenor and tenor songs is usually well under one and a half octaves, and rarely more than that, whereas the vast majority of the bass songs have much larger ranges, many near the two octave mark. It would be difficult to establish a reason for this unless as Owen Jander and Ellen T. Harris suggest some basses used falsetto at the top of their ranges to add extra compass,²⁰ but the fact that there is this difference of range can be a useful aid to identifying songs of questionable voice-type as originally meant for bass.

It is likely that because of the bass voice's proximity to the range of the instrumental bass, these two lines may interact in a unique way and that this may therefore be used as a means of identifying a 'bass voice style' in songs of uncertain voice-type. In fact, these lines cross in quite a few of Purcell's songs, in a way which the soprano and treble songs obviously cannot emulate, and similarly quite a few of the bass songs exhibit the trait of having the instrumental and vocal parts in exact unison.

The only other obvious unique trait in the bass songs is the emphasis on the low notes of the range, a device which is rarely found in the other voices, particularly

²⁰ Jander, O & Harris, E. T.; 'Bass-Baritone', *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 2 (London 2001), 862.

soprano and tenor. As has been revealed, this trait is most obviously associated with John Gostling, but many of the other bass songs use low notes and culmination points in a way that songs for other voice-types do not.

The only way to establish conclusively whether or not Purcell treated bass voices differently from the other voice-types would be to compare settings of the same text for different voice-types, and fortunately Purcell has left us one such example, *Thy Genius, lo!* which was composed initially for John Bowman and later recomposed for a revival of the play with the treble Jemmy Bowen “the boy” in the role of Genius.

The first thing to notice in these settings is that the ranges of the two versions are almost the same, the treble version being $c\#^1-g^2$ compared to the bass $c-f^1$. The one feature which really stands out is that the bass version uses the lowest notes of the range a great deal more than the treble version, which in turn uses its high notes much more, and in the bass version it is the low notes rather than the high ones which form ‘features’ and indeed in the bass version the highest note is “thrown away” in a run. Examination of these songs also enables us to predict the outcome of any attempt to identify voice-specific decorative figures. Although the treble version has a more florid style of decoration than the bass version, a fact which probably has more to do with Purcell’s greater maturity of style at this point, there are some figures which bear resemblance to each other (see Ex.12), suggesting perhaps that certain words rather than certain voice-types inspired ‘standard’ decorative figures.

Example 12: *Thy genius, lo!* 1, bars 23-24; and *Thy genius, lo!* 2, bars 24-26



tremb - - - - - ling struck



tremb - - - - - ling struck

The Purcellian and the Modern Bass

Unlike the modern and Purcellian counter-tenors, which are by and large entirely different types of voice, the Purcellian and the modern bass are basically the same. As today, the bass with a range of approximately F-e¹ was the normal low male voice, but unlike modern times, any alternatives to this basic vocal template were generally caused by individual rather than groups of singers, and there seems to have been no equivalent to the modern baritone. John Bowman appears to have been a bass-baritone, and John Gostling a basso-profundo, but whether these men kept others with similar voices out of the limelight, or whether they were unique voice-types for their day it is impossible to say. Common sense dictates that there must have been other singers like them somewhere in England, but they certainly seem to have been the only two of their respective types to work with Purcell. In the light of this, for a modern historically informed performance of Purcell, John Gostling's songs should be sung by low basses, John Bowman's by bass-baritones and the rest by basses.

Chapter Three

Henry Purcell's Stage Sopranos and Trebles

Henry Purcell's musical output for sopranos is dominated by the influence of the star singers and actresses on the London stage, in a manner hitherto unobserved in connection with other voice-types. The reason for this is most likely that the women of the Restoration stage were its biggest attraction, as John Harold Wilson notes:

Since the actresses were stellar attractions, it is obvious that the dramatist had to provide roles for as many women as feasible and opportunities for those women to exercise their provocative arts and display their persons.¹

The popularity of these women as individuals not only resulted in Purcell writing numerous songs for them, but also meant that their names were printed at the head of these songs when they were published in order to ensure more sales. The combination of these two factors means that there are more soprano songs where the original singer can be conclusively identified than there are for any other voice-type.

Purcell's solo musical output for trebles takes this state of affairs one step further. One might expect that the treble songs would be dominated by the sacred music genre. In fact, there are very few substantial sacred treble solos by Purcell, and only one which fits the criteria of this study. It may be the case that Purcell felt it safer to use adult voices for the solos in his sacred works, since the quality of the treble intake varied from year to year, even one presumes in an establishment such as the Chapel Royal. It takes a long time to train a choral treble into a soloist, by which time he is usually nearing the end of his career. These facts may explain why Purcell's treble music is dominated by one singer in particular, Jemmy Bowen, for whom nine out of the ten songs included in this study were written.

¹ Wilson, J. H.; *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago 1958), 92.

Purcell's Soprano Songs: Range, Tessitura and Musical Structure

There are 65 soprano songs in total, comprising 58 dramatic songs and seven court songs, and there are a further ten songs for treble. The soprano song ranges are set out in Table 1 below, and stretch from c¹ at their lowest limit to a² at their highest, conforming to the Grove Dictionary's prescribed 'average range' for the soprano voice.²

Table 1: Soprano Song Ranges

	f²	f#²	g²	g#²	a²
c¹	1		2		
c#¹					
d¹	7	2	16	3	5
d#¹	1		1		
e¹			9	1	4
f¹				2	2
f#¹			2		1
g¹			1		4
g#¹					1

bold type = standard range

Perhaps the first range-related issue one might investigate in relation to Purcell's soprano songs would be the possible existence of a voice-type equivalent to the modern mezzo-soprano. From the information in Table 1 it is immediately clear that if there was a mezzo voice in Purcell's time, it was not the voice we would associate with the term today since there are no low a's or b's in these songs. In addition, most of the song ranges are somewhere in the middle of the total range rather than clustered at either end, so there is no definite division into high and low range groups which would suggest two different types of voice. In fact, the 'standard range' of Purcell's soprano songs is d¹-g¹,

² Jander, O; 'Soprano', *New Grove Dictionary of Music* 23 (London 2001), 732-738.

a range which is eminently suitable for a mezzo, especially considering that the pitch standard may have been as much as a tone lower in Purcell's day. Nevertheless, even with a lower pitch standard none of these ranges is unsuitable for a soprano so there would be no currency in the argument that all sopranos at this time were mezzos. There is a small number of songs with ranges which would perhaps exploit a mezzo voice better than a soprano (c^1-f^2 , d^1-f^2 , eb^1-f^2), but this would depend on the individual singer in question and is certainly not an indication that sopranos were split into two distinct voice-types, at least in Purcell's works.

Table 2: Soprano Song Tessiturae

	36	37	38	39	40	41
31						
32	10	1				
33	6	5	1			
34		5	14			
35			8	7		
36				4	2	
37					1	
38						1

The tessiturae of the soprano songs likewise do not reveal a clear division into mezzo and soprano brackets (see Table Two). While it might be argued that the tessiturae at the higher end of the scale would be more comfortable for a soprano than a mezzo, none of these tessiturae are totally unsuitable for either voice. Interestingly, neither the bottom nor the top of the Purcellian soprano register is exploited in these tessiturae, suggesting perhaps that seventeenth-century sopranos were equivalent to neither the modern soprano or mezzo, but that these 'new' voices have developed via a two-way expansion of the earlier, much narrower English soprano range, due to more

comprehensive singing teaching, composers' wishes to exploit high and low extremes and perhaps even the need to find a viable replacement for the castrato voice³. Nevertheless, even today the soprano and mezzo ranges are very close together, so much so that mezzo-sopranos often reinvent themselves as sopranos halfway through their careers in order to broaden their repertoire base. Because of this similarity of range, the classification of such voices has long been reliant on tone-colour - an element upon which one cannot comment when discussing voices of a pre-recording era - and so it is impossible either to confirm or dismiss the idea of two soprano voices working in Purcell's London.

It seems from this range and tessitura information alone that the case of the mezzo-soprano and soprano voices in relation to Purcell is similar to that of the counter-tenor and tenor voices. Although this latter group of singers does have two separate terms associated with it, it is clear from the results of the research in Chapter Three that they were on the whole the same voice type, and that individuals would pick or be allocated songs best suited to their own vocal ranges. Since sopranos were not on the whole involved heavily in choral music, and since Purcell seems to have been writing for specific individuals most of the time, no such dual terminology for sopranos has arisen. This is not therefore an indication that there were no mezzo-sopranos in seventeenth-century London, but rather that Purcell's music was for 'Mrs Ayliff', 'Mrs Hodgson' or 'Mrs Butler', rather than 'soprano' or 'mezzo-soprano'. It may be that in the course of the investigation into the music for Purcell's star sopranos, evidence will surface which suggests that some of these singers had lower ranges than others; whatever the case it is certain that they will not all conform to a restrictive soprano 'template'.

The soprano voice shares with the other voice types the employment of continuo as the most frequent accompanimental option, with 64 songs; the other instrumental

³ Handel always used women rather than counter-tenors in his operas if castrati were not available. The first castrato was heard in London in 1664.

combinations are those already encountered in the other voice-types, as are the choices of key. The musical structures used for the soprano songs, however, are somewhat different from those of the other voice-types. Perhaps because of the dominance of dramatic music, and the emphasis on pathos, the lyric and the Italianate air dominate Purcell's soprano output. In addition, there is a strong occurrence of multi-sectional structures, particularly binary Italianate airs beginning with recitative-like arioso, and ending with a contrasting lyrical section, a form which is comparatively rare in the other voice-types. With the influence of dramatic music over the soprano output, and the 'star status' of Purcell's sopranos, it is easy to see the predominance of this form as an indication that Purcell saw the soprano voice as particularly 'operatic', and indeed his only opera is apparently littered with parts for sopranos.⁴

Purcell's Star Sopranos

Most of Purcell's dramatic music for soprano falls into two broad categories. The first is music written for singing actresses such as Charlotte Butler, Catherine Cibber and Frances Maria Knight, who primarily took acting roles but were often given songs to sing in character. The second category includes Mrs. Ayliff and Mary Hodgson, stage singers who did not take acting roles but were employed for their vocal talents alone. There is also a third, specialised category comprising the young singing stars for whom Purcell wrote in the last year of his life. These two individuals, Letitia Cross and Jemmy Bowen, known as 'the Girl' and 'the Boy', are worthy of separate consideration from Purcell's other singers by virtue of their extreme youth, since both were in their early teens when they sang for him.

⁴ See Chapter Four for discussion of *Dido and Aeneas* voice-type allocation.

Singing Actresses

Charlotte Butler, Catherine Cibber and Frances Maria Knight

Charlotte Butler:

Of the singing actresses, it is Charlotte Butler who seems to have made the greatest impression on Purcell. She was his leading theatrical soprano from 1689 to 1692 and hers is the only soprano name to appear in sources before *The Fairy Queen*.⁵ In addition to her solo appearances and straight acting roles, she had a long-standing duet partnership with John Bowman. Colley Cibber remembered her thus:

Mrs. *Butler*, who had her Christian Name of *Charlotte* given her by King *Charles*, was the daughter of a decay'd Knight, and had the honour of that Prince's Recommendation to the Theatre; a provident Restitution, giving to the Stage in kind, what he had sometimes taken from it: The Publick, at least, was oblig'd by it; for she prov'd not only a good Actress, but was allow'd, in those Days, to sing and dance to great Perfection. In the Dramatick Opera's of *Dioclesian*, and that of *King Arthur*, she was a capital, and admired performer. In speaking too, she had a sweet-ton'd voice, which, with her naturally genteel Air, and sensible Pronunciation, render'd her wholly Mistress of the Amiable, in many serious Characters. In parts of humour too she had a manner of blending her assuasive softness even with the gay, the lively, and the alluring.⁶

The implication of Cibber's unsubtle allusion to Charles II's frequent affairs with actresses who subsequently left the stage to become his full-time mistresses - Moll Davis and Nell Gwyn are two such examples - seems to be that Charlotte Butler was also the King's mistress. Perhaps because of her reputation for moral lassitude, Mrs. Butler⁷ was rarely cast in virtuous roles, and instead functioned in Purcell's works as a sort of 'soubrette' soprano, singing coquettish airs, appearing in breeches as Cupid or Mercury, or singing seduction dialogues with Bowman. She had begun her theatrical career almost a decade before Purcell first wrote for her, speaking prologues and epilogues in which she would harangue the audience. For this reason perhaps, Purcell wrote some of his most direct, immediate music for her, in songs where communication with the audience was an indispensable element and vocal virtuosity took a back seat.

There are eight of Charlotte Butler's songs which fit the criteria of this study, all

⁵ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Sopranos', *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 602-9.

⁶ Cibber, C; *An Apology for the life of Colley Cibber* (repr. London 1914), 88.

⁷ All women over the age of 18 were addressed as Mrs in the seventeenth century.

from productions in 1690-1692. Five of these songs come from the semi-operas *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen* in which professional stage singers also took part, and the other three from the plays *Amphitryon*, *The Wives' Excuse* and *Cleomenes*. The personal importance of Charlotte Butler to the semi-opera as a genre cannot be underestimated. The main criticism of this form since its conception has been that the acting and singing personnel remained on the whole separate, denying the works the unity of musical and dramatic purpose indispensable to 'real' opera. Nevertheless, in *King Arthur* there is a pair of roles which bridge the gap between the acting and singing personnel, the opposing spirits Philidel and Grimbald which were created specifically for Butler and Bowman. Although they are not main characters, they are central to the dramatic progression of the plot, which they accomplish at one point through music. The presence of these characters can be seen as Purcell moving towards 'real' opera on the London stage,⁸ and after Mrs. Butler's emigration, soprano music in such works was relegated once again to incidental masques or static songs.

Charlotte Butler's range in these songs extends from e¹-a² whilst her tessitura lies between 33-40. All seven of her songs are accompanied by continuo alone, but we know that this was not due to any lack of power in her voice, since Roger North stated that he had no problem hearing her sing with her back to the audience in *King Arthur*, after having complained of other sopranos who did not project their voices properly for fear of appearing ugly.⁹ Structurally most of these works fall into subcategories of the same form, the triple-time lyric air. Two are rondeaux after the French manner, three are binary with several strophes fitted to the same music, one is a da-capo arioso in 4 and the remaining two are recitatives. The brevity of these songs and/or their frequent use of repeated sections suggests that Purcell was trying to make them as easy as possible for the busy actress to memorise, since unlike the stage singers, she would have had much more to do in each production than just sing the songs she had practised. The style of

⁸ There is no evidence to establish whether or not *Dido and Aeneas* appeared on the London stage during Purcell's life, but it is unlikely because of its brevity.

⁹ See p81, note 9 for extract from North, R; *Roger North on Music* (repr. London 1959).

the songs and the range information suggest a high, light, lyrical soprano voice, since too heavy a voice would have difficulty in negotiating the sprightly triple-time rhythms and rapid declamation.

A glance at the texts of the three songs from straight plays, *For Iris I sigh* (from *Amphitryon*: H60) *Hang this whining way of wooing* (from *The Wives' Excuse*: H69) and *No, no poor suff'ring heart* (from *Cleomenes*: H151) immediately establishes the importance of communication with the audience, in the first two cases to flirt with and amuse them, and in the last to inspire their pity. Indeed the music of these songs, although by no means substandard, is not the sort to keep the attention without the interest of the words. The songs are melodically and rhythmically simple and largely syllabic for the purposes of declamation, and there are no extended melismata. *No, no poor suff'ring heart* has potential for added decoration, but it is of course impossible to say to what extent Butler added her own ornaments.

The three solos for Cupid interpolated throughout the 'Masque of the Cold Genius' in *King Arthur* reflect the play songs in their need for a singer with clear declamation and a gift for infusing the words with drama in order to draw the audience's attention. The first of the three is an invocation to the Cold Genius to rise from the ground, in the form of the declamatory recitative, *What ho! Thou Genius of this Isle* (H279). Roger North described this scene in the original production thus, and it must indeed have made a great impression on him for he was generally one to criticise rather than commend in such instances:

I remember in Purcell's excellent opera of *King Arthur*, when M^{rs} Butler, in the person of Cupid was to call up Genius, she had the liberty to turne her face to the scean, and her back to the theatre. She was in no concerne for her face, but sang a *recitativo* of calling towards the place where Genius was to rise, and performed it admirably, even beyond any thing I ever heard upon the English stage. And I could ascribe it to nothing so much as the liberty she had of concealing her face, which she could not endure should be so contorted as is necessary to sound well, before her gallants, or at least her envious sex.¹⁰

This extract is valuable not only because it describes Charlotte Butler's performance of a Purcell piece written for her, but also for the wider implications which it has regarding

¹⁰ North, R; *Roger North on Music* (London 1959), 215.

other seventeenth-century English sopranos. Earlier in his essay North remarked:

Weomen are fearfull of the distortion of the face which is their *sanctum sanctorum*, [and] therefore check the sound.... Thus they would strain, and hold up the head, without which it is not possible to draw out a good and clear sound.¹¹

North attributes Charlotte Butler's success in this scene to the fact that she was facing away from the audience and so could contort her features as much as necessary to create a good sound, suggesting perhaps that she did not necessarily have a much better voice than other sopranos, but that on this occasion she improved her technique. As he noted:

The English have generally voices good enough.... witness the crys and ballad singers - some weomen singing in the streets with a loudness that downs all other noise, and yet firme and stedly. Now what a sound would that be in a theater, Cultivated and practised to harmony!... But come into the theater or musick-meeting, and you shall have a woman sing like a mouse in a cheese, scarce to be heard, and for the most part her teeth shutt.¹²

This therefore suggests that the seventeenth-century English soprano voice was not necessarily by nature quieter or lighter than the modern soprano's, but that the technique employed by these singers inhibited the sound. However, North makes it clear that this is a bad thing, at least in his opinion, and Butler presumably made such a good impression in this scene precisely because she rejected this practice, and so it is questionable whether this sound should be emulated in the pursuit of historical accuracy.

It is quite possible that the music of this scene was what caused North's surprise, rather than the singing of it, or rather that Purcell's music was written in such a way that Charlotte Butler could not fail to make an impression with it. Certainly it is highly dramatic, more so perhaps than any other of the soprano songs, and in the two recitatives Purcell achieved the Monteverdian ideal of heightened speech perhaps more successfully than anywhere else in his output. The three Cupid solos seem to have Butler's influence stamped all over them; it was surely her gift for declaiming prologues and epilogues which caused Purcell to set the music in such a way that the melody is born entirely of the words.

¹¹ North, R; op. cit, 216-7.

¹² *ibid*, 217.

Example 1: *What ho! thou genius of this isle*, bars 1-5

What ho! what ho! thou ge-nius of this isle, what ho! what ho! - - -
- what ho!

Example 2: *Thou doting fool, forbear!*, bars 1-9

Thou dot-ing fool, for-bear, for-bear! What dost thou mean by freez-ing here?
- - - - -
- - - - -
- - - - -

Example 3: *No part of my dominion*, bars 3-6

To spread - - - - - my sway and sing - - - - - my praise

Example 4: *No part of my dominion*, bar 9

kind - -

The declamatory recitative which opens the scene with its repeated rising cries of 'What ho!', exposed top notes and arresting ascending run is calculated to draw the attention (see Ex.1). Faultless diction and declamation are essential to the performance of this song. There is no room for lyricism or over-singing to express the beauty of the voice in such a direct, speech-like song. One suspects that this is precisely why Charlotte Butler surpassed herself in this role.

Having awakened the Cold Genius, Butler - and indeed Cupid, a character more often given to playfulness than commanding - reverts to type with a short rondeau lyric air, beginning on an exposed g^2 which must be pitched from an open C chord low in the strings (see Ex.2). Clearly Mrs. Butler was not just a singing actress, but an accomplished musician. This bouncy, triple-time lyric is entirely syllabic and rhythmically and melodically simple, like Butler's play songs, but retains the unusual emphasised high notes for dramatic effect. The result is not just a teasing, coquettish number, but music with a sense of real anger on the part of the egotistical Cupid, which Butler must have played up for the audience's amusement.

The final number for Butler's Cupid is a decorative recitative in which Cupid is allowed to indulge and bask in his own glory a little more. Because declamation to a certain extent gives way to decoration in this recitative, it is slightly more rhythmically and melodically complex than the previous numbers. Once again, the emphasised high notes are present and there are moments of dramatic declamation, but there are also several melismatic figures (see Ex.3) and the potential for a vocally indulgent rubato on the word 'kind' (see Ex.4) which make this number much more vocally-orientated than the previous drama-orientated ones.

Purcell's writing for Butler in the next year's *The Fairy Queen* is a mixture of purely musical writing and dramatic, play-song style music. *When I have often heard young maids complaining* (H287) is a binary strophic air with the characteristic bouncy triple-time lilt. Whilst the song is rhythmically simple it is extremely complex

melodically (see Ex.5), once again testifying to Mrs. Butler's musical prowess. At the same time it requires the characteristic high standard of declamation and dramatisation to communicate the coquettish text to the audience.

Example 5: *When I have often heard young maids complaining*, bars 1-8



Butler's other song from this production is that for Spring in the 'Masque of the Seasons', and this masque is so undramatic that the music of this song is quite unlike anything else sung by Butler. *Thus the ever grateful Spring* (H260) is purely vocal in outlook, requiring no audience communication and with no dramatic import to the words. Instead the 'pictorial' words are painted with runs and melismata, and the whole song is melodically complex and much more ornate than any other Butler solo. Perhaps Purcell was short of a stage singer to appear in this scene, or he had begun to realise that Butler's talents extended beyond simple coquettish airs, or perhaps she was needed because of her dancing skills? At any rate, it is clear that whatever the reason, Butler could and did sing music where the sound of the voice was the sole focus and in fact there was a period in the early 1680s when she left the stage to pursue a musical career at court and in public concerts, prompting an anonymous satirist to remark; 'to save her tott'ring fame / At music club she strives to get a name'.¹³

Charlotte Butler was evidently extremely versatile as a singer as well as a general performer; she was certainly no less vocally talented than the non-acting stage singers, and in fact to Purcell she must have been more valuable than them in some ways because of this versatility. No-one could therefore argue that had she remained in England after appearing in *The Fairy Queen* instead of emigrating to Ireland to join Mr.

¹³ Howe, E; *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge 1992), 26.

Ashbury's Dublin theatre company she would ever have been entirely superseded by the stage singers as some of the other singing actresses appear to have been.

Catherine Cibber:

The singing actress Catherine Cibber came from good musical stock, being born into the illustrious family of trumpet-playing virtuosi, the Shores, who dominated the royal trumpet regiment and she had Purcell himself as her singing teacher.¹⁴ She was accomplished and beautiful, according to her daughter Charlotte, who noted in her memoirs that 'she was possessed of every personal charm that could render her attractive and amiable [in a] perfection with which art and nature had equally endowed her.'¹⁵ She was also ideally placed for a career on the stage, having married the influential actor Colley Cibber on 6th May 1693, and indeed she only began to appear on the stage after this union, much to her family's chagrin. Her first Purcell solo, *Then follow, brave boys, to the wars* (from *Don Quixote II*: H242), written in 1694, is the only soprano song to include obbligato trumpet, and it has been surmised¹⁶ that this was because it was designed for Catherine Cibber's brother, John Shore. Perhaps this was an in-joke for the amusement of Purcell's orchestral colleagues. Mrs. Cibber was appearing at St. George's command as the 'Genius of England' and with her voice, Shore's playing and Purcell's music, this song would certainly have been an exhibition of England's artistic genius.

This song is a triple-time arioso with a range of g^1 - a^2 and a tessitura of 37-40 erring more on the side of declamation than decoration, probably as a result of the need for the trumpet and vocal parts to emulate one another. Similarly the melody is simple, as are the rhythms, resembling trumpet calls in battle (see Ex.6). Only the runs in this song present any kind of difficulty (see Ex.7) requiring great flexibility and virtuosity

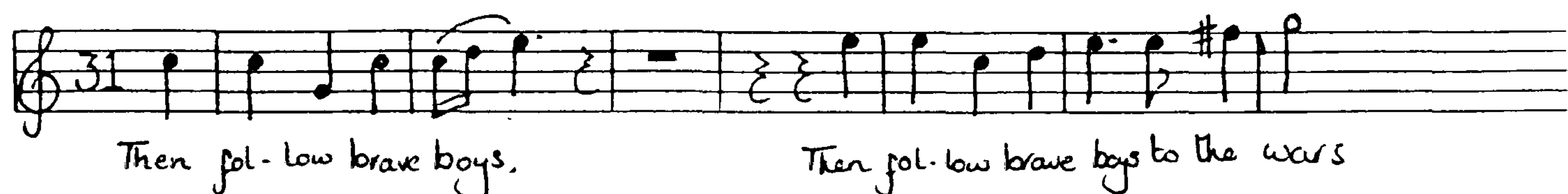
¹⁴ Duffy, M; *Henry Purcell* (1994), 162-3.

¹⁵ Charke, C; *A Narrative of the life of Charlotte Charke* (London 1755), 72.

¹⁶ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 105-129.

from both singer and trumpeter. Catherine Cibber's voice also seems to have been well-developed in terms of volume and power, since in the final section of the song she had to compete with a trumpet descant (see Ex.8).

Example 6: *Then follow, brave boys, to the wars*, bars 1-8



Example 7: *Then follow, brave boys, to the wars*, bars 18-22



The performance details of Catherine Cibber's second Purcell solo *Who can behold Florella's charms* (H298) (d¹-g², 33-37) are unknown, but the song was published as 'sung by Mrs. Cibber'. Whether this was in a public concert or on the stage as part of a play it is impossible to say, as is whether it was written for her, or chosen by her to sing. This song is also a triple-time arioso, with considerably more decoration than the previous one, needing great flexibility of voice and a couple of tricky runs covering the whole range which make a feature of high notes (see Ex.9).

Catherine Cibber had all the makings of a great singing actress, but unfortunately it was not to be, as Margaret Duffy points out:

Catherine was eventually driven off the stage by an excess of marital passion that resulted in a plethora of pregnancies and children; according to her husband there was a new one every time he produced a new play.¹⁷

¹⁷ Duffy, M; *Henry Purcell* (London 1994), 162-3.

Example 8: *Then follow, brave boys, to the wars, bars 92-119*

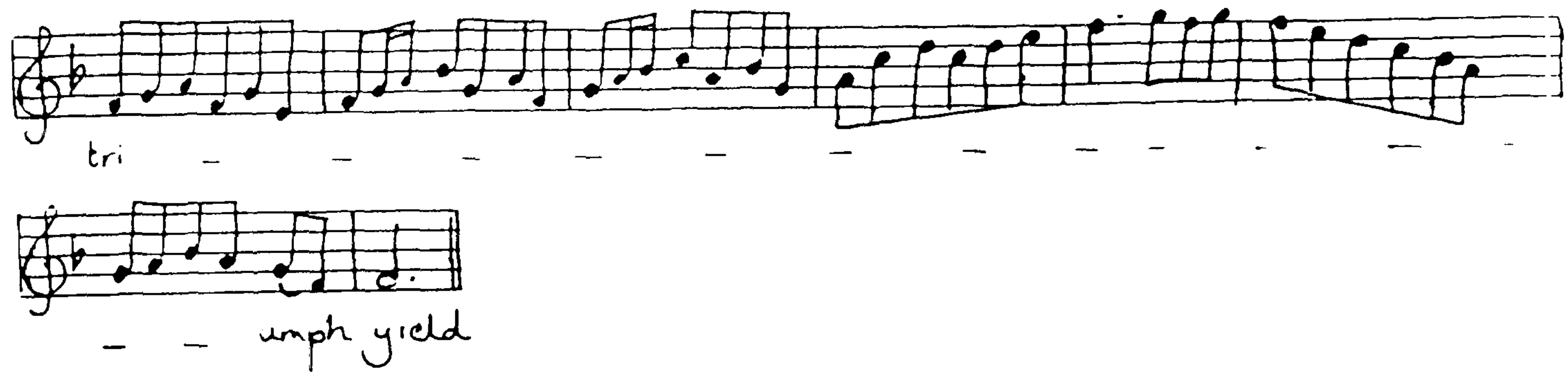
re - mem - ber a sol - dier in war, in war and in peace is the no - - -

blest of all o - ther arts

re - mem - ber a sol - dier in war and in peace re

mem - ber a blest of all oth - er arts

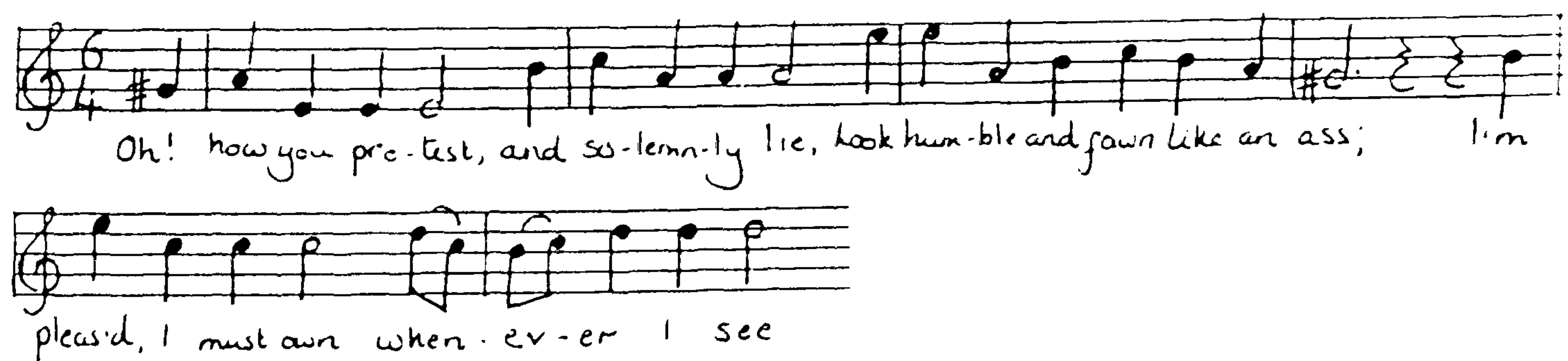
Example 9: *Who can behold Florella's charms*, bars 12-19



Frances Maria Knight:

Purcell only wrote one song for Frances Maria Knight, *O how you protest* (H169) in *The Mock Marriage* of 1695. With a range of c¹-f² and tessitura of 33-36, this song would seem to be designed for a singer of slighter ability, or perhaps a mezzo-soprano. The binary lyric air is in 6/4 and is largely syllabic, with only one very simple melisma (see Ex. 10). Consequently the rhythms are easy and the melody has only very occasional moments of difficulty. The song is very Butler-ish in its coquettish nature, needing communication with the audience, and demanding a singing actress' facility of declamation.

Example 10: *Oh! How you protest*, bars 1-7



Stage Sopranos

Mrs. Ayliff and Mary Hodgson

Mrs. Ayliff:

The stage soprano Mrs. Ayliff was probably no more than 18 in 1692 when she appeared alongside Charlotte Butler and Mary Hodgson in *The Fairy Queen*. Baldwin and Wilson describe her as ‘undoubtedly Purcell’s star soprano,’¹⁸ and between May 1692 and the end of 1694 he wrote more music for her than for any other singer. Although she took a few acting roles late on in her career, which ended in 1696, Mrs. Ayliff only ever appeared as a singer for Purcell, and it was for this talent that she was primarily known; she was the only singer ever to be acclaimed in the popular periodical *The Gentleman’s Journal*.¹⁹ Mrs. Ayliff did not only dominate the sphere of dramatic music, but also appeared as soloist in public concerts and court odes. Timothy Morris ascribes Purcell’s sudden use of notes above g^2 in royal odes after 1690 to her influence,²⁰ and Bruce Wood remarks on her influence over technical matters in the ode *Celebrate this Festival* thus:

‘Kindly treat Maria’s day’ could easily have been written for one of the singing actresses of the United Company, but the name which appears in the performing score at this point is that of one of the Company’s professional singers, Mrs. Ayliff. She also had to negotiate the long and tricky roulades of ‘Let sullen Discord smile’.... [this air] taking [its] cue from showpiece solos in *The Fairy Queen*.... [is] notably more technically demanding than any in Purcell’s previous royal odes.²¹

It seems, then, that Mrs. Ayliff enabled Purcell to write more challenging songs, rather than the simpler airs he had provided for his singing actresses. In a case similar to that of John Gostling, there are many more solos which one can speculate were for Mrs. Ayliff than are directly attributed to her, and more still which may have been inspired by the possibilities presented to Purcell once he had heard her sing.

¹⁸ Baldwin and Wilson; ‘Purcell’s Stage Singers’, *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 112.

¹⁹ See p91.

²⁰ Morris, T; ‘Voice-Ranges, Voice-Types and Pitch in Purcell’s Concerted Works’, *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 139.

²¹ Wood, B; ‘Purcell’s Odes: A Reappraisal’ *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995), 243.

Of the solos which can categorically be identified as Mrs. Ayliff's, ten fit the criteria of this study. The information for these songs reveals that she had a range of at least d^1 - a^2 and her usual tessitura was 34-38. All of these songs are accompanied by continuo, but as was the case with Charlotte Butler, this should not be taken as an indication that Mrs. Ayliff's voice was small or underdeveloped. The most frequent forms are those of the arioso and the lyric, though the latter is generally more decorative and less declamatory than Mrs. Butler's songs. Indeed, the focus of Mrs. Ayliff's songs is almost always a vocal rather than a textual one, revealed by the excessive repetition of single words or short phrases, the melody-driven vocal lines and the frequent use of melismata and decoration.

The earliest solo, *Ah me! To many deaths decreed* (from *Regulus*: H10, 1692) has the lowest range of the songs - d^1 - f^2 - suggesting that Purcell was still unsure of Mrs. Ayliff's capabilities at this stage, only a month after *The Fairy Queen*. Any doubts he might have had about this singer must have been assuaged by the notice in *The Gentleman's Journal* published with the song:

set by Mr. Purcell the Italian way; had you heard it sung by Mrs. Ayliff you would have owned that there is no pleasure like that which good Notes, when so divinely sung, can create.²²

The song's emotional focus and excess of complex decoration do indeed suggest an Italian arioso, especially in the chromatic word-painting on 'Ah!' (see Ex.11), and there is potential for a great deal of vocally-indulgent rubato in places. As well as the obvious technical difficulty, the song is also much more melodically and rhythmically complex than any of the singing actresses' music, and the sparse bass line provides little support. Whether this is a result of the Italian influence or of Mrs. Ayliff's technical prowess remains to be seen.

At some point between 1692-3, Mrs. Ayliff took part in the revival of *Dioclesian*, singing *When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes* (H284). This is another Italianate decorative arioso requiring great flexibility of technique in the many runs. The

²² Peter Motteaux cited in Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 113.

words are painted with musical metaphor (see Ex.12), and the text has a strong emotional focus, rather than a storytelling function, so that Mrs. Ayliff's task was to affect the audience with the emotional qualities of her voice. Again there are moments of unsupported singing, and rhythmic and melodic complexity requiring great musicianship. There are also moments where the singer is responsible for infusing the emotion into the words such as 'oh!', which must be phrased with great care in order to bring out the pathos in the music (see Ex.13). Since this song was written for a revival, we can safely assume that Purcell deliberately wrote it to show off the talents of his new singer, and so it suggests to us that she must have had a gift for suffusing her voice with emotion, perhaps through the use of decorative vibrato.

In January 1693, Mrs. Ayliff sang the triple-time air *Tell me no more I am deceived* (from *The Maid's Last Prayer*: H215). This song is reminiscent of Mrs. Butler's syllabic play songs, with a few melismata and no rhythmic complexity, and a much higher tessitura than her other solos, 36-40, much closer to Charlotte Butler's tessitura. This suggests that the song was not originally intended for Mrs. Ayliff, or perhaps that Purcell had a musical style for certain subjects from which he would not deviate for the sake of exhibiting a singers' vocal personality.

Cynthia frowns when'er I woo her (from *The Double Dealer*: H54) from October of the same year is much more developed. This binary, triple-time arioso has just as coquettish and comic a subject as *Tell me no more*, but it is realised in rhythmically and melodically complex music which really showcases the voice with purely vocal decoration and frequent text-repetitions to allow for an extended melody. The witty 'moral' of the text however - that the forbidding Cynthia will be overtaken by old age before she has time to take advantage of the benefits of passion - is set to a lyric section which reverts to the simple syllabic or paired-quaver-melisma style of the previous song, once again suggesting a correlation between subject matter and musical style, and allowing the bass and voice to create via imitation the impression of Cynthia

being chased by both her lover and old age (see Ex. 14).

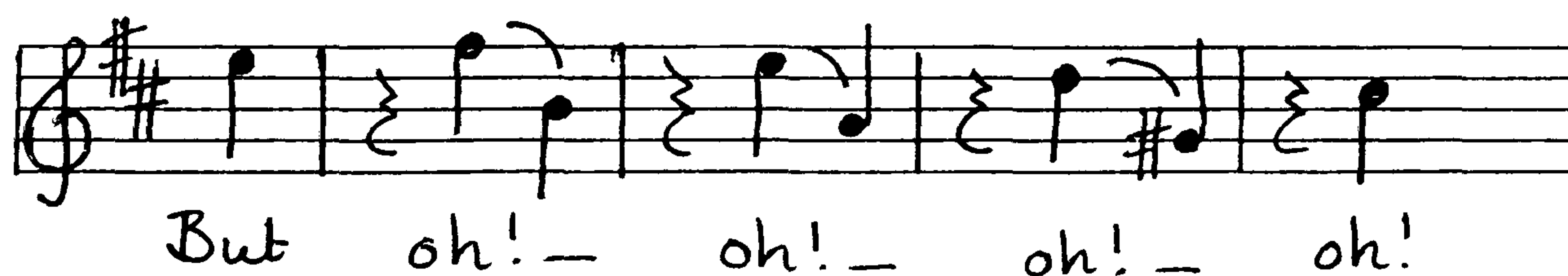
Example 11: *Ah me! To many deaths decreed*, bars 1-2



Example 12: *When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes*, bars 9-15



Example 13: *When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes*, bars 34-38



The year 1694 saw Mrs. Ayliff appearing in three new plays and two revivals. *How happy's the husband* (from *Love Triumphant*: H85) is another coquettish comic lyric in triple time, again perhaps suggesting that Purcell was writing in a subject-specific rather than singer-specific style. Once again the rhythms and melody are easy enough, and the vocal line is embellished with a few melismata. However, the song begins with the voice-part unsupported, echoing the continuo line (see Ex. 15), suggesting Purcell's confidence in Mrs. Ayliff's ability.

Example 14: *Cynthia frowns when'er I woo her*, bars 27-39

Pri-ther Cyn-thia look be-kind you

Pri-ther Cyn-thia look be-kind you

Example 15: *How happy's the husband*, bars 1-3

How hap-py's the hu-band


See where repenting *Celia lies* (from *The Married Beau*: H194) leaves Charlotte Butler territory and really exploits the luxury of a well-trained vocal virtuoso. This is perhaps because the text, although sexual, is not coquettish but tragic and ironic. There is therefore scope for exploitation of the emotional capabilities of music and the human voice upon which Purcell seizes immediately. Thus, words such as 'repenting', 'flow', 'melting' and 'bemoaning' are given rhetorical musical treatment, whilst sighing figurations are used for 'Oh', and the word 'sinful' is repeated during a modulation

from d minor to a minor, highlighting the fact that it is sin which has changed Celia's life (see Ex.16). Again the song begins with the voice unsupported by the instrumental bass, this time taking the lead whilst the continuo provides the echo. The words are put across rather by their painting than by declamation, and the frequent repetition of single words or short phrases suggest a vocal rather than a textual focus. Purcell must have been counting on Mrs. Ayliff's affecting voice carrying this song across to the audience.

I sigh'd and owned my love (from *The Fatal Marriage*: H98) from February 1694 carries the vocal-focus song to its full fruition in a cantata song, the rhythmic and melodic complexity of which reveals Mrs. Ayliff's obvious technical and musical superiority to any of Purcell's sopranos. Again the subject is tragic-sexual, allowing changing emotions to dictate the music. Everything about the vocal line suggests a fine singer, from the interpretational problems caused by the sheer range of emotions and images to be put across, to the technical demands of the rapid decoration, which would presumably have been further augmented by Mrs. Ayliff's own graces. The melody contains large leaps, reminiscent of Gostling's music, and Purcell marks a passage ending in g² "soft" requiring great technical control. The end passage 'But cannot quench the fire' is challenging musically and technically (see Ex.17). All in all, Purcell was able to create a vivid portrayal of the text safe in the knowledge that Mrs. Ayliff would rise to the challenge.

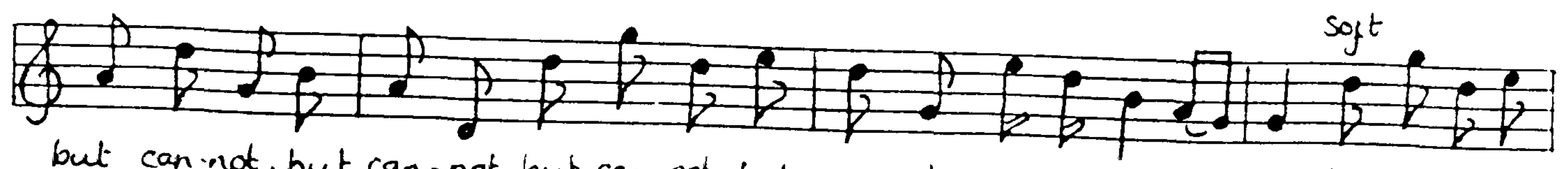
The two revivals in which Mrs. Ayliff took part, *Aureng-Zebe* and *Tyrannick Love*, contain two of Purcell's more Italianate soprano songs. Although most of Mrs. Ayliff's songs so far have featured instances of purely vocal decoration, the opening section of *I see she flies me* (H96) (see Ex.18) seems calculated entirely to impress the audience with the singer's virtuosity, even if the most impressive runs can be justified as word-painting devices for 'flies'. Nevertheless, the frequency of repeated words, the climactic top notes and virtuosic decoration again showcase the voice at the expense of the poem, and the whole song seem to be more concerned with impressing the audience

Example 16: *See where repenting Celia lies, bars 27-31*

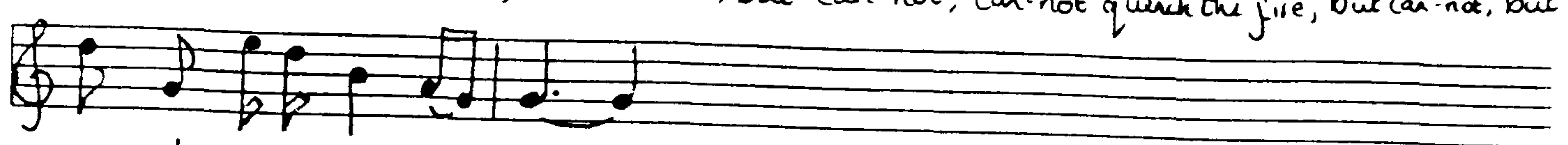


Which sin - - ful, sin - - ful love has made

Example 17: *I sighed and owned my love, bars 76-81*



but can-not, but can-not, but can-not, but can-not, can-not quench the fire, but can-not, but



can-not, can-not quench the fire.

Example 18: *I see she flies me, bars 1-9*

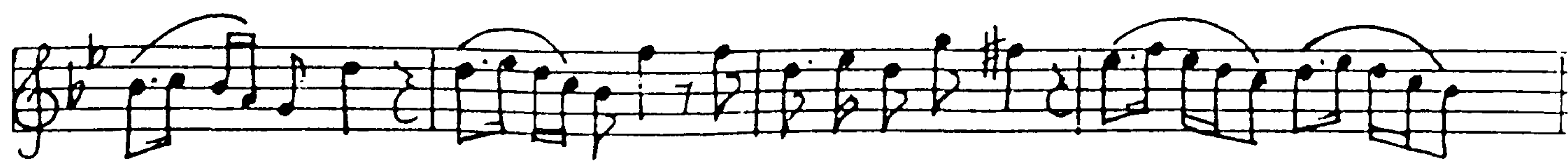


I see, I see, she flies — me, she flies — me, I see, I see, she



flies — me, she flies — me, flies — me

Example 19: *Ah! How sweet it is to love, bars 1-4*



Ah! — how sweet, Ah! — how sweet, how sweet it is to love, Ah! — Ah! —

rather than ‘affecting’ them with emotion like the previous songs, suggesting that by this time Mrs. Ayliff’s popularity with audiences was impinging on Purcell’s compositional style when writing for her.

The second song, *Ah! How sweet it is to love* (from *Tyrannick Love*: H9), is also heavily decorative, making much use of repeated ‘Ah!’ (see Ex.19). As vocally-focused as this song is, it retains the spirit of the words in its frothy over-exuberance, and it seems impossible that Purcell could have intended the tragic second strain, which would sound entirely fatuous set to such music, to be sung. However much he exploited words to exhibit his singer’s voice he never directly contradicted the sense or emotion of a text.

The final song associated with Mrs. Ayliff is the chamber song *Sawney is a bonny lad* (H187) which she sang in a public concert on January 25th, 1694. This coquettish lyric has nothing challenging in it, suggesting that it was not written for Mrs. Ayliff but chosen by her to sing on this occasion as a more ‘populist’ option.

The variety of different styles within Mrs. Ayliff’s music tells us what we would expect from a good singer, that she was a versatile performer. However, this variety is more interesting for what it tells us about Purcell. As ready as he was to exploit Mrs. Ayliff’s voice, he was not so much of an Italian to entirely neglect the words in favour of the voice, always retaining their sense even when they were very much in the background. Similarly, he wrote music appropriate to the occasion; just because he had Mrs. Ayliff on hand did not mean that he would set a comic coquettish lyric to arioso operatic material. The increased use of decoration and emphasised top notes are reserved for texts with suitable emotions. Nevertheless, Purcell may not ever have had the option to make such innovations had he not worked with Mrs. Ayliff, so these can be seen as singer-inspired features.

Mary Hodgson:

Mary Hodgson was born Mary Dyer in 1673, and began to appear on stage as a non-acting singer shortly before her marriage to John Hodgson in June 1692, remaining a stage and concert singer until 1719.²³ She made her debut as Mystery in *The Fairy Queen*, and her songs alternate between simple lyrics which lack the declamatory impetus of Charlotte Butler's songs, and Italianate airs which require less vocal acrobatics than Mrs. Ayliff's similar solos. It seems that Mrs. Hodgson was often chosen to sing men's songs, usually love-songs, and so there must have been something in her voice which suited this repertoire, even if it did not directly inspire it. As Baldwin and Wilson remark:

half of her known Purcell solos were men's songs, and although this may not be significant... her vocal range in Purcell's music (c'-f'' with the occasional g'') is very similar to that of his music for the boy Jemmy Bowen.²⁴

If 'breeches' songs were indeed her speciality, the different style of Mary Hodgson's few Italianate solos could be ascribed to Purcell once again creating music appropriate to the text and situation regardless of the singer's specialities. The existence of two such different styles proves that she was capable of more than just simple lyrics and indeed, she sang duets with Mrs. Ayliff and appeared singing Italianate solos alongside her so these two must have been almost on a par. When one considers the variety of styles these two singers were required to master it seems that whereas Mrs. Butler was typecast into acting roles, and therefore required the same style of music over and over, the stage singers were not hampered by on-stage personae and so could adapt to any style dictated at a particular moment in the drama. This has repercussions on the discussion of the singing actresses, since it suggests that they may not have sung simple music because they were less capable than the stage singers, but rather because characters on the Restoration stage did not express themselves 'operatically'. Serious characters did not sing in plays, but comic or other-worldly ones did, so actresses were

²³ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Sopranos', *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 602-9.

²⁴ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 112.

unlikely ever to have song-texts with the sort of emotions and images which would elicit an Italianate response in Purcell. The isolated 'Spring' solo for Charlotte Butler and Catherine Cibber's decorative solos suggest that the singing actresses' vocal talents may well have outweighed the music they were normally assigned.

Baldwin and Wilson suggest that Mary Hodgson was a mezzo-soprano. Certainly her range does not extend as high as the other sopranos and begins a little lower, at c^1 - g^2 , but in most cases this is a difference of only a tone. Songs on the same theme written for Catherine Cibber and Frances Maria Knight have similar ranges, and since Cibber was a soprano with a capacity to sing in a high register, it may be that a slightly lower range was deemed appropriate to songs with such subjects. If this were the case then one would expect Mary Hodgson's Italianate solos to have higher ranges than her breeches solos, but they do not. Also, her tessitura is lower than the other sopranos' at an average of 32-36, which could certainly be described as a mezzo-soprano tessitura. With the pitch-standard difference her sounding range could actually have been bb - f^2 . In addition, she sang *There's not a swain* (from *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*) - a Purcell tune fitted to new words (and therefore ineligible for this study) - which contains written b's (possible sounding a's), which even without the pitch difference is already mezzo-territory. It does seem likely then that Mary Hodgson was a mezzo-soprano, perhaps not in the modern sense, with a different tone colour to her voice - though this may well be the case if she was chosen to sing men's songs a great deal, witness the late tradition of mezzo-soprano Cherubinos and Ocktavians - but in terms of range and tessitura.

There are seven of Mary Hodgson's solos included in this study, of which four are of the 'breeches' variety particularly associated with her. The first of these was her debut Purcell appearance in *The Fairy Queen* singing Mystery's song *I am come to lock all fast* (H88). Since this was her first appearance, not too much can be read into the style of this song, since Purcell would presumably not have known her voice very well

at this stage and may not even have known for whom he was writing at the time. The song is a simple lyric which is governed by the melody rather than by word-rhythms, and decorated with pairs of quavers and simple melismata, and on the whole there is nothing 'mysterious' about this song, which has little to recommend it to the listener.

The second lyric-style song was written in 1693 and is a prime example of both the musical and theatrical style with which Mrs Hodgson was often associated. *Though you make no return to my passion* (from *The Maid's Last Prayer*: H257) is a witty politico-sexual satire which advocates sexual promiscuity. This triple-time binary lyric like the previous one is melody-driven with propelling dotted rhythms which vaguely follow the stress of the text, but could not be said to be truly declamatory. The song is largely syllabic except for one melisma quite unsuitably placed on the word 'dull' (see Ex.20). All in all, it is pleasant enough but uninspiring, as was Mystery's song.

The danger is over (from *The Fatal Marriage*: H221) from early 1694 is another comic text advocating sexuality over morality, in this case highlighting the benefits of the loss of virginity. Purcell sets this text as a triple-time binary lyric which is once again mostly governed by swinging dotted rhythms. It does however have some word-painting figures (see Ex.21) and a more declamatory air and makes more of the text than the previous songs.

The last of the lyric songs, *Lads and Lasses* (H121) is the simplest, and again takes up the theme of virginity. The simplicity of this song suits the 'countrified' words; again it is melody-driven with a few pairs of quavers and semiquavers by way of melismata. In common with the songs above, there are no climactic top notes or instances of purely-vocal decoration to exhibit the voice, and without the other, more Italianate songs, one might assume that Mary Hodgson's vocal talents were mediocre.

The remaining three songs are radically different in style from the previous music, and are much more like Mrs. Ayliff's songs. *In vain 'gainst love I strove* (from *Henry the Second*: H116) from 1692 is particularly interesting since it is the only song

Example 20: *Though you make no return to my passion*, bars 11-13



No mind the dull max-imat all

Example 21: *The danger is over*, bars 21-25



v1. She dis-sembles her joy and af-fects to look down, down, down, down
v2. Do but wisely re-solve the sweet ven-ture to run, run, run, run

Example 22: *In vain 'gainst love I strove*, bars 1-5



in vain, in vain, in vain, _____ 'quid love

Example 23: *In vain 'gainst love I strove*, bars 8-11



its force _____

Example 24: *Let us dance*, bars 38-43



And re-joice _____ whilst we may

in the production, and one might have expected Mrs. Ayliff to be chosen to sing it rather than Mrs. Hodgson. It seems that Purcell must have held Mary Hodgson in high regard, since he entrusted her on this occasion with music almost as Italianate as Mrs. Ayliff's. The lyrics of this song are the grieving, emotional kind that so often elicit an Italianate response in Purcell, and here he paints words such as 'vain' and 'force' with rapid melismata (see Ex.22-3). The decorative passages are neither as complex nor as extended as those usually found in Mrs. Ayliff's songs, a fact which perhaps suggests a slightly less well-developed technique on Mary Hodgson's part. Nevertheless, this song proves that she was capable of more than the simple songs above.

Mary Hodgson took part in the revival of *Dioclesian* around 1692-3, curiously singing two newly-composed solos to Mrs. Ayliff's one. Both songs are ariosos, *Let us dance* (H128) in the English, decorative, melody-driven tradition, and *Since from my dear Astrea's sight* (H200) in the Italianate grieving fashion. The former song is fairly straightforward apart from the runs which need a great deal of vocal flexibility (see Ex.24), and the abundance of decoration gives the song a vocal rather than a textual focus. *Since from my dear Astrea's sight* is a much more bel-canto lament on a slow ground where the decoration, although showy, is intrinsically tied up with the words so that the focus is not on the agility of the voice, but on its emotional content. All in all, the presence of two such songs in a production already employing Mrs. Ayliff confirms Mary Hodgson's considerable talent, and suggests that simple "breeches" songs were indeed a specialism of hers, rather than a necessity. Clearly Mrs. Ayliff was more suited to the Italianate songs vocally and perhaps dramatically, and Mary Hodgson's differing specialist area reflects their different performance styles and vocal characteristics upon which Purcell capitalised.

Child Stars

Letitia Cross and Jemmy Bowen

Letitia Cross:

The last soprano with whom Purcell worked was Letitia Cross, known as “the Girl” on account of her extreme youth. According to contemporary reports she may have been only 12 in 1695,²⁵ though Michael Burden suggests a birth-date of 1677²⁶ (she died in 1737), and many scholars believe that the theatre owners wished to exaggerate her youth for publicity reasons. I find this birth date unlikely since it would make her the same age as Mrs Ayliff and Mrs Dyer when they first sang for Purcell, making nonsense of the distinction between the terms ‘Miss’ and ‘Mrs’ and of Letitia Cross being described as a ‘girl.’ Letitia Cross was an extremely versatile actress and singer who appeared in both ‘soubrette’ and pathetic roles and sang both incidental and character songs. With her dancing and acting skills, she was a natural heir to many of Mrs. Butler’s roles, though unlike the latter actress she also managed to cross the divide into serious roles. Perhaps this was because she was a “crowd-puller”, or perhaps it was because her youth prevented the public from casting aspersions on her private morals and therefore deeming her unsuitable for such roles. If the latter suggestion is true, the myth was soon to be dispelled when in 1698 Miss Cross received 500 guineas from Peter the Great for sexual services!²⁷ On this account, Baldwin and Wilson make an interesting point which also relates to Purcell’s other sopranos, and to modern sopranos singing Purcell’s music:

His theatre singers were young, but were not the ‘Young Gentlewomen’ for whom *Dido and Aeneas* was written and it is doubtful if the theatre audiences would have expected them to sound ‘pure’.²⁸

Indeed, Letitia Cross’ music was more often than not sex-related, largely because of the age-old artistic preoccupation with virginity, her adolescent status making her the ideal

²⁵ Baldwin and Wilson; ‘Purcell’s Sopranos’, *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 602-9.

²⁶ Burden, M; ‘Purcell and his contemporaries’, *The Purcell Companion* (London 1995).

²⁷ Baldwin and Wilson; ‘Purcell’s Stage Singers’, *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996), 105-129.

²⁸ Baldwin and Wilson; ‘Purcell’s Sopranos’, *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 609.

vehicle for such a subject. In addition to her solos there are also some morally dubious duets for her and 'the Boy' which would certainly be frowned upon were they performed by child-stars today.

When Letitia Cross' music covers subjects other than sex it is usually because she is singing in character. Interestingly she is the only singing actress to perform Mrs. Ayliff-style songs in character, presumably because she was the first speciality singing-actress to cross the divide into serious drama, and once she had done so it encouraged playwrights to include song-texts to capitalise on her abilities. The expression of pathetic emotion in song by serious characters was an innovation on the English stage, and so Letitia Cross can be seen as influencing the shift from plays with music towards more operatic theatrical forms, a shift which was cut short by Purcell's untimely death.

If Letitia Cross was really only in her early teens when she sang for Purcell then one might expect to see signs of immaturity in her range and compensation for an underdeveloped technique in her music. This, however, is not the case, and in fact at d^1-ab^2 her range is considerably wider than some of the other singers', and her usual tessitura of 34-38 is the same as Mrs. Ayliff's. The technical aspects of her music reveal a capability akin to that of Mrs. Ayliff, and considerably more than that of any previous singing actress, and the variety of different styles in her music reflects both her singing abilities and her considerable acting ability which ensured that she was not typecast like Mrs. Butler, but instead shared to an extent the musical freedom of the non-acting stage singers.

Letitia Cross rose to prominence after the division of the United Theatre Company,²⁹ and one of her first appearances for Purcell was in *The Indian Queen* where she took two incidental songs, which, owing to much of the music having been written before the actors' revolt, one must acknowledge may not have been written specifically for her. *I attempt from love's sickness* (H89) is a triple-time, decorative-lyric Rondeau which, although of Butlerish form and structure and governed by declamatory rhythms,

²⁹ Cibber, C; *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber, Comedien* (London 1740, repr. London 1914).

which, although of Butlerish form and structure and governed by declamatory rhythms, is much more melodically complex, with florid melismata, climactic top-notes and bel-canto tune, making it a compromise between the English word-focussed and the Italianate voice-focussed styles (see Ex.25). The same style-compromise can be seen in *They tell us that you mighty powers above* (H249) which is also a triple-time decorative lyric, although this time in binary form. Melismata similar to those found in Butler's songs can be seen (see Ex.26) but extended into long chains, requiring good diction and flexibility from the singer in order to put them across successfully. It seems that these songs are a step up from the usual singing actresses' material, as if Purcell was testing the water with 'the Girl's' voice, whilst at the same time obeying his instinctive musical reactions to certain subjects and emotions, although the style of these songs could also be an indication that they were originally intended for Mrs. Ayliff or Mrs. Hodgson. *I attempt from love's sickness* speaks of the torment of unrequited love and the passionate, bittersweet feelings it creates. A grieving-style Italianate arioso would therefore be as inappropriate a musical response as a jaunty syllabic lyric would be, so Purcell chooses a medium which expresses these emotions more faithfully. It will become apparent later in this discussion that Letitia Cross seems to have been particularly good at communicating such tempestuous emotions both as an actress and as a singer, which may be one reason that she was allowed to sing when portraying serious characters who should by rights remain silent.

In common with Purcell's other sopranos, 'the Girl' was only allowed to shine vocally when the dramatic situation and text permitted it, so her solos in *The Rival Sisters* and *The Mock Marriage* revert to the melody-driven lyric style of the standard play songs. This is particularly interesting in the case of *How happy is she* (from *The Rival Sisters*: H84) where the text was obviously specifically designed for Miss Cross, mentioning her age, but Purcell chooses not to extend this favour to the music other than by introducing some melodic complexity, a few climactic top notes and a melisma

Example 25: *I attempt from love's sickness, bars 1-13*

I at-tempt from love's sick-ness to fly ————— in vain, Since I am my-self my own
fe-ver, Since I am my-self my own fe-ver and pain

Example 26: *They tell us that you mighty powers above, bars 4-8*

Make per-fect your joys and your bless-ings by Love

Example 27: *Man is for the woman made, bars 1-20*

Man, man, man is for the wo-man made, And the wo-man for the man As the spur is for the
jade, As the scab-board for the blade, As for dig-ging is the spade, As for li-quer is the can, So man, man,
man, is for the wo-man made, And the wo-man for the man

on the word 'smiles'. However, this may be because he was attempting to make her seem more innocent and less artful.

The two solos from *The Mock Marriage*, 'Twas within a furlong of Edinboro' Town (H270) and *Man is for the Woman made* (H140) are also designed to fit the situation and text rather than to exhibit 'the Girl's' voice. Indeed Purcell takes this to an extreme in the latter song, whose banal lyrics inspire a song entirely made up of repetition of short phrases (see Ex.27). The other song with its Scottish theme sees Purcell adopting a faux-Scottish folk song style, swapping his usual melismatic figurations for scotch snaps. There is one passage of climactic top-note writing on the words 'It will not do' but on the whole neither song rises above the musical standard set by Mrs. Knight's solo in the same production.

O lead me to some peaceful gloom (from *Bonduca*: H158) is another song clearly inserted into a play entirely because Letitia Cross was to act the part of Bonvica; a tragic heroine who traditionally should not express herself in song, but should call on an auxiliary character to do so for her. On this occasion - largely because of the range of imagery and emotion in the text one expects - Purcell rises to the bait and writes music which would have displayed the singer's vocal talents as well as her acting ability. This song has inspired many different reactions in scholars; Moore, for instance, calls it, "one of Purcell's rare failures"²⁴ because of the extreme contrasts of style within the song. When discussing Moore's opinion, Curtis Price acknowledges that;

as in many of his great vocal works, the opening bars set a mood for the whole piece; even though the style changes radically and often throughout.... This is the only song in the serious dramas that relies on a child and on contrived pathos for its effect.... The song conveys her sinking spirits and her panicky attempt to summon heroic courage.²⁵

This judgement does scant justice to the talents of both 'the Girl' and Purcell himself. As we have already seen, Letitia Cross made a speciality of performing passionate, tempestuous emotions, and the anonymous adaptor of *Bonduca* provides just such imagery for Purcell to hang his music on. It is fair to say that in this case, Purcell

²⁴ Moore, R.E.; *Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre* (London 1961), 154.

²⁵ Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984) 123.

seems to have been somewhat overzealous in his faithful rendition of the text, chopping and changing styles at every new emotion in the text and peppering the score throughout with militaristic imagery (see Ex.28). However, it must be acknowledged that at this stage in the plot, Bonvica may well have been in a disturbed state of mind, contemplating defeat and death, and it seems that this idea is the one background-issue which Purcell deliberately attempts to bring to the fore. Performed entirely statically and out of context this song may seem like an incongruous mishmash of bizarre musical flourishes, but Letitia Cross would have acted it out with the physical metaphorical gestures of the period that would convey the essence of the text to the audience, who in addition would witness the song as the culmination of the previous action. In a way, this is not a song at all, but a recitative-drama in the style of Monteverdi and the Italian tradition, and harking back to the ideals of Greek Tragedy, and its function in the play can be seen as raising the dialogue out of speech at a moment of extreme emotion to heighten the dramatic tension. It functions as a dramatic rather than a musical structure, following the flow of emotions felt by Bonvica, hence the reason that it seems structurally unbalanced when standing alone. A musical purist might argue that a song should work without such dramatic assistance, but since Purcell was writing for a specific singer and occasion, one can hardly call him to account on this charge.

This song retains the over all shape of many of Purcell's ariosi, with a decorative, recitative-like first section followed by a more lyrical section, so that it resembles a miniature operatic recitative and aria. This is an entirely appropriate form for a tragic heroine, and one utilised some years earlier for Dido, a character under similar dramatic circumstances. The music exhibits the further operatic/Italianate traits of bel-canto word-painting and climactic top notes (see Ex.29), and with the complex melody in addition to the excess of decoration and passages of unaccompanied singing, the song must have exhibited Letitia Cross' accomplishments to the full.

Example 28: *O lead me to some peaceful gloom*, bars 10-13 and 40-42

where the shrill, the shrill trumpets ne ver sound, _____ ne ver.

ne-ver sound

What glo - - - ry

Example 29: *O lead me to some peaceful gloom*, bars 2-7

O, O, lead me, lead me to some peace - ful

gloom, where none but sigh - - ing

Example 30: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 11-15

With ten - - der, ten - - der pas sion, my heart's, my heart's dar - ling joy

The last of Letitia Cross' solos, *From Rosy Bow'rs* (from *Don Quixote III*: H64) is another character song, for the role of Altisidora. It is a mad-song exhibiting all 'the Girl's' trademark dramatic characteristics, and since the character is only feigning madness, one wonders to what extent Thomas D'Urfey contrived to introduce such a song into the drama as a vehicle for Miss Cross' talents. Curtis Price remarks:

'The last SONG the Author Sett, it being in his Sickness,' is also his greatest theatre piece.... Purcell's swan song strikes closer to the heart of the human condition than any of [his other theatre songs], with the pure and unguarded expression of an artist who had no time left for artifice. This piece transcends the drama, as if the composer, perhaps working from his deathbed, had no idea of its role in the play.³²

The music is certainly of a higher quality than the drama deserves, the *Don Quixote* format being very tired by this, its second sequel, suggesting that Purcell was once again writing a song to exhibit Letitia Cross' talent in a way that the play itself did not. With its cantata-song format and textual movements subtitled Love, Gaily, Melancholy, Passion and Frenzy, the song is ideally tailored for the young singing actress' musical and theatrical abilities.

The song is in six sections structured as three recitative and air units. The first unit begins with a florid recitative subtitled 'Love' with word-painting melismata highlighting the words 'tender', 'darling' and 'dear' (see Ex.30), emphasising the fact that it is love which has supposedly driven Altisidora mad. This gives way to a sprightly lyrical section marked 'Gaily' as Altisidora changes her tactics in a desperate attempt to win back her lover (see Ex.31). The second unit is marked *slow* and subtitled 'Melancholy', and begins as a despairing, lamenting recitative in which Altisidora likens her despair to 'snow and rain'. This sparks off the idea of 'Bleak winds in tempests blow' which Purcell sets to passionate, high melismata (see Ex.32) giving the impression that Altisidora is becoming frenzied (an idea not directed specifically in the libretto at this point). Suddenly there is an abrupt change back to the melancholic despair of the beginning of the unit for the words 'My pulse beats a dead march'; which Purcell sets onomatopoeically to chilling effect (see Ex.33). The 'Passion' air section of

³² Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984), 219.

Example 31: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 24-28



Or if more in-flu-en-cing, is to be brisk and air-ry

Example 32: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 56-58



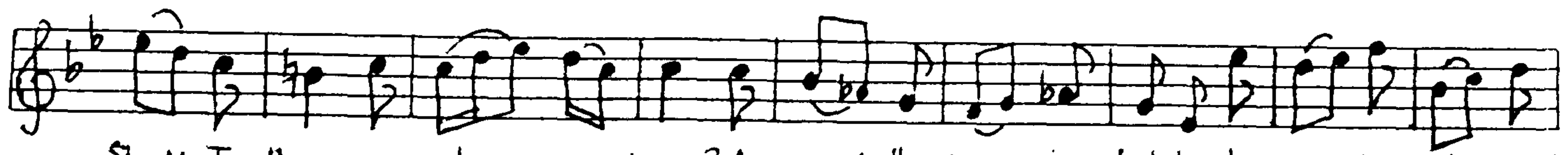
Bleak winds in tempests blow, _____ in tem-pests blow _____

Example 33: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 60-63

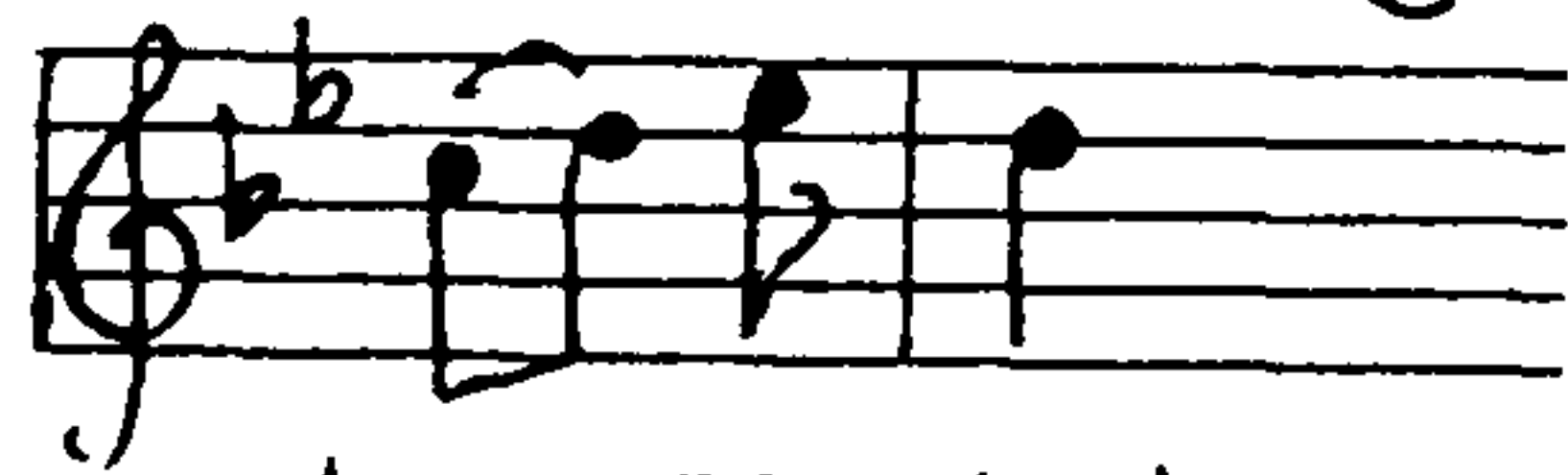


My pulse beats _____ a dead, dead march

Example 34: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 93-103



Shall I thaw my-self, or draw? A-mongst the foam-ing bil-low In-creas-ing all with



tears I shed

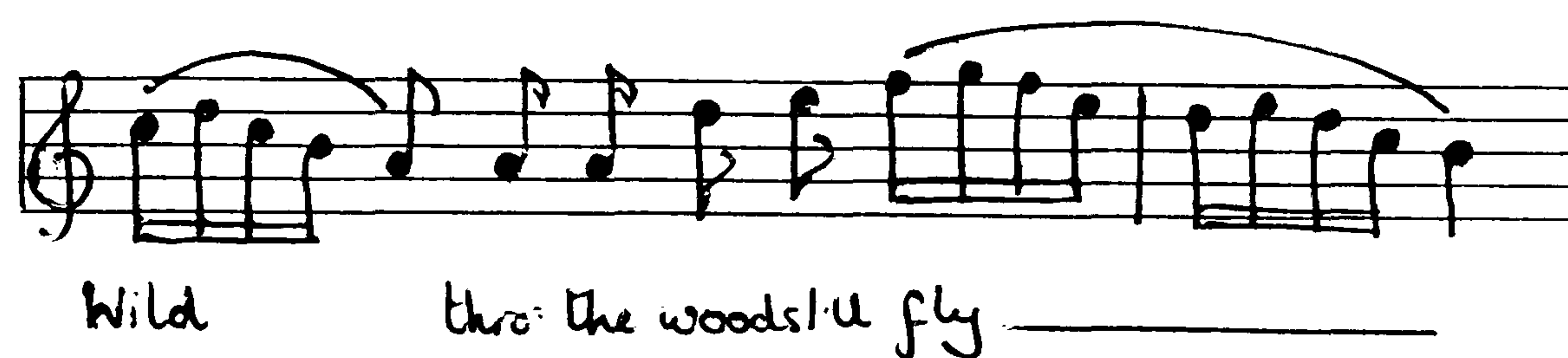
Example 35: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 134-136



No, no, no, no, no, I'll staight run mad, mad, mad, mad, that soon, that soon my heart will warm

this unit like the previous air has an eerily cheerful-sounding melody which is directly contradicted by the hideous images in the text to brilliantly create the impression of raving (see Ex.34). The final, 'Frenzy' unit begins with Altisidora tipping over the edge of reason in a cascade of 'no's' and 'mad's' in which she denies that love has any 'pow'r to charm' (see Ex.35). This develops into a rapid arioso section with virtuosic coloratura passages as she vows to run mad rather than suffer the pain of love again (see Ex.36).

Example 36: *From rosy bow'rs*, bars 143-144



D'Urfey's song-text itself contained many opportunities for Letitia Cross to characterise different emotions, but it is noticeable that Purcell's musical structure does not follow the textual plan precisely. Instead he tried to add yet more emotions, hence the reason that the 'bleak winds' are set to frenzied music in the Melancholy section. The sharp contrasts of musical style which Purcell takes from cues in the text (validated by D'Urfey's performance directions) are here exactly right to create the impression of madness, whereas in *O lead me to some peaceful gloom* Moore finds them incongruous.³³ Perhaps this is because Purcell attributed to Bonvica a more disturbed mind than the song text alone suggests, another case of Purcell adding to a text in music to lend more dramatic depth.

As if the song were not dramatically challenging enough, it also requires faultless diction and a solid technique to cope with the energetic sections and rapid decoration, vocal characteristics astonishing for a girl of 12 or 14. Curtis Price suggests that

³³ Moore, R.E.; *Henry Purcell and the Restoration Theatre* (London 1961), 154.

the graces are much less elaborate and more concentrated than those of the earlier mad songs and dialogues, perhaps an indication that Purcell had finally learnt the virtue of simplicity in composing for the actor-singers.³⁴

Nevertheless, this song is difficult enough in terms of technique and interpretation without the added complication of extra ornamentation (bearing in mind that ‘the Girl’ probably added some of her own anyway), and more significantly, the text does not contain the images usually associated with long melismata in Purcell. In addition, as a character song the emphasis is on what the music tells us about the drama and the character, rather than on the virtuosity of the singer, even if this is still a major factor. I would surmise from the decoration in this and Bonvica’s song that ‘the Girl’ was not lacking in vocal virtuosity, but rather that she was not yet sufficiently mature to portray complex, grieving emotions to full effect, and therefore by default her songs lack fully-fledged virtuosic decoration.

Jemmy Bowen:

Letitia Cross’ male counterpart, ‘the Boy’ Jemmy Bowen was also probably in his early teens when he sang for Purcell, though he may have been as young as six at his first appearance.³⁵ Although singing boys had appeared in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries, and the boys of the Chapel Royal had presented plays on the professional stage before the years of the Commonwealth, Bowen was the first ‘star’ treble to appear on the London stage. Unlike the foremost soprano songs, which are divided between several singers, all of Purcell’s important treble pieces were written for Jemmy Bowen, and one can see just how exceptional a singer he was by comparing these solos with those for unnamed trebles.

If Bowen’s virtuosity were not evident enough from the music alone, Cibber reports an incident which demonstrates Purcell’s confidence in the young singer:

³⁴ Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984), 220.

³⁵ Highfill, Kalman and Langhans; *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers etc. in London 1660-1800* (Illinois 1973).

When practising a Song set by Mr. PURCELL, some of the Music told him to grace and run a division in such a Place. O let him alone, said Mr. Purcell; he will grace it more naturally than you, or I, can teach him.³⁶

Clearly 'the Boy' was an accomplished musician, and since he was unsuitable for acting roles by virtue of his youth and unbroken voice, he appeared exclusively to sing. As a result of this, and the fact that he was such a 'novelty', he was the only one of Purcell's singers of any voice-type to be exclusively allocated voice-orientated music which always demonstrated his talents to the full. His career was short-lived, beginning in 1695 and ending a couple of years after his voice broke, during which time he appeared as a counter-tenor stage singer. He eventually entered the church, and ended his days as the Rev. James Bowen.³⁷

It was acknowledged earlier in this chapter that Jemmy Bowen's normal working range of c^1 - g^2 is not dissimilar to that of Mary Hodgson. Nevertheless, Bowen's total solo range of c^1 - a^2 is actually wider than that of any of Purcell's sopranos, and so perhaps his range was unusually well-developed for a treble if, as Baldwin and Wilson suggest, Purcell gave Mary Hodgson songs with a lower range in order to make her sound 'boyish'. Alternatively, perhaps the effect that Purcell was hoping to achieve with Mary Hodgson and the breeches songs was that of an adolescent boy with a dropping voice, and since Bowen may have been as young as six, this would explain why his range was higher. Bowen's tessitura ranges from 32 to 39, and interestingly none of his songs has the same tessitura as the unnamed treble solo in this study, 33-36, a tessitura which in turn is very like Mary Hodgson's (32-36). Not only is his range extensive but technically his music is as taxing as Mrs. Ayliff's, and the accompanimental instrumentation and structures of his solos betray their vocal focus. Three of his solos have obligato instrumentation (only Catherine Cibber of the sopranos had obligato accompaniment) and in structure comprise three ariosi, a cantata song, a rondeau, two declamatory lyrics and two recitatives. He did not have to sing the simple, melody-driven lyrics which all the sopranos had to, either because the subjects

³⁶ Ashton, A; 'A Brief Supplement', *An Apology for the life of Mr. Colley Cibber* (London 1889), 312.

³⁷ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Stage Singers', *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996).

which provoked such musical responses in Purcell were deemed unsuitable for delivery by a prepubescent boy, or more likely because the public would be disappointed if ‘the Boy’ appeared but did not ‘show off’. In fact, the subjects with which Bowen was entrusted are all tinged with foreboding or pathos, allowing Purcell to formulate a vocally-decorative, Italianate response, which may be the reason that all but one of his songs (the most cheerful song in C major) are in flat minor keys.

Jemmy Bowen’s solos can be split into two broad subject-groupings: those incidental songs which have texts about cruel or unresponsive women, and those where he appears in character, usually as a god. Into the first category fall the three multi-sectional songs, *Lucinda is bewitching fair* (from *Abdelazer*: H139), *Celia has a thousand charms* (from *The Rival Sisters*: H44), and *Whilst I with grief* (from *The Spanish Friar*: H295). All three songs have similar structures because of their common subject of an unattainable beautiful woman: Lucinda who ignores all advances, Celia who accepts them but then proves false, and Marcella who is mad for the love of another man, and is in turn loved in vain by the ‘I’ of the song. As a result of their similar texts and structures and their purely vocal focus all three songs are heavily decorative, but their other internal features vary depending on the precise opportunities presented by the text.

The rondeau song *Lucinda is bewitching fair* was performed at the opening of the old playhouse after the division of the United Company,³⁸ an event which both ushered in the change in Purcell’s musical personnel and heralded the new role which music was to play in the theatre (since by now Purcell was the old company’s only remaining trump card). The ‘A’ section (‘Lucinda is bewitching fair/ All o’er engaging is her Air’) is highly decorative, like Lucinda herself (see Ex.37). The ‘B’ section of the song has a text which is more concerned with the human emotions caused by Lucinda’s disdain, and so the frivolous decoration gives way to lyricism which sets the abstract description of the love inspired by Lucinda. In the ‘C’ section Lucinda’s influence is

³⁸ Baldwin and Wilson; ‘Purcell’s Stage Singers’, *Performing the Music of Henry Purcell* (Oxford 1996).

Example 37: *Lucinda is bewitching fair*, bars 1-9

Lu-cin-da is be-witch-ing fair, lu-cin-da is be-witch-ing fair,
All o'er, all over en-gag-ing is her air

Example 38: *Lucinda is bewitching fair*, bars 54-59

Sighs, Sighs, Sighs too with the rest Rack'd
rack'd

Example 39: *Celia has a thousand charms*, bars 15-19

Fills with fresh magic all
the place

Example 40: *Whilst I with grief*, bars 9-10

I the con-ta-gion took

described in more detail and personified in the characters of Strephon and Philander, giving yet more human emotion. This is stressed musically by tortuous, grieving decoration similar to that of Mrs. Ayliff's songs (see Ex.38), revealing how closely allied certain musical styles and textual emotions were in Purcell's mind.

Celia has a thousand charms uses its text in a similar way, but because of its differing format - two stanzas, one extolling Celia's beauty, the other describing her cruelty - the musical structure is an arioso split into recitative and air. Once again, the woman's beauty is realised in extravagant decoration, though this time, because recitative is such a fluid form, the melismata are much more extended and indulgent (see Ex.39). The lyric section is straightforward apart from a few chromatic twists, the contrast between the sections creating the urgency required to warn Mirtillo to 'have a care'.

The third of Jemmy Bowen's incidental songs, *Whilst I with grief*, sets up a challenge for the young singer even before it is begun, being subtitled 'A song on Mrs. Bracegirdle's singing in the second part of Don Quixote.' Mrs Bracegirdle was the leading actress of her day, renowned for her talent, beauty and singing ability, though she never seems to have sung for Purcell. Indeed, Dryden wrote in a letter to William Walsh that in *The Richmond Heiress*, she and her duet partner Mr. Doggett surpassed even the stage singers, saying 'the singing was wonderfully good, and the two whom I nam'd sung better than Redding and Mrs. Ayliff whose trade it was.'³¹ This arioso is also a recitative and air pairing, with an opening section using decorative figurations again similar to those in Mrs. Ayliff's songs (see Ex.40).

From these three songs it is clear that Jemmy Bowen had great technical virtuosity; the runs and turns are as complex as any in Mrs. Ayliff's songs, and there are many moments of melodic and rhythmic complexity which indicate an advanced level of musical sophistication. However, although 'the Boy' was clearly not hindered by his age in a practical sense, it seems that his youth may have been an issue where dramatic

³¹ Dryden cited in Duffy, M; *Henry Purcell* (London 1994), 220.

interpretation was concerned. On past performance, one would expect Purcell to pick specifically 'grieving' subjects to turn into vocal showpieces for 'the Boy', but this is not the case, and any grief hinted at in the texts of his songs is glossed over quickly by Purcell. One suspects that these grieving emotions would have been exploited much more had Purcell been writing for Mrs. Ayliff, but that like Letitia Cross, the young Jemmy Bowen was not emotionally mature enough to understand such sentiments and so could not vocalise them convincingly. At any rate, such emotions are generally considered more effective coming from a woman. Indeed most of Purcell's songs which describe the pain of unrequited love, or the grief inspired by the death of a lover from a male perspective are set for soprano, suggesting that in his time as in ours, such feelings were by and large considered 'unmanly' when openly confessed to. Jemmy Bowen would have inhabited an artistic no-man's-land on this point; his age and the register of his voice would allow him to express 'unmanly' emotions (indeed as we see below, in one production he actually appeared as a girl), but as yet he would not have the personal experience of such emotions upon which to draw in performance. In formulating a style which skipped over the complex emotions of love whilst still mentioning them, Purcell was able to provide virtuosic music on his usual themes without risking an unconvincing performance.

The fact that Jemmy Bowen's technique was so well-developed at such a young age is a testament to his training. To follow this theme, it is likely that Catherine Cibber was able to sing more difficult music than some of the other singing actresses because she was receiving expert tuition at the hands of Purcell. Interestingly, Cibber and Bowen both had a certain amount of training under Purcell, and both are assigned an arioso with trumpet obbligato. Bowen's *To arms heroic prince* (from *The Libertine*: H268) has the wider range, c¹-g², but surprisingly Cibber's reaches higher, g¹-a², and their respective tessiturae are 34-38 and 37-40, again giving the soprano the higher register. The main difference nevertheless lies in their styles. Catherine Cibber's song is

a triple-time arioso with lyrical decoration - held high-notes and gently winding runs - whilst Jemmy Bowen's is a march with rapid-fire coloratura. In fact it seems that Cibber's is a 'feminine' treatment whilst Bowen's is a 'masculine' one, which supports the theory that Bowen's gender required that his music be emotionally different from that of the sopranos. Even the texts of the songs betray this gender bias: Cibber's song advocates military glory as a way to a woman's love, whilst Bowen's prescribes it as a more rewarding alternative. Musically, Bowen's song is melodically and rhythmically more complex, and despite the startling similarities between some of the runs in the two songs (see Ex.41), the decoration is on the whole more vocally challenging in Bowen's song. However, the trumpet descant over the voice which ends both songs is much shorter in Bowen's song (see Ex.42), a sort of 'token effort' suggesting as one might expect that the Boy's voice was not as well developed in terms of power as Catherine Cibber's was.

So far in his career, Jemmy Bowen had sung a solo inspired by Mrs. Bracegirdle's singing and one set up in direct competition to a solo of Catherine Cibber's. At the revival of *The Massacre of Paris*, a replacement was needed to sing the bass John Bowman's solo since he had defected to the new company. It is a significant indication of 'the Boy's' talent and popularity that instead of employing the new bass Richard Leveridge who had already taken over from Bowman in *The Indian Queen*, Purcell chose to rewrite the song entirely for his star treble. The differences between the two settings have already been discussed in Chapter Two, but the second setting contains all the usual Jemmy Bowen features, being on the whole much more decorative than its predecessor because of its role as a vocal exhibition piece. Interestingly it is also much more recitative-like, and many of Bowen's solos have sections of recitative, presumably because it allowed Purcell to write long, extended melismata without worrying about fitting the timing or structure of a more rigid musical form.

The remainder of Jemmy Bowen's solos are divided between the roles he played

Example 41: a) *To arms heroic prince*, bars 59-62



but bat - - - - - tles

b) *Then follow, brave boys, to the wars*, bars 65-69



Then shake _____

Example 42: *To arms heroic prince*, bars 90-94



tri - - - - - unphs, fame

Example 43: a) *Come all to me*, bars 12-14



make haste, — make haste, — make haste

b) *To arms heroic prince*, bars 49-50



Bid trum - - - - - pets sound

in *The Indian Queen* and *Timon of Athens*. In the first production he appeared in the prologue as the 'Indian Girl', Quivera. This must surely have been as a result of the chaos caused by the actor's revolt,⁴⁰ although one wonders why Letitia Cross was not given the role as she was already appearing later in the production. Quivera's solo *Why should men quarrel* (H301) is accompanied by obbligato recorders and, probably because it is a character song not specifically designed for Bowen, is much less decorative and has much more declamatory impetus than Bowen's other music. Similarly, his other song from this production, the God of Dreams' *Seek not to know* (H195) is also strongly declamatory and lacking in showy decoration, but it also has obbligato instrumentation (solo oboe) suggesting that 'the Boy' had a reasonably powerful voice. This is a miniature cantata song and Purcell's failure to capitalise on the vocal potential of such a form is again indicative that Bowen was not the originally intended singer.

In the masque of *Timon of Athens*, Jemmy Bowen played the most suitable role for a singing boy, that of Cupid. Cupid's two solos, *Come all to me* (H47) and *The cares of lovers* (H220) both capitalise on Bowen's talents in different ways. The first uses the authoritarian commands in the text to create militaristic figures on the words 'make haste' which are an inversion of those in *To arms heroic prince* (see Ex.43), but because it is a character song, the text of which Purcell presumably had little control over, there is nothing in the song which allows for showy decoration. *The cares of lovers* makes up for this in a decorative recitative with chains of complex melismata on abstract words such as 'cares', 'pleasure' and 'torments' so that no complex emotions need to be portrayed in detail (see Ex.44).

⁴⁰ Price, C; *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* (Cambridge 1984), 130.

Example 44: *The cares of lovers*, bars 19-23

Tis ev'n a plea
 sure to com-plain

The unique capabilities of Jemmy Bowen can be appreciated when one considers Purcell's only substantial un-named-treble solo in the anthem *I will give thanks*. The declamatory lyric *I will worship tow'rds Thy holy temple* (H102) (see Ex.45) is rhythmically and melodically simple and almost entirely syllabic, requiring no word painting or virtuosity. When compared to tenor and bass religious solos, one can see that this is not because of the genre from which the song comes, but because the average treble came nowhere close to achieving the technical heights reached by Jemmy Bowen.

Example 45: *I will worship tow'rd Thy Holy temple*, bars 1-29

I will wor-ship, will wor-ship tow'rd Thy ho-ly tem-ple, and praise Thy Name, and praise Thy
 Name, be-cause of Thy lov-ing kind-ness and truth, be-cause of Thy lov-ing kind-ness and truth
 for Thou hast mag-ni-fied Thy Name and Thy word a-bove all things, for Thou hast mag-ni-fied Thy
 Name and Thy word a-bove all things

Dramatic Music for Anonymous Sopranos

Jemmy Bowen dominated Purcell's treble output in a remarkable way. His immediate successors, George Pack and a treble identified only as Jacob,⁴¹ did not achieve anything like the recognition that Bowen did, which surely must be a reflection of his unusual capabilities. One might assume that the sopranos discussed in this chapter were equally influential. However, where Purcell created a new style for Bowen because he was unique, and simply did not write significant treble solos for anyone else, the tradition of soprano song was already well established and there are many soprano songs which appear not to have been written for the star singers. One must therefore acknowledge that the singers in this chapter may not have been vastly more talented than all the others that Purcell wrote for, but that they may simply have been the most popular with the public and were therefore given more opportunities to shine.

It is of course entirely possible that some of the anonymous singers' songs were actually sung by 'star' singers, and that for some reason the performers' names were not noted in the score or published with the songs as they usually were. It would be tempting to ascribe all the 'grieving' style songs to Mrs Ayliff and all the 'breeches' songs to Mrs Hodgson, but just because they specialised in these areas does not mean that they were the only singers for whom Purcell wrote such material. At any rate, both singers sang a considerable number of songs outside their specialist area, so categorisation by theme alone is an unreliable method. There are however a number of cases where other circumstances back up the idea that certain songs were intended for one or other of the 'star' singers. For instance, the music for the play *Pausanias* (1692) comprises a soprano and counter-tenor duet and a soprano solo. Mrs. Hodgson was already taking part in the duet, and the solo *Sweeter than Roses* (H212) covers the same thematic, structural and stylistic territory as many of her other songs, so one would logically expect that this was designed for her too. Nevertheless, the song's range of d¹-

⁴¹ Spink, I; 'Timon of Athens', *The Works of Henry Purcell Volume 2* (London 1994).

a² is a tone higher than Mary Hodgson's normal range and the coloratura is slightly more challenging than that of her other solos, so maybe Mrs. Ayliff was brought in to sing this song.

A more reliable example of a situation where 'anonymous' songs are likely to have been sung by Mrs. Hodgson and Mrs. Ayliff comes from *The Fairy Queen*. Both singers made their debuts in this production, and since Purcell did not know their voices very well at this stage, their music shows none of the particular individual vocal traits which characterise their later solos. Nevertheless, *The Fairy Queen* was such a success that it was revived a year later in 1693 with additional songs. By this time both Mrs. Ayliff and Mrs. Hodgson were established as regular theatre sopranos, and it seems inconceivable that the two big Italianate airs composed for the revival were not especially intended for these singers. In particular *The Complaint* (H156) with its Italian aria style and grieving text seems destined for a star soprano, especially since it is slotted into a place in the plot where the prevailing mood is happy, and so can only be designed as a vehicle for a great talent. Instinct would immediately suggest Mrs. Ayliff as the recipient of this song, but in fact the d¹-g² range is well within Mary Hodgson's capabilities. The song lacks the flashy coloratura normally associated with Mrs. Ayliff, and in style is much more like another lament on a slow ground composed specially for Mrs. Hodgson, *Since from my dear Astrea's sight*, from the revival of *Dioclesian* in the same year. Mrs. Ayliff has no solos which approximate to this style, and since Mrs. Hodgson was given such a solo in the year's other big revival, one can safely assume that *The Complaint* was also intended for her. Mrs. Ayliff's solo in the *Dioclesian* revival is decorative and virtuosic, and the remaining anonymous Italianate air in *The Fairy Queen* revival is also in this style. *Ye gentle spirits of the air* (H306) has an expressive text realised in a vocally virtuosic style, with a subject that encourages such decoration, exactly like *When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes* from *Dioclesian*, so it seems that this song must have been intended for her.

Undoubtedly there are more anonymous solos that were actually sung by the star singers, but there are too many of them for all to be accounted for in this way, particularly in productions such as *The Fairy Queen* and the other semi-operas where it would be impossible for the small number of star singers to perform all the music. Because of the quality of the anonymous solos this essentially means that Mrs. Ayliff, Mrs. Hodgson and the others were at the top of their profession, but were by no means unrivalled in vocal capability.

Modern Performance of Purcell's Soprano and Treble Songs

A projected performance of Purcell's soprano or treble songs in the modern day presents nothing like the minefield of historical information to be negotiated that a performance of the counter-tenor songs would. The Purcellian and the modern soprano and treble are by and large the same voice-type, although for certain reasons their sonorities may have been somewhat different.

The Purcellian soprano at the peak of her career was generally ten years younger than her modern equivalent, at 18-25 years of age. In addition, her standard working range was smaller, at d^1-g^2 (as opposed to c^1-a^2) so it is likely that she had a less developed or 'mature' sound than the modern soloist. This 'girlish' sonority is supported by Roger North's comment that sopranos' techniques inhibited the projection of sound.⁴² It is also probable that the technique of blending over vocal breaks and maintaining distinct differences of tone colour between chest, middle and head registers as described by Pier Francesco Tosi⁴³ meant that the Purcellian soprano's sonority lacked the depth at the top and the radiance at the bottom of the modern soprano who blends all her registers into a unified sonority.

The historically appropriate representation of this sonority in modern times has

⁴² North, R.; *Roger North on Music* (London 1959), 215-7.

⁴³ Tosi, P. F.; *Observations on the Florid Song* (London 1743), 22-23.

been the treble-like, vibrato-less ‘early music’ soprano, and whilst this does to a certain extent create the impression of a young, barely trained voice, it fails to address some of the most important performance issues of Purcell’s music. Foremost among these is the fact that the modern early music soprano is still a voice with a single blend and therefore cannot render conceits such as a sequential passage exhibited first in the head voice and then in the middle register in a truly ‘authentic’ manner. Secondly, it has been shown in the course of this chapter that Purcell perceived the soprano voice as the most ‘operatic’ of the five voice-types, and the one most suited to the expression of emotion, traits that cannot be realised effectively without a considerable amount of vibrato at crucial moments.⁴⁴ Thirdly and most importantly, most of Purcell’s songs would have been written for an individual singer known to him, and as such the idea of a generic Purcellian soprano is anathema. Although some may indeed have sounded very much like today’s early music specialists, we know that Charlotte Butler was praised by North for having a clearer, louder voice than was normal, that Mrs. Ayliff was particularly known for emotionally-charged, Italianate songs and may therefore have had much more vibrato and a much more operatic style of voice, that Mary Hodgson may have had a mezzo-like tone, and that in terms of vocal maturity Letitia Cross seems to have been a Purcellian equivalent of Charlotte Church. Similarly, because Jemmy Bowen dominates Purcell’s treble output, it is impossible to draw precise conclusions regarding the sonority of a typical Purcellian treble.

As was the case with the modern counter-tenor, sopranos wishing to create an historically-informed effect are advised to select or differentiate between their songs according to which singer sang them, remembering to find a different tone colour for chest, middle and head registers. Mezzo-sopranos wishing to sing Purcell’s stage songs ‘authentically’ should confine themselves to the songs for Mary Hodgson, or those with a similar style and range. Mainstream sopranos would probably be most successful with the more ‘operatic’ music of Mrs. Ayliff and Letitia Cross, whilst early music sopranos

⁴⁴ See Harris, E. T.; ‘Voices’, *Performance Practice: Music after 1600* (London 1989), 97-116.

would be most effective in the singing actresses' songs where declamation of the text (which is interfered with by vibrato or excessive volume) is the main priority, though the songs for Charlotte Butler may perhaps require a slightly bigger voice. To truly achieve a Purcellian effect in large-scale works, solos should be allocated according to the singers who originally sang them, ideally using singers with markedly different sonorities, in order to highlight the subtle differences in Purcell's writing for each singer.

Chapter Four

Re-allocating 'Lost' Voice Types

In addition to the music that Purcell wrote for his colleagues in the religious and theatrical establishments of London, there also exists a large body of vocal music which appears to have been written without specific singers, or groups of singers, in mind, or for which the original performers cannot be identified. This means that there are 93 songs by Purcell whose originally intended voice-types have not as yet been conclusively identified. Most of these are chamber or private devotional songs, but there is also one dramatic work, the opera *Dido and Aeneas*, which falls into this category. It is the purpose of this chapter to attempt to reassign these songs' 'lost' voice-types.

Chamber Songs

There are 80 chamber songs included in this study, of which 76 were published in the treble clef and have ranges stretching from c¹ to a², limits which correspond to the extremes of the Purcellian soprano register (see Table 1). This apparent huge bias towards the soprano voice¹ is not particularly surprising when one considers that the songs were written for the amateur market, and that the amateur singers who would have had most time on their hands would have been women. However, Purcell's publisher John Playford is known to have altered the clefs of Purcell's dramatic songs in order to avoid ledger lines, which were difficult to reproduce on seventeenth-century printing equipment, or to ensure more sales in the largely treble-clef reading amateur market.² This fact, coupled with the existence of four bass clef chamber songs³ suggests

¹ As highlighted in Chapter Four, most of Purcell's treble solos were written for Jemmy Bowen, so it is unlikely that many of the chamber songs were intended exclusively as treble songs.

² For instance the 'Select Songs from The Fairy Queen' were republished in a second edition with the counter-tenor solos reproduced in the treble clef (Wood and Pinnock; 'The Fairy Queen': A Fresh look at the Issues', *Early Music* 21 (1983), 44-62).

³ Anacreon's Defeat (H252), Bacchus is a pow'r divine (H27), Awake and with Attention hear (H24), Begin the Song (H29).

that Purcell may initially have intended these 76 treble-clef chamber songs for a variety of voice-types to sing at different octaves. It is equally likely that the amateurs who purchased these songs would have reassigned them to the correct voice-type based on the style of the music and the sentiments of the text as well as the tessitura.

Table 1: Chamber Song Ranges

	f²	f#²	g²	g#²	a²
c¹	2		10	2	2
c#¹		1	1		
d¹	3		26	2	8
d#¹			2	1	
e¹	1		6		2
f¹			1	1	
f#¹					1
g¹			3	1	1

In order to investigate Purcell's chamber songs for signs of their original voice-types, they will be split into four soprano range groupings: Group A 'low' ranges c¹-f#² to e¹-f²; Group B 'standard' ranges c¹-g² to e¹-g²; Group C 'extended' ranges c¹-a² to e¹-a² ; and Group D 'high' ranges f¹-g#² to g¹-a². The songs in each group will be examined for stylistic and textual features as well as tessitura. The information gathered will then be compared with that of previous chapters of this study in order to reassign these songs' voice-types.

Group A: 'Low' Ranges

The six songs in Group A have ranges which appear at the lower end of the soprano register (see Table Two). Although these ranges are used elsewhere in Purcell's soprano songs, they also appear an octave down as bass ranges and are quite similar to

some of the tenor ranges, so it is more than likely that some of these songs were intended for male voices.

Table 2: Group A Chamber Songs

c ¹ -f ²	He himself courts his own ruin How I sigh when I think of the charms
d ¹ -f ²	Farewell all joys The Aspiration While Thirsis wrapp'd
e ¹ -f ²	What a sad fate 2

On examination, only three of these six songs are identifiable as soprano; *How I sigh when I think of the charms* (H86), *Farewell all joys!* (H57), and *What a sad fate is mine 2* (H278b). The former two songs are both written from the female perspective, and although women often sang songs from a male perspective (breeches songs) there is no evidence to suggest that men returned the favour except in comic songs portraying women as harridans and shrews,⁴ so the fact that these songs are from the female perspective, coupled with their trademark soprano grieving sentiments suggests that these are indeed soprano songs. This classification is borne out by their soprano tessiturae of 30-36 and 31-36, which when translated down an octave do not correspond to any other voice-type's usual tessitura. *What a sad fate is mine 2* has a male perspective, but the minor, Italianate, bel-canto music, with its aria form, unrequited love subject and breech-song range and tessitura of e¹-f² and 32-37 suggest that this is a soprano song. Crucially, this song appears in Purcell's autograph Gresham Manuscript in the treble clef. Margaret Laurie in the Purcell Society Edition (Vol. 25)⁵ argues that this version is a revision of the one published in Purcell's posthumous song collection *Orpheus Britannicus*. Since the two versions fall into different range groups, it may be that this second version was a soprano reworking of a song for a different voice-type,

⁴ e.g. Mr Pate as Mopso in *The Fairy Queen*.

⁵ Laurie, M; *The Works of Henry Purcell Volume 25: Secular Songs for Solo Voice* (Sevenoaks 1985), 302.

and this will be investigated later in this chapter.

The three remaining songs in Group A are more difficult to classify. *He himself courts his own ruin* (H76) is written from the male perspective and is quite derogatory to women, not at all like the usual breech-song humour. However, the tessitura seems most suitable for a soprano, at 31-36, since an octave down at 19-24 it is a little higher than average for a bass and somewhat lower than the tenor average. *While Thirsis wrapp'd* (H293) holds no textual clues on gender, and is not in a voice-specific musical style but it does have a tessitura more suitable for a soprano than any other voice (31-35). The sacred chamber song *The Aspiration* with its arioso and lyric structure, minor key and sentiments of longing for death seems destined for soprano, but the text describes the soul as 'she' which seems odd when sung by a woman (one would expect 'my' or 'the'). The low range could indicate that this was a treble song, and the tessitura of 31-36 is not unsuitable for such a voice.

Group B: 'Standard' Ranges

Group B contains the vast majority of the chamber songs, 45 in all, but their apparent similarity to the soprano 'standard' range does not necessarily mean that they were all intended for the female voice (see table 3). That said, 22 of these songs are easily identifiable as soprano by reasons of a combination of range, tessitura, structure and/or subject matter. For example, *Ask me to love* (H23), *Since one poor view* (H201), *Amintas to my grief* (H13) and *Spite of the Godhead* (H209) are all sung from the female perspective, and similarly *In vain we dissemble* (H117) has obvious female sentiments: 'Straight with a smile / Our threats we beguile / Invite with our looks and speak love with our eyes.' In addition, the song *Cupid, the slyest rogue alive* (H53) although a narrative with no gender-specific perspective, has Venus and Cupid as dramatic protagonists, characters usually played by women on the Restoration stage. This coupled with the decorative, cantata-style and 33-38 tessitura of the music surely

marks it out as a soprano song. Another song with a female dramatic character is *Art thou return'd at last* (H21), and since this time the character does sing in the first person and is a serious character rather than a comic one suitable for performance by a counter-tenor in drag, this can also be viewed as an indication that it was meant for a soprano.

Range Group B includes one of the best known of Purcell's chamber songs sung from a female perspective, the mad song *Bess of Bedlam* (H65). This song is clearly intended for soprano on the basis of all the characteristics listed above and shares many features with the soprano Letitia Cross' solo *From Rosy Bow'rs* (H64). Despite all this, perhaps the most important factor to note when assigning *Bess of Bedlam* to the soprano voice is the fact highlighted by Elizabeth Howe, that

Significantly, madness in the drama of the period is almost entirely confined to female characters and is presented as a state in which the victim is rendered helpless, incapable of rational thought⁶

The significance of this socio-dramatic stereotyping will be explored later in this chapter in relation to the opera *Dido and Aeneas*.

In addition to the songs with obvious female sentiments, there are two songs which are known to have been sung by the sopranos Catherine Cibber and Mrs. Ayliff. Cibber's solo *Who can behold Florella's charms* (H298) and Ayliff's *Sawney is a bonny lad* (H187) have already been discussed in relation to these singers in Chapter Three, but the former has many musical qualities in common with the soprano songs,⁷ and the latter appears in both the Gresham MS and *The Gentleman's Journal* in the treble clef, and is sung from a female point of view.

Of the remaining 23 songs, five are sacred chamber songs, which are difficult to classify since sopranos did not take part in public sacred music. Two of these are the companion pieces *A Morning Hymn* and *An Evening Hymn*, which one might assume were designed for the same voice-type and the remaining three are *In the black dismal dungeon of despair* (H114), *Sleep, Adam, sleep and take thy rest* (H204) and *With sick*

⁶ Howe, E; *The First English Actresses: Women and Drama 1660-1700* (Cambridge 1992), 43.

⁷ Laurie, M; *The Works of Henry Purcell Volume 25: Secular Songs for Solo Voice* (Sevenoaks 1985), 302-3.

Table 3: Range Group B Chamber Songs

c¹-g²	A Morning Hymn Art thou return'd at last Ask me to love Bess of Bedlam If pray'rs and tears	Let each gallant heart O solitude Since one poor view Sleep, Adam, sleep With sick and famished
c#¹-g²	In the black dismal dungeon of despair	
d¹-g²	A thousand sev'ral ways I tried Amintas to my grief I see An Evening Hymn Cease anxious world Corinna is divinely fair Cupid, the slyest rogue alive Fly swift ye hours I take no pleasure If grief has any pow'r to kill If music be the food of love 2 In vain we dissemble Love arms himself Love is now become a trade	My heart whenever Pastora's beauties Phillis talk no more Sawney is a bonny She who my poor Spite of the Godhead The Caution The Thraldom They say you're angry When first my Shepherdess Whilst Cynthia sung Who but a slave can well Who can behold Florella's
d#¹-g²	The fatal hour comes on apace Through mournful shades and solitary groves	
e¹-g²	I resolve against cringing and whining In Cloris all soft charms Let formal lovers Phillis I can ne'er forgive it Rashly I swore I would disown When her languishing eyes	

and famished eyes (H303). The two hymns are Italianate in nature and stylistically suitable for either the soprano, treble or counter-tenor/tenor voices. Their ranges are also suitable for all these voice-types, but down an octave the tessiturae are rather too low for counter-tenor, and are not common ones in the tenor voice-type, whereas at written pitch, 31-36 and 32-37, are suitable for either low soprano or treble. Perhaps then, these songs were designed for 'singing boys', such as the one Pepys employed,⁸ to sing for household worship. *In the black dismal dungeon* and *With sick and famished*

⁸ Pepys, S; *The Shorter Pepys* (London 1993).

eyes are both in the same style of recitative/arioso found in the dramatic bass songs, but they have supplicatory subjects more often found in the tenor sacred solos, and their ranges of c/c#-g¹ and tessiturae of 19-24/5 are in-between those of the tenor and bass voice-types, although since John Bowman is likely to have been the only bass of Purcell's acquaintance who could sing this high, it is most likely that these songs were intended for tenor. The same is probably true of the anti-female multi-sectional lyric, *Sleep Adam, sleep*, although this could have been sung by a treble.

Although not companion pieces like the Morning and Evening Hymns, the secular chamber songs *The Thraldom* (H90) and *The Caution* (H33) share many similarities. Both are sung from the male perspective, but the former is an Italianate arioso and the latter a decorative lyric. Both have d¹-g² ranges, suitable for soprano, treble or tenor, and similar tessiturae of 33-37 and 32-37 (21-25 or 20-25) again suitable for all those voice-types. Nevertheless, whereas *The Caution* is a warning against false women, which could be delivered coquettishly as a breeches-song, *The Thraldom* is on the whole more serious, and the text is taken from Cowley's *The Mistress* suggesting that it was intended for a man.

The patriotic lament on the death of Charles II *If pray'rs and tears* (H108) is also included in Group B, and this song seems deliberately to have been written in a multipurpose style, as befits the pluralism in the text, where the whole nation mourns the loss of the king. The style of the song is dictated by tradition as an ariosic lament, and the range of c¹-g² and tessitura of 31-37, although most suitable for treble or soprano, could probably have been managed by a tenor, and definitely by a Bowman-style bass-baritone. Purcell could have created a great tour-de-force, for a soprano representing Britannia for example, but instead chose a rather nondescript style. Perhaps he felt that it was his patriotic duty to produce something as a gesture of his loyalty, and was not particularly concerned to fit the music to one voice or another.

The remainder of Group B is made up of eight songs with the range d¹-g² and

six with the range e¹-g². All these songs cover similar subjects based around lovemaking, successful or unsuccessful, and are sung from a male perspective. Most are lyrics of the type found regularly in every voice-type except the bass, and all could either be sung seriously by men (tenors or trebles), or coquettishly by women. The only element of their music which might give a clue as to their intended voice-type is tessitura. The songs all have tessiturae between 31 and 38; three have 31-36, one has 32-36, six have 32-37, one has 33-37 and three have 33-38, all of which suit the soprano voice best, so it is likely that these songs were intended for soprano, especially since the vast majority of Purcell's amateur singers would have been women.⁹

Group C: 'Extended' Ranges

There are 17 songs in Group C which have written ranges that are 'extensions' of normal soprano range (see Table 4). Five of these are obvious soprano songs. *Not all my torments* (H153), *Ah! Cruel Nymph* (H6) and *Olinda in the shades unseen* (H170) all exist in treble-clef autograph scores, and the latter two have sentiments obviously designed to be delivered woman-to-woman. *She that would gain a faithful lover* (H198) also has the character of an instruction from one woman to another, is told from the female point of view, and sets a text by a female poet. Perhaps the most obvious soprano song in this range group however is *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation* (H216), which aside from being sung from the point of view of the 'ultimate' woman, shares many characteristics with Purcell's dramatic, Italianate soprano songs.

The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation is sung by the Virgin Mary when her son Jesus has gone missing and she is driven near-mad with worry. In terms of variety of emotion, the text has much in common with those of the soprano mad songs, hence the song's dramatic style and cantata format. What this sacred song contains which the two mad songs lack is human grief rather than fantastical ravings, which automatically paves the way for an Italianate Mrs. Ayliff style of arioso decoration. King calls the

⁹ See p28.

song “one of the greatest examples of Purcell’s genius for capturing changing emotions, and arguably one of the best solo settings in the whole English repertoire”¹⁰ and Keates describes it as “one of those strokes of genius which establishes Purcell’s position in the field of solo art song as an heir to Dowland and an outstanding forerunner of Schubert”.¹¹ High praise indeed for a song created with apparently no specific public performance or performer in mind, and remarks which call into question once again the dominance of the star sopranos.

Table 4: Range Group C Chamber Songs

c¹-g^{#2}	Amintor, heedless of his flocks Urge me no more
c¹-a²	Love, thou can’st hear She loves and she confesses too
d¹-g^{#2}	Not all my torments She that would gain a faithful lover
d¹-a²	A Divine Hymn Ah! Cruel Nymph If music be the food of love 3 Lovely Albina Oh! Fair Cedaria Olinda in the shades unseen Pious Celinda Ye happy swains
d^{#1}-g^{#2}	The Blessed Virgin’s Expostulation
e¹-a²	I loved fair Celia If music be the food of love 1

I believe that the success of this song may lie in the fact that it was not written for a specific singer. However much Purcell placed subject and context before singer-specific considerations, he could not afford to deviate from the stereotypes associated with each star singer for fear of losing the favour of his audience. The song may contain Mrs. Ayliff style grieving figurations, but her normal style is much more dignified and

¹⁰ King, R; *A Greater Musical Genius England Never Had: Henry Purcell* (London 1994), 197.

¹¹ Keates, J; *Purcell: A Biography* (London 1995), 105.

does not express such raw emotion. Had Letitia Cross been working at this date, the cantata song format, changing emotions and dramatic, communicative nature of the song would have suited her, but the complex emotions of guilt and betrayal which intensify the song would at any rate have been somewhat beyond her. Mrs Hodgson could only express herself within a certain vocal range and Catherine Cibber sang songs without complex emotions. Writing in a vacuum, Purcell was able to focus entirely on realising the text in the most true-to-life humanistic fashion, combining all the best elements of vocal and performance technique revealed to him over the years by his team of stage singers. The song is so successful because it is single minded in its portrayal of the scene in minute detail and because this evocation of the ultimate woman is designed for Purcell's ideal of the ultimate singer.

Of the other chamber songs in this range group, one seems obviously intended for male performance. *She loves and she confesses too* (H197) is another song with a text from Cowley's *The Mistress*. The lyrics are from the male perspective, and describe the deflowering of a virgin using the sacking of a city after battle as a metaphor, in lurid language which leaves nothing to the imagination: "What's this? Proud honour stands up at the gate". The song could surely not have been sung by a woman in genteel society, or even on the stage, and a c-a¹ range and 21-26 tessitura must have been intended for performance by a tenor.

There is a sacred chamber song from Range Group C which also seems to have been written for the tenor voice. *A Divine Hymn* (H130) is a cantata song which alternates between supplicatory and praising sentiments - the sentiments usually associated with the tenor and the counter-tenor voice-types in sacred music - and whose text is littered with masculine imagery. When this is combined with a d-a¹ range and tessitura of 22-27, this song seems obviously designed for a tenor.

Into Range Group C fall the two remaining settings of *If music be the food of Love* (H106a and H107), the first and third chronologically. The first setting of this text

is particularly interesting because the revised second setting falls into Range Group B, which could indicate that the original version was for a different voice-type. The two versions share all the same stylistic elements, but the first has a range of e^1 - a^2 and a tessitura of 35-40 compared with d^1 - g^2 and 33-38. Both sets of data fit the soprano voice best, and since the changes between the versions are negligible, it seems that they were after all intended for the same voice-type.

Version three of the song is a complete resetting of the text in a dramatic, Italianate cantata-song format with a d^1 - a^2 range and 33-38 tessitura. Again, this data most strongly suggests the soprano voice, but the opening of the song is reminiscent of Mr. Pate's solo *'Tis nature's voice* (H267), and the text and musical style are full of the joyful, rapturous sentiments characteristic of the counter-tenor sacred songs. The cantata song format in the soprano voice is associated with mad songs and the Italianate style most often with grieving sentiments, but there are several soprano songs in this joyful Italianate style, such as *Hark the echoing air* (H73). The only voice-type which does not exhibit this style of melodic figuration is the bass, and since there are some songs with this style of music in the soprano repertoire, since the range and tessitura are most suitable for the soprano voice, and since the other two versions of the song seem to be for soprano, it is likely that this song is also a soprano one.

There remain eight songs in range group C. *Urge me no more* (H273) and *Amintor, heedless of his flocks* (H14) have ranges of c^1 - $g^{\#2}$ and tessiturae of 32-37 and 33-39; *Love thou cans't hear* (H135) has a range of c^1 - a^2 and tessitura of 35-40; *Lovely Albina* (H138), *Oh! Fair Cedaria* (H168), *Pious Celinda* (H178) and *Ye happy swains* (H307) have ranges of d^1 - a^2 and tessiturae of 34-38, 33-38, 35-39 and 33-38; and *I loved fair Celia* (H94) a range of e^1 - a^2 and tessitura of 34-38. All of these ranges and tessiturae are suitable for soprano, and although some do appear an octave down as counter-tenor ranges their tessiturae do not correspond to the normal counter-tenor ones. Since the subjects and styles of the songs cannot narrow the range of options further, it

seems that on the basis of their ranges and tessiturae these songs were intended for soprano.

Group D: 'High' Ranges

Range Group D contains eight songs which have ranges that are unusually high overall for the soprano voice (see table 5). Two of these songs seem obviously to be for soprano. *Love's power in my heart* (H137) is a lesson in how to conquer hearts from the female point of view, and *Bell Barr* (H93) is an Italianate arioso about being unable to resist love, which exists in a treble-clef autograph score. There are also three songs which appear to have stereotypically male subjects. *The Knotting Song* (H80) is a satirical song on the female fashion for knotting at the time, and its lyric style is similar to that of other humorous male-voice songs. The range and tessitura down an octave of f-g¹ and 20-25 seem suitable for the tenor voice. The other two songs, *Ah! How pleasant 'tis to love* (H8) and *Sylvia, now your scorn give over* (H213), come from a publication with many 'masculine' songs *Vinculum societatis* and again their range of g-g¹ and tessiturae of 24-28 and 20-25 are suitable for the tenor or counter-tenor voices.

Table 5: Range Group D Chamber Songs

f ¹ -g ²	The Knotting Song
f ¹ -g ^{#2}	On the brow of Richmond Hill
f ^{#1} -a ²	When my Aemelia smiles
g ¹ -g ²	Ah! How pleasant is to love Love's pow'r in my heart Sylvia, now your scorn give over
g ¹ -g ^{#2}	What a sad fate is mine 1
g ¹ -a ²	Bell Barr

This leaves three songs. *On the brow of Richmond Hill* (H171) and *When my Aemelia smiles* (H288) are both male perspective songs in the lyric arioso style, and

have written ranges of f¹-g^{#2} and f^{#1}-a² and tessiturae of 34-38 and 37-41. Both these ranges are suitable for tenor or counter-tenor, and the tessitura of *On the brow of Richmond Hill* is suitable for tenor (22-26), whilst that of *When my Aemelia smiles* is one of the most frequent counter-tenor ones (25-29).

The final song in this range group is the first version of *What a sad fate is mine* (H278a), a second version of which appeared in Range Group A, and was identified as soprano because of its style, tessitura and the fact that it exists in a treble clef autograph copy. Although the two settings are completely different versions of the song, they are based on the same ground bass pattern and both use the same arioso style. Margaret Laurie surmises that the second version of the song was a revision of the original, in which case since the revision appears in the treble-clef Gresham Manuscript it is possible that the original version was for a different voice. Stylistically the Group D version has a slightly less Italianate quality than the later version which might indeed suggest that the earlier version was not meant for soprano. The range of g-g^{#1} only appears once as a tenor song, but is very similar to the counter-tenor 'standard range', and the tessitura of 24-28 is in-between the highest tenor and lowest counter-tenor one. It is therefore probable that the song was originally intended for counter-tenor/tenor, but this cannot be proved.

Chamber Songs: Reallocating 'lost' Voice Types

As surmised earlier, it appears that most of Purcell's songs were intended for soprano and also as one might have expected that those songs which seem to be for tenor or counter-tenor mostly come from the 'high' and 'extended' range groups (C and D). It is strange that none of these treble-clef songs seem to have been intended for the bass voice, meaning that Purcell composed only four chamber songs for this voice-type, compared to a probable twelve for tenor or counter-tenor and 55 for soprano. There are

of course several chamber songs which end in two-part choruses for high voice and bass which do not fit the criteria of this study, but these are almost invariably high-voice songs with which the bass joins in at the very end rather than bass songs with concluding high voice descant. This may have something to do with Purcell's stereotyping of the bass voice as one of gravitas and dignity, sentiments that were unsuitable for drawing room entertainment, but this does not explain the very small number of bass sacred chamber songs. Instead, particularly considering the dominance of the soprano voice in this genre, it may simply be the case that there was not the market for male chamber songs that there was for female ones, and as a composer who lived by his music, Purcell could not indulge himself by writing works for which there was little or no demand.

Dido and Aeneas

I: Purcellian Voice -Types

By its very nature as a dramatic work *Dido and Aeneas* must initially have been intended for performance rather than publication, therefore for a specific group of singers, and consequently a specific set of voice-types. However, the composer's original intentions were lost along with the autograph score, details of the first performance do not survive, and later manuscript sources and libretti give conflicting information as to voice-type casting. Much work has been carried out on the various sources of *Dido and Aeneas* in order to suggest the original voice-types intended, but as yet no conclusive answers have presented themselves. Unless the autograph score or cast list for the first performance comes to light (events which sadly are improbable in the extreme) it will not be possible to state categorically the composer's intentions regarding this issue. Nevertheless, using the information on range, tessitura and style gathered earlier in this thesis, it may be possible to narrow down the field of

possibilities suggested by other scholars, in order to create a likely original casting scheme.

The earliest of the existing musical sources of *Dido and Aeneas*, the ‘Tenbury Manuscript,’ places all the roles in *Dido and Aeneas* in the treble clef save Aeneas, whose role appears in tenor clef. Nevertheless, there are earlier textual and later musical sources which cast doubt on the voice-type casting of the Tenbury Manuscript,¹² and it is possible that some of the roles may have been intended to be sung by male voices at a lower octave. Table Six lists the roles of the opera with their ranges plus octave displacement, to give possible female and male voice ranges. Also included are the tessiturae of those roles whose solos fit the criteria for this study, and their octave displaced equivalents.

Table 6: Range of Roles in *Dido and Aeneas*

	Bass Clef		Treble Clef	
	Range	Tessitura	Range	Tessitura
Dido	c-g ¹	20-25	c¹-g²	32-37
Sorceress	c-g ¹	18-23	c¹-g²	30-35
Aeneas	d-f¹	18-23	d ¹ -f ²	30-35
Sailor	c-g ¹		c¹-g²	
Spirit	e-e ¹		e¹-e²	
Belinda	d-g ¹	22-26	d¹-g²	34-38
Second Woman	d-g ¹	21-26	d¹-g²	33-38
First Witch	d-g ¹		d¹-g²	
Second Witch	d-f ¹		d¹-f²	

bold type indicates range recorded in the Tenbury Manuscript

¹² For in-depth discussion of these sources see: Harris, Ellen T; *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas* (Oxford 1987).

The two main female protagonists in the opera, Dido and the Sorceress, have the same range, c^1 - g^2 , and similar tessiturae, 32-37 and 30-35 respectively. From a range point of view, these two roles seem obviously for soprano, since transposed down an octave the range begins a tone lower than any of the counter-tenor/tenor songs, and reaches higher than the standard bass top note of e^1 . However, the slight difference in tessitura between the roles means that an octave down, the Sorceress' tessitura is almost exactly equivalent to the 'standard' bass tessitura, 18-23 compared to 18-22, whilst Dido's tessitura still fits the soprano voice better than any other. This could be an indication that the Sorceress was a bass role, particularly in light of the documentary evidence which will be discussed below. However, the low soprano Mary Hodgson had a range of c^1 - g^2 in Purcell's works, and a tessitura of 32-36 in-between those of Dido and the Sorceress. Both these roles could therefore be classified as for low soprano (as distinct from the modern mezzo-soprano).

Another role with the tessitura 18-23 is Aeneas - a role notated in the tenor clef, and with a range that fits the voice-type well, although one might expect it to reach g^1 . Nevertheless, it seems odd that the only male role in Purcell's only opera should be assigned to a voice-type that was elsewhere largely ignored by the composer. Since the tessitura of the role is a bass one, and since it has already been established in this study that roles were occasionally written out in the 'wrong' clef for the voice-type, it seems likely that Aeneas was a bass role, particularly as the bass-baritone John Bowman was likely to have been involved in the original production.¹³ On the other hand, octave displacement of this range and tessitura gives data akin to that of the 'breeches' roles of the type Mary Hodgson specialised in, so Aeneas could possibly be a soprano role. Women were cast as male lead roles in Restoration drama even when there was no 'discovery' of their true sex at the end of the play, and indeed some plays were given with all-female casts, including Killigrew's *The Parson's Wedding*, Dryden's *Secret*

¹³ See p160.

Love and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*,¹⁴ so it would not be unusual if Tate and Purcell's hero was designed for a soprano. When considering this possibility, however, one must bear in mind that Purcell probably wrote his opera for court, knowing that it would be revived at Priest's school just as Blow's *Venus and Adonis* had been; he may therefore have written in a range that was deliberately interchangeable between bass and soprano.

Judging by their ranges in the Tenbury manuscript, the Spirit and the Sailor were also breeches roles. Although the Sailor's range is comparatively high for a breeches song, the coquettish nature of the lyrics and the subsequent development of the solo into a soprano chorus line, as well as the fact that the range fits the Purcellian soprano template better than that of any other voice-type, suggest that the Sailor was indeed a soprano role. This casting is supported by theatrical tradition, since

It seems to have been a fairly common practice to assign young actresses to play certain minor roles - pages, attendants, and the like - which would ordinarily have been played by youths.¹⁵

The Spirit, whilst obviously a male character since he appears 'in form of Mercury himself' and presumably a soprano role by dint of positioning in the treble clef, is actually extremely hard to classify in terms of range alone. The range e¹-e² fits well into the middle of all the voice types' ranges except for the counter-tenor, though the lack of low notes suggest that the tenor would be a more appropriate voice than the bass, and one would expect to find at least an f² to make a 'real' soprano range. Purcell's one other song with this range was sung by the high bass John Bowman as the evil spirit Grimbald in *King Arthur*.¹⁶ It has been shown earlier in this study that Purcell often employed basses in his stage works as otherworldly messengers, and it has also been shown that some bass stage songs were written in the treble clef. It is therefore highly likely that the Spirit was originally a bass solo, and that again as in the case of Aeneas, was given a multipurpose range to make it easy to transfer the work to the girl's school

¹⁴Wilson, J. H.; *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago 1958), 81-2

¹⁵ *ibid.* 82.

¹⁶ See p161 for Bowman's role in *Dido and Aeneas*.

production.

The remaining four roles, Belinda, the Second Woman and the two Witches, all appear to be for soprano. Three of them have the soprano 'standard' range of d^1 - g^2 , and the Second Witch has a similar range of d^1 - f^2 which in connection with Aeneas has already been identified as a suitable soprano range. In addition the handmaidens' tessiturae of 34-38 and 33-38 are very much soprano ones, and an octave down neither their tessiturae or their ranges fit another voice-type as convincingly.

II: Documentary Evidence, Theatrical Tradition and Literary Balance

The main musical texts conflicting with the Tenbury Manuscript's voice-typing are the so-called 'Academy Sources', performing materials pertaining to performances of the opera by the Academy of Ancient Music in 1774 and 1787. These sources give the Sorceress's part in bass clef, Belinda's part reverting to Virgil's original 'Anna' and cast in the alto clef, and the Sailor in tenor clef. Some of these alterations can be dismissed very quickly, such as the alto Belinda, since the female alto voice was not used by Purcell and may not even have existed as a recognised voice-type in his day. At any rate the part an octave down is far too low for a female alto, and although counter-tenors did appear as women on the Restoration stage,¹⁴ this only happened in comic parts, and would therefore not have been appropriate in this situation. In addition, Belinda's solos are frequently repeated at pitch by the chorus sopranos, and so it makes little sense for her to be anything other than a soprano, an argument which also applies to the idea of a tenor Sailor. It seems that these parts were altered to satisfy an eighteenth-century taste for vocal variety. However, the alteration of the Sorceress's voice-type is supported by documentary evidence which predates the Tenbury Manuscript.

The first recorded professional performance of *Dido and Aeneas* took place in

¹⁴ For example Mr. Pate performing Mopsa in *The Fairy Queen*.

1700 at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, divided into parts and worked into Charles Gildon's production of *Measure for Measure* as masque-style performances watched both by the audience and by the characters in the play. The prompt book and an engraving from this performance name a Mr. Wiltshire, a bass, as the singing actor who took the Sorceress's role,¹⁸ supporting the placement of the role in the bass clef in the later eighteenth-century Academy Sources. This suggestion also fits in with Purcell's own working tradition of presenting otherworldly characters as basses. However, since the Sorceress was the invention of the librettist, Nahum Tate, one would have thought that Purcell could have asked that this character become a Sorcerer, to allow him to use the bass voice. Nevertheless, as Price and Cholij pointed out in their 1986 article on the Sorceress, there was a strong theatrical tradition of cross-dressing witches in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, and therefore the 'female' sorceress could well have been sung by a man:

The most famous musical witches in all English drama (and widely recognised as the models for Tate's enchantresses) are those in Sir William Davenant's alteration of *Macbeth* (1663-4, published 1674)... In both [Eccles' 1696 and Leveridge's 1702 settings of the play] the principal witch, Hecate (by definition a female), was cast as a baritone or bass - John Bowman in the first and Leveridge himself in the second. Though no earlier solo music survives for Davenant's Hecate, the Restoration tradition can be traced back to at least 1673, when she was portrayed by the actor-singer Samuel Sandford.¹⁹

The familiarity of these singers' names, the knowledge of Purcell's personal bass-enchanter tradition and the wider travesti Hecate theatrical tradition form a persuasive argument that the Sorceress was meant to be sung by a bass. This is also substantiated musically by the fact that accompanied recitative - which is the mainstay of the Sorceress's part - is extremely rare in the soprano voice-type. Bass accompagnati, however, are common, particularly in dramatic roles of enchanters and spirits.²⁰ Placed down an octave, the tessitura of the Sorceress's part is remarkably similar to these other bass parts, with the tessitura of her recitatives translating as 18-22, the most frequent

¹⁸ For further details see Price and Cholij; 'Dido's Bass Sorceress', *The Musical Times* 127 (1986), 615-8.

¹⁹ Price and Cholij; 'Dido's Bass Sorceress', *The Musical Times* 127 (1986).

²⁰ See Chapter Two and see Price and Cholij; *ibid.*

bass tessitura.¹⁸ In fact, the only obstacle standing in the way of the reclassification of the Sorceress as a bass role is Tate's libretto.

Dramatic Symmetry: Psychological Implications

Nahum Tate's libretto is perfectly balanced, with Dido and her handmaidens opposed by the Sorceress and her two Witches, the Spirit and the Sailor as two messengers, one for each camp, and Aeneas as the pawn in the power struggle between the two parties - the only character who has contact with both sides. Giving the role of the Sorceress to a bass would destroy this symmetry; even to an audience accustomed visually to the convention of men dressed as women on stage in "serious" roles, the aural effect of the two opposing women would be lost. Indeed, Purcell seems deliberately to have created musical references between the female characters by means of range, tessitura and style. Dido and the Sorceress have the same range, c¹-g² and similar low tessiturae, and as Wilfrid Mellers points out, the Sorceress's music "is spacious and noble.... and is directly comparable with Dido's arioso in both intensity and span".¹⁹ In addition, as Roger Savage emphasises, the Sorceress's scenes are a "black parody"²⁰ of Dido's, and as Curtis Price acknowledges, the two characters have an identical dramatic function:

The Sorceress, like Dido is also consumed - not with grief, but with hate, which she expresses by plotting to destroy the queen. The tonal plan... reflects the parallel resolutions of inner conflict.... The parodistic function of the witches' scene is at its clearest here [Act II.i], as the Sorceress, despite the efforts of her weird courtiers, controls the action and the highly representational tonal scheme, precisely as Dido did earlier.²¹

If Tate had gone to so much trouble to draw such parallels in the drama, and Purcell had given the Sorceress and her Enchantresses almost exactly the same range and tessitura as Dido and her handmaidens, the suggestion that they would have intended the

¹⁸ The tessitura of the Sorceress' air 'Our next motion', at 22-25 is far too high for a bass, but Price and Cholij have found evidence to suggest that this was actually sung by the first witch in the production mentioned below (op. cit. 617).

¹⁹ Mellers, W; 'The Tragic Heroine and the Un-hero', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 209.

²⁰ Savage, R; 'Producing Dido and Aeneas', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 265.

²¹ Price, C; 'Dido and Aeneas in context', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 27.

Sorceress to be sung by a bass instead of another soprano is unlikely. In addition, although there was a tradition of transvestite witches on the Restoration stage, there was also an equally strong tradition of tragic plays with two lead actresses playing opposing roles, as Elizabeth Howe notes:

During the 1670s [Rebecca] Marshall and [Elizabeth] Boutell popularised a type of tragedy with two female leads, usually in competition for the same man, yet wholly dissimilar in attitude and behaviour....²⁵

Although Howe goes on to point out that this pairing of female opposites lay fallow after the retirement of Rebecca Marshall in the late 1670s until it was revived for Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle in the late 1680s, the tradition is no less likely to have influenced Tate than the male Sorceress tradition. Considering this theatrical tradition and the obvious musical and dramatic parallels between Dido and her handmaidens and the Sorceress and her Witches, it seems that the original intention must have been that the six female roles be taken by two groups of one low and two high sopranos.

The roles of Dido and her handmaidens are paralleled by the Sorceress and her Witches to such an extent that they could be seen to be dark and light sides of three women's personalities rather than six separate individuals. Furthermore, since the handmaidens and witches are not really dramatic characters in their own right but exist only as catalysts for their mistresses' plans and emotions, one could argue that the conflict is not between two groups of rivals, or even between the good and bad sides of three women, but between two sides of Dido's personality - a psychological rather than a dramatic conflict, which takes place inside Dido's head. The theme of madness, invariably madness inspired by love, is prevalent throughout Purcell's oeuvre, particularly in songs for female voice. As Jonathan Keates points out:

Madness was invariably fascinating to the men and women of the Seventeenth Century, partly because it seemed to some to present a glimpse of another world, exotic by virtue of its disdain for that rationality to which the contemporary ethos increasingly clung.²⁶

²⁵ Howe, E; *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge 1992), 119.

²⁶ Keates, J; *Henry Purcell* (London 1995), 115.

The chamber song *Bess of Bedlam* (H65), the dramatic song *From Rosy Bow'rs* (from *Don Quixote III*: H64) and even the sacred song *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation* (H216) are supreme examples of emotional madness realised in music stylistically similar to Dido's. In *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation* for example, there is an obvious musical parallel between the Virgin's anguished cries of 'Gabriel' and Dido's 'Remember me' (see Ex. 1). *From Rosy Bow'rs* also contains many musical references which recall Dido's music. Dido's opening 'ah!' is similar to the exclamations of 'ah!' in the second recitative and air unit in the mad song (see Ex.2), and the 'Bleak winds in tempests blow' section following this is very similar to Dido's 'Mine with storms of care oppressed' (see Ex.3). There are other touches throughout the song which recall Dido's music, such as the descending fourth on 'death' in the mad song and 'torment' in Dido's aria *Ah! Belinda*, and the melodic similarities between the sections 'to win dear Strephon' and 'So soft, so sensible'. Although these similarities could arise from the similar sentiments of the texts, it has been shown in Chapter Two (in the comparison of the solos for Winter and the Cold Genius) that Purcell was perfectly capable of realising similar images and sentiments in totally different ways, and it was also shown in Chapter Three that he composed in a mad-song style for 'Oh lead me to some peaceful gloom' in order to add psychological implications to the text. It seems likely therefore, that the similarities between the mad songs and Dido's music are deliberate, to show that Dido is in a disturbed state of mind.

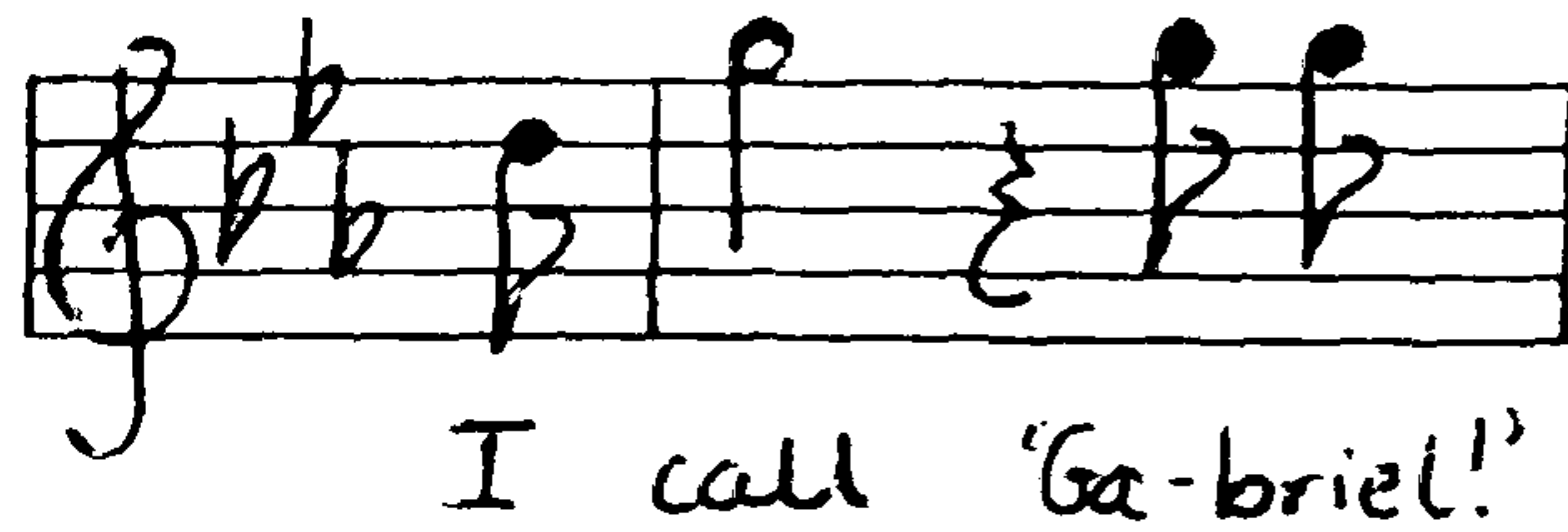
It is not just these musical similarities which suggest that Purcell's Dido is afflicted with madness. Purcell's audience would have been familiar not only with Virgil's original *Aeneid* version of the tale - where Dido stabs herself - but also the reworkings of it by various seventeenth-century writers. One of these, which Jean-Yves Patte points out must have been known in the court of Charles II, was Scarron's *Vergile travesti* which contains the following lines:

Example 1: a) *Dido's Lament*, bars 32-3



re - mem - ber me!

b) *The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation*, bars 41-2



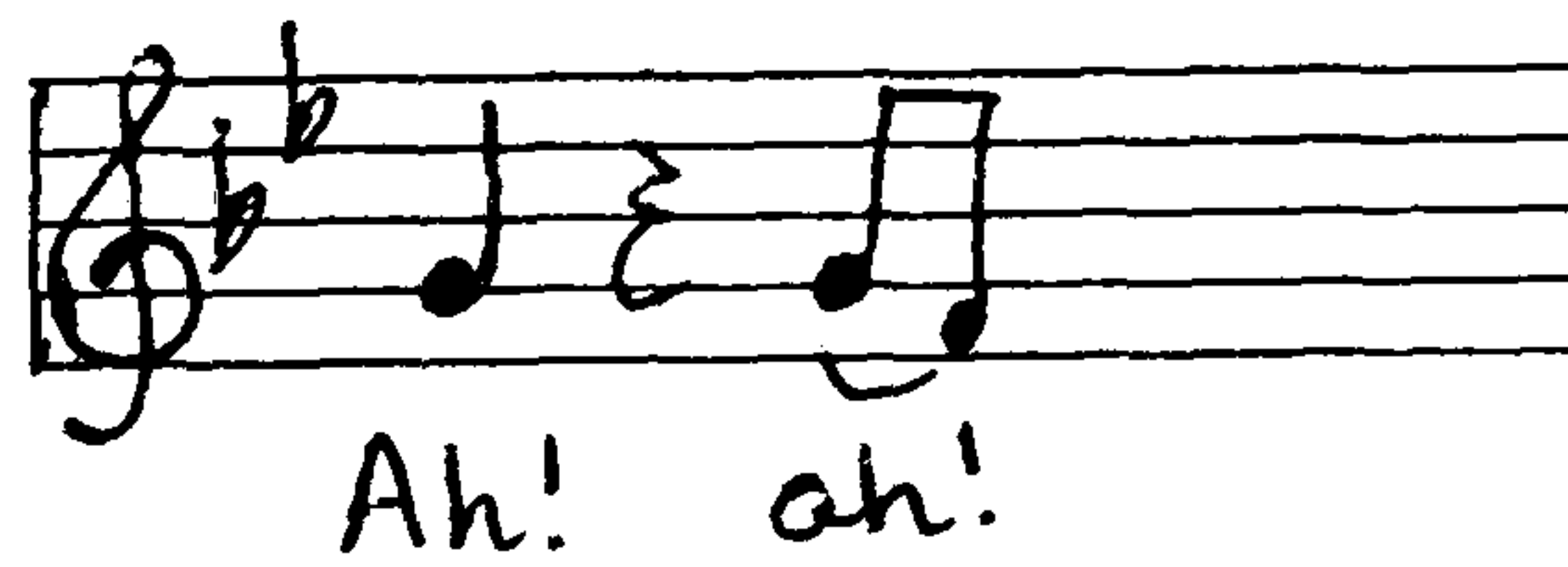
I call 'Ga-briel!'

Example 2: a) *Ah! Belinda*, bars 2-3



Ah! Ah!

b) *From Rosy Bowr's*, bar 46



Ah! ah!

Example 3: a) *Whence could so much virtue spring*, bars 15-17



Mine with storms _____ of care op-press'd

b) *From Rosy Bow'r's*, bars 56-58



Beak winds in tem-pests blow _____ in tem-pests blow _____

his enchanting looks perturb her reasoning
and that poor queen of the demented
hangs on his every word²⁷

It is not just Scarron, either, who presents Dido as a madwoman; Tate himself does so in *Brutus of Alba* where he uses the Dido story, but changes the characters to the Queen of Syracuse and Brutus of Alba. In this reading of the text, the Queen becomes deranged after consummating her love with Brutus, and dies after recovering briefly from dementia to deliver the lines

My malady at last has prov'd my Cure,
My Griefs at last have swell'd to that degree
To break my o'ercharged Heart and give no Ease.²⁸

Thus, Purcell's audience would understand that Tate's Dido was mad, and would view the opera in the light of this information and in the light of Virgil's original tale. They could therefore view the drama from two levels - the 'reality' of Virgil's plot, and the 'madness' of Dido's view of the action.²⁹

Dido at the start of the opera is already "press'd with torment" by her love for Aeneas to which she knows she should not succumb because she has sworn a vow of chastity to her late husband (in Tate's other version, she sleeps in his grave every night). Nevertheless, she gives in to temptation, but rather than assuage her fears, the consummation of her affair with Aeneas serves only to heighten her angst. Delusional and paranoid, in Act II.ii she is bombarded with portentous images: the Second Woman sings of Acteon who is torn to pieces by his own hounds, as Dido will be by her own guilt, and when Aeneas tactlessly remarks "Behold upon my bending spear / A monster's head stands bleeding / With tushes far exceeding / those did Venus' huntsman tear" the phallic reminder of her sin coupled with the reference to Venus' lover Adonis, who met a terrible fate, causes her inappropriate panic at the oncoming storm.³⁰ When

²⁷ Scarron, 'Book IV', *Virgil travesti* cited by Patte, J-Y; 'Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*', notes to recording of the work by Le Concert Spirituel GLOSSA 921601 (2001).

²⁸ Tate, N; *Brutus of Alba* cited in Price, C; 'Dido and Aeneas in Context', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 39.

²⁹ For further information on the significance of *Brutus of Alba* to *Dido and Aeneas* see Price, C; 'Dido and Aeneas in context', *Dido and Aeneas: An opera* (New York 1986), 3-41.

³⁰ See Mellers, W; 'The Tragic Heroine and the Un-hero', *Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 210; see also Savage, R; 'Producing Dido and Aeneas', *Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 272.

Aeneas in reality (and in Virgil) is called away by the gods, Dido believes that this is her punishment for giving in to Aeneas and that she is destined to die, as 'impure' classical heroines always do (witness Lucretia). This reading explains why Aeneas, a great hero, could be fooled by witchcraft without a kindly god intervening to set things right - the message has come from the gods; it is Dido's guilt which makes her think foul play is to blame. In addition this reading helps to explain the chorus words 'Great minds against themselves conspire / And shun the cure they most desire'. In a traditional reading this refers to Dido's refusal of Aeneas' offer to stay, but coming just after the queen's lines 'But death, alas, I cannot shun', might this not be a comment on Dido's madness (her mind conspiring against itself) preventing her from living and loving as a normal person? Thus she dies by drifting fully into madness, hence the reason that there is no great passionate moment at the end of the work, and that Tate's libretto does not include a stage direction for her death.

Crucial to this reading of the plot is the fact that Dido believes the situation she is placed in is a punishment for her weakness, a fact which is made clear in both Virgil's original and Tate's *Brutus of Alba*. Thus, the Sorceress is not merely a figment of Dido's fevered imagination, but a dark side to her own personality, symbolising the lust, faithlessness to her dead husband and character weakness which has brought her so low. The witches' scenes are a parody of the court scenes, but they take place in Dido's imagination, because she is incapable of seeing anything innocently and purely since she is consumed with lust for Aeneas and with grief and duty towards her dead husband. These scenes are her ravings, where she visualises the terrible outcome of her actions in a medium that would strike a chord with Restoration audiences. The fury of the gods was not something that a seventeenth-century Christian audience could identify with, but witches were still being hunted and executed at this time. It is therefore logical that the mad seventeenth-century reworking of Dido, knowing that there must be terrible consequences for her actions, visualises herself as the victim of witchcraft, since she

cannot of course recognise the increasing madness which is her real fate.

This theory is supported by several scholars' readings of the opera, by theatrical convention, and by Purcell's own flouting of that convention. Curtis Price acknowledges that

Dido is consumed from within rather than destroyed by circumstances imposed by fate or perfidy. Hers is not a fall from grace, but a progress from anguish, through guilt and rage, to morbid resignation. The entire opera is a relentless descent to the grave³¹

When one thinks back to the mad songs, there are clear parallels of dramatic structure. Mad Bess' main goal is to die to end her suffering ("I'll lay me down and die"), and Bonvica also hopes to "soothe my pleasing pain" in the "peaceful gloom" of death. Crucially, these mad women's images of death are not violent but simple giving up of hope and laying down to rest, exactly as Dido does at the end of the opera. This is in direct opposition to the normal Restoration depiction of madness, which Elizabeth Howe points out was a deliberate device to satisfy the voyeuristic desires of the audience by presenting an actress post-coitally dishevelled, usually in various states of undress and invariably covered in blood. The fact that Purcell's mad heroines usually 'give up the ghost' in a more romantic, dignified fashion explains why he and Tate chose not to use the Virgilian end to the story, where Dido stabs herself. To further strengthen this parallel between Purcell's mad songs and his opera, it is of note that D'Urfey's categories of madness in *From Rosy Bow'rs* (Love, Gaily, Melancholy, Passion and Frenzy) are all emotional states which Dido experiences in the course of the opera, many of which Price alludes to in the extract above.

Musically speaking, aside from the similarities of Dido's music and Purcell's mad songs, Wilfrid Mellers notes the structure of the overture, stating:

The slow opening section takes us immediately into the world of Dido's suffering: the stabbing dissonant suspensions, the lamenting chromatics, anticipate her arioso though they are ennobled, depersonalised, by the sustained lyricism, the grave movement, the pedal notes. The quick section, in sprightly quavers, is dance music, as we would expect. But it is not the conventional, triple-rhythmed round.... Indeed, it sounds suspiciously like the witches' music: and prepares us for the identification of opposites that is to come later.³²

³¹ Price, C; 'Dido and Aeneas in Context', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 22.

³² Mellers, W; 'The Tragic Heroine and the Un-hero', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 206.

When one considers that Dido and the Sorceress and their companions never appear at the same time in the opera, that the Sorceress was Tate's invention, that the style of Dido's music is in the mad song vein and directly comparable with that of the Sorceress, and that the Sorceress is Dido's way of confronting her black side, it seems that both Tate and Purcell may well have intended the six main female roles to be doubled by three women,³³ so that Dido, driven to distraction by her love for Aeneas, creates her own destiny.³⁴ Only Roger Savage, however, goes so far as to suggest that the roles should be doubled, and then only in the context of a modern rather than an original performance, and he does not subscribe to the mad Dido theory. He states:

It could be argued in fact that... all the [female] roles in the opera are really personified aspects of Dido: Belinda and the Second Woman projections of her yearning towards erotic fulfilment, the Sorceress a formidable anti-self embodying all her insecurities and apprehensions of disaster contingent on her involving herself in any deep personal relationship, and the two solo witches nightmarish shadows of Belinda and the Second Woman....

The easy-going sensuality of Dido's court and the bitchiness of the witches are equally inimical to the queen's happiness, and this comes over very clearly is it is evident to an audience that the same troupe of talented masqueraders is playing both. There is a corollary to this which is on the face of it absurd, that the same singer should play both Dido and the Sorceress. But even here the absurdity would be one of over-emphasis rather than perversity. And is it *so* absurd?... Could someone not be prevailed on to play both in the same production, Odette/Odile-fashion?³⁵

III: First Performances

One final question remains concerning *Dido and Aeneas*: could the opera have really been designed for schoolgirls, with no help from outside female professionals in any of the roles? The girls at Priest's school would have been highly trained musically, and some of them the same age as Purcell's stage sopranos, so it is perfectly possible

³³ If one accepts the idea of dramatic symmetry/doubling ruling the voice-types of the characters, one might suggest that the Spirit and the Sailor should also be the same voice-type. It was surmised for reasons of range and because his solo develops into a soprano chorus line, that the Sailor was probably a breeches role. Since the Spirit's range fits into all voice-types, and since Purcell seems to have abandoned his bass stereotyping of otherworldly creatures once already in this opera, and since the ideal balance for the Sailor would be another breeches role it seems that both these parts were intended for soprano.

³⁴ In 2001 Le Concert Spirituel made a recording using this doubling scheme to great effect, with the mezzo-soprano Laura Pudwell in the title role and the sopranos Salome Haller and Mary-Louise Duthoit as the handmaidens and witches (Le Concert Spirituel; Herve Niquet, conductor; Laura Pudwell, mezzo-soprano; Peter Harvey, baritone: GLOSSA 921601, 2001).

³⁵ Savage, R; 'Producing Dido and Aeneas', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 261-3.

that the opera was intended for them. Nevertheless, judging by the fact that this opera does not make concessions to the amateur status of the performers in the way that Purcell's ode for Mr. Maidwell's school, *Celestial Music*, did, I think it likely that this was first a professional work, probably choreographed by Josias Priest himself, and was later revived at Priest's school. These were the circumstances of John Blow's *Venus and Adonis*, the work widely regarded as the model for Purcell's opera, and the two works share many features which support the theory that their performance histories are the same.

Throughout their careers, Purcell and Blow demonstrated a compositional relationship that was both emulative and competitive; when one made a compositional innovation, the other was quick to follow with his own 'answer' to it. Under these circumstances, the idea that Blow's masque-opera was followed by Purcell's is logical, but the idea that Purcell would have been satisfied to write directly for the school while his old teacher wrote for the court is unlikely. In addition, if *Dido and Aeneas* was first performed at the school in 1689, this seems a very long time for an 'answer' to a work written in 1683. Indeed, I believe, as do many scholars,³³ that the date of composition of *Dido and Aeneas* was much earlier, probably around 1684, and since the work was not published and because Purcell was not in a financial situation which gave him the luxury to compose purely for pleasure, it must have been performed almost as soon as it was written. An earlier composition/performance date also fits in better with the political situation of the time. In 1689, a year after William and Mary ascended to the throne, it would hardly have been appropriate to write a new work based on the story of a foreign prince seducing and abandoning a native queen! A revival of an established work on such a theme, however, would not have been seen as a political statement, and indeed since Thomas D'Urfey wrote an epilogue for the school production and since the music for Tate's allegorical prologue praising William and Mary does not survive and

³³ See Pinnock and Wood; 'Unscarr'd by turning times?: The dating of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*', *Early Music* 20 (1992), 372-90.

was therefore probably added for the school production too, all the signs point to the school production being a revival of the work, given contemporary relevance by the addition of some extra verses.

The similar personnel requirements of *Dido and Aeneas* and *Venus and Adonis* also suggest a court performance of Purcell's work around 1684. Both operas make extensive use of female characters and very little use of men outside the chorus, and have many opportunities for dance sequences. These factors make the work entirely suitable either for the ladies of court or the girls of Priest's school. The presence of men in the chorus, however, suggests that *Dido and Aeneas*, like Blow's opera, was written primarily for the court, since male singers would have been readily available in the Private Musick, whereas they would have been an extra resource for Priest and a considerable financial drain. Since it is an accepted fact that *Venus and Adonis* was written to showcase the talents of Charles II's mistress Moll Davies and her daughter Lady Mary Tudor, it seems probable that *Dido and Aeneas* was designed for the same purpose.

When the roles of Dido and Venus are compared certain similarities do present themselves. Although Venus's range is c^1 - bb^2 , notes above g^2 are utilised extremely rarely, giving a 'standard-range' akin to that of Dido. In addition, Purcell's failure to use the higher reaches of the soprano register for Dido can be explained by his personal preference for composing soprano grieving laments on slow grounds in lower ranges as demonstrated in Chapter Three. Dido's music clearly recalls Venus's in the expressive use of coloratura and chromaticism alongside Italianate, bel-canto arioso writing. The opening duet for Venus and Adonis, although differing in emotion, is musically very similar to the Act III duet for Dido and Aeneas (see Ex.4) and throughout the works are melodic gestures which link the two lead female roles.

It is the closing section of *Dido and Aeneas*, however, which invites the closest comparison with *Venus and Adonis*. Venus' Act III opening calls of 'Adonis' are

Example 4: a) Duet: Away, Away! (D&A III.ii), bars 47-55

D
A way, a way! No, no, No, no, no, no, a way, a-way, a -

A
No, no I'll stay I'll stay. I'll stay. I'll stay and love o

D
way, a-way, a-way. To death I'll fly if longer

A
bey, I'll stay and love o - bey I'll stay, I'll stay and love o - bey and

D
you de-lay a-way, a-way!

A
love o - bey

b) Duet: Adonis will not hunt today (V&A I), bars 41-49

V
No — my shep-herd haste a — way, haste a — way No

A
A - do - nis will not hunt to day No I

V
my shep-herd, haste a way No my shep-herd, haste a way

A
will not hunt to - day, No A - do - nis will not hunt to day

reflected in Dido's 'Remember me' (see Ex.5). Similarly, Dido's line 'To fate I sue of other means bereft / the only refuge for the wretched left' is eerily reminiscent of Venus' 'Ye cruel gods, why should not I / have the great privilege to die' (see Ex.6). It can also hardly be a coincidence that the most memorable moments of both operas are the tortured 'Ah's' which the heroines sing at their emotional denouements (see Ex.7). Of course, these similarities may well be largely created by Purcell's desire to emulate, and outdo, Blow, but the comparison shows that Dido was an eminently suitable role for Mary Davis. In fact, if one subscribes to the 'mad Dido' theory, Dido was an even more suitable role for Mary Davis than Venus had been, since it was after Charles II witnessed her performance of mad songs as Celia in Davenant's *The Rivals* in 1668 that he took her for his mistress.³⁴

Unfortunately there is no role in *Dido and Aeneas* suitable for Lady Mary Tudor, but this does not mean that her mother did not appear in the opera. In fact, Margaret Laurie suggests that the reason for the production of *Venus and Adonis* was to remind Charles II of his obligations towards his daughter, and that the fact that shortly after the opera's premiere the King began to pay for Lady Mary's upkeep may be an indication that the plan succeeded.³⁵ If this were the case, then there would have been no pressing need for Mary Davis or her daughter to appear in a second opera, but these kind of entertainments were frequent at court and there would have been plenty of other singers available to cast Purcell's work.

Another likely candidate for the role of Dido if Moll Davis were eliminated from consideration would be her rival on stage and in love, Nell Gwyn. This actress was the King's Company's answer to Moll Davis (who acted for the Duke's company), although by the end of her career she had gained supremacy and it was Moll Davis who was forced to emulate her success. When one of these ladies played a certain type of role, the other was sure to follow it with a parody role in a different performance a few weeks

³⁴ Howe, E; *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge 1992), 34.

³⁵ Laurie, M; 'Allegory, Sources and Early Performance History', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 44.

Example 5: a) *Dido's Lament*, bars 25-36

re-mem-ber me, re-mem-ber me, but ah!
 for-get my fate, re-mem-ber me, but ah! — for-get my fate

b) *Recitative: Adonis, Adonis* (V&A III), bars 1-3

A-do-nis, A-do-nis, A-do-nis

Example 6: a) *Recit: Your counsel all* (D&A III.ii), bars 10-14

To fate I sue, of oth-er means be-veft, the on-ly re-fuge for the watch-ed left

b) *Recit: Ye cruel gods* (V&A III), bars 37-39

Ye cru-el gods, why should not I have the great pri-vi-lege to die?

Example 7: a) see example 5a)

b) *Recit: Ah!* (V&A III), bars 58-61

Ah, — ah — ah, — ah —

later, and indeed after Moll Davis' success as Celia in *The Rivals*, Nell Gwyn sang a parody on one of the songs from this production at her next appearance on the King's Company stage. Then, in 1669, life imitated art as Nell Gwyn also left the stage to become the mistress of Charles II. Since it is apparent that Nell Gwyn's talents matched if not surpassed Moll Davis's, since rivalry between the King's mistresses was of necessity very high, and because she also had children by the King, it seems more than likely that Nell Gwyn demanded her 'turn' to entertain the King and courtiers in a specially written musical spectacular. The only stumbling block as regards this theory is the fact that, "hating serious parts, Nell did them very badly..."³⁶ and Samuel Pepys once remarked on her inability to act serious roles.³⁷ This therefore makes it unlikely that Nahum Tate would chose a tragic heroine as a vehicle for Nell's talents, even if its purpose was to parody Moll Davis's performance, since it would do her no justice.

At this point in her career, Charlotte Butler had left the stage to pursue a career as a singer at court and in public concerts,³⁸ and this period directly precedes the time that she was Purcell's favourite soprano, so her claim to a role in the opera is strong. Her acting and dancing skills would certainly have come in handy for a masque-like production. Charlotte Butler's range in Purcell's songs extends from e¹-a² whilst her tessitura lies between 33-40, so the most likely roles for her seem to be Belinda/First Witch or Second Woman/Second Witch, though the former pairing seems more likely, because these roles have some slight potential for someone with strong acting ability. If, as Colley Cibber suggested, Charlotte Butler had indulged in some kind of liaison with Charles II, it is amusing to think that *Dido and Aeneas* may have been written to pit her and the King's other ex-mistress against each other, one taking Dido, the other the Sorceress. A performance with such a casting would have been great entertainment for Charles II's scandalmongering courtiers! Alternatively, since the gentleman of the Private Musick who seems most likely to have played Aeneas was John Bowman,

³⁶ Wilson, J. H.; *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago 1958), 100.

³⁷ Pepys, S; *The Shorter Pepys* (rpr. London 1985), 856-7.

³⁸ Duffy, M; *Henry Purcell* (London 1994), 105.

whose range and musical style in Purcell's other works is equivalent to Aeneas' music,⁴² and who Margaret Laurie suggests as Aeneas in the 1700 production,⁴³ it is tempting to assume that his on-stage duet partner Charlotte Butler would star opposite him. Nevertheless, the ranges of both Dido and the Sorceress are consistently low, and Charlotte Butler was definitely a high specialist who one must remember did not play serious roles on the professional stage. The Sailor's range, however, is high and Charlotte Butler often played breeches roles, whilst the dramatically symmetrical role of the Spirit is entirely suitable in range and dramatic character for Bowman, so perhaps these two took the minor parts.

Another range of options presents itself when we consider the court singer Arabella Hunt as a contender for the role of Dido/Sorceress. Mrs. Hunt spent her entire life in court circles and taught singing to Princess Anne.⁴⁴ Although she did not come into the height of her Royal favour until the reign of Queen Mary - in front of whom she sang unnamed Purcell solos - she was active at court at this time. From the point of view of personality, she would have been an ideal choice for Dido, since she was known for her virtue. In a bizarre scandal she married James Howard, only to discover that he was in fact a woman. She lived quietly with her 'husband' for a year and then went through a dignified divorce, after which she apparently did not engage in the sexual liaisons usual for a woman of the court.⁴⁵ An amusing performance subtext would certainly have been created with the virtuous Arabella as Dido, encouraged to surrender to a King by Charlotte Butler, Mary Davis, or Nell Gwyn as Belinda, or any combination of these ladies as the handmaidens.

Another possible Dido is the actress Elizabeth Barry (1658-1713). Acknowledged as the greatest of the Restoration actresses, Barry appeared on the stage for most of her adult life from 1675 to 1710.⁴⁶ She was equally successful in tragedy

⁴² And who would have been more than capable of singing Adonis as well.

⁴³ Laurie, M; 'Allegory, Sources and Early Performance History', *Purcell: Dido and Aeneas: An Opera* (New York 1986), 54.

⁴⁴ Baldwin and Wilson; 'Purcell's Sopranos', *Musical Times* 123 (1982), 602-9.

⁴⁵ Hawkins, Sir J; *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (repr. New York 1963).

⁴⁶ Wilson, J. H.; *All the King's Ladies: Actresses of the Restoration* (Chicago 1958).

and comedy, usually playing in both the honourable yet sexually experienced or 'fallen' woman - a character stereotyping which makes her an ideal candidate for the role of Dido. As was the case with most of the actresses, Barry began playing minor parts, but the turning point of her career came when she played Monimia in Thomas Otway's *The Orphan* in 1680,⁴⁷ a few years before Dido is believed to have been written, and from which the following lines are taken:

When I'm laid low in the grave, and quite forgotten...
When I am dead, as presently I shall be
(For the grim tyrant grasps my heart already),
Speak well of me.⁴⁸

The parallels with Dido's final recitative and lament are obvious:

More I would, but death invades me...

When I am laid in earth,
May my wrongs create
no trouble in thy breast
Remember me,
but ah! Forget my fate

Barry's success as Monimia resulted in the creation of so-called 'she' tragedy⁴⁹ - pathetic tragedy revolving around a female lead, usually Barry - a dramatic construct which died out after Barry retired from the stage. One of the first playwrights to create a 'she' tragedy for Barry was Purcell's librettist, Nahum Tate, in his adaptation of *King Lear* (1680):

Tate rewrote Shakespeare's tragedy so as to focus on Cordelia, played of course by Barry, and, as he explained in his dedication, he changed the original plot so as to heighten the 'Distress of the Story'.⁵⁰

Since Tate had already created one tragic leading role for Mrs. Barry, one might speculate that the part of Dido was also intended for her, since the lead role fits perfectly Barry's typecasting and since the opera is a supreme example of 'she' tragedy. Although one should not lend too much weight to artistic events which happened after the premiere of *Dido and Aeneas* it is interesting to note the parallels between Purcell's opera - a revision by Tate of Virgil's original story - and a known Elizabeth Barry

⁴⁷ Howe, E; *The First English Actresses* (Cambridge 1992).

⁴⁸ Extract from Otway's *The Orphan* cited in Howe, E; op. cit, 118.

⁴⁹ Howe, E; *ibid.*

⁵⁰ Howe, E; op. cit, 119.

vehicle, Nicholas Rowe's *The Fair Penitent* (1703), itself a reworking of Philip Massinger's *The Fatal Dowry* (1632) which, like Tate's reworking of *Dido and Aeneas*, places all the dramatic emphasis on the heroine. As Elizabeth Howe summarises:

The Fair Penitent focuses on a single female character and seeks to submerge the minds of the audience in her emotions. Events are presented only in relation to Calista, the penitent.... Calista... although she dominates the play, is a passive victim. Her seduction... occurred almost against her will. Her attraction to her seducer is a complicating factor, but one which should not obscure the central fact, which is... she is essentially a noble figure on whom wrongdoing, the worst possible calamity, has fallen.⁵¹

Again the parallels with Tate's reworking of *Dido and Aeneas* are surely too apparent to be coincidental.

There is only one problem with the assignment of Barry as the first Dido, that Anthony Aston claimed "she could neither sing nor dance"⁵² when she first came to the stage. Nevertheless, it seems that Aston may have had a prejudiced view of Mrs Barry, and since it is known that she received intensive acting training from her lover the Earl of Rochester, after which she made a triumphant return to the stage, there is no reason to suggest that her vocal skills were entirely lacking by the time of the opera's premiere, especially since she was known for her melodious speaking voice.⁵³

Had *Dido and Aeneas* been written ten years later, one might argue that the two opposing leading roles were intended for the pairing of Elizabeth Barry and Anne Bracegirdle. However, one would then expect Barry to have played the villain and Bracegirdle Dido, although because of her reputation for purity, Anne Bracegirdle rarely played a character who indulged in consensual sex, as Dido does. The queen's remorse for her act and the ultimate price she pays would perhaps be enough to argue that Bracegirdle would have played the role. Nevertheless, Bracegirdle's first appearance on the professional stage was in 1688 and she did not begin to play lead roles until the 1690s, so she can be counted out as an original contender for the role of Dido, though she may well have played it later in her career since she was an accomplished singer.

⁵¹ Howe, E; op. cit, 125.

⁵² Anthony Aston cited by Wilson, J. H.; *All the King's Ladies* (Chicago 1958), 111.

⁵³ Wilson, J. H.; *ibid.*, 117.

It seems then that there was no pairing of actresses at the time of the premiere of *Dido* to take the opposing roles of the Queen and the Sorceress. Since the text and plot of the opera share similarities with Elizabeth Barry's other roles, it seems likely that this opera was indeed a one-woman-show intended for her in which she may well have doubled the roles of *Dido* and the Sorceress.

Dido and Aeneas IV: Modern Performance

The ambiguity concerning the first performance of *Dido and Aeneas*, the knowledge that it may have been written with a girl's school revival already in mind, the fact that the subsequent performing history, musical and literary texts contradict each other, and the absence of an autograph score mean that for the modern director any number of approaches to the opera can justifiably be taken.

It appears that at the original court production all the parts were intended for women, except for Aeneas, which was most likely written for the bass-baritone John Bowman, and the Spirit, whose dramatic role and musical style marks this role out as a bass one. The six main female roles may have been doubled by three women. A modern realisation of the first performance would therefore use seven (or four) sopranos, a bass-baritone and a bass. Nevertheless, one imagines that Purcell may have anticipated a revival by the girls of Josias Priest's Chelsea boarding school, and it seems that the roles of Aeneas and the Spirit were deliberately written to be interchangeable between bass-baritone or bass and soprano, particularly since Purcell may have known that Priest's daughter would be prevailed upon to take the part of Aeneas, as she was that of Adonis. Since several plays were given on the Restoration stage with all female casts, it would be perfectly justifiable to mount a performance of *Dido and Aeneas* with sopranos in every role.

Similarly, although the 1700 *Measure for Measure* performance of the opera

was clearly an occasion over which Purcell had no control, and which he could not have anticipated when writing *Dido and Aeneas*, the Hecate tradition was well established by 1684, and both Purcell and Tate must have been aware of it. Since Purcell often used basses for otherworldly roles, and since the style and tessitura of the music is similar to that which he composed for basses, it would again be justifiable to use a bass for the Sorceress. This, however, is not a decision to be taken lightly, since it spoils the symmetry between the six main female roles, and changes the impact of the drama from a psychological to a literal battle of rival forces.

If one accepts that Tate's Dido is a madwoman, and that therefore the psychological implications of the drama are at the forefront, there are only two real performance options. One is to have the two leading ladies and their associates played by sopranos, mimicking each other's gestures to highlight the similarities between them. The other, dramatically stronger option is to have Dido and her handmaidens double the Sorceress and her enchantresses. In the latter scheme, a soprano doubling the Spirit and the Sailor would also be appropriate, and while Aeneas could be played by a soprano, for the purposes of vocal variety it may perhaps be wise to cast this role with a bass-baritone.

Conclusion

Seventeenth-Century Voice Types and Singers in Purcell's Music: Realisation in Modern Performance

In the course of this study it has become apparent that the voice types and singers of Purcell's day differed from those of modern times. These differences embrace issues of range, vocal technique, timbre, style, dramatic function and subject-stereotyping. Since it has been shown that individual singers seem to have had a certain amount of influence over Purcell, and since it is known that most of the time he would have known exactly which performers he was writing his vocal music for, the above differences are not just of scholarly interest, but have musical and stylistic significance for 'historically-informed' modern performance.

Perhaps the most radical differences between Purcellian and modern voice-types lie in the area of subdivision. Whereas modern standard voice-types are based on subdivisions of the choral S.A.T.B groupings, in Purcell's day there were essentially only three voice-types, Soprano, Counter-tenor (Tenor) and Bass. Furthermore, it seems that in Purcell's works these were not subdivided further except in the case of the counter-tenor and tenor, which were high and low versions of the same voice. Any variance in the other voice-types can be accounted for by the influence of individuals, Mary Hodgson supplying the only known 'low' soprano voice, and in the bass section, John Bowman as the only bass-baritone and John Gostling as the only low bass. In terms of range, the total ranges of both the Purcellian soprano and the Purcellian bass correspond to those listed in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music* as the modern standard range for these voice-types. However, whereas modern singers are frequently expected to sing notes outside these range boundaries, Purcell's singers - except for John Gostling - never did so in his solo vocal works. Even if this was a musical decision taken by the composer rather

than a direct result of an underdeveloped range on behalf of the singers, it may well be that the singers' vocal development was inhibited by their range confinement, and they could therefore have sounded vastly different from today's singers.

Purcellian counter-tenors and tenors, of course, had vastly different ranges from the singers of today, and it seems that this can largely be explained by reason of technique. Although there was a nominal subdivision of counter-tenor and tenor voice-types as high and low, this was not a subdivision which was applied to singers as such. There is no evidence of solo singers calling themselves 'tenors' in Purcell's works; they were all 'counter-tenors', although there is frequent crossover of personnel between the two parts, suggesting that again there was no formal division within the voice-type. There does, however, seem to have been a division of technique within the counter-tenor ranks. Documentary evidence suggests that some counter-tenors used falsetto technique, and this theory is supported by the nature of Purcell's music for the individual singers Alexander Damascene, John Howell and Josiah Bouchier. However, the range and tessitura of Purcell's other counter-tenor music is suggestive of a 'natural' or combination technique, or of a method of vocal production similar to that of a modern pop singer, but it is by no means clear which of these techniques was standard practice amongst Purcell's singers. In any case, it is unlikely that each of Purcell's singers used exactly the same method of vocal production - particularly in the case of sopranos, who all came from vastly different backgrounds, and had not even the luxury of a choral director in common.

The question of technique also throws up questions of timbre, and while again this is an issue that is most pressing in the discussion of the counter-tenor voice, it also has particular significance for the soprano, since the treble-like, vibrato-less soprano soloist is one of the most omnipresent hallmarks of the 'authentic' Early Music sound. It is apparent from various treatises and contemporary accounts that singers who were trained, as we know several of Purcell's sopranos were, were probably taught to preserve

the individual timbre of each of the registers of their voices, only blending over the breaks to ensure smooth passage between the registers. This means again that Purcell's singers might have sounded different from the soloists of today.

Another area of consideration is the dramatic function or subject-stereotyping allocated to each voice-type by Purcell, since these may be an indication of its typical timbre. Conversely, Purcell's stereotyping may have caused singers to sing in a manner appropriate to the subject; a manner which they then carried into their singing for different composers and different subject material. Perhaps because they are such a large group, the counter-tenors and tenors exhibit less subject stereotyping than the bass and soprano. Bases across Europe at this time were being characterised as dignified and grave, associated very much with wisdom and religion, and therefore one might surmise that the Purcellian bass was a declamatory, weighty voice rather than a lyrical one. The Purcellian soprano, on the other hand, when singing in the first person was invariably characterised in extreme states of emotion, typically grief, madness or coquettish lust, and the musical forms and style Purcell used for these women have been shown to be some of his most 'operatic'. The convincing expression of emotion in the singing and speaking voices, as has been argued by many other scholars,¹ is impossible without the use of vibrato, a trait which has traditionally been disassociated from the modern performance of Early Music, in England at least. The fact that Purcell used sopranos as transmitters of all of his most emotional music must then have serious implication for its historically-informed performance in the present day.

All the above voice-type characteristics specific to Purcell must, of course, be placed in the wider context of singing ideology and technique in England in the seventeenth century if one is to attempt to gain true insight into the nature of the Purcellian singer. There are many pieces of documentary evidence which help establish

¹ See Sherman, B. D.; *Inside Early Music: Conversations with Performers* (New York 1997); and Harris, E. T.; 'Voices', *Performance Practice: Music after 1600* (London 1989), 97-116.

this wider context, but the most significant, and those which have been most often referred to by other scholars, are the treatise on singing techniques by Pier Francesco Tosi, published in English translation in 1743, and John Playford's *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick*, first issued in 1674 and later reissued edited by Purcell himself. The latter text is particularly valuable since although it does not focus solely on singing as Tosi's treatise does, it can reasonably be assumed that Purcell as editor was familiar with the material of the book, and would have changed anything he did not agree with. Playford's own comments on singing are confined to the purely technical, the most significant part agreeing with Roger North's comments cited in Chapter Three;

In the expressing of your *Voyce*, or Tuning of *Notes*, let the sound come clear from your *throat*, and not through your *teeth*, by sucking in your breath, for that is a great obstruction to the clear utterance of the *Voyce*.²

Playford's treatise includes a chapter "Written some years since by an English Gentleman, who had lived long in Italy, and being returned, Taught the same here". This predates the careers of the singers discussed in this study, but may still hold some significance for this study. It is suggested in this chapter that English singers could not sing long winding graces, but this seems to have been remedied by Purcell's time, judging by the style of his music. The author also suggests that English singers need to practise more, perhaps indicating that their techniques were not very well developed.

Tosi's treatise, whilst written many years after Purcell's death in 1723, is based on contrasting the style of the 'Ancient' singers with those of the 'Modern' times. The so called 'ancients' were those whom Tosi came into contact with in London during the late 1600s, the heyday of the Purcellian singers, so any information referring to them is potentially very valuable. Most of Tosi's treatise is directed towards the castrato, whether soprano or alto, but certain elements of it can be applied to female or lower male voice-types. Tosi reinforces Playford (and North's) remarks about technique, stating that the voice should be 'neat and clear' and that singing through the nose or in the throat 'are

² Playford, J; *An Introduction to the Skill of Musick* (London 1674, repr. New Jersey 1966), 20.

two the most horrible Defects in a Singer, and past all Remedy if once grown into a habit'.³ The fact that three seventeenth-century writers felt the need to comment on or warn against this practice may well suggest that it was rife at the time of Purcell's singers. Tosi also makes an interesting comment as regards singers on the stage, remarking

I do not know if a perfect Singer can at the same time be a perfect Actor; for the mind being at once divided by two different Operations, he will probably incline more to one than the other; It being, however, much more difficult to sing well than to act well, the Merit of the first is beyond the second. What a Felicity would it be, to possess both in a perfect Degree!⁴

Since Tosi was in London during the period that the singing actors were superseded by the stage singers, this may suggest that the singing actors were indeed less vocally talented than the non-acting singers, as Purcell's music for them would by and large suggest. This latter supposition is reinforced by the view of Sir John Hawkins that

The most celebrated English women singers about the end of the last century, were Mrs. Davis, Mrs. Cross, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Miss Champion...; but it is easy to discover that their perfections were confined to perhaps a beautiful person, graceful and easy action, and a fine voice, the gift of nature, and that owed little of its fascinating power to the improvements of art.⁵

It seems from the above evidence that Purcell's singers may not have had much of a 'technique' at all, though this is a hard fact to reconcile with the obvious vocal complexity of Purcell's music. Hawkins points out in his discourse:

As Purcell is chiefly celebrated for his vocal compositions, it may perhaps be conceived that in the original performance of them they derived considerable advantages, and that the singers, like the actors of that day, had abilities superior to those of the present; but this, as far as the inquiry can be traced, was not the fact: before the introduction of the Italian opera into England the use of the vocal organs was but little understood; and as to what is called a fine manner, the best singers were as much strangers to it as they were to the shake, and those many nameless graces and elegances in singing now so familiar to us;... From all which it may be inferred that the merit of the singers in and about this time rested chiefly in that perfection which is common to all ages, a fine voice.⁶

One cannot of course be sure of Hawkins's prejudices, particularly against singers whom he could only have heard at the end of their careers, whilst he himself was still a young man and obviously influenced by the fashion for Italian opera. Nevertheless, we are much further removed from Purcell's performers than he was, and he may have been reflecting a

³ Tosi, P. F.; *Observations on the Florid Song* (London 1743), 22.

⁴ Tosi, P. F.; *ibid.*, 152.

⁵ Hawkins, J.; *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (repr. New York 1963), 815-6.

⁶ Hawkins, J.; *ibid.*, 753.

general feeling passed down to him; a feeling which Roger North and Playford's 'English Gentleman' also subscribed to.

The essential problem with emulating seventeenth-century performances of Purcell's works is that despite the unity of the contemporary accounts regarding singing, one cannot be sure that Purcell's singers paid any attention to this advice, or even if they received it. Those singers who are known to have studied under a singing teacher, or to have sung in one of London's choral establishments, can perhaps be reasonably supposed to have possessed some semblance of a 'technique', but this is by no means a certainty. The diarist Samuel Pepys, for instance, complained of his wife's singing teacher 'whose teaching of my wife, only by singing over and over again to her and letting her sing with him, not by herself, to correct her faults, I do not like at all but was angry at it.'⁷ Since one cannot be sure of the level of training that these singers received, and since it is apparent that any training that was given used an entirely different technique from modern singers, the attempt to emulate seventeenth-century singing essentially cannot be realised perfectly by modern trained performers.

There are nevertheless several areas in which historical information can be used in order to represent more faithfully the sonorities and style of Purcell's music in its original performance. The two most obvious technical differences between Purcellian and modern singers are that the former probably used throat articulation and had a different tone-colour for each register of the voice, whilst the latter use a diaphragmatic technique and a single blend voice. Whilst throat articulation 'goes against normal modern vocal technique'⁸ and is not a technique which singers wishing to be heard in today's large concert halls, or wishing to sing other repertoires with a 'normal' technique should adopt, the issue of blend is one which can be addressed by varying the timbre of the voice and style of singing so that top notes are sung lightly, and lower notes with weight. This at

⁷ Pepys, S; *The Shorter Pepys* (repr. London 1993), 738.

⁸ Wistreich, R; 'Reconstructing pre-Romantic singing technique', *The Cambridge Companion to Singing* (Cambridge 2000), 186.

least will go some way to replicating the singing style of Purcell's singers, and may add new insight to the music, particularly in the case of imitative phrases repeated in different registers, or in songs where different emotional states are represented in different vocal registers.

Purcell is famed for his word setting. It must be remembered that many of Purcell's singers were primarily actors, and that the singing technique they were likely to have used would have involved a 'speech-like' declamatory style. With these things in mind, in performance it is important to ensure that the music expresses the words, rather than the other way around. Textual gestures and stresses should always take precedence over apparent musical ones, particularly since Purcell had set musical styles for certain subjects, and so took his musical cues from the words. As John Potter remarks, 'what is important is that singers return to a text-orientated mode which satisfies the compositional ideology of the day'.⁹ Potter also remarks upon the difficulties of giving modern performances in historically appropriate accents. In relation to Purcell, although his singers would have sung in their normal speaking accents, these are accents which would have been understood by the audience, whereas an attempt to replicate them in front of today's audiences would obscure rather than add to the music. I believe a far more 'authentic' effect is achieved by communicating the nuances of the music through the words so that everyone can understand them, in the same way as they would have done in Purcell's day.

Aside from these issues, and those discussed at the end of each chapter concerning suitability of repertoire for each modern voice-type, there are few areas where historical information can be acted upon to add to the music. The debate concerning the validity of historical accuracy as a performance criterion is a subject out of the bounds of this study, but it may be noted here that the suggestions made in the course of this thesis

⁹ Potter, J; *Vocal Authority: Singing Style and Ideology* (Cambridge 1998), 168.

need not necessarily be carried over into performance. Every voice is unique, so one cannot hope to replicate absolutely the sound of singers from the past, especially where original recordings are not available and where one cannot directly link the singing ideology of the day with the specific singers in question. As Denis Stevens points out

historical evidence amply demonstrates that the most admired singing, at whatever point in the flowering of western music, was that which incorporated strength, sweetness, flexibility, and other attributes of a positive nature¹⁰

and these, along with a healthy respect for the words, are perhaps ultimately the most important elements on which to base a modern performance of Purcell's songs.

¹⁰ Stevens, D; *Early Music* (London 1997), 167.

Appendix A

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of First Lines and Titles

<u>H</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Voice</u>	<u>Z</u>
	A Divine Hymn <i>see Lord, what is man, lost man?</i>		
	A Morning Hymn <i>see Thou wakeful shepherd</i>		
1	A Prince of Glorious Race descended	c - tenor	f342
2	A thousand several ways I tried	'soprano'	359
3	Accursed rebellion reared his head	bass	f345
4	Ah! Belinda	'soprano'	f626
5	Ah! Cruel bloody fate	'soprano'	f606
6	Ah! Cruel nymph you give despair	'soprano'	f352
7	Ah! Had we, Sir, the pow'r or art	bass	f337
8	Ah! How pleasant 'tis to love	'c-tenor'	353
9	Ah! How sweet it is to love	soprano	f613
10	Ah me! To many deaths decreed	soprano	f586
11	Ah wanton foe dost thou upbraid	bass	f545
12	Amidst the shades and cool refreshing streams	'soprano'	355
13	Amintas to my grief I see	'soprano'	356
14	Amintor heedless of his flocks	'soprano'	357
15	Among the gods there is none	bass	f11
	An Evening Hymn <i>see Now that the sun has veiled</i>		
	Anacreon's Defeat <i>see This Poet sings</i>		
16	And now shall he lift up mine head	c - tenor	f55
17	And since the time's distress to war's alarms	bass	f320
18	Another century commencing	c - tenor	f327
19	April who till now has mourn'd	c - tenor	f321
20	Arise, my Muse and to thy tuneful Lyre	c - tenor	f320
21	Art thou return'd at last	'soprano'	f545
22	As Fame, great Sir, before you ran	c - tenor	f325
23	Ask me to love no more	'soprano'	358
24	Awake, and with attention hear	bass	181
25	Awake, awake, put on thy strength	bass	f1
26	Awful Matron take thy seat	bass	f327
27	Bacchus is a pow'r divine	bass	360
28	Be welcome then great Sir	c - tenor	f324
29	Begin the song and strike the living lyre	bass	183
30	Begon, curst fiends of hell	c - tenor	f630

31	Behold th'indulgent Prince is come Bell Barr <i>see I love and I must</i>	bass	f326
32	Beneath the poplar's shadow Bess of Bedlam <i>see From Silent Shades</i>	'soprano'	f590
33	Beware poor shepherds	'soprano'	361
34	Bid the Virtues	soprano	f323
35	Britain, thou now art great	c - ten	f343
36	But he that dwelleth in heav'n	bass	f65
37	But Kings like the sun	tenor	f324
38	But those no more shall dare repine	tenor	f337
39	But with as great devotion meet	bass	f336
40	By ancient prophecies we have been told	c - ten	f630
41	By beauteous softness mixed with majesty	c - ten	f332
42	Cease anxious world your fruitless pain	'soprano'	362
43	Celestial Music did the Gods inspire	bass	f322
44	Celia has a thousand charms	treble	f609
45	Celia, that I once was blest	'soprano'	f572
46	Charon the peaceful shade invites	'soprano'	f627
47	Come all to me	'soprano'	f632
48	Come, all ye songsters of the sky	c - ten	f629
49	Corinna, I excuse thy face	'soprano'	f612
50	Corinna is divinely fair	'soprano'	f365
51	Crown the altar, deck the shrine	c - ten	f321
52	Crown the year and crown the day	tenor	f335
53	Cupid, the slyest rogue alive	'soprano'	367
54	Cynthia frowns whene'er I woo her	soprano	f592
55	Departing, thus, you'll hear him say Dido's Lament <i>see Thy hand Belinda</i>	c - ten	f321
	Epithalamium <i>see Thrice Happy lovers</i>		
56	Fairest Isle	soprano	f628
57	Farewell all joys!	'soprano'	368
58	Fled is my love, for ever gone	c - tenor	f571
59	Fly swift, ye hours	'soprano'	369
60	For Iris I sigh	'soprano'	f572
61	For look, how high the heav'n is	bass	f47
62	For there is the seat of judgment	tenor	f19
63	For though the Lord be high	bass	f20
64	From rosy bow'rs	soprano	f578
65	From silent shades	'soprano'	370
66	From those serene and rapturous joys	c - ten	f326

67	Genius of England	c - ten	f578
68	Great Love, I know thee now	bass	f628
69	Hang this whining way of wooing	soprano	f612
70	Hark, Damon, hark what music's this I hear?	soprano	f541
71	Hark, hark! Just now my listening ears	c - ten	f336
72	Hark, how all things	soprano	f629
73	Hark the echoing air	soprano	f629
74	He appointed the moon for certain seasons	c - ten	f47
75	He hath not dealt with us	tenor	f47
76	He himself courts his own ruin	'soprano'	f372
77	He was taken from prison to judgment	tenor	f64
78	Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great	tenor	f62
79	Hear ye gods of Britain	bass	f574
80	Hear's not my Phillis	'tenor'	371
81	Her charming strains expell	c - ten	f322
82	Here the deities approve	c - ten	f339
83	Here's the summer, sprightly, gay	c - ten	f629
84	How happy is she	soprano	f609
85	How happy's the husband	soprano	f582
86	How I sigh when I think of the charms	'soprano'	374
87	How long, great God	'treble'	189
88	I am come to lock all fast	soprano	f629
89	I attempt from love's sickness	soprano	f629
90	I came, I saw and was undone	'tenor'	375
91	I look for the Lord	bass	f45
92	I looked and saw within the book of fate	c - ten	f598
93	I love and I must	'soprano'	382
94	I loved fair Celia	'soprano'	381
95	I resolve against cringing and whining	'soprano'	386
96	I see she flies me	soprano	f573
97	I sighed and I pin'd	c - tenor	f571
98	I sighed and owned my love	soprano	f595
99	I take no pleasure in the sun's bright beams	'soprano'	388
100	I was glad when they said unto me	c - tenor	f19
101	I will love thee, O Lord	bass	fN67
102	I will worship towards thy holy temple	treble	f20
103	I'll mount to yon blue coelum	c - tenor	f571
104	I'll sail upon the dog star	c - tenor	f571
105	If grief has any power to kill	'soprano'	378
106a	If music be the food of love 1	'soprano'	379
106b	If music be the food of love 2	'soprano'	379
107	If music be the food of love 3	'soprano'	379
108	If pray'rs and tears	<i>ambiguous</i>	380

109	If then we've found the want of his rays	bass	f324
110	If thou wilt give me back my love	c - tenor	f571
111	In a deep vision's intellectual scene	bass	f545
112	In Cloris all soft charms	'soprano'	384
113	In his just praise your noblest songs let fall	bass	f344
114	In the black dismal dungeon of despair	'tenor'	190
115	In vain, Clemene, you bestow	'soprano'	f588
116	In vain 'gainst love I strove	soprano	f580
117	In vain we dissemble	'soprano'	385
118	Ingrateful love!	'soprano'	f612
119	It was a work of full as great a weight	bass	f332
120	Jove's command shall be obeyed	bass	f626
121	Lads and lasses, blithe and gay	soprano	f578
122	Land him safely on her shore	bass	f336
123	Let each gallant heart	'soprano'	390
124	Let formal lovers still pursue	'soprano'	391
125	Let not a moon-born elf mislead ye	bass	f628
126	Let the dreadful engines	bass	f578
127	Let the graces and pleasures repair	soprano	f627
128	Let us dance, let us sing	soprano	f627
129	Lord, what is man	bass	f39
130	Lord, what is man, lost man	'tenor'	192
131	Love arms himself in Celia's eyes	'soprano'	392
132	Love in their little veins	'soprano'	f623
133	Love is now become a trade	'soprano'	393
134	Love quickly is pall'd	'soprano'	f632
135	Love thou can'st hear	'soprano'	396
136	Love's goddess sure was blind this day	c - tenor	f331
137	Love's power in my heart	'soprano'	395
138	Lovely Albina's come ashore	'soprano'	394
139	Lucinda is bewitching fair	treble	f570
140	Man is for the woman made	soprano	f605
141	May her blest example	soprano	f331
142	Mighty Charles, though joined with thee	bass	f341
143	Mine enemies are daily in hand	bass	f4
144	Music for a while	'soprano'	f583
145	My heart whenever you appear	'soprano'	399
146	My lips should be fain	c - ten	f16
147	My pray'rs are heard	soprano	f338
148	My song shall be alway	bass	f31
149	My torch indeed	bass	

150	Next winter comes slowly	bass	f629
151	No, no poor suffering heart	soprano	f576
152	No part of my dominion	soprano	f628
153	Not all my torments can your pity move	'soprano'	400
154	Now, now the fight's done	'soprano'	f606
155	Now that the sun has veiled his light	'treble'	193
156	Nymphs and Shepherds come away	soprano	f600
157	O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places	bass	f52
158	O lead me to some peaceful gloom	soprano	f574
159	O let me weep	soprano	f629
160	O Lord God of Hosts	bass	f31
161	O Lord, how glorious are Thy works	bass	f18
162	O Lord our Governour	bass	f39
163	O Lord, thou art my God	bass	f41
164	O solitude	'soprano'	406
165	O what great troubles	bass	f16
166	Of old, when Heroes thought it base	bass	f333
167	Oft she visits this loved mountain	'soprano'	f626
168	Oh! Fair Cedaria, hide those eyes	'soprano'	402
169	Oh, how you protest	soprano	f605
170	Olinda in the shades unseen	'soprano'	404
	On our Saviour's Passion <i>see The Earth Trembled</i>		
171	On the brow of Richmond Hill	'tenor'	405
172	One charming night	c - tenor	f629
173	Orpheus perhaps is from the shades below	bass	f541
174	Our next motion must be	soprano	f626
175	Pastora's beauties when unblown	'soprano'	407
176	Phyllis I can ne'er forgive it	'soprano'	408
177	Phyllis talk no more of passion	'soprano'	409
178	Pious Celinda goes to prayers	'soprano'	410
179	Pluto, arise	bass	f575
180	Praise the Lord, O my soul	bass	f47
181	Pursue thy conquest love	'soprano'	f626
182	Pursuing beauty, men descry	soprano	f588
183	Rashly I swore I would disown	'soprano'	411
184	Retir'd from any mortal's sight	'soprano'	f581
185	Return, revolting rebels	bass	f632
186	Rivers from their channels turned	c - tenor	f324
187	Sawney is a bonny lad	'soprano'	412
188	Say, cruel Amoret	c - ten	f612
189	Scorn'd envy	c - ten	f630

190	See, even night herself is here	soprano	f629
191	See how the glittering Ruler of the day	c - ten	f320
192	See, I obey	bass	f629
193	See my many colour'd fields	tenor	f629
194	See where repenting Celia lies	soprano	f603
195	Seek not to know what must not be reveal'd	treble	f630
196	Shake the cloud from off your brow	'soprano'	f626
197	She loves and she confesses too	'tenor'	413
198	She that would gain a faithful lover	'soprano'	414
199	She who my poor heart possesses	'soprano'	415
	Sighs for our late sovereign King Charles II <i>see If pray'rs</i>		
200	Since from my dear Astrea's sight	soprano	f627
201	Since one poor view has drawn my heart	'soprano'	416
202	Since the toils and the hazards of war's at an end	c - ten	f627
203	Sing unto God, O ye kingdoms	bass	f52
204	Sleep, Adam, sleep and take thy rest	'tenor'	195
205	So happily still you your counsels employ	tenor	f337
206	So when the glittering Queen of Night	tenor	f333
207	Sound the trumpet, beat the warlike drums	c - ten	f342
208	Sound, trumpets, sound!	c - ten	f333
209	Spite of the godhead, powerful love	'soprano'	417
210	Still I'm wishing	soprano	f627
211	Strike the Viol	c - tenor	f323
212	Sweeter than roses	soprano	f585
213	Sylvia, now your scorn give over	'c-tenor'	420
214	Take not a woman's anger ill	'soprano'	f609
215	Tell me no more, I am deceiv'd	soprano	f601
216	Tell me some pitying angel	'soprano'	196
217	That I may see the felicity of thy chosen people	c - ten	f33
218	The airy violin and lofty viol quit the field	c - ten	f328
	The Aspiration <i>see How long, great God</i>		
	The Blessed Virgin's Expostulation <i>see Tell me some</i>		
220	The cares of lovers	treble	f632
	The Caution <i>see Beware poor shepherds</i>		
221	The danger is over	soprano	f595
222	The fatal hour comes on apace	'soprano'	421
223	The Father's Brave	bass	f342
224	The fife and all the harmony of war	c - tenor	f328
225	The fig tree putteth forth	tenor	f28
226	The god himself says he'll be present here	soprano	f334
227	The Graces in his Mother shine	soprano	f342
228	The Greatest Blessing fate can give	'soprano'	f626
	The Knotting Song <i>see Hear's not my Phillis how the</i>		
229	The Lord is King, the Earth may be glad	bass	f54

230	The Lord is the strength of my life	c - tenor	f63
231	The Lord preserve him and keep him	c - tenor	f7
232	The mighty Goddess of this wealthy Isle	tenor	f338
233	The pale and purple Rose	c - tenor	f333
	The Plaint <i>see O let me weep</i>		
234	The plot is displayed	bass	f324
235	The Queen of Carthage, whom we hate	'soprano'	f626
236	The royal patrons sung	soprano	f327
237	The sorrows of death compassed me	bass	fN67
238	The sparrow and the gentle dove	tenor	f325
239	The summer's absence unconcerned we bear	bass	f337
	The Thraldom <i>see I came, I saw and was undone</i>		
240	The works of the Lord are great	bass	f21
241	Their looks are such that mercy flows from thence	c - tenor	f630
242	Then follow, brave boys to the wars	soprano	f578
243	Then why Dorinda should not we	bass	f542
244	There's nothing so fatal as woman	c - ten	f571
245	These are the sacred charms	bass	f323
246	These had by their ill usage drove	c - ten	f337
247	They daily mistake my word	tenor	f4
248	They say you're angry	'soprano'	422
249	They tell us that you mighty powers above	soprano	f630
250	They that go down to the sea in ships	bass	f57
251	This does our fertile isle	tenor	f332
252	This poet sings the Trojan wars	bass	423
253	Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien	bass	f331
254	Thou doting fool, forbear!	soprano	f628
255	Thou wakeful shepherd	'treble'	198
256	Though an host of men were laid against me	bass	f55
257	Though you make no return to my passions	soprano	f601
258	Thrice happy lovers	soprano	f629
259	Through mournful shades and solitary groves	'soprano'	424
260	Thus the ever grateful spring	soprano	f629
261	Thus the gloomy world	c - tenor	f629
262	Thus to a ripe consenting maid	'soprano'	f607
263	Thus Virgil's genius lov'd	soprano	f322
264a	Thy genius, lo	bass	f604
264b	Thy genius, lo	treble	f604
265	Thy hand Belinda	'soprano'	f626
266	'Tis death alone can give me ease	c - tenor	f571
267	'Tis nature's voice	c - tenor	f328
268	To arms, heroic prince	treble	f600
269	Turn thou us, O good Lord	tenor	f62
270	'Twas within a furlong of Edinboro' Town	soprano	f605

271	Unto Thee will I cry	bass	f63
272	Upon the slippery tops of human state	bass	f544
273	Urge me no more	soprano'	426
274	Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day without sin	c - tenor	f232
275	Wake, Quivera	c - tenor	f630
276	Welcome as soft refreshing showers	bass	f326
277	Welcome, more welcome does he come	tenor	f326
278a	What a sad fate is mine 1	'c-tenor'	428
278b	What a sad fate is mine 2	'soprano'	428
279	What ho! Thou genius of this isle	soprano	f628
280	What power art thou?	bass	f628
281	What shall be done on behalf of the man	bass	f341
282	What shall I do to show how much I love her?	soprano	f627
283	When a cruel long winter has frozen earth	tenor	f629
284	When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes	soprano	f627
285	When first my shepherdess and I	'soprano'	431
286	When her languishing eyes said 'Love!'	'soprano'	432
287	When I have often heard young maids complaining	soprano	f629
288	When my Aemelia smiles	'c-tenor'	434
289	When Orpheus sang	c - tenor	f322
290	When the world first knew creation	bass	f578
291	While Caesar like the morning star	bass	f335
292	While for a righteous cause he arms	bass	f321
293	While Thirsis wrapp'd in downy sleep	'soprano'	437
294	Whilst Cynthia sung, all angry winds lay still	'soprano'	438
295	Whilst I with grief did on you look	soprano	f610
296	Whilst undisturb'd his happy Consort reigns	c - tenor	f338
297	Who but a slave can well express	'soprano'	440
298	Who can behold Florella's charms?	'soprano'	441
299	Who sitteth in the heav'ns over all	bass	f52
300	Why do the heathen so furiously rage together	bass	f65
301	Why should men quarrel here?	treble	f630
302	With him he brings the partner of his throne	c - tenor	f344
303	With sick and famish'd eyes	'tenor'	200
304	Wondrous machine	bass	f328
305	Ye blustering brethren of the skies	bass	f628
306	Ye gentle spirits of the air	soprano	f628
307	Ye happy swains, whose nymphs are kind	'soprano'	?441
308	Ye twice ten hundred deities	bass	f630
309	Yes Daphne, in your face I find	c - tenor	f629
310	Your counsel all is urged in vain	soprano	f626

'soprano' = suggested voice type for songs with 'lost' voice types

Appendix B

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of Counter-Tenor Songs

H First Line

- 1 A Prince of Glorious Race
16 And now shall he lift up mine head
18 Another century commencing
19 April who till now has mourned
20 Arise, my Muse, and to thy tuneful Lyre
22 As Fame, great Sir, before you ran
- 28 Be welcome then, great Sir
30 Begon, curst fiends of Hell
35 Britain, thou now art great
40 By ancient prophecies we have been told
41 By beauteous softness mixed with majesty
- 48 Come all ye Songsters of the sky
51 Crown the Altar, deck the shrine
- 55 Departing, thus, you'll hear him say
- 58 Fled is my love
66 From those serene and rapturous joys
- 67 Genius of England
- 71 Hark, hark! Just now my listening ears
74 He appointed the moon for certain seasons
81 Her charming strains excell
82 Here the deities approve
83 Here's the summer, sprightly, gay
- 92 I looked and saw within the book of Fate
97 I sighed and I pin'd
100 I was glad
103 I'll mount to yon blue coelum
104 I'll sail upon the dogstar
110 If thou wilt give me back my love

- 136 Love's Goddess sure was blind this day
- 141 May her blest example
144 Music for a while
146 My lips shall be fain
- 172 One charming night
- 186 Rivers from their channels turned
- 188 Say, cruel Amoret
189 Scorn'd Envy
191 See how the glitt'ring Ruler of the Day
202 Since the toils and the hazards of war's at an end
207 Sound the trumpet, beat the warlike drums
208 Sound, trumpets, sound!
211 Strike the Viol
- 217 That I may see the felicity of thy chosen people
218 The Airy Violin
224 The Fife and all the harmony of War
230 The Lord is the strength of my life
231 The Lord preserve him and keep him
233 The Pale and Purple Rose
241 Their looks are such that mercy flows from thence
246 These had by their ill usage drove
244 There's nothing so fatal as woman
261 Thus the gloomy world
266 'Tis death alone can give me ease
267 'Tis Nature's voice
- 274 Vouchsafe O Lord to keep us this day without sin
- 275 Wake, Quivera
289 When Orpheus sang
296 Whilst undisturb'd his happy consort reigns
302 With him he brings the partner of his throne
- 309 Yes Daphne, in your face I find

Appendix C

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of Tenor Songs

H First Line

- 37 But kings like the sun
38 But those no more shall dare repine
- 52 Crown the Year and crown the day
- 62 For there is the seat of judgment
- 75 He hath not dealt with us
77 He was taken from prison to judgment
78 Hear us, O Lord, for thy mercy is great
- 134 Love quickly is pall'd
- 193 See my many colour'd fields
205 So happily still you your counsels employ
206 So when the glitt'ring Queen of Night
- 225 The fig tree putteth forth
232 The mighty Goddess of this wealthy isle
238 The sparrow and the gentle dove
247 They daily mistake my word
251 This does our fertile isle
269 Turn thou us, O good Lord
- 277 Welcome, more welcome
283 When a cruel long winter has frozen earth

Appendix D

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of Bass Songs

H **First Line**

- 3 Accursed Rebellion
7 Ah! had we, Sir, the pow'r or art
11 Ah wanton foe dost thou upbraid
15 Among the gods there is none
17 And since the time's distress
24 Awake and with attention hear
25 Awake, awake, put on thy strength
26 Awful Matron
- 27 Bacchus is a pow'r divine
29 Begin the Song
31 Behold th'indulgent Prince is come
36 But he that dwelleth in heav'n
39 But with as great devotion meet
- 43 Celestial Music
- 61 For look, how high the heav'n is
63 For though the Lord be high
- 68 Great Love, I know thee now
- 79 Hear ye Gods of Britain
- 91 I look for the Lord
101 I will love thee, O Lord
109 If then we've found the want of his rays
111 In a deep vision's intellectual scene
113 In his just praise
119 It was a work of full as great a weight
- 122 Land him safely on her shore
125 Let not a moon-born elf mislead ye
126 Let the dreadful engines
129 Lord, what is man

142 Mighty Charles, though joined with thee
 143 Mine enemies are daily in hand
 148 My song shall be alway
 149 My torch indeed

 150 Next winter comes slowly

 157 O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy places
 160 O Lord God of hosts
 161 O Lord, how glorious are Thy works
 162 O Lord our Governor
 163 O Lord, thou art my God
 165 O what great troubles
 166 Of old, when Heroes thought it base
 173 Orpheus perhaps is from the shades below

 179 Pluto, arise!
 180 Praise the Lord, O my soul

 185 Return, revolting rebels

 192 See, I obey
 203 Sing unto God

 223 The Father's Brave
 229 The Lord is King, the Earth may be glad
 234 The plot is displayed
 237 The sorrows of death
 239 The summer's absence
 240 The works of the Lord are great
 243 Then why Dorinda should not we
 245 These are the sacred charms
 250 They that go down to the sea in ships
 252 This poet sings
 253 Those eyes, that form, that lofty mien
 256 Though an host of men
 264a Thy genius, lo! 1

 271 Unto Thee will I cry
 272 Upon the slippery tops of human state

 276 Welcome as soft refreshing showers
 280 What power art thou?
 281 What shall be done on behalf of the man
 290 When the world first knew creation

- 291 While Caesar like the morning star
292 While for a righteous cause he arms
299 Who sitteth in the heav'ns over all
300 Why do the heathen so furiously rage together
304 Wondrous Machine
- 305 Ye blustering brethren of the skies
308 Ye twice ten hundred deities

Appendix E

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of Soprano Songs

H First Line

- 5 Ah! Cruel bloody fate
9 Ah! How sweet it is to love
10 Ah me! To many deaths decreed
- 32 Beneath the poplar's shadow
34 Bid the Virtues
- 46 Charon the peaceful shade invites
49 Corinna, I excuse thy face
54 Cynthia frowns whene'er I woo her
- 56 Fairest Isle
60 For Iris I sigh
64 From Rosy Bow'rs
- 69 Hang this whining way of wooing
70 Hark, Damon, hark
72 Hark, how all things with one sound rejoice
73 Hark, the echoing air
84 How happy is she
85 How happy's the husband
- 88 I am come to lock all fast
89 I attempt from love's sickness to fly
96 I see she flies me
98 I sighed and owned my love
115 In vain, Clemene, you bestow
116 In vain, 'gainst love I strove
118 Ingrateful love
- 121 Lads and Lasses, blithe and gay
127 Let the graces and pleasures repair
128 Let us dance, let us sing
132 Love in their little veins
- 140 Man is for the woman made

147 My pray'rs are heard
151 No, no poor suffering heart
152 No part of my dominion
154 Now the fight's done
156 Nymphs and Shepherds
158 O lead me to some peaceful gloom
159 O let me weep
169 Oh! how you protest
182 Pursuing beauty, men descry
184 Retir'd from any mortal's sight
190 See, even night herself is here
194 See where repenting Celia lies
200 Since from my dear Astrea's sight
210 Still I'm wishing
212 Sweeter than roses
215 Tell me no more, I am deciv'd
221 The danger is over
226 The god himself says he'll be present here
227 The graces in his mother shine
236 The royal Patrons sung
242 Then follow, brave boys to the wars
249 They tell us that you mighty powers above
254 Thou doting fool, forbear!
257 Though you make no return to my passion
258 Thrice happy lovers
260 Thus the ever grateful Spring
262 Thus to a ripe consenting maid
263 Thus Virgil's genius lov'd
270 'Twas within a furlong of Edinboro' Town
279 What ho! Thou genius of this Isle
282 What shall I do to show how much I love her
284 When first I saw the bright Aurelia's eyes
287 When I have often heard young maids complaining
306 Ye gentle spirits of the air

Appendix F

Purcell Song Catalogue: Index of Treble Songs

H First Line

- 44 Celia has a thousand charms
47 Come all to me

102 I will worship tow'rds thy holy temple

139 Lucinda is bewitching fair

195 Seek not to know

220 The cares of lovers
264b Thy genius, lo! 2
268 To arms, heroic prince

295 Whilst I with grief
301 Why should men quarrel?

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Discography

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CHANDOS 0521 (1981).

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PHILIPS 432 114-2 (1993).

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra
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HARMONIA MUNDI 907110 (1993).

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L'OISEAU LYRE 436 992-2 (1994).

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SONY CLASSICAL 62993 (1994).

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NAXOS 8.553108 (1994).

Les Arts Florissants
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HARMONIA MUNDI 901683 (2001).

Le Concert Spirituel
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King Arthur:
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The Fairy Queen:
The Sixteen
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‘Complete Theatre Music’:
Academy of Ancient Music
Christopher Hogwood, conductor
L’OISEAU LYRE 425 893-2 (1990)

Sacred Music:

‘Anthems’:
Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford
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ARCHIV 459 487-2 (1981)

Court Music:

‘Odes’:

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Ayres and Songs from Orpheus Britannicus:

Jill Feldman, soprano

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